

THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION OF 1981-86

THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 18, 1985.

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Public Buildings on Wednesday, December 18, 1985, at 11.20 a.m. today.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator the Honourable Sir Arnott Cato, K.C.M.G., (President)

His Honour Senator J. C. W. Wickham, M.B.E., (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. C. A. Griffith, (Minister of State (Planning) Prime Minister's Office) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Hon. N. A. Barrow, (Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade)

Senator the Hon. O'Brien Trotman, (Minister of Health)

Senator J. E. D. Williams, (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office)

Senator Mrs. E. M. Lynch, G.C.M.

Senator Miss J. Clarke

Senator Mrs. M. O. Reece

Senator E. E. Greaves

Senator W. W. Hall

Senator A. W. A. McClean

Senator Mrs. G. G. Reader, M.B.E.

Senator the Rev. Canon I. McK. Jones

Senator C. Jemmott, B.S.S., J.P.

Senator J. E. Jordan

Senator H. E. Yearwood and Senator J. Nicholls.

Prayers were led by Rev. Dr. Lionel Crawford.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have a Message that was sent to the Deputy President. It has really been overtaken by

the passage of time, but there was no opportunity to read it before. It is from His Excellency the Governor-General, saying:

"I will be away from the island on private business in Jamaica from 4th to 8th December, 1985. Senator the Honourable Sir Arnott Cato has been designated by Her Majesty the Queen, under section 30 of the Constitution, to be Governor-General's Deputy during the period of my absence.

"As the Honourable the Senate will not be meeting before my departure, it will not be possible for the usual formal Message to be sent to your Chamber.

"Will you, therefore, please bring my absence formally to the attention of the Honourable the Senate when next it meets."

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 10) Order, 1985.

The Exchange Control (British High Commission) (Exemption) Order, 1985.

The Legal Profession (Disciplinary Committee Reference to Court of Appeal) Rules, 1985.

The Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 11) Order, 1985.

The Travel Ticket Tax (Exemption) Order, 1985.

Statements showing Net Customs and Excise receipts for six months ended 30th September, 1985.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 3) Order, 1985.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the National Training Board for the year 1984—85.

The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Barbados Water Authority for the years 1981—1982, 1982—1983 and 1983—1984.

Statements showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for 7 months ended 31st October, 1985.

The Law Revision (Rectification of Omissions) (No. 2) Order, 1985.

The Auditor's Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Board of Tourism for the year ended March, 1985.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Mr. President, I would like to beg leave of the Chamber to move the adjournment of this Chamber on a matter of urgent public importance relating to the imminent closure of the St. Joseph Hospital in St. Peter.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have had a communication from the Senator with regard to this subject, the imminent closure of the St. Joseph Hospital.

Under Standing Order 10 of the Standing Orders of the Senate, if the President is satisfied that the subject is one proper for discussion, he then asks whether the Senate will assent to the discussion of the motion. I am so satisfied that it is a subject proper for discussion, and in accordance with this Standing Order I am asking whether the Senate will give leave for the member to move this motion. Does the Senate give leave for the moving of this motion?

(The Senate replied in the affirmative).

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate so agrees.

My next duty then would be to fix the hour for discussion. It seems that it would be convenient for this item to be discussed as the first Order of the day.
11.30 a.m.

We have not a provision in our Standing Orders, such as they have in the Other Place, for a particular time limit for the speeches and for debate, so I am suggesting, for the approval for the Senate, that we follow the pattern of the Other Place to a certain extent. They allow 2½ hours for a debate of this nature and provide for 20 minute speeches. I am suggesting, for the approval of the Senate, that we allow a 2-hour period for this debate and not longer than 20 minutes for speeches. Does that meet with the approval of the Senate?

(The Senate replied in the affirmative).

Mr. PRESIDENT: Very well. Senator Greaves.

MOTION RE IMMINENT CLOSURE OF THE ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL, ST. PETER

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Mr. President, first I would like to thank you for accepting my request to move the adjournment of the Senate on this urgent and important matter, and I would also like to express my thanks to the other Honourable Senators for having agreed to have this particular matter discussed.

I believe that everybody is aware of the existence of the St. Joseph Hospital at Ashton Hall in St. Peter. It was opened for operations in 1966, and has since that time provided a useful service in the delivery of health care, not only to the people in the northern parishes of Barbados, that is, St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. Andrew and St. James in particular, but, also, I am told, to the people of Barbados, generally.

The services provided spanned the wide range of medical services — maternity, geriatrics, surgery, medicine, some emergencies — and there is no doubt that the hospital has played a useful role in the delivery of health care. In providing these services, the hospital employs approximately 100 persons, nurses and ancillary staff, and the existence of the hospital means a great deal to those persons who are employed there and to their families. Incidentally, most of the employees are from St. Lucy and from St. Peter.

The situation has been reached now where the operators of the hospital, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, have indicated that, for economic reasons, they will be forced to cease operations in January, 1986. I submit, Sir, that this will be a tragic loss to Barbados, to the north in particular, if the hospital is allowed to be

closed. This is a wonderful opportunity which is being presented, as it were, on a silver platter to the Government, on behalf of the people of Barbados, to get involved and save the St. Joseph Hospital from closing its doors. No time should be lost in this.

The Government getting involved in a private enterprise is nothing new. It is not a new policy which is being advocated by me or by those people who have openly expressed an interest in seeing the St. Joseph Hospital kept open. The Government, this Government, has been known to become involved — indeed, has intervened — in private enterprises which have faced financial problems. I only have to mention Aero Services and Tropic Air in which the Government became financially involved, and the sugar industry, in which the Government has placed considerable sums of monies at the disposal of the sugar industry. The last one involved millions of dollars, part grant and part guarantee, and one of the main arguments which was advanced on that occasion was the maintaining of jobs in the sugar industry. These are just some examples of Government intervention to indicate that the appeal which I am now advocating is not a new one. So that not only am I looking at it from the point of view of the provision of additional health care, but I am also looking at it from the point of view of the jobs which are provided in the function of the hospital.

I am suggesting, Sir, that intervention could be on the basis of either negotiating with the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother or other appropriate body with a view to entering into a partnership with them for maintaining the institution, or acquiring the property and maintaining it as a hospital offering a diversity of health and medical care services, particularly for the north of the island.

There are a number of advantages, I submit, which will accrue to this country if it maintains this hospital in the north. One is the relief it will provide on the pressures which are presently exerted on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Bridgetown. It will increase the scope for specialisation. It will develop the potential of Barbados as the medical centre of the Eastern Caribbean. It will provide employment for the people in the north. It will relieve the pressure on the transport services to Bridgetown. It will serve as a focal point for the organization of health and medical services in the north and it would be a vital link in the social, agricultural and industrial development of the north.

Incidentally, Sir, the Minister of Health went on record last week as saying that there is no need for the Government to get involved in the hospital because there is in existence the Maurice Byer Polyclinic in Station Hill, St. Peter and an efficient ambulance service. But, my question is, is the existence of a polyclinic and an efficient ambulance service an alternative or replacement

for a hospital which has all of the facilities for catering to the entire health needs of people who can possibly use it, and for whom, with proper Government intervention, the scope for the use of the hospital can be extended into much wider areas? I am saying, Sir, that that cannot be an alternative. It could, I dare say, be supplementary; but certainly there are no beds at the Maurice Byer Polyclinic, and it is a fact that the services which are offered at the hospital cannot be seen as duplication but as complementary.

The question has been asked, where would this money come from? I believe, Sir, that there are two sources for this money: from the Consolidated Fund or from the millions of dollars which have been collected in this country for the establishment of a free National Health Service. I believe that the figure is now well over \$50 million, and I cannot see how, with the existence of that money, the fact that the Government apparently has abandoned this National Health Service, the fact that money has been taken out of people's wages for years and this health service has not been delivered, that could not be a source from which the money could come to save this hospital and enter into the kind of arrangement that I am advocating.

11.40 a.m.

This is a matter which will redound to the benefit of the people of Barbados. We are dealing with people. Anything to do with health has to do with people, and I believe that the fact that we have the real estate there, we have the infrastructure there, as I said earlier on, provides the kind of opportunity for the Government which it should not lose. An opportunity like this will never be provided again, and I dare say that if we lose this opportunity we will find ourselves in a situation years down the road having to construct an additional hospital at a much higher cost.

I am not saying, and I want to go on record, Sir, that the Government should pay \$15 million for the hospital. I am not an expert on real estate costs. I do not know the value of the hospital, but certainly some kind of negotiations can be entered into. I believe in negotiations, and I believe that if a proper case is put, if the Government sits down with the owners of the hospital, that an arrangement can be made where the settlement would be to the satisfaction of both the Government and the owners. But at all costs, Sir, I would implore the Government not to miss an opportunity which is obviously a very important one.

It would be interesting for me just to refer to the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party of 1981 where we foresaw an opportunity of integrating the St. Joseph Hospital into our medical services. At page 22 of our Manifesto, under Hospitals, we had this to say:

"The Democratic Labour Party promises that it will recognise the wonderful work being done by the religious order of Nuns, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, through the St. Joseph Hospital. Discussions will be pursued with the Order so that the hospital may be aligned with the national hospital system, and so that full hospital services will be provided for the northern part of Barbados on a twenty-four hour basis through an input of resources."

We still stand by that position, Sir, and I believe that the whole question of integrating the hospital into the health services is of paramount importance.

I think that the representative for St. Peter, in response to a question which was raised about the involvement of the Government in the St. Joseph Hospital, took the opportunity to suggest that the wages which were negotiated for workers at the hospital led to the financial embarrassment which the hospital now faces. I want to say, Sir, that this is far from the truth. It just is not so. It would be interesting for you to compare, even with the increases which have been negotiated by the Barbados Workers' Union, the wages of the workers at the St. Joseph Hospital with the wages which the employees at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital get. I am saying, Sir, that the evidence which I have suggests very clearly that, for practical purposes, one could almost say that the employees at the St. Joseph Hospital have worked at tremendous financial sacrifice, even with the increases which we have negotiated up to the most recent one. A staff nurse at the St. Joseph Hospital will get \$1 136 per month; her counterpart at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital gets \$1 298 in a range going to \$1 598 per month, and that agreement is going to expire, that is the one for the nurses at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as of the 31st March next year. So that you see we are not comparing likes, and, as I said, the nurses have worked at tremendous sacrifice. We come to a senior nursing assistant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, who is paid in a range of \$1 141 per month to \$1 381 per month, and her counterpart at the St. Joseph Hospital earns \$984 per month, with the increases which the union has negotiated. A nursing assistant at the QEH is in a range \$783 to \$1 256 per month and her counterpart at the St. Joseph Hospital earns \$921 per month. I use these three examples, Sir, to indicate that, in spite of all that has been said, the fact is that we have tried to raise the level of wages, but the workers have worked at tremendous sacrifice because they believe in the hospital and they want to see the hospital kept alive and kept going.

I believe we have to recognise that this is a national matter and one in which the Government ought to take the lead. I do not want to become antagonistic in my speech on this Resolution. There are a lot of things which I could say, but for politeness I would refrain from saying them because, as I said, I see this Resolution not as a partisan one, but as one which should arouse the interest

and certainly should arouse the support of all members of this Honourable Chamber, and I would really like to urge the Government to do whatever it possibly can to take over the hospital or to enter into a partnership with the the hospital.

In conclusion, Sir, just let me say that I would want to publicly express my appreciation to the Prime Minister, who when I spoke to him on the telephone yesterday relative to the presentation of a petition which I have drawn up and which is being signed by many many people, agreed to receive me tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock for the presentation of the petition. I think that this is an indication of, I believe, his concern. I must confess that I was a little surprised by the very accommodating manner which was displayed, but as I said, I do not see this as a partisan political matter. My efforts to get this hospital kept open have been as a result of the many requests which I have had from people in St. Lucy and St. Peter particularly who spoke to me and urged me to do something to bring this to the public's attention in an effort to see if the Government can be persuaded to do something about the hospital. I am therefore urging the Government to do whatever can be done particularly as I suggested earlier on, either entering into a discussion with the Sisters with a view to entering into a partnership to keep the hospital going or alternatively taking over the hospital and administering it as a hospital providing medical care services for people in the northern parishes in particular, but, of course, opened to other people in general.

I would want to say that the reason why I am favouring Government intervention is because with Government intervention then the hospital can be kept opened to everybody as against it being maintained as a private hospital or indeed as against private enterprise getting into it where then hospital costs will probably be pushed further up and beyond the reach of a large majority of people in the north.

11.50 a.m.

I therefore commend the statements which were made relative to keeping the hospital open to all honourable Senators.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Wickham.

SENATOR J. C. W. WICKHAM: Mr. President, I am really very pleased to be able to use this opportunity to second Senator Greaves' motion. Senator Greaves has outlined his case with his usual detail and his usual passion.

The argument for the rescue, as I call it, of the St. Joseph Hospital is very clear to me. The Government's

interest in the provision of health facilities has been often expressed in this Senate, and there is no one who has ever argued that these things should not be provided for the national health. It seems to me that, the provision of a hospital in the north of the country stands firm on the basis of a provision for our national health, because there is no doubt that the hospital has served — its record is there — and it would be churlish in the people of Barbados if they were prepared to accept a facility or show a willingness to accept what amounted to a freeness, but refused to take up the challenge when paying for it is concerned. I should not like to be a member of a community which rejects the opportunity to put its money where its feet led them when the services were relatively free. Where the money will come from, I think is a secondary matter. The primary matter is whether the Government can summon the will to respond to this need.

Senator Greaves has spoken for his 20 minutes. I really do not need as long as that to convince myself, and certainly to attempt to convince this Senate, that there could have been few measures which could have come more deserving of support before us. We have hesitated sometimes — I have — to cast our votes for some measures which are before the House. I have no such hesitation today, and I urge Government support for this measure in the light of the justification of the need.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Trotman.

SENATOR THE HON. O'B. TROTMAN: Mr. President, Sir, for some time the Government of Barbados has been talking to the Sisters at St. Joseph with regard to how the Government could co-operate with the hospital at Ashton Hall.

I want to start off by saying that this debate on whether or not St. Joseph in its present form, or even an amended form, is necessary to the north, is one which, in my opinion, and one does not want to discredit emotion, has to be against a background of professional advice and sound judgement. The question of the need for the hospital in the north can be made out on strong emotional grounds, but the facts simply do not support that. The hospital was built 19 years ago. It has 108 beds. The hospital, at no time in its history, has managed to fill those beds, and in the last 5 years at least they have been operating at less than 38% occupancy, and when we say operating at 38% occupancy, we have to remember that 24 of those beds are taken by geriatrics. In fact, at any time you are only talking of a hospital, in terms of tertiary care, of 12, 16 beds in any one day, so we are not talking of any real big operation at Ashton Hall.

We have talked to the Sisters and we have asked them — they did not ask us — to present a worthwhile

proposal as to how we could co-operate with them. The first point they raised was the question of casualty services and their Head of Staff himself said that the casualty service could not get off the ground, because one has to face the fact that St. Joseph in its present form, and unless we intend to build a second QEH in Ashton Hall in any amended form, will not be a hospital of the same calibre as QEH. If one had an accident, for example, say in the cement plant, since that is the biggest industry now I believe in terms of investment in the north, and rushed an injured person to St. Joseph, with restricted services, with no doctor in residence, only on call, what you are up against in real terms is that a man in an ambulance would be rushed from the cement plant to St. Joseph so that they could call a doctor to attend the man, then you discover that, in any case, St. Joseph cannot handle the situation, so you have got to get another ambulance to send him down to the QEH, and their Chief of Staff himself said that the whole operation did not make sense; the casualty operation and the emergency services which are so well spoken about were simply not on. And when we looked at the details of what they were telling us about the emergency service, they were saying they would have a physician on call — not in residence, Sir, on call — to handle emergencies, and they would do the emergency service on that basis from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., and then from thereon, from 4.00 p.m. until 8.00 a.m., the Government would have to run the facility at St. Joseph. In other words, we would have to duplicate the casualty, run one at Martindales Road and one at St. Joseph.

When one looks at the need for the real casualty in the north, it does not exist. We are behaving, Sir, as if we are talking of a big country in which the north is Alaska and the south is Texas. The north is 20 minutes away by ambulance. I am submitting that you are far better off in terms of better health care, and that is the opinion of all the doctors, being ferried from St. Peter with trained EMT service to the QEH, where you have proper back-up lab, X-ray and all the other services, than to fool around in St. Joseph Hospital and then discover they cannot take care of the people. So since the doctor who represented St. Joseph himself said that the casualty does not make sense, I do not know why it is that people are persisting to disagree with the advisors of St. Joseph Hospital.

We asked them then, Mr. President, to look at the question of obstetrics and gynaecology. They said to us they could make between 12 to 20 beds available to us if we would send our low risk patients to St. Joseph. When we looked at the fine print of what they were offering the low risk patients at St. Joseph, it was no more, in fact, than a midwifery service which they were proposing to offer, with an arrangement again to rush patients with complications by ambulance to QEH. In other words, what they were saying is that as babies used to be delivered in Barbados many years ago, as I understand,

Sir, by midwives in their homes, they would do the same thing at St. Joseph, and we would have to pay them. When we asked what relief this would result in in terms of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, it meant that we would release, at most, 3 beds per day at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. That is a great relief which we are talking about — 3 beds per day from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital — to go to the St. Joseph Hospital! that is the relief which the St. Joseph Hospital could give to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. When we asked them for the bill, they said, "Well, for that relief, if you do not object, we would like you to pay \$600 000 a year." I do not believe that the citizens of this country would want us to pay \$600 000 a year merely to release 3 beds per day. That is a tall order in any country.

