
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 20, 1996

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, February 20, 1996.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL, (Deputy Speaker)
Mr. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Hons.)
Mr. L. A. WEEKES, G.C.M., J.P.
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister for 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)
Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.
Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport) (Leader of the House)
Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)
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.), LEC, (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)
Mr. D. CARTER
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B., (Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., (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

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B., (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport)

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 Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, 13th February, 1996.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of the 13th day of February, 1996, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Reports of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation for the years 1992 and 1993.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, 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.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 1 – THE INSURANCE BILL, 1996

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the course of my presentation today I shall seek the leave of the House to have this Bill referred to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses for consideration of its provisions.

In my presentation of the Bill, I would want broadly and briefly to set what we **are** embarked upon in the context of the development of our financial sector in Barbados, to give the House the benefit of a short history of the preparation of the legislation before Parliament and briefly and broadly speak to some of its main provisions, particularly those which represent a departure from what is contained in the existing legislation. I trust that this will be the first in a series of pieces of legislation to engage the attention of this Parliament having to do with the development of a financial system, the development of money markets in Barbados and the development of instruments in this country to promote savings and investment.

I begin my address to this Parliament on this matter pertaining to the amendment to the Insurance Act, Cap. 310 of the Laws of Barbados. The development of Barbados' money, financial and capital markets have simply not kept pace with the general development of the country. As it stands, Sir, Barbados has a relatively narrow range of financial institutions. Our financial sector is dominated largely by retail banks, but we do not have a wide range of

specialised financial institutions to mobilise savings and to allocate those savings in support of higher levels of national investment. Equally, Sir, many of the instruments for the attraction of savings and investment are not attractive nor broad based, and it all represents itself in a situation where today one of the main constraints, and perhaps the chief constraint, to the continued sustained and sustainable growth and development of this society is the level of savings.

It is not customary for a Minister of Finance to telegraph what will be the thrust of fiscal policy for the short term, but I just want, even at this early notice, to support the statements that are now being made by the Governor of the Central Bank and leading members of the institution that the key constraint to the growth, the sustained and sustainable development of the Barbadian society, is the level of savings, and therefore in the short term concerted action must be taken to raise the level of domestic savings and to introduce such financial innovations as would make it attractive and worthwhile for people to want to prefer to save rather than to want to consume.

I should also make the additional point, Sir, that in significant areas of the operations of our financial sector, even as it is structured, legislation has not kept pace with the development of the sector and perhaps it is true that the **area** in which this is most glaring is in the **area** of the insurance industry of Barbados. The insurance industry of Barbados has emerged in the last 20 years as one of the fastest growing and the most complex areas in the financial sector. Indeed, Sir, in 1993, the latest year for which statistics are available, the industry wrote \$283.6 million in gross premiums and had investments and cash totalling some \$750 million. The House will be aware of the considerable contribution that the insurance industry has made in particular to the development of the housing stock of this country, and in this respect at the end of 1993 mortgages totalling some \$144.5 million were included in the total investments of the insurance industry of Barbados.

But the industry has not benefited, despite its growth and its increasing complexity, from the kind of legislative framework that bears a relationship to the dynamism of the industry, that bears a relationship to change in the substantive insurance law that obtains in other Caribbean countries and in the rest of the world, and in many respects the industry has laboured to a large extent by the constraints imposed upon it by a rudimentary Insurance Act which was designed basically to lay down requirements for the registration of companies and intermediaries, to lay down **conditions** to cover matters such as capitalisation and deposits and to vest certain statutory powers, in relation to the regulation of the industry, in the Supervisor of Insurance.

Many other matters that are important for the appropriate development, first of **all**, and regulation of an insurance industry are not now addressed in the Insurance Act of Barbados. This was recognised **as** far back as 1982 and I should just want, **as** I proceed to discuss the history of the preparation of this legislation, to say that what we are here embarked upon is not an initiative of this present administration per se. The work on this was begun in 1982-83 and then it was taken **up** in earnest in 1993 and it has engaged the attention of the Supervisor of Insurance Office, the industry as a whole and has been the subject of inputs drawn from legislation developed to apply at the regional level. My first responsibility is to acknowledge the contribution of all of the industry people, all of the public servants and indeed the contribution of the regional specialists who have contributed to putting us in a position today where we can bring to this Parliament a piece of legislation pertaining to the insurance industry that is more appropriate to our times and more relevant to our purposes. 11.30 a.m.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the existing legislation under Chapter 310 of the Laws of Barbados provides basically for conditions to govern the registration of companies and establishes limits in relation to the amount of capital that companies should have and a lot of the legislation is in the nature of divesting of statutory powers in the regulatory authority, the Supervisor of Insurance. We need fundamental amendments to the Insurance Act to go beyond just providing for the registration of companies and in some respects, Sir, we even have to change the way in which the existing provisions allow for the registration of companies. We need to amend the Act to go beyond the vesting of statutory powers in a regulatory authority to provide through legislation the strengthening of protection afforded to policy holders and as a result one of the objectives sought in the reform of this insurance legislation is to bring to bear in Barbados for the **first** time a collection of new measures incorporated in insurance legislation that will provide wider and more ample measures to protect the policy holders who hold policies in our insurance policies. As a result, this legislation is to be judged in terms of the adequacy of the measures that are now being proposed to deal with the quite lawful and proper interests of the policy holders.

We have also reached a situation Mr. Speaker, where the industry has changed and companies are now writing larger amounts of business than was envisioned when the industry was brought under legislation in 1972. Despite that, Sir, the capital and solvency requirement for the industry as a whole have not been changed since 1972 and we therefore have a situation where the industry can be regarded as being undercapitalised, but we need desperately to increase the capital and the solvency requirement of the insurance industry to bring it in line more realistically with the volume of business that ~~the~~ industry is now writing.

All of this, Mr. Speaker, is designed to ensure that the **kind** of threat to solvency, the **kind** of threat to the viability of the industry that has overtaken insurance industries in other jurisdictions do not overtake the industry in Barbados. I really would like to spend just a brief moment on the significance of this. **All** Members of the House would be aware that there is a perception that the Caribbean is a high risk area, a perception that is reinforced annually by the ravages of nature. All Members would also be aware of the growing importance of insurance to a number of economic entities in Barbados whose activities are accompanied by a high level of risk. I perhaps would not on this occasion single out the public service vehicles; but the public is aware that the operations of some sections of the economy have in fact raised the risk for insurance and we need therefore to establish a regime to make sure that the capital and solvency requirements of the insurance industry are so **attended** to that confidence of policy holders in the solvency of the companies and the viability of the company is put beyond any reasonable risk.

Mr. Speaker, **as** the industry has also expanded and become more complex, the existing regulatory framework governing the operation of the industry has proven to be inadequate and the legislation before Parliament is intended to serve an important purpose of broadening the regulatory framework within which the industry functions with a view to enabling the industry to function within more clearly defined parameters than is the case at present.

As I mentioned earlier, in 1993 when this matter was resurrected in earnest, it was intended then that the Insurance Act should have been amended and that in the process of its amendment provisions should have been included in the new Insurance Act to provide for the management and the regulation of pension plans in Barbados.

The first draft of the legislation therefore provided specific regulations to govern the operation of pension funds in this country. Representation was however made that there were many serious and complex issues pertaining to the management of pension funds in this country which had not been fully analysed or resolved and as a result in 1995 we decided that we would exclude from this legislation that has now come to Parliament any provision pertaining to the management of pension funds in this country.

I am therefore serving notice that in due course a separate piece of legislation providing for the regulation and the management of pension funds in Barbados will be brought to this House. I should also stress that the legislation before Parliament has benefited from the drafting of a model insurance act for the Caribbean by the Caribbean Law Institute. There are other Caribbean

countries – Jamaica and Trinidad in particular, whose insurance legislation was far deeper and more relevant than others and in the late 80s and early 90s the opportunity was grasped to draft a model insurance bill to be applied to the Caribbean that draws upon the experience of other Caribbean countries but also brings to bear the experience of other countries in the development of substantive insurance law.

This legislation before Parliament draws very considerably from the model insurance bill developed to be applied on a regional basis in the Caribbean and it draws in particular in relation to those sections of the legislation that have to do with the designation of beneficiaries and other particular matters arising therefrom. I would just want against that broad background, Mr. Speaker, to quickly elaborate on some of the important changes that are being contemplated by this Bill before Parliament.

11.40 a.m.

I should also add, Sir, before I do so, that the Bill in all its stages during the process of its drafting was exposed to the scrutiny of the practitioners. A lot of the proposed amendments suggested by the industry specialists and practitioners have been incorporated in the legislation before Parliament. There are however, Sir, a number of areas in which it has not been possible to agree to specific proposals that have been put and there are some instances in which the difference of opinion has been sharp and I may from time to time draw attention to the areas where some sharp differences of opinion still exist. The purpose of it having to go to a joint committee is for both Houses of Parliament to be able to capture all the concerns of all entities involved in the industry to make sure that at the end of the day we have an Insurance Act that not only reflects policy, but also balances the concerns of all involved in the management and all who benefit from the operation of the industry.

I want, Sir, to outline to the House some of the major amendments being proposed. The first amendment the House must be aware of is that in keeping with the movement toward regional integration, insurance companies operating in Barbados, but incorporated in CARICOM countries, will no longer be considered as foreign companies for the purposes of the application of our insurance law.

Clause 2 of this Bill provides for a revised definition of foreign companies to capture that particular policy. A foreign company therefore will only be a company that is incorporated in an area outside CARICOM.

As I suggested earlier, Sir, one of the key areas that had to be dealt with was the question of the capitalization of insurance companies. I cannot overstate the importance

of an insurance company having adequate capital resources committed and paid up. The capital of a company in an insurance industry is required as a bumper between premiums and its claims, and an adequate capital base is absolutely necessary to safeguard shareholder funds and to give adequate protection to policyholders.

The current capital requirement for the insurance industry of Barbados has been in existence since 1972 and it is therefore totally inadequate in relation to the volume of business the insurance companies are writing in 1995. Some companies are writing business in excess of \$20 million on a capital requirement of only BDS. \$200 000 and this situation exposes the insurers of Barbados to an unnecessarily high degree of **risk**. The opportunity therefore is being taken through the presentation of this new legislation to change the 1972 provisions regarding the capital requirements of insurance companies in this country. The law purports that the existing requirements of \$200 000 for life insurance companies and \$100 000 for all other companies should be changed in the following respect

- that companies writing both long-term and general insurance should now have a capital base of \$5 million;
- that companies writing long-term only should have a capital base of \$3 million;
- companies writing general only should have a capital base of \$3 million;
- companies writing motor or **industrial** life only should have a capital base of \$1 million.

I am mindful, Sir, that this is a set of proposals that can pose a difficulty for some insurance companies. When the insurance industry was in the initial phase of its development, the capital requirements were set low to afford high levels of indigenous involvement in the industry. As it stands now, Sir, it has been represented that only two of the local private companies would meet the capital requirements that are now being prescribed by the legislation. Therefore, companies will be given a period within which to meet these new capital requirements. We hope that in stating higher levels of capital requirements for insurance companies operating in Barbados, those that are presently undercapitalized would be encouraged to make changes to improve their capital base and this would therefore leave some companies to go public and offer some of their shares on the Stock Exchange of Barbados.

The proposed change in the legislation to affect the capitalization of insurance industries in Barbados is designed to provide additional security for the policies of persons insured, but it is equally intended to provide a stimulus for insurance companies to become public

companies and also to begin to offer some shares on the Securities and Stock Exchange of this country.

The third major area the House needs broadly to be aware of is the changed conditions for the registration of insurance companies. It goes without saying, Sir, that only persons of good character, competence and good financial standing should be licensed **as** insurers. It is Sir, still a point of controversy that companies conducting insurance business should not be engaged in so many other types of business as to put the solvency of their companies at risk and put the policyholders' funds in some threat. As a result, clause 12 of the new Bill **purports** to restrict insurance companies to the carrying on of insurance business alone, while section 13, and this I know is a matter that has engaged some controversy in the industry because section 13(1)(d) also provides for a company which will carry on other business to carry on insurance business subject to the approval of the Supervisor...
11.50 a.m.

Sir, the new legislation also seeks to provide **additional** and wider protection for policyholders by making it mandatory for deposits to be held not only by foreign insurance companies, as was the case in the past, but equally, by local insurance companies. Again, Sir, that has been a matter of some debate in the industry.

The new legislation also now requires, under section 25, that a statutory fund should be established in the case of each insurance company to provide additional security to policyholders. Statutory funds held by insurance companies are already the practice in the Trinidad and Belize legislation. These funds will be set up by trust. Companies engaged in long-term and motor insurance will be required to set up such a fund for each type of business.

At present, as all of us know, many policyholders experience hardship in paying large premiums within a 3-month period and some insurance companies have been allowing them longer periods within which to make the payments. The legislation before Parliament, Sir, is intended to provide an extension of the period of credit for **policyholders** who **are** experiencing hardship in meeting their payments.

In addition, Sir, in order for the Supervisor of Insurance to be on top of the situation and to be able to take early corrective action when insurance companies are indulging in practices that could put the funds of the investors and policyholders at risk, it is deemed necessary to improve the requirements for financial reporting in the industry.

You would also note, Sir, that when I spoke today, I could only give the House the benefit of information in full

about the industry for the period ending up to 1993. It is a sad fact that, even as I **speak**, information on the industry is not yet fully ready for 1994 and far less so for 1995.

As a result the opportunity is being taken, that is a fact, to improve the financial reporting required of insurance companies. I want to stress this point **because** insurance companies manage a lot of money for people who put down that money in the belief and in the expectation that, some time in the future, it is going to be safe and secure and that they will have guaranteed access to it.

It is therefore absolutely necessary, Sir, that there must be timely provision of all financials about the industry such that early corrective action can be taken if there are developments that could pose a threat to the solvency and the viability of the insurance industry of this country.

As a result also, the new legislation before Parliament would require that insurance companies would be allowed only 6 months within which to report their financial results to the Supervisor of Insurance and that, of equal importance, the accounts of all companies should be published in the *Official Gazette* and in the daily newspapers so that the public at large could have a greater insight into the financial status of the industry and also to be aware of what is happening with their investments.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that this is important because, as I said, I speak to this House today from the background of not being able to give Parliament a full accounting of the state of the industry beyond 1993. It would be a dereliction of responsibility if we did not, in drafting a new Insurance Act make sure not only that the financial reporting of the industry is brought to a level that is commensurate with the new information technology that exists but also that will allow us to be able to discharge our responsibility, **as** legislators and regulators, Sir.

In keeping with this, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity is being taken in the legislation to improve or to bring the actuarial reviews required of the industry more in line with modern standards. As it stands now, the insurance companies are only required to have actuarial reviews once every 5 years. That surely is out of date and the new legislation would require that annual actuarial reviews be undertaken. Certainly, in no instance, should more **than** a 3-year period elapse before insurance companies have such reviews that are so critical in determining the strength of the insurance companies themselves and **are** so important to enable the companies to make corrective policy changes should they be required.

We are also making provision, under this legislation, Sir, to make it mandatory for every life insurance company carrying on insurance in Barbados to have an actuary.

We are also strengthening the powers of the Supervisor of Insurance in relation to the collection of information about the industry. This matter has already engaged the attention of newspapers in a most prominent and dramatic fashion. I believe that it was announced that the new legislation is going to make it **possible** for the Supervisor to enter and search premises for the purposes of obtaining information, once a warrant has been obtained **from** a Justice of the Peace or a Magistrate. In point of fact, Sir, it does provide for that. We have had situations, unfortunately, in this country where insurance industries have been very tardy, to say the least, in providing the Supervisor of Insurance with such relevant information – very, very tardy to the point of being recalcitrant – as would allow the Supervisor to be sure that he was protecting the public's interest and, in such instances, we feel that the Supervisor should be given greater authority to be able to ensure that he cannot be held to be in default of his responsibility for failure to carry out the law.

Sir, the legislation also establishes new rules regarding tests for solvency as set out in clause 58 which are technical and will engage the attention of the Committee and with which, I will not engage the House. They also provide, more importantly, for the regulation of insurance intermediaries.

This is an industry that is made up of a large number of persons ranging from sales persons, brokers, and the like. It is quite appropriate that the operation of all entities involved in the functioning of the insurance industry including the Association of Underwriters should be brought within the **ambit** of **some regulatory** provisions.

As a result, Sir, a large part of the new legislation broadens the scope for regulation by bringing many of the entities who are functionaries in the insurance industry, not now falling under the control of the Supervisor of Insurance more directly under the auspices of his or her supervision.

Many of the niggling problems of the insurance industry have had to do with people's understanding of things such as cash surrender values and questions of what should happen if you want to have an insurance policy and, thereafter, you might want to change your mind or matters of this character. All persons who have been involved in the industry know that, where the small man is concerned, these **are** the things that matter for him. Sometimes people having committed themselves to insurance might want to withdraw and, at the same time, of course the agents may have incurred cost in **preparing** documents and things of this character, the question of the issue of documents and what should be **the** procedure for the proper issue of these documents, what should be the information provided to policyholders about their participation in the profits of the

industry. All of these are matters that concern the man in the street in relation to his participation in the industry and the legislation sets out a body of new law which purports to deal with matters of this character.

12.00 noon

One major area, Sir, that has been included in the new legislation and, as I said, that draws heavily from the Caribbean Law Institute's initiative to develop a model law applicable to the industry in the region as a whole, is the question of the designation of beneficiaries. This, Sir, in fact is one of the most extensive sections of the new legislation running from clauses 112 to 124 and it will make controversial changes in who can be beneficiaries of insurance policies in keeping with substantive changes in the law of insurance itself. This will be a matter, I am sure, the Committee will want to peruse as carefully as possible and I am looking forward to being a part of the Committee that examines this innovation. It is a very important change and, as I have said, this is something that has been under discussion regionally exercising the attention of the former administration and we are incorporating in the new legislation far reaching changes in beneficiaries of policies.

As you know, Sir, most of our insurance companies today are mutual companies, meaning that the people who hold policies are the shareholders and we want to be able to have a situation as well where insurance companies can issue shares and that is part and parcel of the process, not only of developing the industry but also deepening our capital markets but we are a country whose insurance companies are largely mutual and we want to make it possible for the conversion of mutual companies to companies with share capital.

In addition, Sir, the question of self-insurance is a matter that has now become an issue of great moment in Barbados. We have an exempt offshore insurance company because in the rest of the world entities in high risk areas found that the cost of **insurance** was so prohibitive that they had to establish their own insurance enterprises and our captive insurance industry in Barbados reflects their desire to make sure that the insurance enterprises that they establish are operated under the most cost effective regimes and many of them establish their self-insured enterprises in our country.