12.00 noon.

We have general statements made, Mr. President, about the importance of the hospital in terms of delivery of health care in this country. We are talking about not people from the north, and I invite the Senator from the north, since he is using that term "the north," to tell the public what people from the north use as a hospital in the north. It is used by the middle income people of Barbados who do not want to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. That is the truth of it. And in terms of people who walk into the hospital, the reports that are made to the Chief Medical Officer say that 1 person from the north goes to the hospital every 24 hours. That is what the hospital tells us, not what we hear in the streets.

The whole fact of the matter, Sir, is that the hospital is obviously a bad investment. Obviously, the studies done prior to the building of the hospital must have misguided the investors. It is not a feasible operation. They say that to make it feasible they will have to keep 80% of their beds occupied every day and they could only make 38%. So however they turn, they are losing money.

We hear, Sir, that it will be a tragic loss to the north of Barbados. We have been talking in the Ministry of Health about the impact of St. Joseph Hospital on the health care delivery system in this country, and all the advice available to us is that there will be no loss in terms of health care delivery as it is now. So that we are not going to get into the business of rushing into buying the St. Joseph Hospital. The question of whether or not we want the property is another ball game, and I want to get on to that, Sir.

At present, we are about to start — and I believe, in fact, the contract is within a couple of yards from me — we are about to sign a contract with an international company which will start a \$10 million project at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in mid-January. For \$10 million you are going to get 90 beds at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, plus new storage facilities, plus a

new burns unit, plus new operating theatres, plus new lecture rooms for the university. It is a matter how we invest our money. Do we put our money in a sinking business or do we put it in a profitable business? Basically that is the choice we are faced with, Sir. So that although at present one has to concede that the hospital has a faster turn around of mothers than we would like, the fact is that when we get the extra 48 beds, which are designated for obstetrics and gynaecology, we will have more than enough beds, they tell me, to handle these problems until the year 2 000, unless there is a real baby boom in the north.

I want to talk about the property, not the hospital, because as a hospital, all the advice that is available suggests that the hospital as it is now will not fit into our health care delivery system properly, and that even if you bought the hospital, we will still have massive works to carry out to make it useful. I want to talk about the property. We are at present undertaking a study partly financed by the Inter-American Development Bank. It is costing us \$600 000, and they are trying to find out exactly what the psychiatric and geriatric needs are in Barbados, and I believe, Sir, that the property at Ashton Hall might be of some use in terms of our geriatric and psychiatric needs down the line. We are at present, for example, Mr. President, using Jenkinsville as a place to try and save the drug addicts and alcoholics in Barbados and that is probably not the best place to do that. So that there might be a role somewhere down the line for the property. But that is a decision that we can only make when we have had all the studies completed. Certainly, we are not prepared to jump off and prejudge the study and say what we want the property for.

The Senator makes other points about Government's intervention in Tropic Air and Aero Services, and the sugar industry. But he chose some bad comparisons, Sir, because the Government needed Tropic Air and Government needs the sugar industry. The Government does not need the hospital. I want to separate the question of hospital as from the property. The hospital is talking about 12 people who do not want to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I am not running down middle class people who do not want to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This is a free country. If somebody does not want to go to a general hospital where the poor and suffering go, they have a right to go to a private clinic. I have absolutely no problem with that. I have, in fact, paid to keep relatives in St. Joseph Hospital. I have no quarrel with people who want to go to the St. Joseph Hospital and not to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I believe that, in all societies like ours, it is always going to be a group of people who want to have services in private, away from the limelight of public scrutiny. I have no problem with that. But at the same time we cannot provide that service at so high a cost to the taxpayers.

We were a little bit disappointed, Mr. President, about the way in which the people who represent St. Joseph went about their business. We in the Ministry are really disappointed, because we have been talking with the people at St. Joseph now for over a year. They sent a Mr. Nugent down and he made it quite clear — well, he, apparently, was in the accounting business — he said straight that what he was interested in is \$1.2 million per year to keep the hospital afloat, and he started at \$1.2 million and worked backwards. That was a non-starter with us. When the new agent informed us that he would be here to talk about the hospital, we indicated to him that we had some interest in assisting the hospital to keep its 12 beds going. While we were trying to tidy up meetings with him, first of all he left the country and then came back, tried to get a meeting the same day on which he arrives and I could not attend. I sent the Permanent Secretary, and the Permanent Secretary reported that he attended the meeting, the gentleman said good morning and all of that, and then said, "we are going to close the hospital on January 19." Open and shut! Certainly that is not the way we would have expected the hospital to talk to us. Well, maybe that is their style. They are Americans and we are not of that culture, and we do not do things the same way.

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. O'BRIEN TROTMAN:
Well, you were trained in America, so do not get into that mess.
12.10 p.m.

We were a little bit disappointed at how they handled us, because we believe that especially now with the massive construction going on at QEH, one angle we were considering, Mr. President, was a question as to whether or not we could not, during the 2 years of construction at QEH, invest some money into St. Joseph, maybe on a lease arrangement, to take over some of our beds from us during the construction period. During that time the study would be completed, because it is a 2 year study approximately and 2 year construction project, so that at the end of the construction and the study we would know exactly if we want the property, and if we want the property exactly what we were going to do with the property. We were really very disappointed in the way they just took off and announced to us that they were going to close the hospital.

I do not believe that it is in the interest of the taxpayers to buy the hospital merely for the sake of buying a hospital, because we do not need a second QEH in the north. It is possible, as I said, that we could use it for rehabilitation in respect of our drug problem. It is possible we can use it for some of our geriatric cases. It is possible we might be able to use it for people who want to

convalesce, after the QEH. There are a lot of possibilities. I do not believe, however, that there is one doctor in Barbados who is prepared to say that there is a need for a hospital offering general hospital services in the north.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, I believe that the Minister of Health has struck the correct note with respect to this entire issue. I recognise that a number of people have become emotional about it simply because the hospital administrators have their own agenda. I believe that those administrators would have known long in advance that a decision was taken to close the hospital, and I think it is unfair, to say the least, to ask Government to make a decision within 3 weeks or thereabout as to whether or not there is justification for taking over the running of the St. Joseph Hospital.

I believe that a need is not one that should be presumed, but a need is one that should be established. First and foremost we have to establish whether or not there is a need for the hospital in the north. Secondly, it must be determined how many people of the so-called north actually use the services at the hospital. To be quite honest, the figures reveal that the hospital has found it extremely difficult to have an occupancy level above 38% for quite a long time. The facts of the matter are that even those individuals that use the hospital are basically geriatric patients who reside down there until they are ready to go to the Great Beyond, and there are a few persons who can find it financially possible to use the services of the hospital, and they are in the minority. Regrettably, some of those same persons who use the hospital went along owing the hospital a lot of money which they did not pay, and that, to my mind, was part of the financial problem with the St. Joseph Hospital.

I believe that Senator Greaves in his contribution was trying to justify the wage increases given to the nurses and the staff at the St. Joseph Hospital, but I dare say that the financial difficulties of the hospital were not any better then when the decision was taken to increase salaries as it is now that the decision has been taken to close it down. Therefore, I dare say, as a representative of that trade union which negotiated on behalf of the workers, that the issue did arise as to whether or not the union in its wisdom ought to have granted those sizeable wage increases, which we cannot deny — and I do not think Senator Greaves would want to deny — and that they also added to the difficulty of the hospital. I know workers like to believe that they receive comparable wages — I myself have had experience in this respect — but we cannot get away from the fact that there has to be some relation between a company's or institution's ability to pay and the question of the increase in salaries. I believe that this is one issue, as far as the wage settlement is concerned, which cannot be overlooked in the future.

But you are talking about difficulties in terms of salaries and difficulties in terms of people using the services at the St. Joseph Hospital refusing to pay. The decision then was taken to close it, and Government was asked to make a decision in a short period of time but we cannot rush into any decision to buy the hospital and run the hospital when indeed we might have a superfluity of hospitals and polyclinics and what not in the north. Already a number of people in the St. Thomas area, in the St. Andrew area, in the St. Joseph area and St. James, which also encompasses the north, use the facilities at the QEH.

I know the question of the retention or the safeguarding of jobs is a particularly critical one, but indeed it cannot transcend everything. It cannot transcend making a wise decision. For instance, I notice that Senator Wickham, in my own way of describing it, was a bit emotional on the matter, but people cannot get emotional about it. We have to sit down and rationally look at what has taken place with respect to the hospital, whether or not it has been used by people in the north, and from all statistics you find that the services at the QEH are used to a great degree and the St. Joseph Hospital has only been there providing a service for a few persons who can afford it.

I regret the time frame that was given to Government. I believe that a decision cannot be rushed into. Already we have certain private sector initiatives with respect to the same hospital, and they cannot be ruled out. I believe it provides an opportunity for a set of individuals or certain private sector interests to acquire the facility and run it. I dare say, depending on who it caters to, it could even be a foreign exchange earner for Barbados, and Government is quite willing, if indeed there is that kind of interest in the institution, to bring it under the International Business Companies Act to give it whatever tax benefits and import duties that could be possible, and further than that, the Prime Minister has made it abundantly clear that he also is even prepared to lend whatever idea of promoting such an institution some assistance.

I do not believe that Government can rush too quickly into making a decision. It has to be a case in which we must establish the need for the hospital in the north, and while, as I mentioned before the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother have their own agenda, Government also has to take full cognisance of \$15 million. Ultimately, the taxpayers of Barbados will be called upon to pay the \$15 million, and I dare say that unless the Government is particularly prudent in this regard, should we rush ahead and buy the institution then to find that we have difficulty in putting it to good use, the Government would be criticized down the road for having made an unwise decision.

12.20 p.m.

I think you, Mr. President.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: Mr. President, I would just like to say a few words on this motion in support of it, because as a Barbadian, I believe that it is rather important. Indeed, it is not nebulous. It is one of those situations which one cannot address according to where he abodes. I do not believe we can look at it in terms of north, south, east or west, but the fact is that the St. Joseph Hospital is in the north and it has given ample services to this country in health care to all Barbadians.

I, for one, do not believe, even if the Minister said so, that it has not been beneficial to the poor people of the north. I do not believe that, because I know that when the Emergency Department was opened up in October, 1983, people from the neighbouring districts frequented that department and were glad to pay the \$30 for professional services. Sir, that is the reason why I feel that the Government must, of necessity, look very seriously at this entire situation. If the Government takes over the hospital, or if they get involved, I feel that the entire scenerio would change. I feel that those beds that the Minister talked about that are empty now would be full. That is my position.

I recognize — that is what the Minister said — that the negotiators down there are bad negotiators. That could be true. I have no doubt in my mind that the negotiators for the St. Joseph Hospital might not have been trained in industrial relations. They might not have been trained in the whole business of takeovers and things like that. They might have presented a bad case. I do not know. The Minister, and indeed the Government, would have to tell us this.

But, Sir, when you look at the entire situation, and you talk about industrial development in the north and the spread of tourism, one has to look at it very seriously. Only a few days ago, I was catching up on the Barbadian news and I noticed that when Her Majesty, the Queen, visited the north, the parliamentary representative for St. Lucy was ecstatic. He felt, why should she not go to the north? Why should she not see our Arawak Cement Plant and our Heywood's Hotel? And, "as long as I am here, there would be further excursions. There would be more involvement of my people from St. Lucy and from the north." Well, Sir, I find it passing strange that I have not heard a word now about the people of the north or even the people of Barbados when talking in terms of this hospital.

The Arawak Cement Plant, as far as I know, Sir, sent its workers to the St. Joseph Hospital, I believe under contract, no doubt because they had a good plan. In terms of tourism, although visitors to our shores can be injured, whether while doing fishing or otherwise. In fact, there was a girl who fell through a glass bottom boat, and she got to the St. Joseph Hospital in a Defence Force truck,

just getting a lift. You know that these people, for instance, like the gentleman who collapsed on the jetty at the Arawak Cement Plant the other day — high blood pressure, it could have been worse — were attended to promptly. Sir, there are divers cases where you have people attended to at this hospital, in positions which would have made it very difficult for them to get to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, that is in terms of the nature of their illness.

The Minister had said — well, it was not the Minister, I think it was the Minister for Immigration — he talked about the ability to pay. One knows that he understands, from hanging around the negotiating table, that the ability to pay is one of the facets that determines whether a company has the ability to conclude a successful agreement. Heaven knows how many times he has sat around the negotiating table at Cable & Wireless and told them about the ability to pay and, 'We want our money. If you do not have our money, finish.' You are quite aware of this, too. But you have to look at the money that you pay in comparable industries. If the people at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital get \$1 000, it is obvious that the people at the hospital in the north, doing the same job, would aspire to get the same \$1 000. That is a fact, so it is comparability and, therefore, Sir, when people walk about and say that the 18% that Senator Greaves and his colleagues negotiated for the workers at the hospital was one of the reasons why it is closing down, Sir, I cannot agree with that. That is what is being knowingly said all over Speightstown. I do not believe that the increase of 18% is a reason that actually contributed to the people being sent out. The other one is because of the closure of the St. George's Medical School. Hogwash! I cannot believe that. It is not true. There are reasons, and the reasons will be told in due course. Of course, Sir, in 20 minutes one does not have the time to actually go into them.

What I would like to say is that there are many tourists coming down here who use the facilities. The American Nursing Journal told me only last night, while reading it, that you have to pay \$536 per day for the ICU treatment in the States. I happen to know. This time last year, Sir, I was lying in a bed in Melbourne, and it was very expensive, as you would know — \$500 a day. There is no doubt about it. We have been able to see the situation in Barbados where the tourists come from the United States of America, and further afield, who have been able to use the services. But, what is more important is that Barbadians should be able to use the services, and I believe, Sir, that if the Government subsidizes this whole situation, we would have a case in which Barbadians will be able to benefit further from the services down at St. Peter.

In the House of Assembly today, we have representatives from St. Peter, St. Lucy, St. James North,

St. Joseph and St. Andrew on the Barbados Labour Party side, the Government of the day, representatives who should be able to come together and discuss the problems of their constituents and impress upon the Minister, and, indeed, the Cabinet, the dire need that the people in that part of the country have for medical care. Sir, I am saying, that one can only conclude that they do not believe it can be done, or they are not interested in doing it, and I feel that the people of Barbados will have to decide who is right and who is wrong.

12.30 p.m.

The hospital, Sir, has had its problems. There is no doubt about it. The Minister said that it was a matter of middle class people benefitting, that poor people never benefited. That is not particularly true. We know the problems that the QEH had for many a year when people went in there, used the facilities and did not pay. We know that, Sir. At the St. Joseph Hospital they used to do that too, and because of their religious background, or because of their religious concept, they obviously do not put people in court, and because of the large sums of money owed, you had to put a deposit of \$600. That, of course, would debar the people in the lower echelons of the society from actually going in there. That is true. I do not deny that. I am not telling the Minister that he is untruthful this time. I am not saying that. I am saying that he is correct, that the people in the lower echelons of the society regard the hospital as one for the upper classes. That is because they have had to pay for the services.

Sir, the hospital has tried in my opinion — I have had family down there and I have had friends, so have you and everyone in here; no one can deny that — they have tried to get an ambulance, and I think it was the Rotarians in Miami, if my memory serves me right, who paid half of the cost. The Rotarians had a function at Sandy Lane Hotel. I did not go, but I bought a ticket because it was a worthy cause. Because of the economic constraints the institution had, they obviously could not pay for the ambulance — things like the taxes — and I believe, Sir — I am almost sure — that the ambulance I see going around here making a lot of melodious strains is the same ambulance. I believe, Sir, that they have tried, and it is not right for people to believe, or to be given the idea, that they have not tried at all to get their whole ship in order.

The truth is that it costs a lot of money, and their negotiating prowess might not be the type that has endeared them to the Government. I notice that the Prime Minister has said that they seem to be contemptuous of the Government. I do not know. The Minister alluded to the fact that they, being Americans, just seem to treat you any old-fashioned way. The Minister over there has objected to that; so do I. I do not

believe that because a man is an American he is going to treat a Barbadian stupidly. I believe that if we approach the matter in a sane way, they would have some sort of meaningful discussions.

Sir, it does not matter what anybody says. There will always be a place for private cases being done at a hospital, because people like to know that they have privacy. When women are going for their facelifts, they do not want anybody to know. When they are going for abdominal reductions they do not want anybody to know. When they are going for breast reductions, they do not want anybody to know. When you have a gynaecological problem, women do not want people to walk about and talk about them. Therefore, of necessity, you will find that people will always pay for these services; so I am not going to knock them. I am only going to say that I am cognizant of the view that people will have these sorts of problems.