Similarly, in our own circumstances some economic entities have found it both difficult and expensive to obtain insurance in the regular commercial market because of the nature of their business and because of the very high risk involved and we deem it very necessary that some companies who find it worthwhile and feasible should be able to provide for self-insurance. I am absolutely sure that there is some economic activity in countries that impose such a tremendous burden on the insurance companies

and result in the premiums to the rest of us becoming so high that the ability of high risk entities to provide for their own insurance will, I hope, help to even out the rate of growth of the cost of insurance in this country.

I should also stress that one of the main areas of innovation provided for in the legislation has to do with the provision that is now being allowed for the formation of catastrophe reserves. The House, Sir, is familiar with the tremendous problem facing, not only Barbados, but the region as a whole in relation to the cost and the availability of insurance arising from the ravages of hurricanes in our region and even though we ourselves **are** not mercifully affected there is a perception that the region is a high **risk** region and whenever Florida is affected it leads to both an increase in the cost and a difficulty experienced by entities in our societies to get access to adequate insurance cover and even re-insurance, Sir. The answer to this is presumed to be enabling countries to establish reserves to provide for taxed fees and that they would commit a proportion of the net premiums on property insurance to this purpose. The legislation obviously, Sir, would include provisions governing penalties to be applied when breaches of the Act are undertaken. Generally speaking the areas to which I have referred represent broadly the areas in which there are new provisions in this legislation as compared with that of the old.

Now, Sir, the range of amendments to the existing law were **so** wide and extensive that it was thought that it was necessary to repeal the existing law, take it off the Statute Book entirely, and replace it by a new law rather than have a piece meal assessment. Therefore the exercise on which we **are** embarked is an exercise that will **see** the existing Insurance Act, Cap. 210 of the Laws of Barbados repealed and replaced by an entirely new piece of legislation.

I believe, Sir, I have covered most of the essential points but I want to **stress** that during the course of the next few months we would want to bring down to this House a number of supporting pieces of legislation that address what I said is one of Barbados' chief economic deficiencies – that we have a relatively underdeveloped financial and capital market with some Caribbean markets, particularly Trinidad, that has gone far ahead of us in terms of its range of financial institutions, the extent of the financial innovation that has been brought to bear, the number of financial instruments and the attractiveness of those financial instruments. We are now in a position, I believe, to address one of the fundamental problems that still attend this country at the end of this century, namely that we do not have the **money** or the capital market that can generate sufficient domestic savings to be able to underwrite the general development of Barbados to the degree that we would wish. We have the opportunity that

is historic to really be innovative in the measures that we bring to bear to broaden and deepen our money and capital markets but equally **so** to introduce legislation that will put the regulatory framework within which the industries operate in a context that is recognized as modern and realistic to our time and purposes.

12.10 p.m.

I truly, Sir, wish to thank all entities in the society who have contributed to the drafting of this very complex piece of legislation. As I said, Sir, it is a piece of legislation that has cut across administrations. A lot of drafting of this legislation took place under the previous administration and I commend them for their effort but it is now for us as a Parliament to look at this legislation in all of its complexities and ensure that we put on the statute **books** of this country a new Insurance Act that will meet the interest of the policyholders and that will ensure that the insurance industry can continue to be efficiently and financially secure, and that it will be an industry that can meet its risks within a framework that all agree is fair and reasonable to all concern.

I would therefore wish, Sir, to move that further **consideration** of this Bill should be postponed and that this Bill should be referred to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of this Parliament which will consider its provisions and which will report such recommendations as the Committee sees fit, and that this Joint Select Committee of both Houses of this Parliament should have the power to send for persons' papers and records. I would also wish to reserve my right to continue this second reading speech after the matter has been brought back but I rather doubt, Sir, that I will exercise that right.

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

The question that further consideration of this Bill be postponed until a later date was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be now referred to both Houses and I **beg** to nominate the following persons to be Members of the Joint Select Committee: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the Honourable Member for St. **Michael** West Central and the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the persons who will be sitting on the Select Committee on behalf of the Opposition will be myself and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. **Speaker**, I beg to second that.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Senate be invited to nominate 3 Members to concur in the referring to this Bill to the Joint Select Committee.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I also beg to move that the first meeting of the Joint Select Committee be chaired by Your Honour, the Speaker.

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

The question that this Bill be referred to a Joint Select Committee and the Members so mentioned be Members of this Joint Committee war put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

The question that the Senate be invited to concur in the formulation of this Bill and to nominate 3 Members to serve on this Joint Committee was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ITEM NO. 5 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1996

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. **Speaker**, Sir, the Bill before the House is an amending Bill and Honourable Members will recall that last summer that what was formerly the National Advisory Council on Drugs was constituted as a statutory board **as** the National Council on Substance Abuse. It was established to provide some autonomy and freedom of action to the Council with a view to making it function more effectively, efficiently and speedily. Prior to the passing of the substantive legislation it was just, as it were, a department or sub-department within the Ministry of the Attorney General.

12.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, since the Bill was passed as the 13th Statute of 1995, the Council has made representations to me that the Bill needed some amendments for its refinement. Some were typographical and some were more substantial. In particular, the position of Chief Executive Officer was thought to be too high-powered a designation for the person who is responsible for the day-to-day management of what is really a very small executive operation.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We discussed that. Then there are all kinds of **relativities** between the Central

Government's Schedule of **Personal** Emoluments and Statutory Boards, and it has **been** recommended that we **redesignate** the chief executive officer, the person who is responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the Council, as Manager, and the Government has accepted that recommendation.

Sir, in relation **to** Clause 5, one of the consequences of establishing a statutory board is **to** take over the responsibilities of the former, as it **were**, **unincorporated** body called the National Advisory Council on Drugs. Members may recall that this body is funded by monies voted by Parliament on behalf of the Government of Barbados and contributions from United Nations Drug Control Programme. It was the recommendation of the Government's financial departments, such as Accountant General and Auditor General, that the statutory board could take over the assets, liabilities, functions and operations of the **unincorporated** body that **was** formerly called the National Advisory Council on Drugs, but it would be tidier if we would provide for it specifically in the legislation. A statutory board can only act within the powers vested in that statutory board by Parliament. The functions set out by the legislation creating any statutory board are exhaustive. If the statutory board tries to act outside those functions, it is **ultra vires** and it can be restrained by court order.

We are therefore providing in Clause 5 that with effect from the date of the commencement **of the** Act, all assets, liabilities, property, functions and operations of the National Advisory Council on Drugs are deemed to be transferred over to the National Council on Substance Abuse. That will enable them to have their own **banking** arrangements and so on free from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Mr. Speaker, originally we **looked** at the way in which the previous Government had attempted to constitute the Council, with a view to having as wide representation as possible, drawing on **as** many disciplines and interests in the community **as** possible and we ended up with a Council of 20. It has proven to be too unwieldy and it can retard the work of the Council. **As** I say, the previous Government and ourselves were **trying** to involve as many people who have a genuine, sincere interest in the reduction of the drug problem. I have been advised, and the Government has accepted, that we should have a smaller Council. Rather than specify a number as the original Act had specified, we are leaving it flexible. To that extent, Clause 6 provides for the flexibility in the membership by using the vocabulary –

"The Council comprises a chairman, a deputy chairman and such other members as the Minister appoints."

That gives me the flexibility to appoint nine or 11, but certainly not 20 again. Rather than have a specific number to make a meeting of the Council **quorate**, again we have left that flexible to say:

"A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum."

rather than say 11 of 20 or whatever.

Sir, when the original Bill came to the House, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West drew to my attention that the provisions which purported to deal with conflicts of interest were obtuse, convoluted, complicated and complex. I gave him the assurance then that I would revisit it, because it was a novel collection of words that was used. I do not know where it came from, but it was too elaborate as to really be almost nonsensical. I have tried to keep my promise, I have revisited the matter and Honourable Members will see on page 3 of the Bill Indent 14. (1). We have now put it on a very simple basis, and it reads:

"14. (1). A member who has any interest in a company or firm with which the Council proposes to enter into a contract or otherwise transact business shall disclose to the Council the particulars of the member's interest and details of the disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes taken at the meeting at which the disclosure is made.

(2) A member referred to... [the word 'in' should go in **there**] ...sub-paragraph (1) shall not take part in any deliberation or discussion of the Council relating to the contract or business referred to in that sub-paragraph."

That is entirely in harmony with the provision that appears in the Companies Act, where a director of a company who may be interested in a contract with which the company is interested is only required to disclose the general nature of his interest, have it recorded and then don't take part in the deliberations. So this now harmonises with the usual provisions in the Companies Act.

Those are the main features of this amending Bill, Sir. Next month, Sir, I will be in a position to give the House during the Estimates debate more information about the matter of drugs.

12.30 p.m.

I just want to say generally that drugs still constitute the greatest threat to the social fabric of Barbados. We are trying to deal with the problem on two fronts: demand reduction and the supply side. The problem with the supply side is that Government's ability to wage war against drugs

successfully is constrained by financial circumstances, the provision of equipment and vessels, aircraft and so on. It is almost beyond Government's competence adequately to provide all the equipment that is necessary to really be on top of the matter. What we have had to do is to establish liaison to put us through the regional security systems and secondly through development of contracts and intelligence with friendly countries and agencies to assist in preventing drugs from coming into Barbados but drugs still come into Barbados. Barbados is a transshipment point.

As I said, we are trying to do our best on a regional basis to reduce the impact. We have been achieving quite substantial success in cutting off drugs from entering Barbados when we have the information and the intelligence. Particularly the last few months we have had success with potential marijuana importation into Barbados in the north of the island. We still are able to intercept persons with comparatively small amounts of cocaine. We have had in the last 18 months or so success with one or two attempted drops of large amounts of cocaine up north but we have been able to deal with that when an aircraft dropped many pounds of cocaine in St. Peter in October 1994.

We have established very good relationships particularly with Britain and the USA and **Canada**. Honourable Members will recall that on Christmas 1994 there were 5 persons who came here from England ostensibly on **holiday** but went back with cartons allegedly of rum but in fact mixed with cocaine and the operations were so well done in Barbados on the part of the police that by the time they got to London, **Gatwick** they were arrested **and** dealt with last year. The Barbados Police Drug Squad was highly complimented during the trial of that matter. I think it came off around September last year because a number of them have gone to prison for a long time.

As I said, we are constrained by lack of finance to be even more effective on the supply side. However, Sir, there are a number of friendly governments which are prepared to help the region in this war on drugs and in due course the House will hear of some of the initiatives being taken. I won't disclose anything at this stage.

On the demand side, what the Council of Substance Abuse has to do is to pull together all of the disparate agencies that are doing their own thing as it were in trying to deal with demand reduction and act as a coordinating agency. They are prepared to do this. Honourable Members are aware that the police have officers who go and do lectures in schools and groups trying to sensitise young children about the dangers of drug use and abuse.

The Ministry of Education does its part and the Ministry of Health; but one of the functions of the National Council on Substance Abuse is now to pull together all of these, coordinate the activity and make sure that we attack this matter in a structured and organised way so that we **are** developing what is called a master plan for drugs. The draft of the master plan should be ready by March 15 and then to be approved by the Council shortly thereafter.

In the master plan what they are really setting out is a broad strategy for the attack on drugs starting with developing and expanding education, sensitising the public, particularly the youth, about the problems of drugs. I am confident that in this year there will be – I mean the year 1996 as **distinct** from the fiscal year – there will be **considerably** more activity in the **area** of information about drugs. The Council has collected a tremendous amount of material, printed and electronic, in the sense of videos and so on. We are getting requests from schools and from the police to let them have some of the information that we have, be it in brochures, pamphlets or videos. The coordinator has himself gone to schools and the most recent is St. George Secondary to give lectures and show films about the **drug** problem. A lot more of that is going to be done by way of television advertising.

I hope the television station will be reasonable in its charges because we have a small vote of about – \$800 000 as between what **UNDCP** and the Government is putting in. Just as you have the ads for AIDS, for example, on television we want to develop a series of ads about drugs. I must say the work of this council is not limited to psychotropic substances. It will also be dealing with the problem of alcoholism and we are developing programmes to deal with alcoholism at the workplace and to sensitise the public. We are going to be working very closely with the **Task** Force to collect a lot of statistical information about the problems of not only hard drugs but the problem of alcoholism and so on.

I thought I would give Honourable Members a little **bird's** eye view of some of the areas of orientation and activity of the Council. I **beg to** move, Sir, that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief and I should like to ask the Minister for some more **c** cation relative to clause 5 of this Bill. As I understand the Financial Rules that apply in Barbados, if a council existed before or however you style it and there was an **ad hoc** organisation or an organisation set up even pursuant to some administrative decision, then the financial matters relative to the operation of that Council have nothing to do with the Council. It would be the Permanent Secretary in the relevant Ministry who would be responsible so that **there** is really nothing to transfer.

Therefore, this section, in my view, is a complete waste of Parliament's time and is something that drafters should have a better understanding of. There is nothing anybody could have vested in any council established by a Minister unless the individual members hold it personally so that this does not tidy up anything. This is a complete waste of Parliament's time and I believe that with respect to matters like this that it may, in fact, send the wrong impression to the public that councils or bodies which **are** established by Ministers to advise them have some kind of asset holding power, or they can create liabilities, or own property, or have some other dealing in financial matters.

12.40 p.m.

Now, the Minister has explained that the technicians, he is quite right to do that, or, perhaps, the lack of knowledge of these matters by the present council would have led them to believe this, but there is absolutely no basis in law or otherwise in this country for any Council established by any Minister to hold any assets, incur any liabilities or make any decision relative to the allocation of Government's finances. I want that message to go out very clearly because, as I say, this section may unwittingly mislead people unless, of course, the Council in fact did engage in the acquiring of assets, or the incurring of liabilities, or the ownership of property which it would have had no basis in law or any other administrative procedure to do.

Even when the United Nations, or specialized agencies of the United Nations, or other entities make **grants** or contributions to Barbados, it is the accounting officer in the Ministry in which – let us say, you have an Advisory Council on Women's Affairs – You have had Advisory Councils on areas in education, health and in the year of the family. All of these entities, yes, are given a budget but the ultimate person who is responsible is the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry. As I say, in my very humble submission to the Attorney General, this amendment was totally unnecessary and, in fact, makes a mockery of the existing legislation in this country. I would only suggest that in matters of this sort the persons who understand how Government's finances, including the technicians in the Ministry of Finance, would point out that this really is not curing anything unless the previous council was illegally undertaking activities which it should not have undertaken.

I am not saying this to **embarrass** the Attorney General because he has explained his position but I have seen this kind of foolishness before across my desk, and the impression which some people want to give is that councils and other bodies established by Government exercise some kind of control over Government's finances, and that is not the case.

The second point I want to make relates to paragraph 14 of the First Schedule. I want once again to compliment the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who raised this matter. I am glad the Attorney General responded to the concerns of the Opposition. However, I would certainly request that the Attorney General take this further. There is the Rural Commission Bill and there was another Bill that **was** passed in this Chamber with Schedules which had similar disclosure clauses. We took the position then that the member of the council should not participate.

I remember there was a big debate in here about what is appropriate for Cabinet Ministers when matters in which they may have an actual financial interest arise and it was generally agreed that Ministers are required not only to disclose but not to participate in that particular decision. We took the position that therefore members of statutory corporations or councils which come under the authority of the Minister, that similar provision should apply. I am glad to see that this has been codified in this way.

My only suggestion is that there are two or three other pieces of legislation in which this would have come up for which this provision in my view is crystal clear. In some cases the legislation said that in the event one entered into a contract and the person did not disclose that the contractor should not necessarily lose the contract. We took the very strong position that that is not so that once the contractor knew that a member of the Council or Board had an interest that he should ensure that person discloses that particular interest. I like this proposed amendment. I believe this is the stance that should be adopted in legislation of this sort and that this should be **carried** forward into any other legislation relative to the establishment of statutory entities which have power to dispose of, or acquire assets, or undertake other financial matters.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say thanks to the Attorney General for honouring the commitment which he had made. I recall very well that he did indicate the first opportunity which presented itself he would revisit the issue and I think I should put on the record that I am satisfied that he has done it, and the manner in which he has done it.

Now, I do not wish to use this opportunity to have a major debate on drugs in Barbados because I do not think we should seek to do that on an amendment, but there is an aspect of this which I wish to raise in relation to the council as now constituted. Every time we talk about substance abuse in this country we almost automatically move to discuss drugs as such and I do not recall either through the council, or in this House, or anywhere else our ever having a really serious discussion about tobacco and its use.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: **As** a matter of fact, the Honourable Member is saying from her seat that alcohol is the worst offender. I can touch on that but more specifically, I wish to suggest that "substance abuse" as understood by the Council – the definition in the Act itself is very clear.

"'Substance abuse' means the ingestion, inhalation, injection or application or administration by other means of a substance by an individual to his body to the detriment of the physical, mental, psychological, social or economic well-being of that individual, his family or society as a whole."

I may say in passing, Sir, it is a most comprehensive, lucid and desirable definition. Substance abuse therefore extends, and the Council should extend its activity to include the other areas of substance abuse in this country. 12.50 p.m.

Substance abuse extends and the council should extend its activity to include the other areas of substance abuse in this country. I take a very serious view of what is happening to the young people of this country, not in relation only to marijuana or cocaine but in relation to our failure, as a community, to mount a serious campaign against cigarette smoking.

Mr. Speaker, I used to smoke, let me establish that I used to smoke. Let us deal with the smoking and drinking separately so that we do not trivialize it. I used to smoke and I finally saw the light more than 10 years ago. I do not speak as a convert. I speak, more particularly, after I became Minister of Health – I had given up cigarette **smoking** before then – I got very involved in the knowledge relating to the danger of cigarette **smoking**.

When I was Minister I banned smoking in all the public buildings of the Ministry of Health. I am very glad to see that it is continuing and I know that in the Hospital there used to be a slight violation by persons who were so addicted they could not help it. We became aware of slight violations and it was suggested that there ought to be an area designated for the smokers. I felt that for the health facilities we ought not to have such an area and that we should be rigid and insist that there shall be no smoking in any of the health facilities in Barbados. I think that still holds.

What I should like to see the Government do is to examine the possibility of bringing that restriction to all Government buildings. Mr. Speaker, I know that that is going to offend a number of people who feel that it is

an assault on their rights. It might even offend persons close to me who still smoke. I am able to say that, not every time you bring information of goodwill to the people you love that they will necessarily accept it on face value. Getting people to stop from smoking is not easy.

But I think that the council – I am not going to say the Government because there is a limit to how much any Government can do – has a specific responsibility and I think they should take it on board as part of their real responsibility not only to deal with the hard and soft drugs but to deal with substance abuse in the true form, as it has been described in the Act.

A few weeks ago, I read a confessional by a former employee, an important person in Barbados at Barbados Rediffusion Services. He spoke about the suffering he is having now with emphysema. I know of one other person whom I have known very well who has been my friend and is in the medical profession and we are all aware of the difficulties which have arisen, almost exclusively, because of his continuing **smoking** habit, over many years.

I am pleased to say that, on this front bench – I cannot speak for the backbench – we are very fortunate that we are able to say that we represent good role models in that regard. There is not a single smoker on the benches of the Opposition, at least, the majority Opposition and we are **working** on the minority Opposition. We have been **working** on it for a long time. I have reason to feel that one or two persons have difficulty breaking the habit but I think that, in terms of role models, I **am** satisfied that children start to smoke because they **observe** the adults that they have respect for **smoking**. I am certain of that, in my own head. When I started **smoking** it was because I wanted to be like my father. There is no question in my mind that there is something macho about **smoking**. There was then; I do not believe it has changed.

But the real danger of **smoking** does not become apparent to he or she who smokes until some time subsequently. To the extent that we can stop a single person from beginning, I think we have a responsibility, as adults. To the extent that we can get those who are now **smoking** to stop, we would be successful. But we have to deal with those who have not yet started. We cannot tell them how to live their lives in every respect. But I believe that a systematic programme brought through the institutions and the education institutions wherever 2 or 3 are gathered together, if we can have a concerted programme that we may, in fact, save a large proportion of our young people.

Mr. Speaker, I am fully aware that the tobacco industry, first of all, in Barbados, the company that functions in Barbados has been a good company. All

reports indicate that it has **been** a good company and I have no vendetta against either the company or the people involved. It has been a model company, so far, as to how it employs people although it has closed its manufacturing activity and has now become a way station. It is going towards becoming no more than an importing agency for the Headquarters company in the Caribbean which is now in **Trinidad** and Tobago.

But, be that as it may, I think the health of our people is more important than any other consideration. There is a doctor who has been battling for a long time in this area. I believe Dr. Gale has been successful, to some extent. His passion for this is sometimes, I think, self-defeating in that there are persons who, on hearing his **proselytizing** turn off immediately. He has been my constituent and I have talked to him, from time to time and suggest that he should soften his approach. But I do not think he is capable of softening the approach because he is passionate.

But, be that as it may, Sir, I hope that this council will set part of its major responsibility and thrust towards the question of substance as it relates specifically to **smoking**. I do not believe that we should ever have any child in a school **smoking**. I do not believe that the seniors in a sixth form at any school ought to be **permitted** inadvertently or otherwise to smoke. It should be clearly understood – I am not suggesting that there is **any** permissiveness. I am not criticizing the Ministry of Education. I am not setting out to do so. I am merely saying that my own view – these are very **personal** views which I have. But I have seen some of my friends succumb to **smoking**.

I know of one gentleman whom we all know who has had 3 brushes. He stopped for a while and then, as far as I know, he is back again. It is a powerful narcotic. It is a pleasurable experience. No one who enjoys smoking will give it up easily because it provides 2 aspects to their existence. It gives a certain psychological crutch in that when certain activity occurs in the brain there is an almost automatic resort to what, in effect, is a comforter. There is no question about that.

Secondly, Sir, there is a certain amount of pleasure from the actual narcotic as it affects the mind or the brain. But, be that as it may, it is important that we get the word to the young people that smoking cigarettes may, in fact, be much more detrimental than some of the other activity which we decry on an ongoing basis.

There are some persons who say, "What about alcohol?" The jury is still out on alcohol, if it is not abused. As a matter of fact, the health authorities are now saying, in respect of moderate use of alcohol, that it is beneficial. I am not authorized nor am I qualified to

speak to the verity of that. What I can say is that where a person is clearly identified by their personality **type** or their physical **makeup** as a person that is likely to be addictive to alcohol, all of the strictures which I just made on cigarettes apply equally and indeed more to that person desisting from the use of alcohol. You do not take long to know that. Very early in a person's life they become aware of their tolerance to alcohol or otherwise, but cigarette **smoking**, when you have one, when you have the bonnavis behind bath with the boys, when you have that one cigarette and then as it has now been clearly demonstrated, the cigarette producers in the world are deliberately, with malice, foxing the young people into the narcotics it is necessary for any agency we have on substance abuse to take it seriously and approach it as a war.
1.00 p.m.

It is not a war for us. I think that some Honourable Members might be lost. They are never going to stop. Maybe they do not want to stop. I hope they do but I am not discussing those persons. I am discussing the youth. I am discussing the young people and every opportunity I get, including my own son, I preach. I will not be as successful with him, it does not seem, as I would be with the sons of other people. I hope other people will work on my son but we have a duty to the young people, especially the ones who are coming.

So, Mr. Speaker, I take the opportunity of these amendments to put that in the record because I feel very strongly about it. I know there are some of my friends who think that there is no one as dangerous as a person who has been converted but I smoked my **last** packs on a day in 1985 and I have framed them in my study, beautifully framed, and they are called Branford's last packs. Mr. Speaker, with a lot of help I hope that many of my colleagues would be able to say the same thing in due course.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.00 o'clock in the afternoon.

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

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that we would recommit the item 'Notices' on the Order Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there is no objection, so be it.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$850 000 from the Consolidated Fund and to place the same at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates **1995/96** as shown in the Supplementary Estimates **1995/96**, **No.12** which forms the schedule to this Resolution.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is resumed. Order No. 5.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to wind up the Second Reading of this Bill and in doing so I will investigate the point raised by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in relation to Clause 5, except to say that, for example, the council has received in its own name from the Private Sector supplies and materials for use in the programmes. That is why they are advised to be careful about that matter and have it transferred over by enactment rather than leave it. I think the Honourable Member has a point but even though the Council may have a subprogram in the Estimates, it is really a subprogram under the aegis of the Ministry.

I also wish to express gratitude to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West for extending the debate into the **area** of cigarette **smoking**. I did say that the Council sees it as its responsibility, not only to deal with **psycho**-tropic substances but also alcoholism and will refer the concerns and the suggestions of the Honourable Member to the Council. I am sure, in due course, they will give attention to that matter of **smoking**.

Smoking is a matter on which there are several views and I understand the concerns of people in Barbados but I am not going to pontificate in this **area** because I do not know enough about it except to say that there is still considerable evidence that people of Europe and South America are perhaps going to be the last to take the warnings about **smoking** seriously. They still smoke quite a lot in Europe and in South America. I have not been to China since 1979. It seems that the evidence is not featured as being conclusive in all parts of the world. That is all I will say on it, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, in respect of paragraph 14 of the First Schedule, I have in fact checked the Rural Development Commission Bill that was passed last year. The form of words in that Bill is different from the form of words in the original Substance Abuse Bill but still I think it was overdone, Sir. I am

not sure that they would have achieved much. I must confess that I did not remember at the time when we were going to do the amendments that I had also promised to do the amendments to that Bill. I am grateful to the Honourable Member for reminding me and I will draw it to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture who is responsible for that **area** of legislation that at an appropriate time he can make recommendations for amendments along the lines of the **amendments** that we have done to this Bill and incorporate it as paragraph 14 to the First Schedule.
2.15 p.m.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, 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 5 were called and passed.

Clause 6 was called.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Clause 6 stand part and in so doing I beg to move a little amendment on page 3 to Clause 6 (c) (2) where it says, Sir, that a Member referred to sub-paragraph 1 shall not take part in any deliberation and discuss it. It should read: "A Member referred to in sub-paragraph 1" and I beg to insert the word "in" before the word sub-paragraph.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is on that copy. **Okay**, Sir. I will then withdraw that. So I beg to move that Clause 6 stand part, Sir.

*The question that Clause 6 stand part was put and resolved in the **affirmative** without division.*

Clause 7 was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, 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. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 7 – TO MOVE THAT THIS HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO **COMMITTEE** OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE **GRANT** OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF BARBADOS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider certain grants of sums of money for the service of Barbados and that Your Honour do now leave the Chair.

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

*The question that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply was put and resolved in the **affirmative** without division, and Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.*

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

HEAD 36 – TO MOVE THE **PASSING** OF A RESOLUTION FOR \$450 403 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 1995-96 AS SHOWN IN **SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES** 1995-96, No. 11

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I wish at the outset to state that the Ministry of Health seeks a supplementary in the sum of \$450 403 and to indicate to this Chamber that this is one of two supplementaries that the Ministry will be bringing to this Chamber this week. This first supplementary which I will speak of in greater detail in a few minutes relates to the supply of provisions at the Psychiatric Hospital and the second supplementary which is anticipated that the House will debate on Friday will relate to the monies for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and in particular the funding of staff and the payment of staff emoluments at that institution. Now at the beginning of this financial year, Sir, I believe that the sum of \$1.8 million was approved under this general item for provisions and food and other supplies for the Psychiatric Hospital. The money related primarily to the provision of food but also to supplies for cleaning, laundry and general detergents, other cleaners for floors and so on. The vote has now been exhausted and the Ministry has to have it supplemented in order to carry on to the end of the financial year.
2.25 p.m.

I wish at the outset, Sir, to explain the circumstances in which this supplementary is sought and to make

the public aware of the growth of the psychiatric institution. Most of the time the public tends to focus on the Queen **Elizabeth** Hospital. What many people do not realise is **that** in fact while the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is a **600-bed** institution, the Psychiatric Hospital has some 900 beds and stretches over a 30-acre compound.

In **the** last few years, with the problems relating to structural adjustment, with an increasing number of drugs in the society,

- (1) there has been an increase in the number of people being admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital as patients on a full-time basis;
- (2) people being remanded to the Psychiatric Hospital from the courts; and
- (3) an increase in the number of people who are day patients, who get some sort of community care or care at the Psychiatric Hospital on a daily basis, or on a sporadic basis, but where they may come in and spend only a **day** or a few hours, get their treatment and leave.

In fact, in 1994 some 623 people were in-patients at the hospital. By 1995 that number had grown to 657, with about 100-day patients and a further 20 at the Roseville House, the halfway house, also being provided for out of this vote. In the year 1994 some 1 503 patients were admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital for various reasons. A year later, in 1995, we saw an increase to 1 602, with 118 being admitted as a result of remand orders from the court in 1994, and an increase in 1995 in the number of people remanded to the Psychiatric Hospital from the court to 147.

To go on giving the background in terms of the figures, in 1994 a total number of 1 987 client patients were provided for, while in **1995, 2 148** so you will see the growth in the numbers of people coming into the Psychiatric Hospital into the various programmes offered there. One of the consequences of this is the rapid increase in the need for food and other supplies to facilitate feeding **all** of the people who are on the compound, including staff members, and doing the laundry, the linen, clothing and other laundry for all the patients. It also means that there is an increase in the number of supplies used to clean all the areas of the hospital, and so on. In fact, the hospital compound itself was expanded when the Psychiatric Hospital took over what used to be the original plant of the Black Rock Polyclinic, which is now relocated at another site on Black Rock Main Road. All of these things have contributed to the increasing numbers and the need to supplement this vote.

There are a number of other things which I want to draw to the attention of the **Chamber**. One is that the drug addiction service, which the public may be aware of, part

of which had been relocated to the St. Joseph Hospital, was returned to the Psychiatric Hospital in April of last year with the closure of the St. Joseph Hospital complex and the programme being run at the Psychiatric Hospital instead of from the St. Joseph Hospital.

I would wish, Mr. Chairman, however, even with what I have said and in telling the House that this vote we are now seeking to give to the Psychiatric Hospital will bring the vote for Food and Supplies closer to that given to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, to make the point that the Government is concerned about the high degree of mobility that exists in relation to Government supplies throughout the Government Service. There is a concern in relation to this vote that the rate at which we are being asked to increase it, despite the rationale I detailed earlier, is not necessarily commensurate with the rate of growth of the institution. We believe **firmly** as a Government that serious management systems have to be put in place, not only at the Psychiatric Hospital but throughout the system, to make sure that where the Government votes money for the provision of food and other supplies for Government institutions, the food and supplies reach the persons for whom they are truly intended and do not walk away from the institutions into the businesses and kitchens of other persons.

In trying to get control of this vote and improving the managing systems existing, we have established a situation where we are moving towards a plated service rather than a large, bulk service; where there is a dietitian in place who will more carefully monitor the stock of food and supplies; where we will look at the security measures in place in relation to securing the compound, because part of the problem at the Psychiatric Hospital in particular is that the staff areas and the storage and supplies areas are within very close proximity without any security existing for the supplies. In addition to that, there are no controls at the gate in relation to vehicles exiting with supplies that are the hospital's and that should remain on compound. These are all concerns which we need to have and have to look at if this vote is going to be controlled.

There is no unwillingness on the part of this administration to provide proper meals and proper supplies for patients who are in Government institutions, but we have a responsibility as a Government to ensure that the institutions are sufficiently well managed that we can keep control of all our votes and all our supplies and that we can accurately predict, because this is what this speaks to, that you have a number of patients, you know how many people are going to be coming and you can roughly approximate by experience what it will cost to feed a certain number. Yet, despite that, the vote is exceeded far beyond what is originally requested as being the sum

necessary to support the services being provided. Though the Opposition seems to think that there is some degree of levity in this, it truly is a very serious matter, because there is a perception abroad that once there is an absence of something Government will find the money to stock it back, to **resupply** it somehow and that you can treat Government's property with extreme disregard. There have been several examples throughout the system where Government's property disappears, where there is not proper control of inventory, where there are not proper management systems in place to ensure that Government's property is not lost from the institutions where it is intended for. I am trying to speak very frankly in relation to this matter. I also want to indicate to the Chamber the **kinds** of measures that are being put in place **to** ensure a higher level of control and security in relation to supplies. There must be some degree of accountability when stocks and supplies disappear. There must be proper inventory kept of the stocks and materials when they come in. The private sector has systems in place where security checks take place to ensure that there is not massive pilferage of the private sector supplies.

2.35 p.m.

We must have a similar policy in relation to Government. We must stop the view that the Government will continue to provide no matter what happens with the supplies and the stock. The private sector because their profit margin depends on the control of their stock and supplies put measures in place. We have to be equally vigilant of the taxpayers' money and the way in which it is expended. These large institutions like the Psychiatric Hospital, like the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, have been run for years without financial comptrollers and proper management systems. These must be put in place. It is not reasonable in 20th century Barbados to ask an institution to spend a vote of \$69 million in the case of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and several million dollars in the case of the Psychiatric Hospital without having in place a financial comptroller, the proper management staff and the proper management system to ensure not only that Government policy is carried out but that the place is efficiently run and effectively managed, to ensure that the highest quality of services including adequate amounts of meals and that the meals are not mobile in terms of the Psychiatric Hospital and others, that these systems are put in place to protect those patients. It is of particular concern in the case of the Psychiatric Hospital because the patients are not in a position to make complaints in the way that people in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would be able to say that they have not had a meal today or that their meals came without meat or that they have a problem with their food. Therefore, we must be all the more vigilant to ensure that those patients whose mental and physical state stop them from being in a position to defend themselves and to stand up for their own rights we who are the policy makers and the policy directors and managers must ensure that these people are protected.

I don't know Mr. **Chairman**, that I **can** speak any more frankly on this matter. I have indicated the measures that are being put in place and need to **be** put in place to ensure control of the stock and I have indicated what I think the problems **are**, the extent to which the problem is a genuine problem of growth in the numbers coming into the institution and where beyond the growth of the numbers coming into the institution there is a haemorrhage from another source.

In those circumstances, Sir, I would **ask** that **Head 36** stand part.

Mr. L. A. **WEEKES**: Mr. Chairman, in some way I have been surprised and caught off guard by the Minister's presentation. I am not sure that the Minister recognises that first and foremost under our system of Government that a Minister is responsible for all such matters that come under his or her portfolio. Therefore, I was taken aback to see a shift, placing the responsibility from **the** Minister to the servants. In simple language the only way they can take up food is to steal it.

To my certain knowledge, and I can tell you my certain knowledge, because I have had a very close association from the very early **days** of Mr. Hope. You may not know him, but he was the senior officer in charge of that institution and that is years ago. Gate control, Sir? You could not go in that place like a thoroughfare, Sir. Quite frankly, I am shocked that the Minister could come to the House and make these kinds of statements knowing full well that her responsibility on the first day of taking up responsibility was to acquaint herself or to get knowledge as to the departments as they are. I have no doubt that most Ministers when they are appointed do what we call a familiarisation tour. Where was the Minister at this time? Two years have gone and now we are hearing that all the blame must be placed on people who have no responsibility in this area.

It is a direct challenge to the Manager in the first place. He is not doing his job. That is what you are saying. The staff is incompetent. Not only that, Sir, your Estimates. Remember my words when the Estimates were drawn up, I drew to the Minister's attention that I believed those estimates were inadequate. I said that because as I understand how things develop the Minister gave us a number of figures from 1994 or thereabout. What kind of Minister can we have recognising that there is a developmental growth in numbers and still come up with an estimate that reflects that you will have to come back to Parliament for this supplementary.

I am not against the Supplementary, because if you have people you must feed them. What surprises me too – I understand now the dietician is tied in with security:

How do those two things tie in? In one instance, she said that the food is being taken away and if a dietician is there, there will be some kind of surveillance.

I am not so sure I understand the Minister's position and maybe she **can** explain it a little better to me. It is surely a case of the Minister's irresponsibility and I am saying that from the Floor of this House on the basis of the information that she gave. She put the facts and she said that all these things are true. If they are true, it means that some heads must roll. The Minister did not indicate that such would be the case. I understand the question of change in management but even in those days, Sir, with non-professionals... I get carried away sometimes with this idea of control officers and these high sounding names but we had people who probably only had a minimal education but through the system they acquired a perfect knowledge as to how to **run** those institutions. Maybe the Minister needs to draw a little closer to some of those people and get some knowledge. My view is that the Minister ought not to pass the buck at this stage. She should take full responsibility and take full blame and we on this side would understand how to accommodate her because we are not going to vote against the Resolution because we understand that supplementaries are necessary.