Sir, is my time up?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Not yet.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: Sir, you have a situation at Heywoods where you have one nurse down there. I am saying that in all the industries where you have a 24 hour day, the laws of this country say that you should have a nurse per shift. You have one nurse down there. That is not enough. Looking at the entire West coast where people tend to go to St. Joseph, you find that one nurse is not enough, and because of the fact that you have such a paucity of trained medical attendants around the place, it means that it is essential that you must have these services. The people of the north are not the only ones that have babies; they are not the only ones that have accidents. I am saying that in the maternity ward at the hospital there are beds between beds. Sometimes there are 6 babies and 6 beds, and what happens is this — we are so ashamed, some of us seem to think that because our foreparents used to have babies in the fields and go to work in the afternoon, women must do that — a lady would have a baby this morning and by afternoon they are ready to cart her out because of the fact that there is no room in the inn. I seem to have heard that before, at Christmas time there was no room in the inn. There is never any room at that inn up there, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, for the ladies who are having babies. There are beds down there in St. Joseph Hospital. I understand that the position is supposed to be one of 50 beds. Do you know, Sir, how that would alleviate the problem in the maternity wards in Barbados?

Look, with my mother and your mother in the Thirties and Forties, it was a situation where women never came out of their child bed for 9 days. We have come a long way since then. When they caught a cold it was a thing called a lying-in cold that remained with them for the balance of their lives. Older women attest to this, not

the younger generation. We feel it is a small matter, but it is not a small matter. All I am asking is that the Government take cognisance of these problems and do something which would alleviate them.

I do not believe, as the Minister on the other side, Senator Williams, said, that it was a matter of 3 weeks. I do not believe that the negotiations were going on for only 3 weeks. I tend to think or I tend to believe that the proposals were put forward as far back as April, so I do not believe you should try to tell people it has just been pushed on you. I do not believe that a Government would sit down and allow people to railroad their intentions on them. You are there to manage, you are the Government, duly elected, and you must manage. You must not only cope, you have to manage, and, Sir, I believe that with all the representation they are supposed to have in the north, the Barbados Labour Party should be well aware of the needs of the people. As you go through the constituencies you can see where a representative is there from the party in power, that they are represented. You can see, Sir, as you go around St. Michael and you go up there in Bay Land, a multi-purpose court for nearly every 100 people. You can see these things. How is it that with all the north voting for the Barbados Labour Party....

Aside.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: I just met President Zia, a serious man, so don't truck with me.

With all the representation in the north, I think that the Government should find little difficulty in seeing the plight of the people.

And talking about emotional rhetoric, talking about emotionalism, I believe that if there is one Senator in this august Chamber that will never be accused of being emotional, it is Senator Wickham. I believe so. I do not really feel that because he does not particularly agree with you at this point that you should now say that he is emotional. No, Sir! I believe he is a concerned citizen like me, and like Senator Greaves and many of you over there. The only thing is, Sir, I hope to God that they would get up today and let us know what is the courage of their conviction. Let us for the first time, for this good time of felicitations, "Peace on earth and goodwill to men," get up and say that we feel as concerned citizens that this should be done. Let us not be like blind sheep going forward. We do not want that at all.

12.40 p.m.

What we need...

Aside.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: I have often referred to the fact, Sir, that Senator Jemmott is an elderly man and I respect his age.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Alright.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: I would like him to refrain from interjecting when I am talking, because I do not believe that he has the capacity to understand exactly what I am saying. So do not cross me, Sir. Do not get me annoyed!

Mr. PRESIDENT: You only have 1 minute.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: I have one more annoyance?

Sir, I am going to end by saying that this is a matter for all Barbadians, a national issue. I am not going to be sidetracked as I finish. I do feel that for the betterment of all Barbadians, the Government should look into this one very seriously. They are the ones to govern. They must do what they think is fit.

I have heard it said that \$15 million is a lot of money and one must tread wearily and cautiously when spending it. I come into this august Chamber where sums of \$90 million for a road and \$75 million and more for a bank have been discussed quite freely.

(Aside: SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: \$75 million?)

SENATOR W. W. HALL: Seventy million, \$75 million! I feel that the Government, although recognizing the fact that it is a lot of money, as Senator Wickham said, have to find it somewhere if they feel that it is well spent. If they do not feel it would be well spent, they should come to the people and let them know, Sir.

That is my contribution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I am a bit unclear as to the precise content of the motion before us. I am not sure whether we are discussing a motion for Government to subsidize what will continue as a private hospital or whether we are discussing a motion for Government to make the St. Joseph Hospital part of our public hospital system.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Are you discussing a motion for the adjournment of the Senate on the matter of the St. Joseph Hospital?

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Yes.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Say what you like about it.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Yes. We are talking about the St. Joseph Hospital, but from the suggestion coming from the person who moved the

motion for the adjournment, I am not sure whether the essence of it is whether Government should be concerned about subsidizing a private hospital or acquiring the St. Joseph Hospital system, so I will address both points.

In relation to the question of a private hospital, I think Government could only reasonably be asked to involve itself in subsidizing such a venture if it were shown that the public system is inadequate, such as the secondary school system, and therefore you need private entrepreneurs, so to speak, to become involved and assist Government in a critical area. I do not think that is the case in Barbados. I think the public hospital system is adequate, and if it is not adequate it can be made adequate at cheaper cost than would be involved, let us say, in subsidizing the St. Joseph Hospital.

As far as a private hospital is concerned there is the second question as to the extent to which it can become close to being viable in terms of the number of clients that it should attract and so on. We have been told that it is far away from that and very few people, in relative terms, given the size of the hospital, do make use of those services, and the occupancy rate in somewhere in the vicinity of 38%. In those circumstances, therefore, it would seem that as a private hospital St. Joseph is essentially non-viable.

Speaking to the other options, whether Government should acquire it and include it as part of the network of general hospitals or have it as a special purpose hospital, such as a psychiatric hospital, again we should look carefully at whether such an approach would be cost efficient and whether it would enhance the quality of medical care at the level of the hospital. I would hazard a guess that the answer to including it in a network would be unfavourable to Government taking that step. I do not think it would be a cost efficient thing acquiring that rather than expanding QEH. I do not think it would enhance the quality of medical care. I, for one, would not want to be hospitalized at St. Joseph Hospital or I would not want my immediate family to be hospitalized there. I would prefer them to be close to the highest quality facilities in the case of emergency. I do not think that the size of the country is such as to render it necessary, or even desirable, that people living in the north should be hospitalized in the north. On the question of a special purpose hospital, a psychiatric hospital, again one should look carefully at the question of acquiring a building designed for other purposes as opposed to getting a custom built building which from the start is set up as a psychiatric hospital. You might find that the second approach might be more cost efficient and give you a facility which can provide better service to the patients so to speak.

All in all, therefore, what I would suggest is that Government has to look very carefully at any decision to

acquire that property or to continue running it as a hospital. We have made our fair share of doubtful investment decisions, such as the Central Bank and so on in recent years, and from here in.....

Laughter.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN:.....we have to be very careful as to how we spend our money. We must, in my view, look carefully at the mileage which we get out of the investment. As far as \$15 million is concerned, I think that if Government had \$15 million to spend on St. Joseph, they could spend it much more effectively enhancing the teaching and research capability of the University of the West Indies. If there is a neglected area in terms of immediate relief, I think it would be our tertiary level of education in terms of the levels of research facilities that are provided there, and I think that the dividends we pay back to the country would be far, far, far greater than a few people going down to the St. Joseph Hospital when they have the option of going elsewhere.

Thank you.

Applause.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Nicholls.

SENATOR J. NICHOLLS: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I have sat here for the last 1 hour and 30 minutes listening rather carefully to the arguments, because they really are arguments, and, using an analogy of a situation where we are in a court case, trying to determine exactly what the prosecutor was trying to say on the main points in his case and having no difficulty in discerning what the defence was putting forward as the main points of their cases.

When Senator Hall was in the process of his address I was not at all surprised that it was a clear indication, at least to me, from someone who has a lot of experience in a different field, what it means and how to go about playing for time....

Laughter.

SENATOR J. NICHOLLS:....because — I have no difficulty about getting into any emotional state — when — and I speak from a recent experience as well, as recently as April this year — I had to make a decision as to whether to send my wife to the hospital being discussed now or to the QEH to have our son, I had no difficulty in making the decision that because of superior facilities in the case of any emergency that might arise, she was going to be hospitalized at the QEH.

It is funny how some individuals can talk about the problems of the constituents and the care and concern that they have for constituents, and it is even more hilarious when one considers the comments coming from persons who do not share the same political affiliation as I do. Those comments would be better directed to someone on their side who has for a long time not heard the pleas and cries of his constituents. But, in a very short time, a correction to that erroneous situation is going to be made, and the same people will have the decision in their hands to make, and they will judge the performances that have gone before.

12.50 p.m.

The case about whether or not we are going to allow the hospital to close, whether the Government gets involved either on a purchase or lease basis, in really a very straightforward one such that we should have no difficulty in coming to a decision. You cannot talk about an institution serving individuals unless you look at hard facts to support the argument as to whether or not those individuals that you are putting the case for actually utilize the institution. I am not convinced that I have heard that from those who are arguing it, albeit emotionally, and I will deal with that in a few moments. I am convinced that, on hard facts, and that is what I am dealing with, you can't put a strong enough case for either of two of the options that have been mentioned for Government's involvement. You really have to look at it, because you are talking about spending taxpayers' money in either way, in a far more serious way than I think some folks have already done.

I do not know on what basis you have arrived at the decision that once the Government acquires, the institution become viable. From my own personal observation, that is when you are going to run into more difficult problems. And the same persons who will be urging you on to make such a decision, from my own experience as well in this country, will be the first persons to jump up and say, 'well, you have the Government, you have the mandate to rule and you are put there to make the decisions. You ought not to have been led or misled by us.' The comment has been made in the Other Place discussing another matter. So that, in the final analysis, the responsibility of this responsible Government is to the citizens of Barbados and they cannot be allowed, and will not be allowed, to make decisions that involve public funds on the basis of emotion.

What I think is an important fact that has to be looked at very carefully is the situation with those 100 people who now have their jobs in jeopardy, and I might want to suggest to the Government that time be spent looking to see in what way either those individuals can be brought into the current health system or otherwise. Because I think that we have to do as much in our power

to make sure that, by closing its doors, another private enterprise does not swell the unemployment ranks in Barbados. The point has to be made, because I have heard a lot of talk, and a lot of blame has been placed at the doors of the Government with respect to the unemployment situation in Barbados without looking to see what has caused an undue swelling of the unemployment ranks in Barbados. So I think that we have to look very seriously at the situation of the 100 people whose jobs are in jeopardy and let us discuss and find some viable, reasonable way in which we can try to save these 100 individuals and the families which they support from being out in the financial cold.

A suggestion was made, indeed by the Minister, that the Government was looking at the possibility of the structure, the real estate, that is situated in St. Peter with a view to providing psychiatric care, and I am absolutely sure I heard him mention drug abuse rehabilitation as well. It really heartens my heart, Mr. President, to hear that at least one of the suggestions made by the committee that I had the pleasure to chair for International Youth Year, and that is for a drug abuse and rehabilitation facility, is receiving in some way favourable viewing from the Government. For a very long time we have swept under the carpet the problem that exists here in Barbados with respect to drugs, and I do not think that we have realized that there is a need, and the young people will tell you that there is a very real need, for a special service to rehabilitate those individuals who have suffered in some way from drug abuse. So that I will be indeed very pleased to learn that that is given some consideration with respect to putting the facilities to some reasonable use.

I really could not believe, Sir, that in justifying the retention of that institution that you could really get up and talk of odd, abstract cases of people falling through whatever, falling through glass bottom boats and collapsing on jetties. How can you justify, viably and financially, the involvement of Government in an institution by supporting your argument with odd, offset cases? Even if you have to deal with 6 of them in a year, you would have to do an analysis to see what you would really want to charge the people who you are going to bring in for that emergency service to make the whole operation viable. So you really cannot bring an argument that weak to this august Chamber and expect that this Senator is going to buy it. I do not know about the others, but not this one. You see, I have a particular advantage in that I have not been around long enough yet to be influenced one way or the other. So I am putting the case straight, down the line, with no axe to grind, and if I think you are talking less than what I consider sense, then I have no problem in telling you so. You have to show how, if you lease the operation, you can justify the money that you are going to put into it. You have to show how, if you subsidize it, it can be justified, because there is another situation of subsidies in Barbados or subsidization in Barbados, and every year

there is a debate on how much money the Government is pouring into that institution, whether they can justify putting it in there, and whether they are in actual fact making back what they are putting in, and how, or if, it is becoming a burden on the taxpayers of Barbados. So you are now suggesting, without putting forward a very clear-cut case, that you should get into a situation of further subsidizing as well. That, to me, does not gel.

If you want to come down now to the actual fact of the purchase — and I heard the figure of \$15 million being bandied about, but I am going to be cautious and say that whatever figure it is, because I do not know what the real estate value of the property is, and when you are arguing facts I do not think that you can take information that you see either appearing in the media or you hear being thrown around in the street to bring to serious argument — the cost indicated has not in any way been justified. I have seen nothing from any experts to suggest that that is the cost, notwithstanding that point, Sir. And if you are going to think in terms of the purchase, you have to look where it fits into your over-all national health programme. 1.00 p.m.

To say that the Government has now decided to scrap the National Health Service is utter nonsense. Simply because you do not agree, or you decide to modify or change, or not bother with one particular aspect of it is in no way suggestive that you are deciding to shelve it. But, you see, some of us tend to like to say things because we know it is going to be picked up outside, and there is a state right now in the country where very few people want to listen to those of us who hold political office or who aspire to hold political office, because those who are there or who have gone before have made it a point to speak in half truths and to say what suits them at a particular time. I like to think in terms of myself as one of the new breed of politicians who have surfaced to take Barbados into the year 2000 and I do not plan to follow that road that was used by those in the past.

So that when you look at the whole situation you have to look (a) in terms of the initial cost if you want to get into that, and (b) in terms of the running cost. My final point is that there is an admission of prolonged economic losses and declining revenues, and I am yet to be convinced that if the Government gets into the venture there will be a turnaround, significantly or at all, to justify the move that they will take.

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. President, as I understand it, the motion really is that the St. Joseph Hospital — one presumes its imminent closure — should be discussed, and that clearly is not a topic with which any of us ought to be able to find any difficulty. Indeed, as I sat here and heard 2 or 3 speakers — I was not here for the opening contributions — it did strike me that only one Senator had any difficulty discussing the topic

and therefore preferred an excursion into the realm of the amusing.

I thought Senator Hall's speech particularly amusing, but he did also emphasise two points. As he spoke he talked about this hospital which was very heavily used by visitors and by people in the north. I think there is room for what you would like to be distinguished from what actually is a fact. If this hospital were so heavily used by people in the north and by the visitor industry, then why would it be closing? Is the Senator inferring mismanagement or is he inferring that there is failure for other reasons which perhaps ought not to be mentioned here? I do not know anything about it, but what is he saying? It does not seem to me to be consistent with the pattern of heavy use in a hospital which is a fee paying hospital, and a hospital the mores of which, my earliest recollection tells me, really concerned the practice of certain doctors in this society who, when they wanted to charge an arm and a leg, would put you in the St. Joseph Hospital rather than put you in the Queen Elizabeth, although they had rights to practice at the Queen Elizabeth.

I can personally tell you, Sir, of a particular instance when a lady came to me one afternoon and said to me that she needed information because a peculiar situation had arisen. Her daughter had taken ill at school — I am not going to indicate the nature of the illness because it would be like pointing fingers at people — and she had taken that daughter to one doctor who had given her, as it were, a statement of account. He said an operation had to be performed immediately and that the child should be taken to the St. Joseph Hospital and that this is what it would cost. She thought she had better check around because something struck her as a little uncomfortable. She spoke to another parent whose daughter had had the same operation done very recently and then she came and said, "Can you help me?" I picked up the telephone and called a doctor in the same specialty, and the doctor I spoke to — I did not disclose that she had already seen another doctor — said "let her come in, I will have a look at it right now." I said, 'Can you see her right away?' and he said, "Yes, let her come right away." He decided that the operation had to be performed right away, that the child would be admitted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and gave her a statement as to what the cost would be, and it came to exactly half as much.

Let us deal, therefore, with what is going on. It may be that some of these doctors, who are very close to the Democratic Labour Party incidentally, who have been ripping off people, have been preventing that hospital from having an occupancy level above 32%, and that that may be why the hospital has failed. That may well be the case, I do not know, but if you want to find out who is practising down there, check in George Street. Do not even check on the radio programme. Anyhow, do not let

us get into that. But we have to be careful when we are standing up in Parliament and making statements not to mislead the public into thinking that here is a hospital which is heavily in demand and the wicked Government is allowing it to go under. If it were heavily in demand, then there would have to be a crisis of management for that hospital to be going under, because it is a fee paying hospital. I am being given the statistics as to what would be the break even point, but I do not think that in a contribution of 12 minutes or so I can afford to expand on that aspect.

The second point is that Senator Hall, the other thing I could pick out of what he was saying — because I found it a little difficult going to Pakistan and coming back, and so on, and Zia Al Huq and how impressive a gentleman he is and so on. He is impressive but he is not very democratic, you hear? I think the Senator should be careful as to the political model he chooses. He has already chosen one that is not so democratic — the next point which I was able to lift out of his contribution had to do with his emphasis on the services which could be provided at the St. Joseph Hospital in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology. There are only two things wrong with what Senator Hall was saying. The first relates to this — it was hinted at by Senator McClean, and it must have informed the judgment of Senator Nicholls — what happens when the ordinary O and G cases turn out not to be so routine? Are we going to have that patient sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as happened within my knowledge, with the lady concerned being told, having already had to pay the doctor before he would touch her, that before she can be moved she has to settle up the rest of the bills down there? Is that what we are going to have to have happen as something in this country which we must underwrite? I think it is a very important question.