One of the things I was led to believe in this Chamber during the session that forecasting would be so accurate that there would not be any need for half a million dollars. I don't want to tie this in with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because that is a separate entity by itself. Certainly, **Sir**, detergents are necessary. What is the problem with the laundry? I think one needs to hear what is the problem with the laundry. For years we have been having some problems with it but I am not so sure that it was ever solved and I thought that the Minister would be in a better position than those whom she succeeded because that was the cry. They knew the solutions to the problem and we would not have expected that the same problem would still exist after 2 years. I am sure the Minister would want to say something in respect of the laundry. We must have **gotten** something done about that. I have a vague recollection that there was some solution that the clothes were sent out. I will not accuse any person of anything I am not sure of but I believe that the laundry itself, like the hospital, has a problem. Mr. Speaker, the Minister needs not get cold feet on the matter, but she must listen carefully to what responsibility and competence mean. If you are a competent person then these problems ought not to surface after two years. Maybe the Minister might have been like some other people, believing that the Psychiatric Hospital is a place for society you do not deal with.

2.45 p.m.

There are other problems at the Psychiatric Hospital as well. We have had problems of persons dying and no one has been able to say anything clearly on the matter.

Aside.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: As a Minister you ought to give the House the assurance that these things are under control. **That** is the basis of your responsibility and that is ministerial Government. That is the system we operate. Last week I understood a directive was sent to some of the departments not to give information.

Aside.

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Worse still. It is a very difficult situation. I am really targeting the Minister. What I am trying to say to the Minister is that her responsibility is of such that it is a very serious responsibility when you have to take taxpayers' money and use it in that way. Therefore, my contribution is to get the Minister to understand that she cannot blame anybody for anything that happened in her Ministry other than to punish those people. If the rules provide for punishment, punish them. But we expect the Minister to come to this Chamber and take full responsibility and give us the assurance that these things are going to develop in a better way.

I want to say one thing to the Minister. You **talk** a lot, speak a lot, but we never get further than that. I think it is about time that actions follow that. I say that in this regard. You are promising to set up a management system. If you say you are going to set it up, do not let us come back next year lamenting the fact that somebody did not do anything. We need to see it in place. I am sure that we on this side will give you the full support you require because we are all **committed** to health *care* in Barbados at the highest level and if I sound a bit carried away by what is happening, it is because I was part of the health scheme and I expect we must give whatever we can to make sure that our systems function effectively.

There is another problem about the Psychiatric Hospital I just want to raise and it is the domestic area. There were times when the sewage overflowed and the residents in those areas used to complain. I think I did draw it to the manager's attention once or twice and he suggested to me that it was a question of pumping off the water and so on. I suppose because we are not having a lot of rain now we may not be having this problem but I am not saying that it happened yesterday, day before, or even in your time, but these were problems that did surface.

One last problem which I think I can raise with the Minister which I think she would feel exposed to do is that the Psychiatric Hospital used to have its own market gardening area and they used to do that, I suppose, to assist the hospital itself. Many of the patients could be fed from the very same project. If you go down there, you would see a whole wide open area of bush. The farm mill is not

working. You know what has happened? The adjoining **rastas** have taken over. They are planting, and all this is happening in your Ministry.

One or two things I would make a plea for, either resort to the system in which the institution could help feed itself, or allow those residents, those young people who I believe like farming and rather **than** allow the bush and rats to gather in **the** area, lease it to them. They would raise rabbits, goats, sheep and probably help with reducing the bill. That is the other area I think the hospital can help itself. It has enough **land** that it can produce these kinds of vegetables.

Mr. **Chairman**, my contribution is usually a 15-minute one in **these** circumstances and I only want to impress upon the Minister that we are not against anybody. We are for **better** conditions. We want to see the moral of our staff high because I am almost certain that any slant made on those people who have to serve that institution may very well take offence to the fact that they may be involved in some underhand and criminal activity.

I will tell you this, **Sir**. This is nothing new. In all institutions you get some form of mischief. But that same institution I remember as a boy, I do not know if we had ministerial status then, but at the gate you could not come out of the gate like that. There were people there where security was tight so I am a bit at a loss to understand that there is no security there. I really feel that something has gone wrong and I am appealing to the Minister that whatever system she puts in place make sure that these areas are well covered and that, at least, the taxpayers would be **spared** some of the losses mentioned. I am not blaming **the** staff because I am not privy to anything about anybody taking away **from** the institution but **if** you make that statement, remember there is a consequence for it, and your staff would want to be defended that they are not the people who have been indulging in these **kinds** of activities.

Mr. Chairman, I think I have responded adequately to what the Minister said. I hope that when we come back to discuss this we would discuss it on a higher level and we will **see** the institution as not one in which there are only drug addicts – I **see** them **too**. They come to the rails when the Crop Over is on and they come up and have a good time. **They** are still part of the community and I think we still treat them as human beings. For me, **Sir**, a person who is suffering in that state, we should make them feel part of the community. As a result of that, I hope the upgrading and management of whatever they are talking about will bring some kind of enlightenment and happiness to the people in that institution.

Thank you.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I wish, Mr. **Chairman**, to make a few remarks concerning the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Do you still wish to speak?

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: No, Mr. Chairman. In the circumstances I will let the opportunity pass. I am told I can keep my remarks for Friday.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the contributions on that side seem to be getting shorter as each new Member gets up to speak. I must confess that having heard the Minister of Health, somebody who was the shadow Minister who normally has a lot to say on any subject speak with such subdued tones and for such a short period of time, I felt it was necessary to get to the bottom of this particular Resolution which was followed by my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who had even less to say on this Resolution, but a lot should be said about it and I do not normally get into matters relating to health. It is probably the first time except when it comes to matters which affect my constituents that I have **gotten** into this debate.

There are some matters that need clarity. That clarity may have to come from elsewhere but I, nevertheless, wish to put the matter on the record because it concerns me deeply that the introduction of this Resolution was not accompanied by the **kind** of explanation which one would think is reasonable. It is always easy to cast aspersions in whatever language you use, and all of us in here are still bright people who understand the English Language.
2.55 p.m.

All of us in here are skilled bright people who understand the English Language. Some like me only understand the English Language. I do not have any pretensions to understanding any other language so I listen carefully.

The Honourable Member for St. James South is following, historically, on a tradition where her party has said that the big problems in Barbados were that the Government of the day was engaged in some kind of corruption or 'thieving'. Now that the Barbados Labour Party forms the Government, it is not the Opposition any more, the blame has now shifted from the Opposition to unnamed persons in health institutions who are now guilty of the 'thieving' and the surreptitious removal of supplies and other items from the health institutions in this country.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They are negligent. If they are not 'thieving' I want to make it clear they are negligent because the Minister said supplies are disappearing.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: In common parlance in this country, negligence is 'thieving' too. The Barbados Labour Party's own **standards**. The common understanding of the word 'thieving' includes negligence, the negligence of Ministers.

That brings me to the second point that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has raised which is that now we are hearing that, in matters of this sort, the ultimate responsibility does not lie in the Minister, that it is quite acceptable for the Minister to parade and plaster his or her officials with the blame for the ills which attend public institutions.

Let me tell you why this resolution has to be laughable. Again, anybody going on the streets of Barbados would know. What linen is it that is being washed at the Psychiatric Hospital? Do you mean the linen that people **bring** in for their relatives to use?

We are hearing every day about the absence of supplies in health institutions. The officials and the managers of the health institutions are saying, yes, they do not have supplies and yet we can have a supplementary saying that they are doing more washing of linen and clothing. This does not square with the experience of the average citizen in this country. The persons who use these institutions are the persons for whom the Minister always claim the right to get up in here and defend their position, their space in this country. They have to scramble whenever one of their relatives is admitted to a health institution in Barbados and carry linen, other clothing and food.

That brings me to the third point. What is it that the dietitian has done, relative – because I want the patients at the Psychiatric Hospital to hear that read into the record and hope that the Press carries it because that is where we would discover whether in fact the quality of food has improved and whether people at the Psychiatric Hospital are enjoying higher nutrition or, for that matter, lower because it does not really speak to the issue. It says the quality and quantity of food provided for patients. I am reading from the Addendum which, in itself, is more fulsome in its explanation than anything the Minister has said in here.

What is it then that the patients are now receiving at the Psychiatric Hospital that has improved in quality in recent time. What quantities are they now receiving that

has so dramatically improved? Those details are very important. I hope the Minister will get them from the sources who know, even though there is a gag order on at certain health institutions. I hope that gag order will not apply to Parliament as well and that Parliament will be given the information that the citizens of this country are being denied again, either because of the negligence of the ultimate repository of power in the Ministry of Health in permitting health professions to apply gag orders in relation to their staff or health professionals acting outside of the scope of their responsibility and remit which also, at the end of the day, should reflect my understanding of the Westminster Model and even the former Barbados Labour Party's understanding because that is the Barbados Labour Party in Opposition as distinct from the Barbados Labour Party in Government.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Their then understanding of Westminster Government which is that the ultimate responsibility lies with the Minister.

We have had a lot of talk in here over the years. Many things, CARIFESTA and so on. The Honourable Member for St. George South had a rough time. One of the greatest charges in financial recklessness was laid at his feet. He never avoided it.

Mr. L. R. TULL: On a point of order, Sir. I have never heard, anywhere in Barbados, in Parliament or in the villages any accusation of financial recklessness laid at my feet. I wish the Honourable Member would withdraw that, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I apologize if that is the way he has interpreted it. The Minister of Education who was negligent in not being able, after CARIFESTA in 1981, to accurately, adequately and swiftly account for the **expenditure relating** to CARIFESTA. I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. George South never denied it.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Do you want me to be more charitable?

Mr. L. R. TULL: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is making some grave misrepresentations. One is that this Minister was Minister of Culture for one month after CARIFESTA.

Secondly, Sir, unless the Constitution and the Rules have changed, this Minister has never yet been responsible for the finances in his Ministry. I have always understood the Permanent Secretary, according to the Rules, to be the accounting officer and responsible for all expenditure.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, that is why the Permanent Secretary for Culture should have been in this House. I am only being...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...facetious. I have given the Honourable Member enough pressure on it. But he has never shifted the blame to anybody, until now. This is the first time that I am hearing that the blame for this should be shifted. The Minister is the ultimate repository of responsibility in this Chamber.

Mr. Chairman, what this tells us is either there was not adequate planning when the Estimates came to this Chamber, and I wish to refute that allegation, even if I meant it because the Right Honourable Prime Minister made it very clear that Estimates meetings were convened early, people shuffled paper and worked very hard on having clear, accurate Estimates and that what he brought to public affairs, in this country, was his ability to forecast and that these kinds of silly, time wasting supplementaries were a thing of the past, that Ministers were going to be called to account by him and that there would be none of this foolishness that went on, under the Democratic Labour Party.

What this would tell you is that, obviously, the Minister of Health did not hear him at that time, she did not heed his advice or his instructions and now you have a situation in which an additional sum of \$400 odd thousand is being requested. This is just for the Psychiatric Hospital because as the Honourable Member for St. Joseph now knows we will be dealing with the QEH shortly. That is another set of money for which adequate forecasting, adequate planning in the health sector and so on have all gone through the window.
3.05 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to go the last step of the way and tell the Minister that I do not accept any of her recommendations or view points on detection of pilferage. I accept none of her promises to look into it because, Mr. Chairman, I accepted the promises which the Honourable Minister gave the public about the drug service. I am timing that carefully. Mr. Chairman, Sir, there was supposed to be a full investigation. The police were called in. All kinds of activities were undertaken and to this day the public of Barbados has not been told.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. In relation to the matter to which the Honourable Member for St. John is alluding, because he is not specifically stating, the police were carrying out an investigation into the drug service. It has nothing to do

with me. I am not the Commissioner of Police. I did not say anything about investigation into the **drug** service. The police were investigating a matter in the drug service so this notion that there would be investigative enquiries which I authorised and so, is not true, is not accurate. The police had a report. The police acted on a report. They are carrying out investigations. It is nothing **to** do with me. In fact the entire Ministry of Health **has** cooperated fully with the police in relation to this matter but we are not carrying out any investigation. I do not want it to be suggested, as the Honourable Member for St. John is seeking to do, that we are trying somehow to shift an investigation. I cannot take that, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Now, Mr. Chairman, I agree. The Honourable Member for St. James South said that the only thing she was doing was instructing her officers, and I saw this somewhere, to cooperate with the police. I assume that prior to that they were not cooperating and it was necessary for the Minister to intervene to tell them to cooperate. She did that. I accept that. Now, we have just had a promise that in the event that there is disappearance and I assume it also means thieving by anybody, including the staff at the Psychiatric Hospital, that attempts would be made by every means within the Government's power, which of course has to be via the police force, if not I would have to be asking the Honourable Attorney General some questions, but the police are not above questions. Let us make that clear inside here. If an investigation is undertaken then I **assume** that the Government has a duty, based on its public statements, to tell us the result of that investigation. If it has been abandoned then we should be told it has been abandoned. If not somebody is going to say there is a cover-up in the Ministry of Health. I do not want to say now, though it could be said, that there is some kind of cover-up relative to the drug service in Barbados by somebody somewhere. That could be said, because a full year has passed and it is easier for Barbadians to get drugs in Trinidad from the Barbados Drug Service than it is to get them in Barbados apparently. That is what I am hearing from my constituents. People who use the polyclinics cannot get drugs in Barbados. People who use health facilities in this country cannot get drugs but if they took a plane from Barbados and went to another Caribbean Island, apparently they could get those drugs at a certain price. If that does not need investigation and immediate action by the officials in the Ministry of Health, I do not know what does. That is why I am saying that there is no basis on which I can accept the opening remarks of the Honourable Minister of Health and I make the assumption that there is going to be some kind of additional information which will allay the fears of citizens of this country about the real deterioration in health services in this country, including the provision of basic amenities, management and medical attention, at all of our hospitals including the Psychiatric Hospital. I will **return** shortly, Sir.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Resolution brought to this House by the Honourable Minister of Health.

Mr. Chairman, like so many other Third World Countries, Barbados has found itself in a situation where many of its young people have been caught up in a serious drug problem and have found themselves being taken out of the mainstream of the society. These people have found themselves, some of them through their own volition, going to the Psychiatric Hospital for help and some of them have been sent there by the Magistrates' Courts.

Mr. Chairman, this is putting an extra burden on the Hospital. When they go to the hospital sometimes they are there for long periods of time. Some visit there on mornings and go back home in the evenings and in this way it puts an extra burden on the supplies that are used to feed these people. This institution lies just adjacent to the constituency that I represent. I pass there quite often and I can see the large numbers of young people there.

Mr. Chairman, people who are sick mentally, and otherwise, need proper nutrition in order to convalesce and to put a dietitian on the staff on a full time basis, Sir, is a very good shot on the part of the institution in order to help these people. So I do not see anything wrong with us voting money there to pay these people and to improve the quality of food and the quantity of food that would nourish these people back to health.

On the appearance of the laundry, when you are dealing with people who are sick, some of them sick in their minds, it is not the same thing as dealing with the same people say, at the QEH who would not be destroying and dirtying as fast as these people and I can see why there would be a need for more detergents and cleaning materials and so for the institution.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that I compliment the Minister and that this Resolution has my full support. I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I take this opportunity to enter this debate at this point in time. Over one year ago I warned the then Minister that she has to be very careful how she is prepared to deal with public finances. At that time, Sir, we were not dealing with the Psychiatric Hospital but we were dealing with the Sanitation Service Authority. She assured me that she had given a commitment to the Sanitation Service Authority to submit for whatever they wanted.
3.15 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am speaking to the issue. You cannot off-track me and I am saying, Mr. Chairman, to come in here today and make a charge about people squandering money when...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...Mr. Chairman, to come in here and give the impression that things are slipping through the back door of the Psychiatric Hospital when she was warned that she has to be careful how she allows people to spend money at different Government Departments, she gave the impression that she was quite prepared to allow it to happen. If she has changed her mind, I am prepared to agree with her.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. I must take objection to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy of his remark which suggests that I supported at some point squandering of taxpayers' money. I have never said it and I take it strong objection to his framing his remarks in that way.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, it is written in Hansard. I have asked for the debate but it cannot be found as yet because I remembered when we wanted money to correct the problems at Mangrove. I warned her and she said no problem. I remember her looking to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and she asked him if she was right in her head. I remember that well. So I am saying, Mr. Chairman, if she has changed her mind now, I have no problem with that because I understand now that she is looking after the interest of the taxpayers' money. But you cannot correct that problem by employing a financial controller at the Psychiatric Hospital. What you need to do is to employ a stockroom controller and not a financial controller. All you need is for somebody to account for what is coming in and what is going out. That is all that is needed. Do you mean that things are so bad that you need someone to guard the guards now? So when I was warning her a year ago, she should have listened to me.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying if that is true, it is over a year and a half that she has made an error in this House and the Honourable Member ...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You want me to identify the person. That is not fair. Mr. Chairman, she wants me to say the Honourable Member for St. James South should have listened to the advice and she would have saved the taxpayers thousands of dollars for over a year and a half. Thank you very much.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. **Chairman**, I just want to say that it is not easy for Barbadians to understand that this country is not too different from any other countries in the world. One of the significant features of Government in many countries of the world is the inability of Government to retain costs in the area of health. As a result of that, whole new methods of the management of health institutions have arisen. Many Governments have had to undertake **radical** reforms in this area and in addition new methodologies of approach have **occurred** in **the area** of supplies and **catering** which is a very important function of a health institution. There have been large scale catering contracting out to specialists in order to ensure that there is a finite amount which can be placed in a budget thereby ensuring that the responsibility for control in that **area** is shifted from the institution to the contractor. That is a fact.

I hope, Sir, as a result of the efforts that the Honourable Minister **has recently** announced that this area will be the subject of an intense comparative study, so that we in Barbados can update ourselves as to how other **countries** deal with the problem of containment and accuracy in this area. Now I commend the Minister for acting so swiftly in that area. Had the previous Minister been up-to-date in this **area**...

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: ...Indeed, Sir, I am very glad for the *sotto voce* remark because had the previous Ministers been up-to-date in this area in the last ten years, the Honourable Member would have come into the Ministry and had on the desk for digestion the benefit of these comparative studies. Then she would have been able swiftly to move for the implementation of these modern methods of containment. I trust that the Honourable Minister will be able very soon to give us the benefit of the studies that she has commissioned in this area.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, my intervention is a **short** one and I will depart somewhat from the trend in the debate where some Members are expressing some degree of surprise that this Resolution has come before the House today. But I am not surprised at all that there is a supplementary. I had anticipated **it** because I have become accustomed that everything the Honourable Minister of Finance says he reverses. So if he spoke in terms of proper forecasting and proper budgeting, it is fair to understand that we must anticipate that there will be supplementaries, because we have to accept that everything that he says he changes his mouth on.