1.10 p.m.

As a virtual representative of a northern constituency, people talk to me and I know what is happening in the north. I know, for example, that there are a lot of people in the north who will tell you that that hospital has itself to blame, because the St. George's Medical School was providing a lot of jobs for the people in the north and the hospital had a chance to do something about its financial situation and threw it away because they preferred to follow the Democratic Labour Party politicians who were running down the St. George's Medical School. I know there are people in the north who will tell you that, because those people in the north lost jobs, and they are very concerned about the closure of the St. George's Medical School.

The other point which I want to make about obstetrics and gynaecology is this, that it is funny how these things happen. You would remember, Sir, that when we were talking about the medical school in a debate

in this Chamber, when we brought out the files they showed that a private medical school has been the subject of discussion starting, not since September 1976, but way back under the old Democratic Labour Party Government, when Mr. J. C. King would have made some change by selling land to the promoters and so on, if you remember that, Sir. It is significant that the files again indicate that talks about collaboration between the Government of Barbados and the St. Joseph Hospital go back — the first record of meeting is on August 14, 1975 — and even then the point was being made that the hospital needed to make more of a contribution in terms of the number of beds being devoted to obstetrics and gynaecology, and the hospital made it clear at that time, and continued to subsequently, that it was not prepared to make more than 15 beds available for this purpose. So I am afraid that the answer to Senator Hall's point about the great contribution in this field is to be found in the attitude of the hospital when successive Governments, in attempting to find areas of collaboration, have been making this same proposal and not getting a favourable response to it.

I may sound, Sir, as though I am prosecuting the hospital or crucifying them or something. I am not. I just want to bring a sense of realism back into this debate after hearing Senator Hall. I am very glad that he did not approach it from the position of jobs, because the Barbados Foundry, certainly, has had a greater impact in terms of loss of jobs than this hospital will have, and the St. George's Medical School closure has had a greater impact than this hospital will have. So let us move now from the jobs.

We, as a Government, are extremely concerned about the loss of every single job, any job in this country at any time, but in this matter we have to look at what Government is providing in the north and what, in its overall plan, is the concept of delivering medical services to the people of the north. Are there such that the people in the north would be satisfied? Can we say that these policies are not sufficiently farsighted that they do not take all of the existing circumstances into consideration?

First of all, we are a small country and, therefore, provided we have an efficient ambulance service, you ought to be able to get to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital within a reasonable time. One of the outstanding things in the record of my colleague, the Minister of Health, is the re-organisation of the ambulance service to make it efficient and, come April, he will be stationing an ambulance at the Maurice Byer Polyclinic in St. Peter. So that not only has he reorganized his service and made it efficient, but he is also going to ensure that the people of the north are provided with an adequate ambulance service. Now, that, after all, must be regarded as what you would call the emergency/casualty kind of concept within the hospital services.

In terms of the other points, I do not think anybody on that side, or anywhere else, is going to argue about Senator McClean's point as to which would be wiser, to spend the money to upgrade the already good facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or to spend your money, spending \$15 million, to purchase a property and then, of course, having to upgrade the facilities, because I do not think anybody in this debate probably wish to say it, but there is all the evidence that the facilities offered by the St. Joseph Hospital are below par. They are sub-standard facilities and, therefore, we would need to spend a lot of money afterwards to bring those facilities up to par. In other words, we are talking about a significantly expensive undertaking which there must be compelling logic in support of if we are to stop, review and change our existing approach to the delivery of hospital services in this country.

It is not an easy matter. Not one of us want to see the hospital close. Not one of us want to see people put out of work, but are we going to make foolish decisions when already we are committed to a programme of expansion and upgrading at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in order to deliver first class medical care? That is the real point, and Senator McClean, in his own succinct way, said it with far greater precision and greater brevity than I have said it, but, at least, in my long-winded way, I have come back to the same point.

What I do not understand is the point Senator Hall was making. Is he saying that we should not be dealing with the polyclinics in the north, where there will be a half day service, a doctor half day every day at Hometown from January and the same thing at Belleplaine. The delivery of medical services has to be seen as a whole. What is he saying?

What I would like to know, because I have an open mind on the subject, is, what are they saying? Are they saying buy it at any cost? Are they saying review your options and see whether you can buy it? If they are saying review your options and see whether it will make sense to buy it, we would say, of course, that we will do that, because that is exactly the on-going exercise, but I do not think this ought to be approached just against a background of sound and fury, signifying nothing, excursions into Pakistan and other emotive gestures such as going around collecting signatures. Why did not the gentleman go to Diamond Corner and collect the signatures?

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR THE REV. CANON I. McK. JONES:
Mr. President, I have sat and listened quite a long time to all the arguments for and against, and I must say that I came here today feeling that I could, in all conscience, support the motion that we retain the St. Joseph Hospital,

or that this Government would do something to help, but having listened to the arguments on either side, it really does seem to me now that there has been no worthwhile arguments, in my view, for retaining the hospital, as a hospital. We just heard from Senator Barrow that they would have to do so much to bring it up to standard. As a matter of fact, he said people were afraid to say it was below standard. But one thing has me confused. It seems to me that the Government has already decided that that is out. Now what purpose does it serve for the Prime Minister to meet Senator Greaves tomorrow? That really has me a bit confused, because he is going to go there and he is going to show him the petition he has, he is going to show him the thousands of names he has on it.

1.20 p.m.

(SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Just courtesy.)

SENATOR THE REV. CANON I. McK. JONES: I do not see the point of that.

I would like to say, Mr. President, that I did hear the Minister of Health say that they were having a meeting with the new member who came to represent the St. Joseph Hospital. It would seem to me that that meeting did not succeed in achieving anything because of the brashness or the discourtesy or whatever you like to call it of the person involved from the St. Joseph Hospital side, but the Government did intend to have some consideration about the St. Joseph Hospital, that is, whether they could use it as a geriatric hospital or a geriatric and psychiatric, or to help with the drug abuse that we are having so much of today. But, for whatever reason, I do think that the door should not be closed on a meeting between the Government and whoever is in charge of the St. Joseph Hospital. I think the door should still be open, because although it has been bandied about that the cost is going to be \$15 million or whatever, it would seem to me that if they had consultation, and if they do go into the pros and cons, they may find they may not have to spend that kind of money on it for whatever other use they want to put it to.

I do make the point from arguments I heard in here this morning that I cannot in conscience say that there is a need for the St. Joseph Hospital as a hospital, but I do feel that the door should be open for further communication between the owners of the St. Joseph Hospital and the Government for whatever other use they may be able to put it to.

Thank you.

SENATOR MRS. G. G. READER: Sir, I have reservations on both sides in this case. My feelings are a bit ambivalent, but I feel very sorry for the old people who are at present housed at the St. Joseph Hospital, and for the families of those people who are trying to find places

for them to go. I have also had several telephone calls from young mothers who are booked into the Obstetrics Department who have been told that they cannot get into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Where are they to go? It is difficult. I feel sorry for them.

Sir, many many years ago, when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was being built, I petitioned the Ministers and people in the know that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was a general hospital and that an obstetrics department may be there, but not to close the Maternity Hospital, to leave it open. Young women, having their first children particularly, need teaching in infant care, and this cannot be done at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital now, because the turnover is too great, and we are seeing now what is happening with these young people who are going out of hospital and who have no idea of how to care for their children. Some of them are very young, some of the mothers, I mean, are very young. As a matter of fact, one of the nurses at the hospital told me not long ago that it gave her quite a turn when she saw an adult on the maternity ward.

Sir, we need a maternity hospital in Barbados. Whether the St. Joseph Hospital is the right place for it is for the Government to decide. It is very far away from the centres of population. It is difficult to get at for relatives. It would make an excellent place for a convalescent or geriatric home because it is peaceful and quiet, and it also would make an excellent place for a drug rehabilitation unit, but as a general hospital I cannot see that it is meeting the needs of Barbadians as a whole, because it is too far away from the centres of population, even if most people can afford to get there. But I must press with the point that we must have services upgraded. I do not mean that the services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are not good — they are good — but I mean the time span in teaching these young people how to care for their children, how to breast feed their children and how to bathe them and look after them. This takes days, you cannot do it overnight, and it needs doing and it needs doing now.

When the Child Health Committee was being run, we had a nurse that went into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital every morning and gave the mothers in there a card to attend the nearest child health centre, either Government or Child Care, which would help them with these problems, and they would come in within a week of being discharged from hospital, and sometimes they were only in hospital for 24 to 48 hours. Now you have girls of 16 having their first babies, and remember a lot of these girls are having babies and their mothers are very angry with them, and all they are told at home is "you had it, you look after it." That is not helpful. It is bad enough for children to have children, but when the community looks down on these young mothers as well, it makes things very difficult.

I know of a case here where the mother and grandmother of this young girl did their utmost to get her locked up so that they could take the baby away from her. Be that as it may, we must do something more on this side to try and get the mothers trained and taught how to care for their children better. We would then have less children in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's children's ward, we would have less children in care. I begged the Government at the time to build a new maternity hospital, extend Verona, do anything they could, but we need it, I think, nearer the centre of population than the St. Joseph Hospital.

I feel very sorry for the old people. I feel very sorry for their families. I know that the geriatrics here are difficult. These are old people who want a little bit of privacy, a little bit of special care and attention. It is not always easy, and anybody who has had anything to do with the general practice in Barbados will know what it is well nigh impossible today to get an old person into a geriatric hospital such as what used to be the almshouse. It is well nigh impossible to get them in even when they are unable to move. I have seen old people rolled up in bundles of rags under a roof that is leaking and people are delivering meals on wheels to the door and the old people cannot get to the container to get the food out because they are unable to move, and they are still unable to get into the geriatric hospital. We need another hospital for geriatrics.

Then again we have to look carefully at whether the \$15 million that we would have to buy this hospital for would not be better spent filling in the potholes in Barbados, which I understand are soon to be leased as housespots. Some of them, goodness know, are deep and large enough.
1.30 p.m.

Anyway, I am hoping that the powers that be will negotiate again and see what can be done to use the St. Joseph Hospital, if it is acquired, for the best possible purposes and see that these people are not out of work, because there are a lot of unemployed nurses in Barbados, a lot of well-trained, unemployed nurses. I know several of them are in business today because they cannot get nursing jobs. But to ask that the St. Joseph Hospital be kept open as a general hospital, I do not see at the moment that it is feasible.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Time for the motion has expired.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. PRESIDENT: I think it is convenient now to suspend the sitting for 1 hour. The sitting is suspended until 2.30 p.m.

1.32 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: The sitting is resumed.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, Sir, on the Order Paper today there are 3 items, 1 Bill and 2 Resolutions.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Sir, in order to deal with Item 1 on the Order Paper, the Barbados Sugar Industry Act, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 45(1) and (2) for the remainder of today's sitting.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In relation to the Bill on the Order Paper, I think we should make a formal first reading and record it.

The question that Standing Orders 45(1) and (2) be suspended so that the Bill on the Order Paper be dealt with in all its stages today was put to the Senate and agreed to.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before we consider the item, "Introduction of Bills," Senator Griffith would make a presentation because of the fact that at an earlier stage in today's meeting, when we would ordinarily have done this, Senator Barrow was not in his place.

Senator Griffith.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

OBITUARY SPEECHES RELATE MRS. COLINA HAREWOOD, SISTER OF SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, Sir, I believe it was two sittings ago that I had the duty in this august Chamber of speaking on a Resolution of sympathy with respect to the passing of the father of Senator Nigel Barrow. At that time I do not think

Senator Barrow was in the Chamber; he was abroad on Government business I believe. Within weeks of the passing of his father, however, he experienced another death in his family, the death of his sister, Mrs. Colina Harewood of St. John.

Those of us who journeyed to St. John's Parish Church on that Thursday afternoon to share the funeral service and to sympathise with the Barrow family could not help but be impressed by the number of people who had turned up from all over Barbados in expression of support for the bereaved family. From those who have been associated with Mrs. Harewood, it can be gleaned that she was an outstanding person, mother in her own right, and an outstanding civil servant who had served with distinction in many departments of Government.

I remember that at the time when I spoke on the passing of his father, I mentioned the fact that the father's quality could be borne out by the fact that he had raised some very distinguished children, 2 of whom I had the privilege of knowing personally, Nigel and Vere. From what I experienced, having had the occasion of speaking with many people who personally knew his sister, I am satisfied again that the Barrow family had another giant who has passed on.

I would like, Sir, in this Chamber to express solidarity with the Barrow family and to say to Nigel, we know you have had it very, very rough, but we know, with the kind of strength that you have demonstrated in the past, that you will hold on, confident in the knowledge that two very distinguished members of your family have made a distinctive contribution to Barbados.

I would like, Sir, on this side to just express the sympathy of the Government and the people, and indeed the thanks of the people of Barbados to the Barrow family for having shared Colina with us.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Greaves.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Mr. President, I, too, would like to join Senator Griffith in expressing my personal sympathy and that of the Democratic Labour Party to Senator Barrow and his family on the loss of his dear sister recently.

I recall meeting Senator Barrow in a gas station at the top of Roebuck Street, I believe it must have been either the same day or the day after his sister died, and he made a remark to me which I did not understand at the time, but he did not tell me that his sister had died. It just was a passing remark, and I only discovered some time after that it was his sister. I believe it was his way of dealing with the particular situation, and if I did not kind

of react in the way that one would normally react in those circumstances, I would hope that you appreciate that I did not really understand what you were saying to me.

I did not know Mrs. Harewood personally, but I have a very good friend who knew her very well — as a matter of fact, I believe they grew up together — and he has always, even before she was ill, told me what a very nice and charming person she was. I have no doubt that she was, and I certainly would like to say once more that I want to express my sympathy to Senator Barrow and his family on the passing of his sister.

Mr. PRESIDENT: From the Chair, I would like to associate myself with the remarks that have been made and the expressions of sympathy to Senator Barrow on the losses that he has recently sustained.

There is a saying that we all know, "It never rains but it pours." Senator Barrow must have been thinking of that when in quick succession he lost his father and his sister. It certainly poured on the evening of his sister's funeral — it was at St. John's Parish Church — and we all got a good soaking.

I think though that Senator Barrow will be buoyed with the realization of what Senator Griffith said, that both his father and his sister made remarkable contributions to this country. If he has the faith which we know he has, he would know that the good Lord above tempers will to ensure that He does not give you more to bear than you can really bear.

I will ask the Clerk to send the usual message from the Senate to Senator Barrow to express our sympathy and our solidarity in these times. If Senator Barrow does not have anything to say, I would ask the Senate to stand for one minute.

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. President, I just want to say that I am deeply touched by the kind sentiments expressed, and that, on behalf of the Barrow and Harewood families, I wish to say thanks very much for the kind sentiments.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would ask the Senate to stand for a few brief moments to express its sympathy.

The Senate stood in silence for a few brief moments.
2.55 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, Sir, the 3 items on the Order Paper will be done in the order as they appear. There are some outstanding

items which I believe can be held over after the Christmas recess, so these 3 items will just be the Orders of the day.

SUGAR INDUSTRY (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1985

Order No. 1 was called — To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Sugar Industry Act, 1982.

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, Sir, the Sugar Industry (Amendment) Act, 1985 seeks to amend the Sugar Industry Act, 1982/36 in order to authorise the Auditor General to audit the statement prepared by the Accountant General in respect of the Research and Development Fund established under the Sugar Industry Act, 1982.

Part 2 of the Act, Sir, makes provision for the imposition of an annual levy at the rate of 1.2% on the ex-factory proceeds of sugar cane processing establishments. This levy is payable to the Accountant General, who is required to establish a fund at the Barbados National Bank, to be known as the Sugar Industry Research and Development Fund, into which the profits of the levy must be paid.

Section 15 of the Act requires the Accountant General to prepare an annual financial statement of the fund and to have a copy of the statement laid in Parliament and published in the *Official Gazette*, but no provision is made in the Act for the auditing of this statement. This omission was pointed out by the Accountant General, and the Minister of Finance instructed the Research and Development Committee to appoint the Auditor General as auditor for the refund in respect of the financial year 1983. It was agreed that the Act should be amended to provide for the auditing of the fund in the ensuing years.

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

The question that the Bill be now read a second time was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. C. A. GRIFFITH, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Senator J. C. W. WICKHAM in the Chair.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. C. A. GRIFFITH, the Senate was resumed and the Bill reported — having passed in Committee without amendment, Mr. PRESIDENT in the Chair.

On separate motions of Senator the Hon. C. A. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time forthwith and passed.

BORROWING BY THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS, ACTING FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT, OF CERTAIN SUMS

Order No. 2 was called — To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the borrowing by the Ministry of Transport and Works, acting for and on behalf of the Government, of certain sums to finance the costs of bus chassis, complete buses, spare parts for such buses, the fitting of the bus bodies and the shipment of the buses and chassis to Barbados.