The second thing, Mr. Chairman, I want to say up front is that for the Honourable Minister to come here today to say that there is an increased number of

admissions, I anticipated it because the broken promises, the lack of drugs in the Drug Service, the lack of **mal-**administration in the whole health service will send anybody mad.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I have absolutely no sympathy for the present Minister of Health because when she came to this office she lambasted the Democratic Labour Party and she spoke about bad management and all kind of nonsense when we know for a good while throughout the entire Public Service there have been practices that have been going on within the public sector that have absolutely nothing to do with political administration. Yet, I sat for years and through the whole initial period of this administration where they sought to pillory the Democratic Labour Party political **arm** because of **maladministration** in the system and today we have a Minister coming into this House of Assembly asking for a supplementary. It is a national **disgrace** and this House should not vote one single cent for the Ministry of Health because they have said clearly that they would not come into this House and ask for one single cent in supplementaries. What kind of standards are we setting? I am disturbed that there are suggestions that staff are carrying away the things down there. I think that it is an indictment. Is there no evaluation that the stuff was not used? This is a serious indictment on the staff. Why could the Minister not come and say the detergents or laundry items were used instead of accusing people of stealing? Why **everything** has to be brought down to that level? It is ridiculous.

My other point, Mr. Chairman, has to deal with the fact that again we are talking about prioritizing. This supplementary **prioritizes** areas that cannot be more **important** than the lack of drugs throughout the system. I do not want to deal with the woes at the hospital and I will certainly deal with them at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital when we come to that under another head. It is nothing short of a national disgrace to keep coming back to this House asking for these supplementaries after they have bragged about their proper financing, good management only to discover that they have a Minister who needs managing herself. The Minister clearly has demonstrated that she is a person that needs managing as far as the system is concerned. I am not so sure that I will support the Minister on these grounds, but I understand that if there is a need at the Hospital that we have no choice but to get supplies into the Hospital.

3.25 p.m.

Under the Democratic Labour Party, at no stage, despite all of the protestations of the Administration, was there a situation where we ran out of drugs. This

situation did not occur. We had no complaints from the general public that they could not get drugs here, that they would have to run down to Trinidad to get drugs from the Drug Service in Trinidad or St. Vincent. We did not have that **kind** of a situation under the Democratic Labour Party Government.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to support this Resolution with great restraint. I am reluctant because the Minister of Finance, and I take personal offence at it, time after time came into this House and bragged that they would not be coming back to the House for these **kinds** of supplementaries and I think it is an indictment on the Barbados Labour Party Administration and we must not condone this **kind** of practice in this Honourable House.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, it is indeed intriguing as we are **looking** at the question of the Psychiatric Hospital **that** we can hear an Honourable Member get up and say he would not support the Resolution at hand. Then in the next breath hear **him** say he would support it. It is indeed very intriguing.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I said I would support it reluctantly.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, a **point** that is very relevant to the operation of the Psychiatric Hospital that has not been raised here is the **whole** matter of the question of the extent to which previous patients of the Hospital have been truly been reabsorbed into the community. Let me give you some examples, Mr. Chairman.

There are persons who have been hospitalised once or twice at the Psychiatric who go back out on discharge and who still need psychiatric support **from** the point of view that they literally go back to the Psychiatric sometimes on **Sundays** and ask the generosity of the staff there for food. It is a fact. They are also those recently discharged who having formed some relationship with the Hospital go back with some frequency, sometimes as **day** patients, but often literally in need of some support which the staff at the Hospital can give them.

Mr. Chairman, it often happens that there is a situation where persons are discharged and have to come back as day patients to receive various types of treatment; but there are also times too when by the staff having formed fairly good relations with these patients on discharge the patients go back there and do in fact put some pressure on the supplies, on Sundays in particular. I know persons who had previously been patients in due need, real welfare cases. It is a fact that there are persons who are more welfare cases than psychiatric cases who turn

loose on the Psychiatric Hospital for some assistance and put pressure on the resources there. I believe the Honourable Minister is going to be able to address this.

Of much significance is that it seems to me as though there are occasions when it is very difficult for the staff at the Psychiatric to truly forecast what the net increase in patient care is required on a given basis. For example, I have seen how in one year there was a **certain** level of patients going to the Psychiatric and then the next year it increased by 47, **the** following year by 52 and then one year, based on what I understood, **999** people more than the previous year went to the Psychiatric, not necessarily to be detained over any length of time but for some form of care.

The Honourable Minister would be able in her winding up to explain these things because when such things happen there comes a time when **the** staff are put in a position where so far as their own factual forecasting of what is required by way of resources is concerned they are out to **sea**. I believe that some of these things do in fact have implications for what we **are** looking at today.

I have no difficulty whatsoever in supporting the Resolution at hand, Mr. Chairman and I rise in **support** of my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. James South..

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, a number of things in this debate I **find** somewhat disturbing but none more disturbing than the fact that the Leader of the Opposition who has the constitutional responsibility as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to investigate any infelicities in relation to the expenditure that is voted by Government should take leave of any evenhandedness and make both direct and indirect accusations of wrongdoing against Government departments by serious **implication** and Members of Parliament.

I should first of all in respect of the gratuitous charge that was hurled at me by the Honourable Member to put that in its perspective. Because **Hansard** remains and people read things and get the wrong impression. First of all, I was Minister of Culture at the time of CARIFESTA as I said in the intervention. I gave up the Ministry one month after the end of CARIFESTA. Secondly, the Public Accounts Committee under the Chairmanship of the predecessor who represented the constituency of St. John, the Rt. Honourable **Errol** Barrow had hearings in respect of CARIFESTA. Not me. I wasn't at any meeting. In respect of the accounts, he interviewed the public officers who dealt with it. That was laid to rest because he obviously found no fault with the accounting officers who were responsible for the expenditure in CARIFESTA. So that was cleared by the Public Accounts Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Barrow.

Why the Honourable Member for St. John persists in his facetious way to continue to make these wild and reckless accusations I do not know. I cannot defend the public service on it, but I have a responsibility to myself to **try** to arrest these constant references as if there was some wrongdoing at CARIFESTA. I want to mention in relation to one or two others charges occurring in the debate and particularly in relation to this question about a police investigation into the Drug Service. Now the Leader of the Opposition is not just another member, although no Honourable Member should be so reckless as to make the kinds of statements that fell from the lips of the Honourable Member for St. John.

If a matter is being investigated and the Honourable Member has information that might assist the police in their investigation he has a duty not only as a Member of Parliament **but** as a lawyer and as a gentleman, if he is one.
3.35 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: **Mr.** Chairman, I have absolutely no knowledge that any matter is being investigated neither **has** it been formally, informally or otherwise been communicated to me. If the Honourable Member knows it is being investigated he should inform the House and I will treat the matter as being under investigation, but this House has never been told that any matter is being investigated by the Police relative to the Drug Service.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I have heard the Minister of Health in this very debate on this very **day** in the presence and hearing of the Honourable Member for St. John say that the Police is carrying out an investigation.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. That was on a point of order. After I said something, the Member then got up and informed the House. She has not spoken since I spoke. I spoke after her so it was on a point of order that that information was made available and when it was made available I let the matter rest.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The Honourable Member says that he was speaking after the Honourable Minister, the Member for St. James South, and that is when he heard it for the first time. I am speaking after the Honourable Member for St. John and I am saying in addition to the fact that the Minister of Health mentioned it today that it has been in the public domain. It has been in the newspaper and the Honourable Member today made reference to the fact that the Minister of Health had said that she had given instructions to the members of her staff to cooperate with the police. That stemmed from the lips of the Honourable Member for St. John today which means he must have heard of it before.

Anyhow to move beyond that, Sir, it is the height of irresponsibility for the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament to make these wild, reckless and wanton charges against any sector of the public service, or any Member of Parliament, because he disqualifies himself from sitting as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee on any of these matters to which he has given such utterance. It is not the first time that I have heard the Honourable Member get on the Floor of Parliament and make these charges about improprieties without a hearing.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I rise on a point of order because although the Honourable Member wants me to say something, I am going to give him the opportunity of saying it. I never laid any charges on anybody in this Chamber. I only followed essentially the comments which the Minister has previously made. If the Honourable Member wants to give information about somebody in this Chamber he does not need to **ask** me or wait on the Public Accounts Committee. He can do so now and if necessary the report can be laid and the Public Accounts Committee can investigate it.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, if the Honourable Member is so anxious for me to refer to Honourable Members in this Chamber I can do so, and I will. The Honourable Member for St. John told me that he received money from CARIFESTA that he did not work for. You want me to start there?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: **Mr.** Chairman, on a point of order. I received a travelling allowance, back pay for travelling during CARIFESTA so it was money I worked for but I did not even know that a person working for CARIFESTA was entitled to back pay. It shows the extent of financial recklessness in CARIFESTA that as a small contractor managing a little auditorium that two years after I could be summoned to Culloden **Farm** for a cheque of **\$231** for back pay on travelling allowance. It demonstrates the level of rectitude, or lack of rectitude, exercised by the accounting officers and the then Minister of Culture, whoever he or she was at the time.

Mr. L. R. TULL: **Mr.** Chairman, I am going to move away from answering what I consider words of recklessness and irresponsibility coming from the Honourable Member for St. John and I **am** going to touch very briefly, Sir, because other Honourable Members have alluded to – you cannot get into political posturing over whether money should be provided to feed the patients at the Psychiatric Hospital. There are times in Parliament and outside where the political parties have to draw swords and fight some epic battles over matters of great moment. This is not one of them, Sir. To provide funds to give the people in the Psychiatric Hospital a proper meal could hardly be the arena for a partisan political debate such as we are hearing today. I am disappointed at that part.

I **am** also disappointed, Sir, and after I have been in here as long as I have been, I really have to reflect on these things because in many ways the more things change, **the** more they remain the same. I was shadowing the Ministry of Health in the last Parliament and all the things I have heard coming out of the mouths of the Opposition today are things I mentioned when I was sitting in the Opposition benches. If you pull Hansard, Sir, you can see them. All the charges, all this business about maladministration, and the patients not getting their meals, things disappearing, the state of the plant, there is no linen, patients have to take in their own drugs, toilet paper, their own bandages, their own soap all these things have been ventilated over and over again. I really thought we could have moved beyond that stage and address the more fundamental problems confronting the health service in Barbados. No Minister of Health, however talented like the present Minister of Health, can in the short space of a year right all the wrongs that plagued the health service in Barbados. There has to be a fundamental restructuring of the health delivery service in Barbados.

All of us are aware of the manifold problems confronting the hospitals in Barbados, the two public **hospitals**. Even the private hospital is encountering a **number** of problems and these problems stem from a variety of reasons. Anybody who has been reading what is happening in the United States, North America and Europe **would** see that the phenomenal increase in the price of health care delivery is wreaking havoc on the quality **service**, and on the economies, even of rich States. It is a fact **that** during the period when money was aplenty in North **America**, Europe and Barbados, when there was a lot of money to **spend** one tended to pay less attention to the amount of **wastage** that obtained in our institutions, but there **are** a number of new realities and it will take very careful and **considered** thinking by the Government and the Ministry of Health **to bring** about the kind of structural change to put the health services and the administration of the hospitals in Barbados **on** a sound and solid footing.

I was surprised, Mr. Chairman, **when** I heard that there is no Financial Controller in an **institution** spending \$69 million. I really was genuinely surprised about that. I am also surprised when I learned only last **evening** that there is not even a Human Resources Manager, to use the new term of art, in place in an institution that employs well in excess of 1 000. These are the kinds of problems that have to be addressed and they must not be addressed in an *ad hoc* manner. We have to come to Parliament occasionally because we have to come with estimates. We have to come with supplementaries. We have to come with amendments from time to time. But these cannot be the proper occasions for a Minister to state what are the new departures that are being taken to bring about the kind of structural change necessary to improve the delivery of

health care in Barbados and, also, to improve the administration of our health facilities.
3.45 p.m.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will wind up. I get a little tired of the unreasonable partisanship over matters that really should not attract division. I **am** as aggressive in the defence of what I believe in **as** I am I against those things that I feel strongly about, Sir. **Ask** anybody.

But I really believe that the Honourable Member for St. John has a problem. He has a tongue that he uses like a whip. But his **skin** is very soft. Because whenever you have to **reciprocate**, he sits down and frets like a child.

I **am** grateful to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member who just sat down talked about the **unreasonable** partisanship in the discussion of health care delivery in this country. That is the only point on which I could coincide with him. I do not arise now to participate in any unreasonable partisanship with regard to health care delivery in this country. When I was Minister responsible for Health and, subsequent to that, I have indicated that I do not intend, personally, to participate in any partisan discussion of health in this country because I do not believe that we ought to be using health or education, as a point of departure between us, as a people.

I believe, however, that there are legitimate questions which might be raised, from time to time **in** relation to the delivery of health **care**. The Minister is discovering, I believe, that after the first flush of partisanship that there is a point at which she has to settle down and **try** and get the people to do what they are supposed to do, **as** opposed to vying to make political points. If she has not so reached, it will not be long before she does.

But what I want to deal with is the Addendum. **As** I have looked at the Addendum of this supplementary, I find it a little difficult to understand how the same people are sending up the same rubbish, as justification for things which they do.

I do not believe that a careful examination of the addendum to this resolution would result in any acquiescence in what I choose to call, Mr. Chairman, rubbish which has been put forward. If you look at - "the amount of \$1.8 million approved under this item has proved to be insufficient for the following reason..."

If they had put a full stop at insufficient then we could vote the amount and move on. Because the amount of \$1.8 million was insufficient and would prove to

be insufficient. The Minister of Finance would know that it is insufficient. What would be more interesting is if we could, somehow, go behind the Minister and find to what had been asked for and what the Minister proposed.

When we last had the responsibility for the Ministry of Health we were under structural adjustment. The Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has indicated that things have changed. He has, constantly, in his presentation suggested that things have changed. We would not have expected that the same kind of stringency which applied during the time of structural adjustment was applied. But during the time of structural adjustment we did not – or we were not permitted perhaps – allow for some of the stringent cutbacks which have occurred.

If the Minister cuts back, he must not come and fulminate, I am talking about the Minister of Finance – and try to pretend that they had found some new nirvana, some new methodology for running the social services of this country and that we would not require any supplementaries and put the Ministry under the kind of pressure where, at the time the supplementaries come, they come after some human dislocation and suffering.

I resent this concept that Ministries of Finance can go on and pretend that the issues can be dealt with, by simply cutting back. I am not going to participate in any emptying or debunking of the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health suffers from a particular difficulty. That difficulty is that the Minister of Health has taken a long time to understand the difference between running a Ministry and participating in an election campaign. The time will come when she will recognize, if she has not so done, that the running of a Ministry requires...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The late Honourable lamented Leader of the Opposition is, preferably, poised to make those comments. I accept whatever he says in good grace. He is a statesman now. He is in the backbench now and he can always make these recommendations.

But the Minister of Health hit the road running and did not understand that these issues are not matters that could be dealt with, by pure rhetoric. They had to be dealt with through the reality of dealing with the issues. I have 15 minutes. I am going to deal with this issue.

The increasing number of meals due to increased admissions. I think the Minister should tell us the level of the increase in admissions. There are 627.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Psychiatric Hospital is designed for 627 persons. Is it more than 627 now or less than 627?

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If it is 1 100 then the Minister of Finance behaved in a cretinous manner.

Mr. L. R. TULL: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member has to withdraw the word 'cretinous.'

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know what he meant, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I object to the Honourable Member using the word 'cretinous'. He referred to some Minister as being 'cretinous.'

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. I never said that. I know. Your Honour would have heard me, if I had said that. I said that if, in fact, the Psychiatric Hospital is designed for...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was saying that, if in fact, there are 1 100 persons where 627 is what is required then that provision should have been made at the very point when we were discussing the Estimates.

For the Minister of Finance to come in here and fulminate and leave the impression to the population that a Daniel has come to judgment. That is the problem. The Minister of Finance came in here and led the population to believe that a Daniel had come to judgement and not recognizing that, in fact, there would be need for a much higher level of requirement, at least 20% increase. The Minister of Finance demonstrated that he could function, having said that it was perfectly proper to have as much as a 4% deficit when we were battling with structural adjustment he then came in and budgeted for a surplus and that is the problem. We are discussing the financing of the supply and we cannot have the kinds of provisions for the Ministry of Health that we should have. I really believe that the Minister was not, and I do not now know it, in position to argue and battle with the battery of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Prime Minister and that battalion up there that talks through one mouth when they are discussing the levels and on the other they do not give the resources necessary to maintain the level of rhetoric that they carry on.

3.55 p.m.

When I was the Minister of Health I was in the fortunate position that I could argue my case successfully. The Honourable Minister now may be able to argue her case but she does not have any clout in relation... When the present Deputy Prime Minister was Minister of Health these services were Mickey Mouse compared with what we have now. The present Minister inherited a situation which is operating at an entirely different level. But the Prime Minister is still picayune in his concept even though his utterances might not suggest that. His utterances give the impression that he is committed to a concept which the Minister of Health found which suggests that Health and Education for the people of Barbados is paramount, that there has been a paradigm shift from the old time system to the present system and the Minister of Finance and his officials left the Ministry of Health in a vortex. If the Minister did not at that time understand, I hope she has reached the point where she understands now, that she was left in the lurch. Whereas they were told there will be no more supplementaries I have lived in this House to hear the Minister of Finance say "there shall be no more supplementaries. I am putting an end to the concept of supplementaries." I think he was reckless. I wish he was here, Sir. I really am sorry that I have to speak of the Minister ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to note that the word 'reckless' is deemed to be ...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I withdraw reckless, Sir. Cavalier, Sir, in his approach to the funding of the Ministry of Health and more particularly, the psychiatric hospital.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. It is grossly improper and unparliamentary in my submission to suggest that the Minister of Finance has been cavalier in respect of moneys to be granted to the Ministry of Health. I call upon the Honourable Member to withdraw those remarks.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, if Your Honour rules that I should withdraw, I will withdraw, but I make the point that the Minister of Finance, by virtue of the statements he has made in this Committee and in this House, indicated that he would brook no supplementaries, that he had given careful consideration. It is a matter of record.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am on a point of order and I am inviting Your Honour to rule on the matter. I have asked that the remarks which were made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West to the effect that the Minister of Finance was cavalier in his attitude and his behaviour to the Minister of Health, in terms of the granting of funds, should be withdrawn. I am asking Your Honour, the Chair, to rule on that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member does not seem to be asking, she seems to be bullying the Chair as if the Chair has some kind of wax in his ear.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I go on to make the point. The increasing number of meals due to increased admissions. It is clear that if they increase admissions we have to have more meals and nobody on this side should refuse a supplementary. I am not discussing the quantum of the supplementary. I am discussing the principle. This is supplementary No. 11 and the Barbados Labour Party, as has been exemplified by the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, said that supplementaries would be bane of the Parliaments that he had participated in. He said so in here.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You all were not here so I do not have to explain to you when. You should have been here. If you were here you would have heard. He said when you were not here. Ask the Honourable Members in the back who do not come to your support.

I go further, Sir. I think that the Minister should raise questions and I will speak again. The employment of a dietitian on a full time basis has led to the improvement in the quality and quantity of food provided for patients. Now, Sir, I believe the Minister, after this has been passed, should reflect on that particular reason given because the employment of a dietitian would be in keeping with the pattern that has been established but I do not think that the employment of a dietitian *per se*, if what the administrators had said in the past, is valid. The employment of a dietitian should not in itself have resulted in an increase of the quantities and quality.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am dealing with what has come before me. I have been required to make a judgement based on this addendum and I am saying that this addendum insults the intelligence of Honourable Members. The employment of a dietitian is secondary, as a matter of fact, tertiary to the reality. They are saying that until a dietitian was employed there was no other way of determining how much food was needed. How embarrassing.

When the Honourable Member has spoken I would be able to respond again in the upgrading of the laundry because I wish to ask some specific questions. My first 15 minutes have run out. I think the Minister would wish to give us details about the upgrading of the laundry because there have been problems with the supply of electricity etc. etc., and I would like to hear from the Minister where we are. I think the population deserves to hear from her. As

to these things that have been written about why we are voting \$450 000, Mr. Chairman, if these were the only reasons we were voting \$450 000 nobody could support it. I think that the Government owes us a better explanation than this addendum that has been written here as the reason for \$450 000 in case of a Minister of Finance who indicated clearly that they could only get a supplementary over his dead body, almost.

Mr. Chairman, I really wish to hear the Minister because I was Sorry, he forced me to say that. I withdraw that because it struck me that that was not necessarily desirable. But I would wish to hear the Minister and, after I hear the Minister, I will raise some more questions. I am grateful to you, Sir.
4.05 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West should be the last person in this Honourable Chamber to get up and **talk** in a negative manner or **talk** at all about the fact that the Honourable Minister of Health has come in here for a supplementary in the sum of \$450 000.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I never spoke in a negative manner about the fact that the Minister has come for the \$450 000. I spoke about the fact that she was forced to come.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I have in my hand **Hansard**. I am reading at page 3044. This is a debate which took place 3 weeks before the Estimates debate in 1993. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West was then the Minister of Health. He came in here for \$10 million in a supplementary 3 weeks before the Estimates debate and he put all the blame on the civil servants at page 3044. I am quoting myself. This is what I said in this Chamber on March 2, 1993:

"It is very easy for the Minister to blame the Permanent Secretary and to blame the civil servants, but in the end the buck must stop at him. So he comes in here now for in excess of \$10 million three weeks before the end of the financial year." That is only 1993, Sir. Much has been said in this debate...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I think that it is not fair to the Committee for the Honourable Member to just simply give the information of the then Minister asking for \$10 million. I think the Honourable Member has a duty to at least say what it was for. The point made was that I was in a position to get \$10 million as opposed to \$450 000.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. **Chairman**, Sir, in those days and before 1993 when the **Honourable** Member for St. Michael West was Minister of Health and was pouring \$26 million into the St. Joseph Hospital, on this side when we were in Opposition we were making the point that he was starving the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, starving the Psychiatric Hospital, starving the Geriatric Hospital of funds to feed the St. Joseph Hospital. I will say no more on the St. **Jospheh** Hospital at this time, Mr. Chairman, because that is still under investigation in **case** the Honourable Member for St. Michael West thinks otherwise by the Public Accounts Committee of this Chamber.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member, if she is going to discuss that, it seems to me that she should not mislead this Chamber. They shut down the St. Joseph Hospital so that the other hospitals would have facilities and still they have no drugs, no linen, no anything.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point of order has been made.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sorry, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, **much**, has been said in this debate. Let us now be clear and frank. The Psychiatric Hospital is the largest hospital in Barbados and always has been in terms of beds. The most recent census of the hospital which was taken as I **understand** it in October, 1995 showed that there were some 687 **patients** in the hospital, 276 females and 411 males.

Mr. Chairman, I have made this point **in** here before but I make it again for those who have **ears** to hear. The Psychiatric Hospital is closer to being a Geriatric Hospital than a Psychiatric Hospital. You **have** people in the Psychiatric Hospital in Barbados who **are** literally just waiting to die and who have been **there** for 40 years and some of them 50 years and some **of** them in excess of that, people who would not know **how** to catch a bus and people who just could not survive **on** the outside. There are people there who went into **that** hospital in the days if you behaved a little **strangely** you were locked away for the rest of your **life**. **The** truth is that modern psychiatric methods call **for** a great deal of treatment of patients on an out-patient basis on the outside of the institution. So let us get that straight to begin with.

I am made to understand, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that when the Honourable Minister of Health first became the Minister of Health in September, 1994 the hospital was just about to be in the process of moving from a temporary kitchen to a fully functioning kitchen equipped with steam jacketed pots, baker's oven and potato peelers and items of that sort. That is what she came and found. Previously

before she became the Minister of Health, patients would help with the washing of the pots and pans but they now have additional staff there to help with the washing of the pots and pans to acceptable standards. **All** of this has been done in the time of the Minister.

Mr. **Chairman**, Sir, the upgrading of the laundry together with the installation of new equipment including two storage tanks to relieve low water pressure which now enables the Psychiatric Hospital to do all of their cleaning in respect to clothing, bedding and linen – all of that is there.

Mr. **Chairman**, I hear Honourable Members in here side-stepping the reality of the real issue attached as to why this supplementary comes before the House. Not only at the Psychiatric Hospital but at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and all of the hospitals in Barbados which are run by the Government we still operate under very antiquated, ancient and unworkable systems. In fact, it is a fair comment to **say** that in some cases there are no management systems at all and that has to change. I want very much to support what the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said. Modern management systems have to be brought to bear. It is unbelievable that in 1996 with the hospital the size of the Psychiatric Hospital, a hospital commanding the vote ~~that~~ the Psychiatric Hospital does that it has no management structure beyond a hospital director. The hospital director cannot be the eyes, ears, nose of the whole hospital. It is just not possible and what we are seeing here is a hospital now creaking at the edges and falling apart for the want of proper management systems. Now I know and we ~~all~~ know that a Health Rationalization Study is currently under way. This is a study the Members on the other side played **about** with for 8 years when they were in Government.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I do not like played **about** with, Sir. The Honourable Member is being provocative. The Honourable Member is saying that we played about. The Honourable Member knows and I have every reason to **know** that there was no playing about, that the rationalization study was to be done and it was begun.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: Okay. No **point** of order.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Since the Honourable Member became the Honourable Minister of Health in this administration, she has had to employ consultants to carry out the Health Rationalization Study. One of the primary targets of that study, Sir, is the Psychiatric Hospital and I would wish, Mr. **Chairman**, that even before the Health Rationalization Study is put for recommendations before the Honourable Minister of Health that certain emergency

steps would have to be taken to correct the situation which allowed what has happened to bring this supplementary before us to continue to happen. We are weeks away from this financial year. Today is the 20th of February. The financial year as everybody knows ends on March 31st. The financial year, as everybody knows, always ends March 31st. Something has to be wrong and we all know what it is. What we need now is the political will and the determination to put it right. Ministers have helped in the recent past and have found it possible to concentrate on all kinds of what I would describe as **non-essentials**. They were busy building monuments to themselves while patients at hospitals like the Psychiatric Hospital were not getting the quality of care that they **deserve** because the relevant sums of money were not being voted.

4.15 p.m.

When the supplementary for the \$10 million for the Ministry of Health alone came in 1993, do you know what that was for, Mr. **Chairman**, Sir? 90 percent of it was for the payment of National Insurance Contributions. That is what was going on. They could find \$10 million to pay for National Insurance contributions in a number of institutions falling under the Ministry of Health but all of these basic necessities – a decent kitchen...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I believe the Honourable Member is unwittingly misleading the House. While it is true that in respect only to the Ministry of Health for the purpose of this debate 90 per cent of the amount which was being sought by that supplementary related to National Insurance contributions, that did not amount to 90 per cent of \$10 million. The supplementary had a much wider scope and I believe also it related to other institutions. But with respect to the National Insurance contributions, government-wide it was a large supplementary. You could never have \$10 million in National Insurance contributions. Anybody who understands public finance in Barbados would never make that statement in here.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. **Chairman**, Sir, I go back to **Hansard**, page 3041, Head 36, Ministry of Health, the Honourable B. M. Taitt:

"Mr. **Chairman**, this Resolution is seeking to supplement a number of subprograms in the Ministry of Health. The amounts required total \$9.5 million under the various subprograms and a substantial part of the requirement has to deal with the National Insurance contributions."

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. **Chairman**, a point of order. I am saying that there is no way that the National Insurance contributions in a year in the **Ministry** of Health could amount to \$9 million so that a supplementary for

\$9 million, 90 per cent of which is National Insurance Contributions is the height of foolishness. You cannot have **arrears** like that. Those National Insurance contributions are recurrent expenditure for Government. You cannot run **arrears** in relation to recurrent payment. Statutory Boards, yes. That is the difference. You don't understand it.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I can only **read** from Hansard and I am reading the words of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. If he was lying to the House, well then let him get up and put the record right. I am reading from **Hansard** now, page 3043:

"The Psychiatric Hospital needs \$59 000 in supplements to deal with their National Insurance contributions. The Children's Development Centre needs \$1 041, again National Insurance. The St. **Andrew's** Children Centre, theirs is also National Insurance."

It goes on and on.

"... The Drug Service is National Insurance. It also needs a supplement for supplies."

I can only read what the Honourable Member said, Mr. Chairman, and I don't have to rationalise or justify speech.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is reading from the records and misleading this House. I am disappointed that the Leader of the House would do that. I am saying that the Honourable Member is purporting to read from the records and is misleading the House.

Mr. Chairman, the point of order is that if you read from 3041 through 3045 far from 90 per cent constitutes what the supplementary is for. To give you an example. On page 3041, the two factors responsible for the shortfall, according to the information, is that the Estimates originally submitted were reduced and this figure was inadvertently cut and also the National Insurance contributions were **increased** from October 1991.

Sir, when I respond after the Honourable Member I will quote from this to show that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Not 90 percent. Far from it.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the point I am making here is that the time has come when we have to take very serious and deliberate decisions about management, about organisations and institutions in the Government service, particularly those which fall under the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Chairman, it is very easy when you are in Opposition like the Honourable Members over there to make fun and laugh as though it is a big joke. The position with the Honourable Members on the other side is that in all of these recent years, those 8 hard years as the Bible would tell you in the Old Testament, those years of drought and famine and starvation and cutting back of salaries and 8 per cent cuts, those 8 lean years we endured under the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. D. St. E. **KELLMAN**: On a point of order. I have been accused for 8 years as being on this side.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I don't have to say anything. That speaks for itself. That interlude speaks for itself.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that in those 8 lean, hard, starvation years under the Democratic Labour Party these were institutions that carried the brunt of it. That is the Party that cut the vote to the Child Care Board, that cut the vote for the children's homes, cut the vote for the Psychiatric Hospital. I did not read it out of the debate. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West brought it up just now and read out the facts that the Honourable Member for St. John cut the vote for the Psychiatric Hospital. But then the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has an interest in pointing the finger at the Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would wish to come back to this matter depending upon how the debate goes. I want to **give** my support to this and to say that the time has **come now** to put systems in place. It is incredible that we would go into the 21st century with a hospital that is **still** running on standards which were put in place in Victorian times. 4.25 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, **Sir**, it is imperative in the circumstances of the speech by the Honourable Member who has just sat down **that** we put the record straight. I am disappointed **that** a former Minister of Health, and not a very good one, who is now Leader of the House, could get up in **here**, Sir, and in purporting to put forward information about a \$10 million Supplementary could **leave** the impression that 90% of it was for National Insurance.

I will just give some very brief excerpts from the speech I made which was a very full speech about that \$10 million to show that the Honourable Member not only was misleading the House but the Honourable Member must have known because she purported to have read the debate. Now, Sir, I will just give you a few.

Under the new Polyclinics structures on Black Rock ~~there~~ is an amount being asked for. I quote:-

"Construction started 1989/90 at a contract price of \$4.2 million. It was scheduled to be completed by December 15, 1992. The decision to cut back on the amounts of money being spent over a period of time meant that the contractor has had to carry some costs through part of 1991 and all of 1992 and the polyclinic is now only going into its finishing stages. This means that the claim by the contractor would cost over and above the sum agreed upon in the contract and it has to be favourably looked at and is being considered by the Ministry."

That was part of it. We went on again at page 3042:

"Under the Queen Elizabeth Hospital there is an amount that has been included of \$1.3 million for overtime allowances in respect of medical staff at the Accident and Emergency Department"

On page 3043, Sir, we dealt with this. I am sorry the Attorney General is not in his seat because he will remember. On page 3043 I dealt with a matter that was of crucial importance. I am quoting:

"We had one case of which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is fully aware where the estimated cost was unknown but by now it exceeds CAN. \$250 000. We have one case that is still outside of Barbados where the cost of that case seems as though it will be in excess of U.S. half a million dollars.

The Medical Aid Scheme therefore, has to carry the **brunt** of the up-front payment."

And, as I said earlier, there is another one for nearly \$500 000.

So we were asking for a supplementaxy to take care of the Medical Aid Scheme.

We then went on to say on page 3043:

"Anyhow, we are seeking a supplementary of \$2.7 million for the Medical Aid Scheme."

Now, Sir, on that basis alone, the Leader of the House stands condemned for the Leader of the House to get up in here and say that 90% was for National Insurance, and I have been able to show that \$2.7 was for Medical Aid alone. That alone, Sir, puts her to be condemned.

I went on to say:

"The Drug Service needs a supplement for supplies. The sum for the Drug Service voted was \$14.2 million, a reduction of \$565 000 from the year before."

And so we supplemented it. I go on:

"We require for the Special Benefit Service \$1.6 million. For the procurement of drugs \$239 000 giving us a total of \$1.9 million for the Drug Service."

How could the Leader of the House get up in here, Sir, and make that kind of contribution? I am disappointed.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It showed that we were so concerned about the people of Barbados that we had no difficulty coming for a supplementary of \$10 million for the people of Barbados when we considered it was in the interest of the ordinary people of Barbados. The Minister of Health must understand that she must ignore them and in particular she must ignore the triumvirate.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, she is part of the normal triumvirate, but the triumvirate for the Ministry of Finance that will not give the people in the vulnerable groups what is required, and that is why we are not going to crucify the Minister for the \$450 000 because we know that the \$450 000 did not even begin to scratch the surface of what is required to give the ordinary people in Barbados some kind of comfort in these situations.

Sir, let me tell you why I took that position. When you look at the Estimates for 1995/96, let me show you, Mr. Chairman, why this is an abomination. Estimates for 1995/96 page 168, Item 210 which is being supplemented now, Head 36 – Supplies and Materials:

- "Provides for the feeding of patients, the purchase of linen, clothing and bedding, medical supplies, toiletries, dental and optical treatment, cleaning materials, kitchen and tableware and materials for O.T. Department."

This is the Head that is being supplemented. Now, Sir, in 1995/96 the Government came down here for an estimate of \$1.660 million. The approved estimates for 1994/95 for \$1.850 million and the revised estimates for 1994/95 was \$1.940 million. Sir, what I said earlier

is justified that here was the revised estimate of \$1.9 million and the Minister of Finance who could not care a single thing about the ordinary people, least of all the people in the Psychiatric Hospital, cut that \$1.940 million to \$1.880 million. The actual expenditure was \$1.910 374 and therefore when I said that the Minister of Finance, and not the Minister of Health – I will not join them in crucifying the Minister of Health today, another time, but not today because the Minister is – I do not want to say "the victim" because the Honourable Member for St. James South is the victim...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, I got \$10 million so I do not have a problem. I can go for \$10 million and get it. That is the difference. The Minister of Health, whom I will attack at a different time, but today I know that the Minister of Health is under extreme pressure because of the Minister of Finance. If I were the Minister of Health I would come to the conclusion that the Minister of Finance has a reason for this behavior **pattern** because the actual expenditure is \$1.9 million and he gave \$1.8 million and then said there will be no supplementaries. What kind of mirror image the Minister of Finance can have? He should have been in his chair, Sir. I would have much more enjoyed this if he was there.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is coming? Good. He can hear me. Well, let me speak to him Sir. He gave the Minister of Health \$1.8 million for the Psychiatric Hospital for all the things that are included in this supplementary, this supplementary that the Addendum is so badly written that I think the persons who wrote this Addendum should – well, the Minister has to take the blame. I would condemn the Minister on this Addendum. It is better to bring no Addendum and let us crucify you for having no Addendum than to come in here with this abomination. "The upgrading of the laundry to wash all the bedding, linen and clothing necessitates the need for a substantial increase in the purchase of detergents and laundry supplies." Somebody should be buried in detergent and laundry supplies for putting this before this House. How can this House expect that the mere fact that we need laundry and detergents is sufficient for an increase? There is no evidence whatsoever as to how much we use, or what we use.
4.35 p.m.

I will say this. I am not...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I do not like – You see, Sir, I like fair debate. I like attacking. When the time comes to attack the Minister, I am going to bite out her

throat. But I cannot, in all fairness, recognizing that the Barbados Labour Party has treated the ordinary people of this country so bad that I am not surprised that we have an increase in the numbers going into the Psychiatric Hospital. But, more particularly, the people who have been treated in the Community Psychiatric programme have not had their drugs and, therefore, they have had to be kept in the Psychiatric Hospital. That is why we have a particular problem with regard to the amount of drugs which have to be used.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of **order**, Sir. The Honourable Member is engaging in some exercise of self-gratification. There is no evidence of that I cannot let him mislead the House with that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Minister is not herself seized of these matters in a way that would allow her to say whether it is true or false and I can appreciate that the Minister would wish us... But if the Minister would check with what has been happening with those who normally would be part – and Your Honour should be concerned with this because many of the out-patients from the Christ Church and St. Philip areas who, normally, would not be kept in the Psychiatric Hospital because the community psychiatric health service allows, permits and induces them to take their medication have had to back off because the medication has not been available. And so they have had to descend on the Psychiatric Hospital.