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, Sir, the Transport Board in 1982 was instrumental in obtaining substantial additions to its fleet of buses. Between 1982 and 1983, Sir, there were some 130 units added to the fleet, 80 in 1982 and 50 in 1983. Of course, Sir, there was significant outlay required for the cash purchase of these units, which would have amounted to something like Bds\$16 million, and since that money was not available, there was an arrangement made for a mixture of suppliers' credit and commercial bank loan financing, since this approach seems to be the most feasible, as the accumulated reserves in the Transport Levy Fund, the source of payment for the units, did not permit cash outlay of that kind of money. In those years mentioned, Sir, there were 20 Leyland Vikings purchased, 60 Mercedes Benz and 50 Mercedes Benz purchased in 1983. The 60 Mercedes Benz mentioned earlier were purchased in 1982. Except for 20 complete units, which were provided by a company in Belgium, all the other units were fitted with bodies supplied locally by Acme Manufacturing Company.

From the point of a cash down payment of 15% to the suppliers of the first instalment of 80 units in September 1982, certain credit arrangements were entered into by the Ministry of Transport and Works acting on behalf of the Government of Barbados, as directed by the Cabinet. There were suppliers' credit agreements and supply agreement of 1982 with the Leyland Vehicles Export Limited of Britain in the principal sum of L171 736 for 85% financing of the purchase of 20 Leyland chassis and relevant spare parts. This loan is for 5 years and repayment is at an interest rate of 10.5% per annum on outstanding balances.

There was a loan agreement in 1982 in the principal sum of Deutsche Marks 860 627 with Barclays Bank International Limited for 86% financing for the purchase of Mercedes Benz bus chassis and 100% cost of spare parts for 60 units. This loan also is for 5 years and interested is at the LIBOR plus 7/8% spread, giving a total average interest rate of 10¼% per annum on outstanding balances.
3.05 p.m.

There was a further loan agreement of December 30, 1982 in the principal sum of Deutsche Marks

1 914 153 with Citibank for 85% financing of the purchase of 30 Mercedes Benz bus bodies. This loan is for 5 years and interest is also the LIBOR rate plus a spread of 7/8%, averaging 10 3/8% per annum on outstanding balances.

The fourth loan agreement, on December 31, 1982, was the principal sum of Bds. \$6.3 million with the Barbados National Bank for 100% cost of manufacturing and fitting by Messrs. Acme Engineering Limited of 80 bus bodies. The agreement is for 5 years at an interest rate of 12% per annum on outstanding balances.

There was also a fifth loan agreement, November 29, 1983, in the principal sum of Deutsche Marks 2 413 000 with Barclays Bank International Limited in respect of 100% financing of the purchase of 30 Mercedes Benz bus chassis. The loan is for 5 years and interest rate is LIBOR plus 1.5% spread, thereby averaging an annual interest rate of 11% on outstanding balance.

There was a further loan agreement, March 8, 1984, and a supplementary agreement on June 13, 1984 in the principal sum of Bds. \$2.3 million with the Barbados National Bank in respect of 100% cost of purchasing and fitting by Messrs. Acme Engineering Limited of 30 bus bodies. The loan is for 5 years with an interest rate of approximately 10.7% per annum on outstanding balances.

There was still another loan agreement in the principal sum of Deutsche Mark 3 546 869 with Citibank in respect of 100% financing for the purchase of 20 Mercedes Benz bus chassis and the fitting of bodies by John Keer of Belgium. The loan is for 5 years at Libor plus 1.5% spread, giving an annual average interest rate of 11% on outstanding balances. The repayment schedules for all the loans are provided for by annual instalments.

Sir, there was an omission to seek parliamentary approval for these arrangements which apparently stems from the fact that all payments and the arrangements are being made from the Transport Levy Fund and not the Consolidated Fund. Advice has been sought in the past from the A.G.'s Chambers and the Ministry of Finance and Planning on the correctness of the approach as far as these arrangements were concerned, and the question of parliamentary approval had been overlooked principally because of the fact that there was use of Transport Levy funds and not funds approved by Parliament. The Ministry of Transport has decided, quite properly, that these matters should be brought before Parliament, and it is this Resolution which now is before this Chamber.

Sir, I just want to make one or two small points on the whole question of the transport service in this

country. We have been hearing quite recently of the problems associated with people trying to get to work and so on, and of course one cannot deny that a public transportation system will be the butt of comments and criticisms as long as that service is not deemed up to par. Let me say this now, Sir, that in a way, in Barbados the people have come to expect a very high standard, and so it must be, because it has been the policy of Governments to give the people in Barbados a certain high standard, something to aim at. So whenever there is a fall off from the high standards the people have been accustomed to in the delivery of services, there is, of necessity, a significant outcry.

All of us in this country, indeed those of us who have travelled in many developing and even developed countries, can pat ourselves on the back when we compare the services in those countries with the services that we get in Barbados, a country with little or no natural resources. Indeed, the only thing we can boast of is a resourceful people and good management. I will venture to say, Sir, that, based on my own experience in travelling all over the world, the transport system in Barbados is one of the best obtaining in the developing world, and indeed surpasses public transport systems in some countries in the developed world. It surpasses or is equal to that in some countries in the developed world. That, however, is no excuse for us, if the high standards which we have set ourselves no longer prevail. But when we examine why there may be difficulties in maintaining the high standard that we have been able to provide for the public, not only in transport services but in any service, we have to come to the conclusion that none of us who are policy makers, decision makers, people who have to implement decisions that are made, will wantonly set about to bring discomfiture to the public for any reason whatever. Of course, because of the inconvenience caused to the travelling public in some instances, there is a tendency for a certain partisanship to prevail when these complaints become a matter of public concern.

If we go back to the history of public transportation in Barbados — and I would not want to bore you with the details of the move to move the transport system from the private sector to public sector — we will find that if we want to ensure the public of Barbados enjoys an acceptable level of transportation, we cannot think in terms of encouraging, whole-sale, private sector operation of the Transport Board. I am surprised that some of the people who have had a say, indeed who have been directing the affairs of this country for some time, could think in terms of looking at the question of privatisation of the public transport system because we are facing problems, and the problems are not insurmountable. But we would be doing the worst kind of injustice and disservice to the people of this country if we were to turn

over the transportation system, lock, stock and barrel, to private sector operators.

3.15 p.m.

If we look, Sir, at the whole question of the cost of running the Transport Board, we find that year after year there is a need for a subsidy from Government financing, but we must question ourselves as to the importance and the need for that subsidy. If we go back briefly to 1975, early '76, we would remember that bus fares in Barbados, which were standing at 65 cents, were suddenly dropped from 65 cents to 25 cents, and if we look at what was happening, not only in the country but throughout the world at the time, we would recognize that there was a period in the world of hyper-inflation occasioned by the quadrupling of the oil prices. The price of oil went from \$2.00 a barrel in 1973 to over \$13.00 a barrel in 1975, and everything that was related to oil, everything that had a petroleum base, of course contributed to the high rates of inflation. So, in 1975, with a spiralling cost of living, high wage increases, increased costs of operation of the Transport Board, we saw the bus fares dropped from 65 cents to 25 cents!

The Government of the day sought to justify it on the grounds that people were paying less bus fares and that was important. If we want to be charitable, when we try to look for reasons for that kind of decision, if we really want to be charitable, we could not even construe that action as a crude application of Fabian socialism, although every working person in Barbados was paying income tax and 5% sales tax. There could have been no economic justification for dropping bus fares from 65 cents to 25 cents, and it was done, and when I analyse — I sit very quietly — indeed, I have sat very quietly and analysed what would have been the cause of such a decision — what comes to mind is that 1976 was the election year, and you could only conclude that to move the bus fares from 65 cents to 25 cents when they bore no relation to the cost of providing the service was gimmickry, pure, unadulterated gimmickry, because if we want to be honest with ourselves, we have to look at the whole question of providing public transport and look at the real cost of a bus fare, or look at the economic cost of the system, and if we were to be truly honest with what we see, we would recognize, we would agree, all of us, that even the 75 cents that people are paying cannot adequately support the level of public transport in Barbados. We must not try to give the public the impression that it is 75 cents per person, plus all the other benefits that people get — police travel on the buses free, school children have a special bus fare and so on, that with all of that — that 75 cents a person can provide enough revenue to maintain the kind of fleet we have.

We have just had a wage settlement in the Transport Board. I think it was in the order of 12%. There was a go-slow at the Transport Board during the period of negotiations and, indeed, there seemed to be

some evidence, and I could even go so far as to say that there is evidence, that there were difficulties where buses were deliberately taken back in when there was nothing wrong with them, so much so that the Government had to go to the private sector to get repairs done in order to keep a certain number of buses on the road. But if we were to look at the economic cost of the transport system and truly arrive at a figure which that cost could bear, we would appreciate that 75 cents clearly cannot support it. So where must the rest of money come from that supports the system? This is what we must be able to tell the public. The rest of the money must come from tax levies. It must come out of the pockets of taxpayers. It is only a question of how you meet the cost of running the Transport Board. You either pay the bus fare that would support the system or you pay a subsidized bus fare, a fare subsidized by the taxpayers. That is why, when we look at the whole question of economic costs, a realistic bus fare, we have to think in terms of what the taxpayer must bear, not through direct bus fares but through other means of supporting the transport system.

We have had all kinds of representations in the past about lopping off the subsidy, but if we lop off the subsidy from the Transport Board, it means that the support must come from some place else, and we have resisted all kinds of pressure in the past, relentless pressure, to lop off the subsidy. We are not saying that we on this side are satisfied with the level of the subsidy. It is important that we have certain economies of scale, but we cannot do anything to compromise the level of the service to which the people of Barbados have become accustomed.

We have had a situation in which there has been tremendous talk about the minibus operation. There is no doubt in my mind, and in the minds of right thinking people in this community, that the minibus service has a place supporting the public transportation system in Barbados. They provide a good service, but, of course, there is no minibus operator who would want to be out there investing \$80 000 in a bus, and paying a permit and licence fees and not being able to make a profit. Hence, we have a situation where minibus drivers and minibus operators are the subject of attacks by many people because it is felt that they hog the road in pursuit of the almighty dollar. But there is a reason for this. Many times one can pick up the daily press and see a substantial number of minibus drivers or conductors being prosecuted before the courts for overtaking and for breaking all kinds of laws. I happen to spend a lot of time talking to minibus drivers and conductors and I can understand why they are on the hustle. They tell me, plaintively, 'We have an incentive. We have to make 25 cents in the dollar'. That is the incentive. 'We have to make 25 cents in the dollar for ourselves, and therefore we have to incur the wrath of the police and other people

on the road to ensure that we make ends meet.' I do not believe that minibus drivers and conductors are a wanton lawless breed. I am satisfied that, like in any other situation, there may be a few bad eggs, but, by and large, a large number of the people who drive these minibuses are people who are in pursuit of a living to support their families, and they run afoul of the law because of the condition of remuneration which the operators present to them.

3.25 p.m.

There have been all kinds of reasons advanced for the failure of the Transport Board to increase its revenue. One reason that is constantly advanced is that the minibus operators believe only in operating the shorthaul routes, and because we have a public transport service, the public transport service must be forced to operate on the longhaul routes. I believe, as in every situation, that there must be solutions to this vexing question. I know, for instance, that on 1 or 2 routes, the routes particularly to the north, minibus operators do go right down to the northern tip of the island or very far north in the island, but in other parts going through the eastern part of Barbados and so on you could hardly find a minibus going to the outer limits of the country, and therefore the public transportation system must take up that slack. One has to wonder if there are not solutions to the problem. One has to wonder, for instance, if there could not be some combination of a system where one service would be complementary to the other as a solution to the problem. I have given a lot of thought to the whole question of the complementary approach to the problem and I believe that it must be looked at seriously, having one or the other service go to a certain point within radius of the city and the other service picking up from there and moving in. That is only one approach. That does not necessarily solve the problem, but it is an approach that could easily be looked at. I know that there has been considerable talk about the need to limit the number of permits, the need to control the minibus operators by forcing them to operate in the areas for which permits have been issued, but I am satisfied that the Government is mindful of the difficulty and is taking a hard look at the best way to solve the problem in the interest of the travelling public.

Every time there has been an increase in the bus fares, Sir — and this does not happen only in this jurisdiction, it is a normal behavioural activity that one can expect among thinking people — if there is an increase in the price of a commodity, that consumption in that commodity will drop at least for a very short period of time. We have seen in Barbados an increased ridership in the minibus at the expense of the public transportation system, and there are many reasons for this. One of the major reasons, of course, is the fact that people feel that the minibuses are more reliable — you even get musical entertainment on the buses, there is a

faster turnaround, people break routes for the reasons I have advanced already — but there is also another very important reason, and that is there is a significant increase in the number of private cars that we have in the country. I think that at last count there were some 40 000 motor cars in Barbados, and if we were to look again at the rolling stock in Barbados as far as cars are concerned, one could easily assume, on a cursory examination, that the average age of a car in Barbados is 4 years. If you had to add mine in there it would increase dramatically, because my Mercedes is 10 years old. It is still one of the best that was made. The point is that with something like 40 000 cars on the road, it has implications for all other kinds of public transportation activity.

So we must not believe that the Government of Barbados will wantonly enter into an agreement to purchase 130 buses without due consideration for the needs of the travelling public. As far as I am concerned, indeed as far as the Government is concerned, the dislocation and discomfiture that people suffer at this time can be considered only an aberration, because in the final analysis we can still boast, as I said before, of one of the finest public transportation systems in the world.

Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate concur in this Resolution.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, this Resolution in its way is symptomatic of much that is wrong with the Ministry of Transport and Works, and indeed with the entire Government in terms of relationships with statutory boards. It does not seem to me that the Ministry of Transport and Works should have been in the business of ordering and entering into arrangements for buying buses in the first instance. Indeed, if Government wanted to be involved in that, the proper agency should have been the Ministry of Finance. But it would seem that there has been a style on the part of not only this Government, but also the past one, to involve themselves rather more directly in the affairs of statutory boards than the legislation setting up these Boards envisaged. Ministers are supposed to give general direction to Boards in matters of policy and so on and leave it to the persons selected to be members of the Board and to the managers of the corporations to carry on with the day-to-day affairs of the various corporations. But this, quite evidently, has not been the pattern which has emerged in Barbados, and I rather say therein lies one of the reasons for the failure of many Government corporations and one of the reasons for the inability of corporations that have gone wrong to put themselves right, because when the politicians presume that they must take a very delicate and careful interest in what is going on, presumably because they feel that it is in their political interest to do so, you find that ever so often

the corporation can be diverted from the implementation of proper policies because somebody who is injured by that policy can importune the Minister to prevent them from doing it.

3.35 p.m.

Getting back quite clearly to the Transport Board and its particular difficulties, I think that the single most important problem confronting the Transport Board, as I remember it when I was involved with that Board, is the question of maintenance. Until you get a proper garage with adequate size, adequate facilities and put in place a programme of preventive maintenance, you will find that the operating cost to the Transport Board will be much higher than it has to be.

Going beyond this, there are problems on the scheduling side, the problems of management, and you can only deal with those by putting in place skilled managers, and if they are not already fully experienced in the particular area, getting someone to train them on the job, so to speak, to develop the skills that are required for operating the Transport Board. Some 13 years ago, when I was on that Board, I myself started to try to teach some of the staff members statistics and certain other things so that they could lift the level of operations to a point where they could analyse the information which was coming towards them and be able to make more informed decisions. But it seems as though there has not been any great tendency to go in that direction as far as the Transport Board is concerned.

The most evident thing that we have seen coming out of the Transport Board is a tendency to play musical chairs with the Board members. It seems as though the Ministry of Transport has been shifted between quite a few Ministers in recent years, and every time there is a ministerial change, there is a change at the Transport Board, and if that Minister remains for longer than a year or two, there is another change at the Transport Board during his tenure of office. I do not know what informs Ministers as to why they put people on Boards and why they take them off, but, quite evidently, the particular experience at the Transport Board, and indeed elsewhere, would suggest quite clearly to any observer that, whatever principles they are operating under, they must clearly be wrong, or in the alternative, the people who are applying correct principles have very poor judgement. I think it is rather a matter of the principles being wrong and they are trying to fit people into a situation that people are disinclined to fit themselves into, or in the alternative, if they can get people who can fit their situation, they do not have the competence not to embarrass them in terms of running the operations properly.

In terms of the specifics of the Resolution, it would seem as though what we would be doing would be

essentially making the loans already made charges against the Consolidated Fund, knowing that, evidently, the Transport Levy Fund will pay them anyhow. But legally, it would be a charge against the Consolidated Fund, I rather think, and I am wondering whether, in those circumstances, the question of the Transport and Works Ministry acting on behalf of the Ministry of Finance should be the essence of the Resolution, or whether that Resolution be like any other where we pass a Resolution authorizing Government to undertake certain financial liabilities.

On the question of bus fares, whether they are too high or too low, as you know I hold a view that an ideal transport system should be one in which you do not have any bus fares at all, and that it should be financed out of general revenues of the Government rather than specifically by bus fares. The people who use it are sufficiently broad-based to justify such an approach, and the cost of operating the system would be considerably lower. So the question of the essence of the level of the bus fare is not the essence of the problem. It is a matter of a philosophical position as to the way in which you should attempt to finance the service.

I think it is not entirely accurate to say that bus fares went down from 65 cents to 25 cents some years ago, because in those years, we had a structured fare system. I cannot remember if they had any under 25 cents, but not too long before that we had 10 cents bus fares and so on. We had a structured fare system reaching up to 65 cents, and the majority of people would be short distance travellers paying rather less than 65 cents, so that the change in revenue to the Transport Board would not be to the extent as would be indicated by the drop from 65 cents to 25 cents. I do not recall the precise fare structure at the moment to know whether there were any fares below 25 cents that came up to the 25 cents, but I rather think there might have been 20 cents fares going up to 25 cents at the time when those fares came down.

Essentially, I do not think it is a good thing for Parliament to be confronted with Resolutions asking to give approval for loans which were incurred 2 or 3 years ago. That is not a good thing at all. It might have been better if these arrangements were made through the Transport Board, which is really the competent body to get involved in buying buses and borrowing money for buying buses. They have the legal competence to borrow money, not the Ministry of Transport and Works, and it would seem to me that the eagerness of Ministers to get involved in the affairs of the Board probably diverted things from the right course of action into an embarrassing situation.

Thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Wickham.

SENATOR J. C. W. WICKHAM: Mr. President, the question of public transport in a place like Barbados is so intimate, is so close to the bone of the people, that, with all due respect to the people who decry the expression of emotion, one's emotions have to be engaged. We do not question the engagement of emotions when we talk about apartheid. The cricketers who went to South Africa did not engage their emotions, they went purely because they were cold, they wanted money. But anybody who based a decision purely on that without the engagement of emotions, I think has to be suspect of not being concerned with the business of the people.

One's emotions have to be engaged, and if you are one of those 40 000 people who have the privilege of driving a car you have to notice the agony of people waiting for the bus every morning and every evening. It seems to me that it makes me feel guilty to have the benefit of driving home or driving to work when I see people waiting late every day. I give them lifts and they tell me that their bosses and their employers cannot believe that the reason for their lateness is that they cannot get a bus. So the engagement of your emotion is a measure of making contact with those people, and the politicians ought to be the last people to say that their emotions should not be engaged.

The Minister who presented the Bill said that the problems are not insurmountable. If that is so, we have to look askance at the quality of the management of this business of transport. If the problems are not insurmountable, why are they not surmounted? What is wrong? It seems to me that there is an absence of will, and I am really quite disturbed by the fact that we have to vote money all the time. The money is not the point so much. We will vote the money, I am sure, and the money is deserved. Now is the fare important?

It seems to me that Barbados deserves the best, not by comparison with anybody but by absolute comparison. There is no point telling me that we have a better service than they have in Timbuctoo or Carriacou. We have the best cricketers in the world, I do not see any reason why we cannot have the best transport. If the problems are not insurmountable why are all arrangements for dealing with it defeated time and time again?

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lynch.

SENATOR E. M. LYNCH: Mr. President, while I agree with most of what has been said by previous speakers, I think that we need to look at this problem of

transport rather more sympathetically than we seem to be doing. Any fair-minded person who has been observing what has been taking place in transport would feel that some measure of praise, some measure of encouragement, is deserved by the present Minister of Transport and Works. I really feel that he has done his best to correct many things, and I feel that while what I would call the scheduling has broken down, there have been some very imaginative approaches to the problems of transport. For example, I live in a little village called Water Street in Christ Church. From that point I can get a bus to St. John, St. George, St. Philip, Rock Dundo, which I think is in St. Michael although I thought it was in St. James, and if I walk a few steps, say 5 or 8 minutes, I can get a bus which will give me an uninterrupted drive to St. James and Speightstown.
3.45 p.m.

The provision of that network of cross-country buses is, I think, very important. We should realize that one of the results of extending the services in the way that has recently been done has had the effect of putting a brake on the drift of population from the rural areas to St. Michael to an extent that would be detrimental. The rural areas are still the best places to bring up our children, and we have only to note the growth of the Alleyne School to understand the importance of that network. I remember that in the 1950s and 1940s the Alleyne School was a tiny school. Today, look at the size of the Alleyne School. That is because transport to St. Andrew makes it possible to get there easily. Also, the cross-connection from St. Peter in that direction to Bathsheba makes it possible for the Grantley Adams School, which was a tiny secondary school, to be a very big school today. Alleyne is a very big school, Foundation is a very big school, and Coleridge and Parry and Alexandra are big schools. Those schools out of town are actually receiving children from St. Michael. There are so many children in St. Michael that the children spill over into all the secondary schools of the rural areas.

I feel that the developments which have sprung up — when I look in the newspaper, I see land being advertised in St. Silas Heights, various parts of St. Philip and all about the country — mean that people are setting up their homes out of town, especially people who are retiring. They are going and living in these areas. They can go and live there because any morning their car breaks down, they can still get a bus to town and they can get a bus back home, and things of this sort. So we should give praise where praise is due. Criticism is most effective when it is coupled with a true appraisal of what is being done. It is quite obvious that there is a certain amount of vision. There has been the introduction of the fare boxes. I do not think that could be popular with everybody. I understand that in recent times \$2 million was saved in overtime work, and that cannot be popular with everybody.

In an undertaking of this sort which employs so many persons, obviously we need skilled management. We are a small community. Just as we have had to learn to handle big schools, so we have to learn to handle these highly concentrated forms of business which have not been common in such a small community. We need properly trained middle management, remembering that sometimes middle management has come up through the ranks of the worker and finds it difficult in a managerial position to influence the worker as he should. You can see what is happening in the mending of the roads, for example, that the same hole is mended over and over. It is not that the roads are not mended. The same holes are being mended repeatedly. So, therefore, this is something you have got to look at. You have got to look at supervision and the material that is being used.

We must not underestimate the difficulty of transporting to and from school. Our greatest blessing is a very large child population. Whereas the primary school children stopped perhaps at 12 or 13, now, everybody is going to school to the age of 16, so we are transporting a very large number of children in the mornings and afternoons to and from school. What makes the matter more complicated is that the number that you transport in the afternoon is not the same as the number transported in the morning. It is very difficult to calculate, because in the afternoon children go off to a variety of activities. It is no use saying that they should travel only on the school buses. They cannot! They go to karate, they go to swimming, they go to music, they go to private lessons, and they trickle home. There are always large numbers of children who are going home at times different from the schools' closing hour. In the morning everybody is going to school, but in the afternoon they are not all going home. They go different places before they go home, and on quite legitimate activities. This makes it fairly difficult to calculate the provision that you must make for school children. My own experience when I was head of a school was that of 570 children, 50 children walked to school. So that meant that almost the whole school was transported by bus, and if this is repeated in nearly all of the rural schools, you get a picture of the tremendous problem which the travelling school children present to the Transport Board. I think that this is a problem that has got to be looked at and some sort of sensible arrangement made to solve it.

If you go this afternoon into the bus stand, you will find a very different situation from what you would have found, say, 3 weeks ago, when the children were at school. The moment that school children are no longer at school and it is holidays, then the bus service seems adequate. So that I think that in this business of transporting the school children, we must bear in mind that the school age has been extended. Formerly, most children left school perhaps at primary school stage, at

ages 12, 13, and so forth. Now everybody is going to school to the age of 16. Every child is at school to the age of 16, and we have a tremendous child population. We have to look at these realities and realize the stress under which the system works to appraise what has been achieved. I personally feel that a great deal has been achieved.

Some of us who have motor cars also travel by bus, and there is a lot of difference in travelling by the bus during school holidays and travelling during school time. The school children make all the difference. This is something that really has to be looked at. We have to praise the present Minister for what he has tried to do. For the first time it is possible to travel on buses, to go into the bus stand and take a bus, be proud of the bus you are travelling in and proud of the behaviour of the people in the buses. The standard of conduct on the buses has risen tremendously within recent times, and I think that it has to do with a growing sense of order and the fact that provisions are decent.

3.55 p.m.

While there are difficulties — I am not making any plea for the Government or for the Minister — I am saying that we should be fair and that our criticisms are most effective when we are fair, when we give due weight to what has been achieved and also make the criticisms that are obvious. You take an area like Dark Hole. I am not quite certain if it is in St. Joseph or in St. Andrew, but you can get a bus to Dark Hole in St. Andrew. I hear a bus trundling past me around midnight. So when we are going to complain about the things that are wrong, let us give due weight to what has been achieved and let us hope that we can see ways of improving the transport system.

There is a great deal we can do to help encourage our workers to have a sense of pride in the work which they do. There is no doubt in my mind that we need to do some training of those people who have to operate the services. We may notice that there are places like big garages and so on which are very well organised. Some of the motor services in the island are very well organised, and I feel that a lot can be learned by watching those businesses, how they organise their garages and things of that sort.

I think we all need to try to take pride in the services which the country provides. I think that perhaps we are too hard on ourselves. I think we can be proud of what we have achieved and try to encourage the people who work in the services to go ahead and do better. It simply is not fair to behave as if nothing has been achieved, and everything is turbulent, to take pictures of the holes in the road and so on, which we hope will soon receive attention. We all, by our attitudes and the way we use the services, can help them to improve.

I would like to point out that — I know that my friend talks about the fare structure and some people even think of buses that run that you do not pay — but in Moscow there has been an increase in bus fares and they have a fare structure, and they have some of the same kinds of problems that we have. It is possible to be too hard on ourselves. I think we have made progress, I think we have to look and see what is wrong and try to improve on it. It is fairly obvious that you have a system in which buses operate in such a way that the Transport Board must have it very difficult to make ends meet if you have another bus system that turns around all the time in front of the transport buses, and the transport buses cannot move as quickly, and we need to do some synchronising and some proper arrangement of how we divide up the routes and things of that sort.

I think that we have done a great deal where transport is concerned. I think we should say more words of encouragement to the Minister, who has tried to make the kind of improvements that he has done. More needs to be done, but we have to grow. We are a small community, we are not accustomed to handling these large assortment of problems that go with transport. I think we need encouragement. I think we can give criticism where it is due, but I feel we are a bit hard on ourselves, because I think we have achieved something in transport and that we should go on to the next stage. I think we should be critical, but I think we should also give encouragement and sort of recognise what has been achieved while we try for higher standards. One of the things that is very important and that has really to be tackled is how we transport these large numbers of school children to and from school. As soon as they go into school we can feel the stress on the system.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Mr. President, this question of transport is one which exercises the attention of a number of people when matters relating to transport are brought up in this Chamber and in the Other Place. Today we are asked to discuss the Resolution relating to money which was borrowed by the Ministry of Transport and Works some years ago to replenish the stock at the Transport Board. According to one of the preambles to the Resolution, parliamentary approval was not obtained at that time and we are now seeking to regularise the situation.

I think, in the first instance, that it definitely is a matter of concern that at this late stage parliamentary approval is being sought for debt which was incurred some years ago, and one has got to be critical of this particular approach. It is true that this Resolution would seek to regularise that situation and therefore there is no need to spend too much time on that aspect of the Resolution, but since the matter has to do with transport I would spend the rest of my time looking at this whole question of public transport in Barbados.

I want, Sir, at the very outset to say that, as far as I am concerned, transport is a matter which should, to a large extent, or if possible, totally be controlled by the Government or by a governmental agency. I do not believe in private enterprise controlling public transport, for the simple reason that, if this were done, people who live in the farthest parts of this country would not have the opportunity to have access to a good transportation system. The opportunity, not necessarily that the opportunity exists at the present time, but at least there is a possibility that with the Government having control over the transport system, the needs of people who live in the distant parts of Barbados would have a chance to be met.

4.05 p.m.

One talks about the minibuses. I have said over and over again that one of the reasons for the Transport Board not being able to raise the kind of revenue which it ought to raise is because the lucrative routes, that is the short routes, have, for practical purposes, been given over to the operators of the minibuses and the Government operation has to take the long routes, which are not necessarily the kinds of routes that would ensure that the finances of the Transport Board would look more healthy. I think that this is bad. I believe that every effort should be made for the Transport Board to capitalise also on the short routes, so I do not go along with any argument or any position which says that public transport should be privatised.

Like Senator Wickham, I think this is a matter which relates to people. Transport concerns the welfare and well-being of people, and if one has to, as I say, be emotional in the appeals to ensure that a proper system exists in this country, then so let it be.

Senator Griffith in his introduction indicated that the discomfiture, and I quote him directly, which people suffer now is only an aberration. I thought that the meaning of the word aberration had changed since yesterday, because aberration, as I understand it, has to do with a deviation from the norm, and if we are to take Senator Griffith's position that the discomfiture which people suffer now is only an aberration, or only a deviation from the norm, then, I am saying, that the word "aberration" has taken on a new meaning today. I submit, Sir, that the discomfiture which people have occasioned as a result of their inability to have access to proper transport in Barbados as provided by the public transport system is not an aberration, but is a fact of everyday life. It is a normal situation, and what we are saying is that the millions of dollars which have been spent in public transport over the years, and which we continue to spend on public transport, ought to provide a better service for the people who have to rely on this service.

Senator Lynch, in her defence of the Minister of Transport and Works, has indicated that the Minister has done his best to correct many things. I disagree entirely with that submission, Sir. I would go on to say that the present Minister of Transport and Works is, in my estimation, the worst Minister of Transport and Works that this country has ever seen, and there is no point in defending the indefensible.

The present Minister of Transport and Works, in the first instance, behaves as if the Transport Board is his private plantation. That is the first thing. He behaves as if the Transport Board is his private property. He interferes in the day-to-day administration of the Transport Board to such an extent that what remains of management at that corporation is utterly confused. The Minister runs the Transport Board out of his hip pocket. The General Manager can do nothing. The Personnel Manager, who, incidentally, has no training in personnel management, can do nothing unless the Minister says so.

You see, when we talk about the Transport Board, we talk about it with feeling because it pains us to see how a good thing, as it were, could be so misused and abused by one man who, as a result of his actions, causes so much pain, suffering and inconvenience to a large number of people in this country. People's jobs have been lost, people have had to give up jobs because they could not get to work, and I am saying that if the Minister were to allow a proper management structure to be put in place, if the Minister were to allow the Transport Board to function as a Board, if he were to allow the management in all sections of the Transport to function as they ought to function — function in a professional manner — then, I am submitting, Sir, that a lot of the problems which are now encountered would be removed overnight. It is as simple as that. The Minister is really the stumbling block to the development of a proper system in this country.

Sir, I can give you the chapter and verse of a number of incidents to support the contention which I am making. I do not want to bore you with the details, but just let me give you a simple example. Some time in 1984 the Minister said in Parliament that the Transport Board was overstaffed. At that time, I seem to recall that he said that a study which was done had indicated that a team of about 1 200 people could run the service properly. But do you know that the very next day the Minister personally ordered that 12 additional people be employed, and over that period from 1984 until now an additional 250 people have been added to, to use the Minister's words, an already overstaffed situation?
4.15 p.m.

Sir, we in this country have reached the point where in order to get a job at the Transport Board the

Minister has to personally approve of the selection, right down to the bus washer. I am not even going to talk about the catchment area from which a large number of the people who are employed at the Transport Board come, but the fact of the matter is that in order to get a job at the Transport Board, there are only certain people who can go through the Minister and get jobs there. I would say this, Sir, that even some of those Ministers over there cannot get people in at the Transport Board to work, because they do not have the *entré* with the Minister. I think, Sir, it is a very serious situation when we reach that point.

But one has got to remember that one of the leading members of the Barbados Labour Party in 1978 — I would always remember this — on the first day the House of Assembly met after that famous South Central by-election — made a statement to the effect that if he had his way, all members of the Democratic Labour Party would starve. He went on further to suggest that if a person had the initials like Douglas Leopold Phillips, which would end up as DLP, that they, too, should starve. Sir, what we are seeing today is a very clear manifestation of that not only in the Transport Board, but in every other area of Government. I believe that some Dems have now got to pretend to be Bees in order to get jobs. Senator Trotman would know that well, with the ones that he carried in at the National Insurance Office. But we are not discussing National Insurance today, Sir, we are discussing the Transport Board, and it pains me when we see that we have a system which can work not working.

I think that there was a time, and I am not holding any brief for anybody, but there was a time when one could see that there was a definite strategy to put effective management people in place at the Transport Board. The emphasis was on trained personnel and on training. I agree with Senator Lynch on the point that in the transport system where in the first place you are employing so many people — I believe the staff is currently approaching 2 000 persons — where the staff has to be in constant contact with the public, and where in the kind of service which is delivered you would want to ensure that the public feels satisfied with it, it is important that the kind of persons who work at the Transport Board are selected properly, they are the best for the job, and there is a training programme in place to sensitise the workers to the roles which they are expected to play, and at the same time to involve them in the whole development of a transport system which would redound to the benefit of the users of that system. I doubt very much that any training has been done at the Transport Board over the last 2 to 3 years.

Some people might say, 'but the minibus people do not have any training, nobody spends any money in training the minibus operators.' You see, this is where we make a mistake. I do not think that we have to look at

them in any case. I do not think that their whole approach is the right approach, but we are dealing with a public institution, we are dealing with the expenditure of public money, and we therefore have to be sure that the people who are going to deliver the service are provided with the opportunity to ensure that they become involved, that they understand the direction in which the Transport Board is going, and that they have some general idea about general policy directions. To Senator Lynch, I would say there is no point in making any excuses for the present Minister. I do not think he deserves the kind of excuses and whitewashing which have been made on his behalf here this evening.

I was minded to respond to the point which Senator Griffith made about the supposed impact of the reduction of bus fares in late 1975 to 25 cents and the feeble suggestion by which he attempted to link the reduction of the bus fares in 1975 to the present problems which the Transport Board now faces. I think that the answer which Senator McClean gave adequately deals with that particular point. It is a position which has been taken by the Barbados Labour Party. As a matter of fact, Mr. Owen Arthur, the representative for St. Peter, in the transport debate recently made that very point, and the linkage was established and it was feebly attempted by Senator Griffith here today.