Mr. Chairman, there are over 2 000 out-patients in the Christ Church, St. George, St. Philip area.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There is, in the St. Michael area, a larger concentration of those out-patients and they have been increased in the Psychiatric Hospital. The Honourable Member for the City said that there were 687. The hospital was designed for 627, at its **maximum**. I am told that there are now nearly 700.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central **needs** some serious talking to, Sir. He needs some **counselling** in these matters. The Honourable Member is not one that I would take on. He is my representative you know, Sir, when I am living at my mother's house.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South knows where I live, from time to time.

But, quite seriously...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: I do not understand. Mr. Chairman, are you not going to protect me from all of these people who say where I should live and where I should not live?

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, nonetheless, is saying that there were people sleeping in the corridors. The one thing I can say, with impunity, is that whereas there might be people sleeping in the corridors in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Psychiatric Hospital has never permitted people to sleep in the corridors. They have always taken care of them, even if they have to make adjustments. With the movement of the Polyclinic from within the Psychiatric compound, they were given additional space.

I would say, for the Director, and the staff of the Psychiatric Hospital that they have never been known to have people sleeping in the **corridors**. You cannot put mad people...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: You said that.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Do not mind Don Blackman. You cannot put people to sleep in the corridors. That is a different ball game.

The point I am making and I make it with all the emphasis I can, is that the amount that was voted, and this is **really** the gravamen of our charge ... First of all, I do not accept the rubbish that is written here as the Addendum for the Supplementary. I do not believe that the Minister would get up and defend that rubbish.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: No. I am saying that I do not believe you would **get** up and defend it. I am not going to vote against the amount because it is necessary.

The point I am making is that the Minister of Finance, in a situation, where the **Government** was in a position where the funds were different from when the Honourable Member for St. John was Minister of Finance, when we were in structural adjustment, where the Minister of Finance who had before said that a 4% deficit was acceptable in an economy of this nature could turn around

and look the Minister of Health in the face and, in light of having actually spent \$1.9 million for this Head cut it to \$1.8 million which was less than had been spent in **1994-95**. Now, after having said there would be no supplementary, the Minister has no choice but to come for a supplementary.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: The Honourable Member is **asked** to wind up.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: In the circumstances, I wanted to make the point and show that the Leader of the House had misled the House because she had sought to suggest that when we came for \$10 million, it was something fundamental.

I will end with this, Sir, the Democratic Labour Party was so committed to ordinary people and so understood ordinary people and, more particularly, the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. John that when it became necessary in the light of revised examination of the Ministry of Health, at the time, when it became necessary, he did not agree to any \$450 000 for one institution. The Minister and the Democratic **Labour** Party's Cabinet recognized that we **needed** \$10 million in the Ministry of Health to maintain the standard which is the umbrella. They made sure that the vulnerable groups in this society, those who are in the Psychiatric Hospital, for whatever reason, would not suffer, even though the country was going through structural adjustment.

Whereas we could get a supplementary in this Committee for \$10 million, the Honourable Member has had to come for \$450 000 in the face of hostile reaction from the Minister of Finance who caused her, in the first place, to be in this by reducing the \$1.9 million.

Mr. H. **deB. FORDE**: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member cannot, in this House, write into the debate that there was hostile reaction, from the Minister of Finance in granting another Minister a supplementary, unless he has evidence. There is no such evidence. It is really accusing the Minister, not only of an improper motive, that there is hostility.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West knows that the question of supply is one that has been dealt with, in administrative terms. I mean administrative hostility. I do not mean personal hostility.

Anyone who has ever gone for any sums of money from the Ministry of Finance knows that there is nothing short of administrative hostility to the Ministry of

Health and the Ministry of Education which are regarded as spending Ministries. That is the only point I am making. If the Minister understands that I am on her side on this issue, she will not allow herself to be sucked in by the likes of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who, when he was the Attorney General fought, on the **Floor** of the House with his Minister of Finance. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South can **confirm** that he fought with his Minister of Finance, on the Floor of this House. He accused his Minister of Finance of worse than hostility. But I will let it pass, Sir.

Mr. H. **deB. FORDE**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member has really used this debate, as Honourable Members on the other side, for purely partisan points.

I did not believe that this Committee needed to spend so much time on a vote that is, obviously, justified.

When the Honourable Member for St. Michael West could find nothing to say against this request, he resorted to an attack on the Minister of Finance **simply** because the Minister of Finance has made it clear, quite rightly, that good budgeting requires, up front, that you should know what your requirements be for the year and that the Permanent Secretaries and the accounting officers **should** manage those votes properly and that if supplementaries were required they should be of such an order that they could possibly be properly justified. Now, that is proper financial accounting. What the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is complaining about is that his Ministry was the worst offender when he came to this House on several occasions for some of the largest supplementaries that we have ever had in the history of this House, certainly in the 25 years I have been in this House. He gets up and he feels smart by saying that he got \$10 million. Well this Minister does not come for \$10 million. She has managed with less to run her department better than the Honourable Member **ran** the department at the time. In fact the difference between her 1994 and 1996 vote was simply \$60 000 and the reasons which she has given here are reasons which any rational and Honourable Member our member of the public should accept for justification for the small increase in this vote.

4.45 p.m.

Now, what are the reasons she has given here? If there are more people being admitted, obviously there is an additional cost. What is wrong with that? What is the Honourable Member saying to the public? We must begin to be rational in this House.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is not in a position to demonstrate that

at any point I have questioned the desirability of an increase in the vote because there have been **admissions**. The Honourable Member is accusing me.

Mr. H. **deB. FORDE**: I am saying the Opposition. Everyone of my criticisms will not fit the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member, for instance, for St. Michael East found it difficult to vote for this for any of these reasons advanced.

Mr. J. O. **TUDOR**: All I said, Sir, is that the admissions had something to do with the fact that the public were frustrated with the broken promises and that many more of them were going to the mad house.

Mr. H. **deB. FORDE**: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is not even a point of order. The Honourable Member obviously is making a point that, I would suggest, is very childish. What broken promises and admissions increasing because of broken promises? That is the sort of political point that is not worth pursuing. When one is probably stretched on a platform and does not know what to say, one makes those sorts of points, Sir. Let us take these debates seriously. The Minister is asking for supply to \$450 000 in circumstances which she said she has had an increase in the number of admissions and in which she says that she has been trying to upgrade the laundry facility in order to provide a higher quality of care.

She has provided a dietitian on the premises and I would expect that the quality of meals, from a nutrition position, would improve. What is wrong with that? I go to a nutritionist or dietitian in order to get advice in this respect. The normal member of the public **understands** that. I do not understand how Honourable Members in this House who are supposed to represent the public can quarrel about those reasons as valid reasons.

Mr. B. M. **TAITT**: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. No one is **quarrelling** at the appointment of a dietitian. I think the Honourable Member has been away from this Parliament for too long. No one over here has quarrelled about the **appointment** of a dietitian.

Mr. H. **deB. FORDE**: I **do not** believe the Honourable Member is right. He **might have** been in Trinidad but I have been in this Parliament. I **am** speaking on the point, Sir. The point is, Sir, that this is a proper Resolution for the House and I **am** glad to see that the Minister is managing her department with greater efficiency than was manifested by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West when he ran the Ministry of Health. Unfortunately he got away with it on many occasions.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West, he has never forgiven us for reducing his vote. Remember he read out the figures today to make it clear that his vote under this Head has been cut by almost \$½ million by the Honourable Member for St. John. I had forgotten it. I would have forgotten it if he had not read it out, Sir, as Minister for Finance.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, I never read out any such vote where the Minister cut my vote by \$½ million. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He must not do that, Sir. It is not fair. The Minister of Finance gave me a supplementary for \$10 million.

Mr. H. deB. Forde: You see, Sir, the Honourable Member forgets so quickly but he was talking about the vote the previous year had been reduced when they did the main Estimates by \$½ million and then he had to come back on a supplementary and he got \$10 million.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of elucidation. What he pointed out is that it was an IADB project and that the funds which had been reduced the previous year were restored. That is the only point he was making. I do not understand the Honourable Member, Sir, he knows better.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: He should have been reduced by more because he has left the Minister with a plethora of problems which she now has to solve in the Ministry of Health and I congratulate her on the manner in which she is going about finding solutions to these very difficult problems that he left in the Ministry of Health.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Since I stopped being Minister of Health there have been other Ministers of Health. I do not understand how I could have left the Minister anything.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: There were other Ministers of Health who, unfortunately, found the problems to be chronic as created by the Honourable Member. He knows that, Sir. So what is he talking about? He used to come in here, Sir, and ask for large supplementaries in Health and get them. We criticised him at the time to say that he had to bring management systems into place. Ask the Honourable Member what he has done with the study which was left by Minister Trotman. What has he done with the study that was looking at putting management systems in place in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? He may say whatever he likes but the studies were started as long ago as that period of time.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, it does not become the Honourable Member to be trying to put Minister Trotman....

I really think the Honourable Member is being facetious when he would raise Minister Trotman in serious debate in this Committee. He really should not do that.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I raise it in serious debate, Sir, because I am not going to wait until a person dies to come in here and talk a lot of foolishness about them and when a Member has made a contribution, as he did, in inviting and getting management studies in order to put into place systems which the Honourable Member never followed through when there was a change of Government. Now we find ourselves having to clear up the mess. I believe that we should encourage the young Minister to continue in her zeal and with the foresight that she is showing to deal with the problems, Sir, despite all opposition. Do not try to divide the Government on all sorts of little points. She has problems, Sir. I have been in this House and heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West speak on numerous occasions about how he was going to build the new psychiatric hospital. Well he was removed from the Ministry of Health and never, ever got the project even off the ground. Now it is left for this Minister to try to rationalise the structures, the organisation and the systems at the psychiatric hospital as in so many of our health institutions.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, the Honourable Member definitely must not get away with that. The Honourable Member must know that the rationalisation study which the Honourable Member has spoken about in recent times, even the Honourable Member alluded to the fact that the rationalisation study was grounded in the administration of the Democratic Labour Party and the record of that will come out in due course. I do not want to import it into this debate, but the Honourable Member must not make that kind of facetious remark.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: The point is, Sir, that the Minister is working assiduously to solve the problems which she has inherited from the past administration and she will solve them because she has the determination, she has the intelligence and she also has the backing of her cabinet colleagues and the other members in the party on this matter.

Aside.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I can speak to that, Sir, and I speak very strongly about it because she has shown the foresight to solve the Mount Stinkeroo problem which the Honourable Member could not solve and they have never forgiven her for exposing them on that point, Sir. Every time they want to attack her and find they can't attack her they want to set her up against her colleagues.

I tell the Minister keep on with the work she is doing. I would like to hear her, if not now, some time during the estimates on the issue of what is being done for the Psychiatric Hospital and whether we are going to be building a new psychiatric hospital and the new methods being **introduced** to deal with the after care of mental patients. I appreciate that there is a problem, particularly growing out of our drug problem in Barbados, not any problem as the one the Honourable Member for St. Michael East will have us believe that because there is a change of Government we have more mad people around. Maybe that is what he is trying to say, Sir.
4.55 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I made myself very clear. I said that with the increase in admissions that it has a lot to do with the social fall-out because people are frustrated as a result of the broken promises by the present administration and it is sending them mad.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, who will believe the Honourable Member when in 1991 we were campaigning and he said how badly they were running the country and we were told that we never had it so good? By 1991, they had structural adjustment, people walking the street, people going home in droves and losing their homes. The Honourable Member then was in 50 different minds. He did not know whether he was under stress or **not** to know where he was going. What is he **talking** about?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I find it difficult to accept how the Honourable Member could suggest that I could be in 50 different minds. I was in one clear mind that he was responsible for the decay in the economy when he made a reckless statement about the devaluation of the Barbados dollar which caused tremendous panic in this society and he has the temerity to come in here now. I was waiting on you. It was a mad statement.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: It is a pity the Honourable Member did not have the courage of his conviction to tell me so instead of telling me down the corridor that Sandiford was not good for the country. He did not have the courage of his conviction and that is what I am saying now.

Aside,

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. Everything I said against the Democratic Labour Party I said on the floor of the House and I said it openly and publicly not behind any back corridor. I had temerity and

guts because my constituents were hurting and I spoke about the pain and suffering that they were going through. I have no recall of **speaking** in the corridor with the honourable gentleman. I have no recall, Sir.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE: I will put it down as the Honourable Member's enthusiasm in order to score a political point. But the Honourable Member should know that the Government in its short period of time is grappling with the myriad of problems which have arisen particularly out of the structural adjustment **period** in this country from the lay-offs to the bankruptcies to the other serious problems occurring such as the loss of jobs. That has had tremendous impact on the psyche and the psychology of Barbadians. The Government has **tried** and is trying to deal with the numerous problems that are occurring including health and I congratulate the Minister in managing her department and recognizing that there **are** problems within this very department and trying to put in place the controls that are necessary to ensure that the public's money is well spent. I give this supplementary Resolution my full support.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I only **rise** to correct a few things. I do not want to begin with the Saturday morning at the paddock at the Garrison when the Honourable Member for St. Michael East spoke to me. I had to admonish him how to behave and not **talk** so loudly for everybody around the paddock to hear what he was saying to me about that Right Honourable gentleman, Sir, I rise just to correct the records. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West had a lot to say about the Minister of Finance and the position of the Minister of Finance in relation to supplementary provisions. I have found in 1991 the position of the Minister of Finance in relation to supplementary provisions. It is very clearly set out. I am saying that I understood the Honourable Member for St. Michael West to be critical of the present **Minister** of Finance in relation to what the present Minister of **Finance** said about supplementaries when he was in **Opposition**.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of elucidation, Sir. I am speaking about the Minister of Finance in his present capacity. I was merely alluding to what he had **said** in his capacity as Minister of Finance in the 1995 **Estimates**. He laid down the law that there shall be no **supplementaries**. I know that when he was in Opposition he **made** some wild statements, but I was not alluding to those. I am addressing his position as Minister of Finance. **So** the Honourable Member will be quite out of order if he will quote for 1991 the statement by the then Leader-**of** the Opposition who was not responsible. He said **so** himself that he was not responsible for what he **said**. He would cry sometimes and quarrel sometimes. **He** said that he did not know what he was doing. He **said** so.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You really must not tell lies on the Prime Minister. On November 26, 1991 the

Honourable Member for St. Michael West when he was then Minister of Health brought a Resolution in here for \$1 626 849. He began by saying that the sum of \$2 million was voted that year under Head 36, Sub-programme 3 for structures to the QEH.
5.05 p.m.

He began by saying that the sum of \$2 million was voted that year under Head 36 subprogram 3 for structures in Q.E.H. He said a supplement of \$1 626 849 is required to meet the claims from the contractor who requires to be paid.

The present Prime Minister in speaking on that debate said this, page 1153

"... I have already put on record my objection to supplementaries that are larger than the initial vote. It is bad, financial practice. It says that there has been a complete breakdown in Government's financial planning when Government comes in the midst of a financial year and asks this House to agree to a supplementary that is bigger than the initial vote itself. Something has fundamentally to be wrong with that system of budgeting.

I have already said that I shall not be voting in this House with the Government whenever it brings to the House supplementaries that are bigger than the initial vote. It is offensive to everything that we understand about financial planning. I want to say that one of the reasons why Barbados is in the financial mess that it has found itself in is nothing to do with factors of the sixties and seventies. It is precisely because of battles like this.

In 1988 and 1989 this House was bombarded with supplementaries that were larger than the initial vote and despite our complaints about them, Sir, the House **railroaded** them through and has ended up at the end of the day with expenditures far greater than what the House at the start of the financial year regarded as being sober and judicious."

Sir, that was November 1991 and in February that year he got \$13 097 743.47, \$13 096 700 in the Estimates for 1991 for office supplies, toiletries and miscellaneous expenses to do with the Drug Service.

At February 15, 1991; 6 weeks before the end of the financial year, expenditure was \$13 097 743.47 and at February 15 there were commitments of \$3 110 027.95. He came for a massive supplementary then and was castigated 6 weeks before.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I don't wish to dispute the entire comments the Honourable Member made but both what the then Leader of the Opposition said in 1991 and what subsequently has been said by him are two different things. Our debate centres on the parameters for financial management in this economy set down by the Prime Minister last March during the Estimates debate. We will get it but we cannot quote it in this Session, as you know. There are 3 points he made. Give me one second.

First, he disagreed with the Minister of Finance attributing supplementaries to the Contingency Vote. Secondly, he disagreed with the policy where the Minister of Finance found savings in the Ministry or where the Minister found savings and the funds were allocated to other kinds of expenditure. He said he believed in prudent, fiscal planning and it has been on this basis that we challenge the Government for its mid-term adjustments. We just had some mid-term adjustments a couple of months ago and that is the basis on which we now again criticise the Government because the Prime Minister said that forecasting was his forte. One of the only things that he brings to public life.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: In the absence of the official record I will hear what the others say. I will not believe nor will I listen to the comments that come from the other side. There is a capacity for distortion on that side that I am well aware of.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I have not said that the Honourable Member is a liar, Sir. But he is.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. I wish to establish categorically that I have not now nor have I ever nor will I distort anything the Prime Minister says, especially with regard to prudent management of the economy. I listened carefully to everything the Prime Minister said in his capacity as economist and Minister of Finance would say and the Prime Minister has made it very clear that when it comes to fiscal matters he is pristine and therefore I object to the Minister suggesting that we might distort. I can speak for myself and my colleagues over here. We are careful never to distort what the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance says.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS; Mr. Chairman, I am just making the point that I am not prepared to accept what was said because I do not remember the Prime Minister going as far as the Honourable Members are purporting to say he went. He has consistently made the point that money should not be spent unless it has been authorised by Parliament. He consistently made the point that where

one is seeking a supplementary, the supplementary should bear some reasonable remit to the original vote. Otherwise, there would be some evidence of shoddy planning.

I have already quoted from page 1153 of the Hansard for 1991.

Are you hearing me, or hearing them?

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: In this debate, Sir, it has been grossly unfair to attribute to the Prime Minister statements which are not supported by the record. When they produce the record, I will be prepared to look at it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member as Attorney General knows and is seized of the fact that we are unable to quote the **Prime** Minister in this Session. I give him the assurance that we will show him if he as a Minister and one of the senior ministers, one of the main triumvirate, does not remember what the Prime Minister said in this House all that we have been saying. I can't repeat it, Sir, because that would be too long.