4.25 p.m.

Aside.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: But the point is, Sir, that it has to be appreciated that when this was done, this was a policy decision taken by the Democratic Labour Party.

Aside.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: It was done to ease some of the pressure.....

(Aside: Senator the Hon. C. A. GRIFFITH: Yes!)

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES:.....which the travelling public at that time was experiencing.

Laughter.

Aside.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: It is pure and simple.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: So, Sir, I do not think we have any apologies to make for that. As a matter of fact, Sir, I was very proud to have been the mover of the Resolution to reduce the bus fares from 65 cents to 25 cents. I would say this, Sir.

Aside.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: I do not agree with Senator McClean about the non-payment of bus fares. I know that Senator McClean has been arguing this point for a long time. As a matter of fact, I believe he first projected this idea somewhere around 1972, 1973, if I remember correctly, and from time to time he has been arguing this point. But I am not convinced that that is a solution or would indeed be the answer to the current problems of the Transport Board. I believe, like Senator Griffith, that the problems of the Transport Board are not insurmountable. They can be overcome if only the Minister of Transport and Works would cease interfering in the day-to-day affairs of the Transport Board in the way that he does. I am sure that Senator Jordan, who is a member of the Transport Board, does not agree with the day-to-day interferences. If he does, then I would be very disappointed that a young man of his stature could agree to that kind of situation.

Aside.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Senator McClean referred to the way in which the Transport Board seemed to be regarded by a number of Ministers. One of the things which one has found is that when the Barbados Labour Party came into power, the first Minister of the Transport Board moved in his team, Chairman and everything. Senator Yearwood at that time I think was the Chairman of the Transport Board. Then there was a change of Ministers. Senator Yearwood went through the eddoes. Gone! A new team came in. He was not the Minister's friend, so he gone through the eddoes.

Laughter.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: A new Minister comes, Shorey gone through the eddoes because he was not the Minister's friend! The Minister brought in his team. Changed the Minister again, Glenroy Straughn through the eddoes! The present Minister, Mr. Jordan comes in. But I understand that he went on some trip that the Minister did not know anything about, and when he got back, he went through the eddoes! And another one came. Who? Sir, there have been so many Chairmen who have been dismissed, I really cannot remember all of them. How can you develop a system like this?

The present Minister, not only did he move the Chairman, you know, Sir. The Personnel Manager, a trained person — fired! General Manager, sent on leave for almost a year! After him, the Deputy General Manager, Mr. Waterman, acted as Manager. He did not last 6 months. He went through the eddoes. Another Manager came, and he went, too. And then they reached a point where you have the present Manager, who was handed a letter indicating that he could go home as from now, I think his contract expires on January 31, 1986, but the Board, at the instance of the Minister, has indicated, I think, that they prefer him not to be around.

Senator Jordan is a member of the Transport Board. He can deny whether it is so or not.

Aside.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Oh, you are not at the Transport Board anymore? I did not know anything about that. Anyhow, Sir.....

Laughter.

Aside.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Let us have a little order.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: What I am saying, Sir, is that the problem at the Transport Board is really a management problem, even the whole question of the scheduling of buses is a management problem, and until there is some conscious decision to appoint proper managers and to allow the Transport Board to function in the way that it should function, we will always have these problems.

Can you imagine, Sir, that in the 1985-86 allocations for the Transport Board they have allocated \$4.2 million to purchase buses, et cetera, and can you imagine how much money they have allocated for spare parts? Not one penny! That is the nature of the Transport Board. How on earth could you spend \$4 million in buses in 1984-85, buy new buses in 1983-84, and yet in 1985-86 you do not allocate any money for spare parts? Do you see what I am talking about?

(Aside: Senator the Hon. C. A. GRIFFITH: Fire the Manager.)

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Sir, if the Minister would allow the Transport Board to function, things would be much better.

Let me give you another example of the kind of nonsense which goes on at the Transport Board. You know they have some old buses up there which have been sold from time to time. I am not talking about those old buses, Sir, that the present Minister bought — about 4 or 5 of them he bought himself — I am not talking about those. But I know.....

(Aside: Senator the Hon. N. A. BARROW: You said he bought 4 or 5?)

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Yes. He has them down in Trents in St. Lucy.

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: On a point of order, Mr. President: Senator Greaves this time

is for sure misleading the House deliberately. This is a matter which is a matter of public record, because when the Minister was accused of having bought buses, he did in fact publicly state that he had bought 2 buses. We are not dealing with 4 or 5.

What is more, Sir — and this is the part that Senator Greaves would of course wish to suppress — is that he was not Minister at the time, and, therefore, to put it in the way he has put it would suggest wrongdoing, which is a rather underhand way of doing things. Secondly, Sir, not only was he not Minister at the time, but, like anybody else, he put his money up for things that were being sold, and when he waited to purchase his, the price went up by more than 100%. He, in fact, was done no favour.

I would wish that put in the record, Sir, because the Senator is, in my view, deliberately misleading the House, which is something which is against our Standing Orders.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Just a minute. I do not mind these explanations, but I want to warn members that if they make — I think the Minister knows what I mean — these interruptions, it might prejudice the right to speak. I know you would not wish a statement that needs to be corrected to go on and keep creating the wrong impression, but I would like long interruptions to be avoided until you are making a substantive speech.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: Yes, Sir. When the Minister bought the buses — I understand they are 2 — he was a Minister in the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Aside.

4.35 p.m.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: I said he bought the buses. Yes, he bought the buses. But, Sir, there are other people who bought buses, and I say this here. I know of one person — I only want to show you the kind of foolishness which goes on — who bought a Transport Board bus for \$100. Do you know, Sir, that out of that investment of \$100 he has been able to sell back to the Transport Board, in less than a year, parts off of that old bus for over \$700, and the man still has a substantial portion of that bus in his yard? There are others who have bought a number of buses. They have sold buses with a lot of diesel in them and people have turned around and sold diesel back to the Transport Board. They have sold buses and then had to go and buy back parts from the persons who have bought these old buses.

You see the point I am making, Sir, is that what you need at the Transport Board — back to the point —

is a proper management structure. That is the problem up there. But the Minister would not allow this to develop. He picks yard fowls, people who are not qualified to run a system like the Transport Board, people who have no experience in this kind of operation. The public of Barbados deserves better, because it is a lot of money we are talking about, millions of dollars, which go to the Transport Board every year out of the Transport Board Levy Fund and out of the Consolidated Fund, and yet we find that there is dissatisfaction all around the country about the level of service which is being provided. I cannot agree with the Leader of the Senate when he made the point about the discomfiture being an aberration. This is a daily occurrence and, as I said, we have to demand better of the Transport Board. We ought to have a better service.

So, Sir, as far as this Resolution is concerned, there really is not anything that can be done with it. The buses have already come, the money has been committed, and I do not even think that a protest vote at this point would serve much of a useful purpose, except to show or to demonstrate the dissatisfaction which one has with the general administration of the Transport Board and with the day-to-day interference of the Minister, which leads to all sorts of confusion. I would not even bother, Sir, as I might have done were it sometime previously, and call for the resignation of the Minister, which really ought to be called for. But the life of this Parliament does not have very much longer to go, and I am sure that my illustrious colleague, Senator Hall, will ensure, or at least the people of the constituency which the Minister represents will ensure, that he will no longer be in a position to represent that constituency and do the kind of nonsense which he has done to the transport system, or to any other system in this country.

Thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Jones.

SENATOR THE REV. CANON I. McK. JONES:
Thank you, Mr. President.

I am not in a position to speak as the last speaker spoke about what is going on with the Board and the Minister. But I do think that transport is a public service and a national business, and it should transcend all political barriers. Debates that I have heard here and what I have read in the Lower House, in the Other Place, seem to suggest that some speakers want to make public transport a political football, and I think that is tragic.

Whatever censures may be levelled against the transport in this country of Barbados, no knowledgeable person can deny that the bus service in this country is one of the best anywhere to be found in the Caribbean, and the cheapest. When you realize that you can get in a bus

at Oistins and drive from there to Speightstown, a matter of 18 miles, for 75 cents, I challenge anybody to tell me where you can drive that distance in almost any other part of the world for that kind of money for 75 cents. It is true that we have certain things happening with the Transport Board that gives us some discomfort, for example, the subsidy of \$17 million a year, which is a lot of money. But when one says that, one also has to ask, if the Government were to stop being in control of the buses or stop looking after the buses, what will happen in this country? The amount of money that will be lost to the Gross National Product, the GNP, would be much larger than the amount of \$17 million.

People have said that they cannot understand — not that they cannot understand, but they are always comparing the bus service, the transport system, with the minibuses, and I think that is unfair because you are comparing like with unlike, and any logician will tell you that is bastard logic. You cannot compare two incomparable things. What is happening is that, as has already been said here by one of the speakers, the minibus only ply the routes where they know they are going to get passengers and they are going to make money, and they are the short routes. You never hear of a minibus going up in St. Philip or St. Andrew and trying to get people to bring to town, so it is unfair to compare the minibus with the general transport. But the Government has got to see to it that people who live in outlying districts can still get to work and can still get around, and, as Senator Lynch pointed out, we cannot forget the school children. As I said already, the transport service is a national service, a public service, — it is not partisan — and whatever party you belong to, whether you are a Barbados Labour Party man or a Democratic Labour Party person, or you belong to no party, because you have some people in this country who do not belong to any party, wherever you are you have to use the bus. You have to get on the bus some time. So the buses are essential.

What I would like to suggest, and I have not heard this suggestion before, is that the top brass of both the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party at their monthly constituency meetings use their good offices — they have some eloquent speakers on both sides, they have their Disraelis and their Pitts, and we know who they are — use their expertise and knowledge to try to encourage the drivers of the buses, the conductors and motor mechanics to embrace the philosophy that the work in which they are engaged is not something that is personal or individualistic, but that the work that they are engaged in is relevant to the entire community. They are working for a lot of other people and not only for themselves. If we can encourage them to put their best foot forward, to work to the best of their ability, and help them to understand that they are there to be of service to an entire community, I am sure that

would go a long way in helping to improve the bus service in our community and to make them understand that they have a challenge to do whatever they can do to promote the best interests of the people in Barbados. 4.45 p.m.

I hope that the top brass, as I said, in these political fields will take a little time off from criticising each other and denouncing each other and let people know that this public transport is of real national importance and that we need it. We cannot do without it, it is an essential service, and we have to get them to understand that when they are working, what they are doing is taking to and fro school children who in the next 8 or 10 years will possibly be having the reins of Government in this same country. They are doing a wonderful job, and if we can inspire them to do it to the best of their ability, I am sure we will do a lot for the youth. Instead of hearing all the condemnation about the bus service, we will begin to hear some commendation. That is what I would hope for in the future.

Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. President, I do like the tenor of what Senator Jones had to say; the only trouble is that I am not about to sit down in this Chamber or anywhere else and hear a lot of nonsense talked about the public transport system in a way to attribute to Government a lot of responsibility for what is not happening, indeed, and let it pass, so I think the Honourable Canon is going to have to bear with me for a minute.

I am talking, Sir, against the background that yesterday they had 207 buses on the road, but while the union was negotiating a new contract the number of buses on the road fell to 182. I like how Senator Greaves can get up and talk in here and then run out when he understands that somebody who knows exactly what is happening is going to get up and talk. It is a maxim that he who comes to equity must come with clean hands, and Senator Greaves really should never adopt the high ground in any debate, especially one on public transport, because we are dealing with a matter which is one that is sensitive, because very few things affect so directly such a large proportion of the population as the public transport system, and therefore it is always something on which one can work up a certain amount of support for almost any view.

But there are certain cold, hard, objective facts. The transport system of this country was unsatisfactorily serviced at the time when in 1955 the Government of the day, then the Barbados Labour Party, took steps to nationalise a major portion of it. There has never been any doubt in anybody's mind that if that step had not been taken the service was going to go from bad to worse

and that the interest of the public would not be served. What is significant, however, is that it was 21 years later, when a new Barbados Labour Party Administration took office, that the rest of the public transport system was then nationalised.

I am saying this because Senator Greaves, in his lofty position over there, draws himself up fully to his 4'3" and delivers as though he has some right to attach himself, either philosophically or otherwise, to decisions in relation to a system of public transport. But like you have to say with a lot of things, in all the time his party was in power why didn't he believe sufficiently strongly that the public transport system should not be privatised? Why didn't he believe sufficiently strongly that the public transport system ought to be treated as a national service to the national good and therefore reorganised? Why didn't he believe it all that strongly? Now somebody else does it, he comes along with his new-found beliefs.

But we go further than that, because he has taken the position, this lofty ground, and then he decides to let go his slurs. It was not in 1976 that the Transport Board started to sell buses off, left, right and centre, at \$50 a bus. It was not in 1976, Mr. President. For many years they have been doing that. I believe there is a justification. They needed the space, those buses were no longer of any value to them, there was a market for the buses among plantation owners who wished to use these bodies, park them in among the fields, provide some kind of convenience for the workers in the field, and therefore they literally gave them away. Fifty dollars was what they charged. The interesting fact, if there is anything at all interesting about all of this, is that the Minister he criticises was not Minister of Transport at the time and therefore was standing like anybody else in the queue, but he owns a plantation and, like other people owning plantations, sought to buy 2 buses. The only dispute that there ever was was that when he sought to buy 2 of the buses the then Chairman of the Transport Board, who is in fact with us in this Chamber, raised the price from \$50 a bus to \$300 a bus. In fact, the two buses cost that individual a total of \$500 more than they would have cost him if that Chairman had not taken over, so that he in fact suffered from this change of Chairmen which the Board seems to have had over the years. But really, that is the only thing of interest in it. What more is there? That the gentleman concerned wrote the cheque for \$800, so that he also paid for the cost of having the buses drawn down to the plantation in St. Lucy? Is that really interesting? Can we really regard that something that ought to take up the attention of Parliament? Yet Senator Greaves considers that that ought to be the subject of some kind of moral judgment.

Every time I hear Senator Greaves on moral judgment he reminds me more and more of his mentor,

Mr. Cameron Tudor. I remembered it today, Sir, when he was talking about the Douglas Leopold Phillips speech, because the Douglas Leopold Phillips speech was a speech made in response. I am not defending the speech — I am standing right down the middle here — but Cameron Tudor had made the point that members of the Democratic Labour Party were getting the jobs and not members of the Barbados Labour Party, and that that was why we lost the by-election in St. Michael South Central in 1978. People like to forget these things, but I believe I have a little bit of a memory that is fairly accurate. He was beating this particular point, and the response to him was that 'for my part, if your name is Douglas Leopold Phillips, you could not get work for me,' or whatever was said. But that was the context of the statement. Cameron Tudor was arguing very clearly, 'when we were in power,' he said, 'it was our people that got the jobs. Now, they are in power, it is still our people who are getting the jobs, so you can check and see what you are supporting the Barbados Labour Party for.' I would really like Senator Greaves to come and tell me who it is that started this business of discrimination in employment that he was carrying on about in here today. 4.55 p.m.

At the end of 15 years of Democratic Labour Party rule, Mr. President, we can talk about discrimination in employment. I can look straight in the gallery now and see somebody who was a senior public officer, and because all of his family and all of his wife's family supported the Barbados Labour Party — he and his wife were, also, at that time, believed to be supporters of the Barbados Labour Party — when the post of Chief Labour Commissioner came up to be filled, the then Premier said, "he cannot fill it. I am going to re-organize the department." When the Comptroller of Customs post came up, he said the same thing. The Comptroller of Customs waited and, eventually, when the Governor-General was not here and somebody else was acting Governor-General, he approved the appointment, because the Public Service Commission, in both of these cases, as far as I know, kept submitting the same name. But the gentleman I am talking about did not wait. He went off to Cable and Wireless, and as soon as he went up to Cable and Wireless, you heard not one more word about re-organizing the department. An appointment was made, and I really have to take my hat off to the gentleman every time I see him, because his wife is a candidate for the Democratic Labour Party and he is their principal research man.

But he knows intimately, in a way that nobody else knows, about job discrimination under the Democratic Labour Party. He knows better than me, Sir, and when I applied for a job at Harrison College, the late Mr. Hilton Vaughn, and the sometimes Mr. Cameron Tudor, canvassed a whole governing body against my getting a job. They told them that I was a troublemaker and they

could not give me a job. So I know about job discrimination in employment, and the gentleman I referred to, Sir, knows it even better than me, because his was a career already embarked on in which he had invested many years, and because the then Government believed his politics were, in fact, other than they were, he suffered. At least, in my case, they knew my politics. In his case, they guessed at his and guessed wrong, and....

Laughter.

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: I remember the day that I decided that I was no longer prepared to associate with the Democratic Labour Party, in case anybody really wants to know. The job of Deputy Headmaster at the Lodge School was going, and I was told, when I had said that, in my view, Mr. Hoyos — now Sir Alexander — was the obvious man to get the job, I was told to speak to a few people and see what I could do. When he did not get it and I came back in, I said, 'I do not know how 'Fab' did not get the job.' I was told "But, you do not understand. We can afford to support 'Fab' because we knew he could not get it." Every Lodge boy of my generation came away from that school considering this gentleman an example of uprightness and of caring and concern for the students of a school in what was, in fact, a racial, strife-torn society.