The Honourable Member should not do that to us. He knows that it would be an illegality. We would be challenging the Chair if we were to bring what the Prime Minister said and put it in the record because it happened in this Session. He said it during the presentation of the Estimates and he said it during the presentation of the Budgetary proposals. He said it in the Estimates and he accused the Democratic Labour Party of all kinds of nefarious activities in relation to planning and he left the **impression** that planning had reached a new plateau.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I appreciate the challenge which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has put out. If it were possible, I would produce it but this is February 21st and the Hansard for last March was only produced about 2 weeks ago. That was the last debate that was published. It may not yet be in this record but as soon as we have it available we are functioning in this Parliament on a 12-month lapse in terms of debates and therefore people cannot bring accurate information to the House. If we had it we would make it available.

Whenever it is available, we will produce it. If the Honourable Member can require the Leader of the House to have the publication of Hansard debates speeded up so that we can be more efficient in our work, then we will produce the documents.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member is a member of the Management Commission which is

responsible for the publication of Hansard. He has a duty to speak at that Committee.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I rise to wind up this debate which has been longer than I had anticipated and in the process of winding up would hope to focus this Honourable Chamber's attention on what I consider to be the essential issues in this matter. I want to say *en passant* that I am appalled to learn from Hansard that 6 weeks before the end of a financial year that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West could have brought to this Chamber a Supplementary in the sum of \$10 million. It speaks to a certain absence of proper financial management.
5.15 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. She has done very well to speak about her own amazement. I am not surprised that she would be amazed about anything. I can give you chapter and verse about a number of things that would amaze her. However . . .

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Oh, I see. Press on.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West has been kind to me today and I want to frame his comments in the context of the whole debate. But I want to make the point that even in doing so the Honourable Member is supporting what my **central** thesis was when I started that we have to look at the whole matter of the management of the institution, that we have set up systems to manage institutions which are now of some considerable age. The Psychiatric Hospital is over 100 years old. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is over 30 years old and in each case the management structure set up to carry on what was then a very simple institution has remained exactly the same over that period.

What I am suggesting here and what I have suggested in this Chamber **today** is that we need to put in **place** a system of financial management and a management structure, management personnel and management practices that look to inventory and other mechanisms of management and a **certain** quality of management to ensure that these institutions are properly managed **and** to ensure a proper level of accountability of the **public's** resources.

It is unacceptable that in 1996 the Psychiatric Hospital could be spending \$1.5 million without a Financial Controller and without proper management systems to oversee the vote. Every system where there is large money, even systems where there are small amounts of money being **expended**, have proper control systems in place

to ensure inventory, stock and so. I am not cursing public servants, or as it has been suggested by the Other Side, seeking to cast aspersions on public servants *per se*. I am speaking to the existence of problems in human nature, and that where human beings **are**, systems have to be put in place sometimes to help them help themselves. In these institutions we are spending taxpayers' money.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is even worse because it spends some \$69 million without a Financial Controller or proper management systems, or proper management structure. When the Hospital was first built, just like the Psychiatric Hospital, there was a whole different approach to health care management. The institutions were not as complex. The QEH now has a staff of 1 700. That is a major institution by any standard.

I believe the point the Other Side was making in relation to the Prime Minister's comments about financial controls and supplementaries is that we have to look to our votes to the amounts we were projecting we would spend, to our budgeting processes, to our management processes and to make sure that that exercise was properly done in dealing with the public's money.

I want to go ahead and deal with the point specifically raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. As Minister I do not think we can any longer focus on this so long as these problems exist. **What** we need to do is to chart a new framework for the future. I inherited a situation where these problems existed. **The** problems were not created overnight and the solutions **will** not be put in place **overnight**. There are people who have been operating in the system without accountability for years and resent being made accountable now.

The odd reports that have been done on the Psychiatric Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and **paid** for by taxpayers' money in some cases, and by grab monies in other cases, now have to be taken off the shelves **where** they have remained for years and the recommendations that can help take the management **systems** and institutions forward must be implemented. I **give this** Chamber the commitment to ensure that that is done.

I also **give** this Chamber the commitment that proper management **systems** are going to be put in place, both at the Psychiatric Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because ultimately they are institutions paid for by the taxpayers and in **which** we are going to be treated, I believe, some of us at one **time** or another, and they must

deliver to the public the quality service the public is entitled to get from them. I am not seeking to duck my responsibility in relation to the changes that must be effected. In fact, I see myself now, given what we know to be the problem, to be the change agent for health care in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that in the same way I came without reservation or hesitation and tackled the problem of Mount **Stinkeroo**, that I must now move to the institutions under the management of the health care system and deal with those institutions one by one because they also have serious problems that were not created overnight but will require a level of commitment, a political will and the cooperation of all the employees to resolve. But it is a matter of putting the proper systems in place. The next step is to identify the problems. I have in this Chamber indicated where some of **the** problems lie and over time I will be speaking about the nature of the problems and speaking more fully to what the specific solutions are going to be. Very shortly a number of measures are going to be coming before this Chamber for debate that will seek to resolve the problems particularly in relation to management and the absence of management systems that exist in the health care institutions in Barbados.

On the Other Side, during the course of this debate one repeatedly heard that we are seeing a level of maladministration by the Minister in health care today, that there are now absences of materials, absences of supplies, shortages of materials and supplies that never existed before. I would wish, Mr. Chairman, to put the record in this Chamber straight on the matter of the policy maker voting the sums necessary to carry this institution.

In the financial year 1994/95 the Psychiatric Hospital was given an overall vote of \$13 098 676. In 1995/96 based on our assessment of what the expenditure would be, and what they would have needed to carry their programmes forward, this administration gave the Psychiatric Hospital, do not mind all the talk about cuts from that side, \$15 669 494, an increase of \$2.6 million. In relation to the Drug Service, because that side also talked about shortages of supplies in the Drug Service. 5.25 p.m.

When we came to office, Mr. Chairman, the figures for the drug service, in that year – I do not have the figures before me – were fifteen point something million dollars in 1993-94. In 1994-95, it moved to about \$16 million.

We have, in the course of our time in office moved the drug service vote to \$20.4 million, in the last financial year, in order to ensure that people got their supplies.

Similarly, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's vote was increased in excess of \$2 million. I am saying therefore, Sir, that there has been no shortage of provision, by this Administration, for the health institutions to be able to buy their supplies and materials.

Therefore I go back to the point at which I started, in the introduction, and that is that what we need to do is to put proper managers, proper management systems in place and proper control for the inventory. Because no matter how much money you provide, as a Minister, if the management systems are weak, if the managers are weak, if management systems are non-existent and if there is no control of inventory and stock and supplies, then the problems that we have been hearing about, in the press, will continue to recur.

Mr. Chairman, I want to disabuse this Chamber and the speakers on the Other Side of any notion that these problems are new. I wish to remind the Chamber, Sir, that it was under the last Administration that we saw complaints in the newspaper of people not being able to get bandages and those kinds of things, people not being able to get drugs, junior doctors not being paid their on call and other allowances on time. The same kind of problem.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to remind this Chamber that it even came to the fore, under the last Administration, when there was a front page story in the NATION newspaper that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital had no saucepans. I am tired of reading every day that the problems in health started when Liz Thompson became the Minister. Those were the problems that I inherited.

I wish to remind this Chamber, Mr. Chairman, that in 1993, before the Barbados Labour Party won the election of 1994 that 22 people died in the Psychiatric Hospital from salmonella poisoning.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Twenty-two people died from salmonella poisoning.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Minister must do better than that. There is no evidence anywhere about any 22 people dying in the Psychiatric Hospital. That would have been a travesty. Get the facts and say it again. I know you have made a mistake and you do not mean 22.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Report was taken into the Ministry of Health and kept under confidential cover. It was not made public. It was a major cover-up. I would release it to the public, if you provoke me. Twenty-two people died. Those are the figures I have here.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir...

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, there were deaths and the point that I am speaking to...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, Sir. I was not the Minister of Health in 1994.

The Minister is making a grave charge that 22 people died in the Psychiatric Hospital as a result of salmonella. She is saying further...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: She is saying further that it may have been a cover-up. The Minister is not an ordinary person. She is not a Hagar maid. She is a serious Minister. Twenty-two people is a serious charge. A person who makes that charge should be able to substantiate it.

I would wish to hear more. I wish the Minister to put it on the Record and let it all hang out. She cannot come in here and say that 22 people died and then withdraw it. Let us hear the details. Give us the names of the 22 people because I too wish to know if 22 people died as a result of salmonella. I want to know. Let me hear the facts.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, on a point of order. I am saying that the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, it has to be said because either the facts are going to come out, very clearly in this Chamber ...A very grave charge has been made about covering up files. But in addition to that, 22 people dying of salmonella poisoning in Barbados?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, those facts either have to be given to this Chamber now or they must be given to the public, if not the Minister has to be exposed for misleading this House, on a very serious matter.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am going to set the Record absolutely straight. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said that people died in the hospital and I had given no explanation.

I want to walk the Chamber through this, very carefully. In 1993, 22 people died in the Psychiatric Hospital. We never got any explanation as to why. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West is saying that heads should roll.

I am saying...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir...

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I want to walk **the** Chamber **through** this very carefully.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ...The Minister of Health said, on the Floor of this Committee, that 22 people died from salmonella and she must give the information. Twenty-two people died from salmonella? You must give **the** details.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Let me finish. Mr. **Chairman**, in 1993, 22 people died at the **Psychiatric** Hospital. I am going on to the next point. Of those **22, 4** were from salmonella poisoning.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT This Minister is not unknown for misstatements to Committees and the House. This Minister is not unknown for opening her mouth and letting words drop out.

This Minister ~~said~~ and I quote:

"Twenty-two people died from salmonella" **She** must apologize to this Committee.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, those **4** **died** out of a sum total of 37 people being affected by salmonella poisoning.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, **please**.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: She did not only say that 22 died, she **suggested** that the Democratic Labour Party covered it up. It is **unbelievable**. I cannot believe. This Minister must resign.

Mr. H. **deB.** FORDE: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. **CHAIRMAN**: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West **is** on a point of order.

Mr. H. **deB.** FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is entitled, in this Committee, to give any explanations without the Honourable Member continually interrupting her and shouting, Sir. The Minister should be heard....

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members are asked **to**...

Mr. H. **deB.** FORDE: The Minister is properly explaining herself, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please wind up your presentation.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The point on this must be made very clear. This Chamber was told by the Minister of Health earlier, that 22 people died in the Psychiatric Hospital from salmonella poisoning.

She further said that there was a cover-up, that the **information** was put on a file and that somebody covered it up and that she was going to expose it to the public of Barbados.

I am saying that the Minister must now recap that and apologize to this Chamber if not it is going to have serious consequences.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your point is made.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is not the first time this **kind** of foolishness has happened in here. The Minister must clarify and also apologize to this Committee and the Chamber.

We cannot have this kind of thing going on in **Barbados** where serious and dishonest allegations are being made against the Democratic Labour Party...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...and nobody feels accountable. The press runs along with it...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: **You** have made your point of order.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...and misrepresents the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point. The Honourable Member for St. James South. You have clarified the first issue of the number of people who died from salmonella.

The second point which you have to withdraw is the matter of the cover-up. Could you please address that.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. **Chairman**, I have given the actual figures that 37 people had salmonella.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Deal with the cover-up section.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: There were 3 deaths. I am also saying, Mr. Chairman, that this information went into the Ministry in 1993 on a file and was never made public up to when we came into office.
5.35 p.m.

Loud asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Honourable Member for St. James South, are you withdrawing therefore the words "cover up"? Are you withdrawing your initial words **of** 'cover up'?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that this information was never made public to the press.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: So you are withdrawing your initial words of "cover up"?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Yes I am withdrawing the words "cover up".

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay. In the first case the Member is giving the number of patients who died and secondly she is withdrawing the words "cover up". You have one minute to wind up your presentation and I am giving you extra time because of the interruptions. You have one more minute to wind up your presentation.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The point that I have been making, Sir, is that the problems throughout the health care institution.....

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member must apologise.

Loud asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN rose.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Loud asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. **Order.** Order please!

Honourable Member please **wind** up your presentation.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Despite all the noise, Mr. Chairman, these people are dead. **Dead** because the kitchens were not in a good **state** and **proper** meals were not being provided and that conditions existed in a health care institution where 37 of the patients ...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. Unless that statement is based on a premise that the Honourable Member has not only withdrawn the statement that 22 people died from salmonella poisoning and there was a cover-up by the Democratic Labour Party and apologises to this Chamber there is no **basis** on which this Opposition can feel satisfied in continuing in any debate with a pack of people who are going to mislead this House, tell lies, make wilful dishonest accusations against us

Loud asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Time has expired for this debate.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Please put the question and finish with this debate now.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I **beg** to move that Head 36 now do stand part.

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour Mr. SPEAKER the passing of one money Resolution in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Loud asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could we hwe some order, please?

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to Friday, 23rd day of February, 1996 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning. On that occasion it is proposed that the Government would proceed with the amendment to the Income Tax Act which is No. 2 on the Order Paper at this time. It is also proposed, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Government will proceed at that time with a Resolution for a Supplementary in respect of the Ministry of Health in particular the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is possible, if time would permit, on that occasion, Mr. Speaker, that we would try to proceed with the compulsory acquisitions on the Order Paper.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Presumably it has been seconded. Speaking on the adjournment, Sir, I have been a Member of this House for a very long time. I have served in many capacities, not the least of which is the Ministry of Health.

This House, Sir, although we have the system of pretending that there is no gallery which was inherited from the ancient system the fact still remains that what is done in this House is observed by all and sundry. I think it is very important, Sir, that as we debate in this House we take cognizance and pay attention to the sensibilities and sensitivities of all Honourable Members and I am sure Your Honour will agree. There are certain points that are made from time to time in the heat of debate which are barbs and which may in fact be inflicted on one or the other side in such a way as to cause some personal discomfort. That in itself, Sir, will soon pass as Members who have been here for a long time can attest to that. However, there are certain matters which when they are said in debate need to be clarified in crystal clear terms such that there can be no doubt whatsoever in the minds of even the most purblind that what was said was not a fact. 5.45 p.m.

Now, Sir, this Honourable Chamber does not permit anyone to speak any truth that is not true or to speak any lies in this Chamber. This Honourable Chamber does not allow and would not permit an Honourable Member to make a statement that cannot be verified. It is important therefore, Sir, that when certain fundamentally devastating and destructive comments are made, even inadvertently, that such statements be eliminated from the mind of all those who might have heard them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not required to report to Your Honour and therefore will not. However, in the course of a debate where such a statement is made, it would have been prudent if the record could be so purified as to cause

whatever utterance that was made not to appear in the record. Mr. Speaker, I can only appeal to Your Honour because Your Honour is the only repository of the privileges of each Member in this House. I therefore say to Your Honour, Sir, that I have been authorized to speak for the Honourable Members and to say that just in case Your Honour might have heard even accidentally anything that might suggest to the contrary that to the knowledge of every single Member on this side and all Honourable Members in this House who served in the Government of Barbados at anytime that we have never knowingly suppressed information about any kind of devastation of the population of this country in such a way as to make it unknown to the public. We have never covered up and would never cover up any information about the deaths of citizens in this country. I wish to say categorically for the record that there has never been...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member please. I have given you quite a bit of latitude.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, and I am grateful for that.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point and may I refer you to Standing Order 28 (4).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am grateful to Your Honour for the latitude which Your Honour has given me because I recognize...

Mr. SPEAKER: If you are grateful, you must respond like you are grateful. You should not abuse...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not about to do that, Sir, but I needed to be certain.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you have made your point, Sir,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am grateful to Your Honour and I appreciate the position which Your Honour has taken in the circumstances and I recognize that Your Honour is acknowledging that you have accepted what we have said, Sir.

Thank you, Sir,

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, speaking on the adjournment, I should like to compliment the Leader of the House for adjourning the House at this point in view of the events which have taken place during the course of the day and I hope that the Members on her side, particularly those who have been entrusted with the great responsibilities of State, particularly those who have been given an instrument from the Governor-General of Barbados and who have sworn an oath to the people of

this country which oath relates to things like truth, **valor** and courage and other things like that will take a few moments between now and Friday to reflect on the very high standard which you as Speaker of this Chamber would expect of Members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have a long tradition in here and I believe that there are times when people may stretch an argument. There are times when people may trespass very close to misleading the House. But, Mr. Speaker, I believe that Cabinet Ministers have a sworn and solemn responsibility to be faithful and truthful to this Chamber. On any previous occasion that I know of that a Cabinet Minister has misled this Chamber in the history of this **country** – I am speaking in generic terms – the standards which you would defend and uphold would be such that if that Minister subsequently found out that the information which had been put before this Chamber was misleading that he would then come back to the House at an appropriate time and either withdraw it, correct it or apologize.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that this is the first time in a sitting of this Chamber when I would have had to reflect myself on what a Minister of the Crown should do or any other Member of this House when misleading information has been put before the Chamber and that information needs either to be corrected or withdrawn. I would think that in the circumstances, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. I think that you have gone beyond the little latitude that I was granting. May I refer you to Standing Order 28(4) which clearly states:

"It shall be out of order to reflect on any vote of the House or attempt to reconsider any specific matter upon which the House has come to a conclusion during the current session except upon a substantive motion for rescission."

This is what the Standing Order says and I believe the Honourable Member is out of order.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I want to deal now with Private Members' Business. That is the substantive matter on which I rose and I was merely setting **the** scene for what I was going to say in that regard. If I mislead the House, I think that it is my duty to apologize if I have been offensive to you or this Chamber in any way. I would think my first reaction should be to apologize. That is what we expect of Members of this Chamber. Apparently, this does not necessarily obtain but that is what we expect. Therefore, if any other Member in this Chamber has offended this Chamber, they should apologize. That is the standard of parliamentary conduct we expect.

But I will not belabour that point, because I have made it. I am going to go on and say this, Mr. Speaker, that we have 7 items of Private **Members'** Business and I would like to alert the Leader of the House that in due course I will be approaching her to request an Opposition Day to complete those items, two of which as I recall requests have been made for broadcasting.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, other Parliaments, as I was alerted by the Leader of the House herself during her contribution in the **CPA** Conference, have what are called Opposition Days. Since I have been Leader of the Opposition, I know of no such occurrence or event in which a day has been designated as Opposition Day in which we are entitled to call any matter of Private Members' Business. I know that Government's agenda is very full and I will be approaching the Leader of the House to have an Opposition Day in which we can have some of those very urgent and waiting matters which we have on the Order Paper up for consideration. I am just alerting the House of my intention at this stage.

The question that this Honourable House be now adjourned to Friday, 23rd February, 1996 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly.
5.55 p.m.

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