That was the position, people were playing with people's careers because they were known supporters of the Barbados Labour Party. Those are not my values and, therefore, if I talk about them now, I will talk about them now as I talked about them previously. Nobody's politics will ever enter as a consideration where I am concerned. I am not telling you that if I have a choice in the same way as if I know you and do not know somebody else and something is within my gift that I am not going to go down a particular line. I am not telling you that, but I am not actively going to discriminate against anybody on the ground of his beliefs, whether there be religious or political. Nobody in the Democratic Labour Party can say that. Not one of them can say it.

"Sleepy" Smith appointed more school meals workers in August 1976, than they probably appointed the rest of the year preceding August, and, of course, Senator Greaves here — Sir, this gentleman is reminding me that "Sleepy" brought them from St. Michael South Central which is why he did not lose his seat. He won by 20 votes. He had more than 20 school meals workers appointed. But, in the Garden Land in 1976, Caddle appointed all the people to come and wash all the buses down in the Transport Board. You forgot that? Carmichael and Parks and Beaches! These people from the Democratic Labour Party really have a lot of gall to come in here and talk about job discrimination. I do not

really want to go any further because, I believe, I have that out of my system. As I said, he that comes to equity must come with clean hands.

The other aspect of Senator Greaves' speech that I really cannot take — and I was very careful when he spoke to write it down almost word for word — is his statement that the present Minister is the worst Minister of Transport and Works this country has ever seen. He behaves as if the Transport Board is his private plantation. He interferes with the daily administration of the Transport Board to such an extent that what remains is utter confusion. He runs the Transport Board out of his hip pocket. The General Manager can do nothing. The Personnel Manager can do nothing unless the Minister says so.

I have read a number of statements. Each of them is a statement, specific enough, but not one statement is substantiated by a single shred of evidence. Each of those statements indeed constitutes a serious charge, but it is typical of what Senator Greaves inflicts on this Chamber. He does not deal with a single example to support anything he says. I talked about job discrimination. I was not afraid to give examples, because I know the examples are there to give. Senator Greaves could not talk and give examples, because he has absolutely no examples to give.

There is another thing, Sir, and I know they will tell me that as a Minister I should not do it. If the Permanent Secretary involved in this business, Sir, where we now have to come and put things right was not from St. Lucy, Senator Greaves would be in here riding him. I see somebody's face over there. He only knows he is a Dem. He does not know he is from St. Lucy, too. If he was not from St. Lucy, Senator Greaves would be riding him like anything. For our part, we are satisfied that he made an honest error, because he sought legal advice. What happened is that the legal advice he got at the time was not the legal advice which he got later, and it was on the basis of that legal advice that the mistake was made. We are satisfied that there was no intention to mislead the Government, no intention to mislead Parliament. Senator Greaves cares for none of these things, and had he not been from St. Lucy.....Just let me leave it at that.
5.05 p.m.

I have 1 or 2 statements to make, Sir. I am just picking these things up, because I remember Senator Greaves in particular saying that he would not call for the resignation of the Minister, and again we know that if he had any confidence in Senator Hall's capacity to win that seat, he would be up and crowing ever since; he was not going to be holding back. Senator Greaves does not hold back. The other thing that Senator Hall must remember is that Senator Greaves went and pushed out

his neck for him, went down in St. Lucy over a road, killed his chance of ever winning in St. Lucy again, and that he is not sticking out his neck for him again.

There is a point which I believe was made somewhere in all this. Sir, I have been taking up things said by Senator Greaves as I went along, but there is one thing also. He was talking about the Transport Board and he kept saying it is a problem of management. He said the problems at the Transport Board are problems of management. You would not believe that the same man who is saying this is referring to the case where he said a man was sent on leave for, I think he said years and years or for a year. Now if he is saying that the problem is management, even if he did not tell the truth when he said he was sent on leave for a year, why should the then General Manager, who was a civil servant seconded to the post and not doing a good job, not have had his secondment terminated? Senator Greaves said it is management, not me. I agree with him, but he said it. If the problem is management, then why do you keep the secondment going of a General Manager who is not performing competently.

The other thing he was talking about, and Senator Jordan shook his head and indicated that it was a total falsehood, concerned the present General Manager. If the present General Manager was employed, quite frankly, as a stop-gap choice on a 2 year contract, and the 2 years are almost up, won't the Board have a responsibility to intimate whether they want to enter into negotiations with him for a renewal of contract or whether they would not wish to enter into any such negotiations at the end of his contract? He is the man who served as General Manager some years previously and was brought back as a stop-gap for 2 years, so what is so fancy about this? In fact, if I listen to Senator Greaves, obviously you should not be renewing his contract, because he says it is a problem of management.

Mr. President, what I want to say about the Transport Board in positive terms — I am not dealing with any points made by Senator Greaves about the minibuses — the fact of the Transport Board — this is exquisite timing — is this : that within the public transport system the minibuses and the Transport Board buses complement each other. If it is one thing on which all speakers will have agreed, it is that nobody running a service for private gain is going to either run in the off-peak hours at a satisfactory level, or go into long hauls. There are a number of other things they are not going to do, but all of this tends to detract from the general quality of the service. We need to recognise that we can speak with pride about the kind of transport system we have, which is not only just better than any other in the Caribbean but in fact is a transport system which is generally efficient.

Government came in and found a lot of old Seddons, but that is another story. The late Mrs. Rock was a member of the Democratic Labour Party. She and somebody else used to bring in the Seddons. The Seddons were totally unsuited and represented a waste of money. That is one of the areas in which the Transport Board lost millions of dollars, and we are still saddled with that loss, but she was within the party and so on and so forth, so you know what would happen, they bought the Seddons. Since those days we have not bought any Seddons. We retired all the Seddons and these same Seddons were the buses that they used to sell for \$50, because that was the value of the Seddons. Only Vic Johnson got caught with his because they made him pay \$300 for his. I did not even know that you could speculate on them until Senator Greaves told the story about his friend this afternoon, but then the Dems can speculate on anything, make money even out of Seddons. So they make it on the import, the Transport Board loses, the Transport Board sells, virtually gives them away, and they turn around and make the money again. A great life, Sir. If he is a friend of Senator Greaves, I know he is nothing.

The fact of the matter is that within our system we have to maintain a fleet of some 250 buses on the road. Under that level we are going to get complaints because we cannot service all the routes satisfactorily. That is why recently, again a decision was taken to buy more buses, and the whole point of the Transport Levy is not only within the context of the roadworks, but also and principally indeed to provide for retirement of that old stock of buses and to purchase new buses, because the life of a bus, I believe, is something like 10 years. If you have Seddons they would not last that long, but what they are doing now is that they are refurbishing old stock and they are adding new buses all the time.

I used to know the figure for the number of new buses bought since 1976, but the majority of the present fleet is in fact new buses, and once we get out of the time zone, so to speak, of the negotiation, we are going to be in a position to render a better service, because as I indicated before, today we have 207 buses on the road — and we are in fact going to keep improving — but at the time when we were negotiating with Mr. Greaves' union we had fallen to 182 buses on the road. All I can tell you, Sir, is that if Senator Greaves is right about mismanagement, we must not fail also to look squarely in the face of all other aspects of the problem, and I am very glad to see that the union negotiation was settled because the people would be able to get to work a little better now. All those buses are not going back in without anything wrong with them, and a lot of them now that were off the road previously are back on the road, and I am sure that when Mr. Greaves speaks from his high position of moral principle, he would be able to speak in future with greater conviction, some time in the future though, Sir.

Sir, that is my contribution. I really do not like to hear the transport system in this country being knocked, because a great deal has been done to improve its performance both in terms of carrying out a general commitment and also in terms of its general efficiency.

SENATOR H. E. YEARWOOD: Mr. President, I will not be making a long speech on this matter, because, everytime the Transport Board comes up, everybody seems to have a little go at it because it seems in this country that everybody is a transport expert.
5.15 p.m.

Sir, the problem with the Transport Board from my position as one of the previous Chairmen, the main problem, is the attitude of a lot of staff within the Transport Board.

(Aside: Senator the Hon. O'B. TROTMAN: Dems!)

SENATOR H. E. YEARWOOD: My view, Sir, is that a lot more could be done if Mr. Greaves and his union would set an example and tell the workers at the Transport Board what they must do and how they must do it. They do not give a proper lead in my view, and on a number of occasions a lot of these faults which are reported by drivers at the Transport Board are things which could most certainly be overlooked.

We have this situation, a very serious situation in the Transport Board where — and I think this is the most serious — people come in to work and are not interested in doing a day's work. It goes as far as this — a fellow may come to work a morning, he wants to go into town shopping and this kind of thing, and the first thing he does is he goes out with a bus and reports sick. These are the problems which the Transport Board has been facing for years. These are small problems of discipline which could be corrected in my view by the union having a serious talk with the culprits involved in this thing, because the whole thing, Sir, is that there are a lot of good, hard-working drivers and conductors in the Transport Board who are prepared to do an honest day's work, they are prepared to co-operate with the management at the Transport Board and they are prepared to allow the system to work.

There are also a number of people in the Transport Board who are saboteurs, and Mr. Greaves knows them. Some of them, Sir,.....

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: On a point of order, Mr. President. I object to Senator Yearwood suggesting that I know the saboteurs in the Transport Board. I do not know any saboteurs in the Transport Board. The only saboteur I know is Vic Johnson.

(Aside: Who is Vic Johnson?)

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: I do not know.

SENATOR H. E. YEARWOOD: Sir.....

Mr. PRESIDENT: Just a second. Why do you have to spoil everything by making these unseemly remarks? You got up to correct something that was said — sit down — and all you need to say was that you do not know any saboteurs. Now you compound the thing by making unseemly remarks. I wish you would avoid that, Senator Greaves. All right.

SENATOR H. E. YEARWOOD: Sir, I certainly agreed with Senator Lynch when she said that a lot has been achieved in the Transport Board. A lot has been achieved. But, unfortunately, Sir, all that is achieved in a very short time can be kicked down and broken up by these people who do not intend to see the system work. As I said earlier, there is no question in my mind that if the union, which has a lot of authority in the Transport Board, would see to it that the people who set out to cause trouble are spoken to very firmly, or that when they are disciplined, that there is no lot of problems with getting them disciplined properly. I am sure a lot more could be achieved by the management at the Transport Board.

People talk, Sir, about all this management at the Transport Board. I cannot see how over all of these years, in any other section of this community most other places are run quite well, but every year, or every few months, they are talking about the management at the Transport Board. There might be some problems with a bit of the management at the Transport Board, but the fact is, Sir, that with the best will in the world and with the best management in the world and you do not have the co-operation of those people who have to physically run the system, with the assistance of the union in this case, it will never work, regardless of what anybody does at the Transport Board. All of the problems which arise at the Transport Board can be solved. The problem is that the problems which arise there keep coming up. They are being repeated every day because there are the same people there who are trying to destroy the system for their own reasons. Whatever reasons there are, we do not know, but I believe, Sir, that if the management at the Transport Board is firm, a lot can be done and a lot of improvements can be made within the system.

Senator Greaves talked about these buses. I think Senator Barrow has explained that already, but I think I should add that when people talk about selling buses at the Transport Board, in fact, they are not buses, they are chassis that have been cannibalized. All the parts have been taken off, the engines have been taken out.....

Aside.

SENATOR H. E. YEARWOOD: The engines are taken out. I do not know where Senator Greaves got that from. That is probably since my time. The engines are taken out, everything is taken out. They are pure chassis, with probably bodies on them, but no engines are in these buses, and in fact those are the buses for which \$50 used to be paid. But when the Board, which I at one time looked after, took over, we decided that they were getting away with too much and we increased the price of the buses. They were really basically chassis; lights were off, every part was taken off of these things. They were very good for making the cane carts at these plantations, so the plantations used to buy them to move canes.

It was nothing to do with any buses. I remember somebody at some other stage, on some other political platform, had said something about "imagine selling 2 new buses for \$300 to Vic Johnson." Even one tyre costs more than that. Of course, it was their lackey. I think that should be cleared. The buses, in fact, were chassis, and I would really like to make that clear, because there is a lot of misunderstanding about that whole thing.

I would like to appeal to Senator Greaves to assist the Transport Board's management in any of the things which they want to do to make the system more efficient, and I firmly believe this can be done. If supervisors at the Transport Board, Sir, try to discipline any of the workers, there are always threats about they are going to burn their house or they are going to meet them and beat them up. It is a fact that that is how in there is run. Again, I have to repeat, Sir, that I am not speaking of all the Transport Board workers because sometimes you are misinterpreted and people think you are criticizing every worker in the place. There is a small corps of people who are like this, and I am saying that they are people who are not in sympathy with the Barbados Labour Party and they do not want to see the system run efficiently. Regardless of what they do, I am still prepared to say, Sir, that our transport system, as other people have recognised, is still about the best transport system you can find anywhere, but I am saying that with a little will and a little co-operation on the part of some of these workers the system can be made more efficient, and I am sure that every year we would not have to be coming to this Senate and in the Other Place having all of this debate on the transport system, which seems to create, in my view, too much controversy for the good of the system in the country.

Sir that is my contribution on the whole matter. Thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Hall.
5.25 p.m.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: Sir, I am not really going to try to attempt to flog a dead dog, but I shall make a few brief comments.

Aside.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: I said dog. What is the difference between a horse and a dog?

I would like to make a few comments, and I would like to begin by saying that I am not at all going to ask anybody to stick their neck out for me, Sir, as alluded to by Senator Barrow. As a matter of fact, my life will not be punctuated by highs and lows, determined by which Government is in power. I am in that position, Sir. It just happens to be that way. It does not matter to me. My life is not going to be adversely affected. If I run for the House of Assembly, which is my privilege as a Barbadian, and I happen to win, I am not going to jump over the moon; and if I lose, I am not going to lie down and play dead. So in relation to all of the innuendoes that we hear expressed in here, Sir, I just want the honourable Members to understand that, and as long as they understand that that is the situation, we could then be on "even Stevens."

Sir, I am not the repository of all transport knowledge, but I need not be to know that the Transport Ministry is in real trouble. I believe, Sir, that although there has been a lot of talk about this Ministry, although there has been a lot of talk by Ministers when they assume office about what they are going to do and what has not been done in the past, and things like that, I believe, Sir, that no real in-depth analysis seems to have been done about the role of the Transport Board. A Minister, it seems to me, Sir, can hire and fire as he wants. He can hire or fire the chairman, Board members, the manager, and the employees. It seems to me, therefore, Sir, that if all is not well, the Ministers will get a fair share of the blame, and if all goes well, obviously he will get the bouquets.

I am not here in the business to criticise unduly, Sir — I would just like to make a few comments — but at the Transport Board people get promoted when they should be fired. That is a fact, and it seems to me, Sir, there is a lot of confusion and a lot of frustration in the Transport Board. We have heard accusations, even today in this Chamber we have heard an ex-chairman say that the attitude of the worker is wrong. Maybe he is right. He should know. But the Minister has also accused the workers, and there have been counter-accusations against the Ministry. So you see, Sir, you have to look very carefully and scrutinize the entire operation to come up with some meaningful solution. The Minister said this morning that the problems are not insurmountable. That may well be true, Sir. I hope so, because if they are not

insurmountable, it seems to me that, sooner or later, preferably sooner, someone should try to solve them.

But, Sir, at the Transport Board people know what is going on. We talk about "Sleepy" Smith and 20 votes. There were more than 20 workers in the School Meals so, therefore, he won by 20, and one gets the impression, as if it is common knowledge, that when you give people a lot of jobs, you win. That is the recipe. Indeed, it seems so, because one only has to go up there in Fairfield Cross Road and give your name to Mr. Goring.

Aside.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: I do not want a job there.

Give your name to Goring, and then it is felt, or you are made to believe, that you can get a job there at the Transport Board! Sir, it is little wonder, therefore, that you get square pegs in round holes. It is little wonder, Sir, that the place seems to be fraught with a lot of indecision and, indeed, a lot of confusion.

Only a little while ago, two senior members of the workshop were sent on training, Sir to do with the Mercedes buses, and when they returned, one went to Mangrove and the other to Speightstown. It is true that last week one returned to headquarters. But, Sir, when the damage is already done, these are things that people wonder and complain, and these problems seem insurmountable, because they can easily be solved. But that looks to me, Sir, as a case of bad management.

There are a lot of buses on the roads, Sir, and they are quite pretty, but some of the buses remind me of some people I know. They are pretty outside and they are pretty bad inside. One only has to look at the 4 bus depots. They see buses with their bellies exposed, no spare parts. One only has to queue up on the highways to get a bus and, yes, Sir, you see the agony on their faces. That agony is a fixed one, they know that they will hardly ever get a bus. Sir, these problems tell me, and they should tell every concerned citizen of Barbados, that all is not well. As I said, one needs not to be a repository of all transportation knowledge.

I, Sir, believe that in a given situation where when a Minister moves to a Ministry his boy Friday moves — they are like Gilbert and Roland, inseparable — it means that there is mass confusion. We have seen it in many Ministries. I think Senator Greaves alluded to it, and I need not go any further. But I think that if you look at it from a point of view of good management or if you have trained staff, skilled managers, trained middle management, trained supervisors, and a motivated staff, I think, Sir, that would be an answer to good transportation.

I certainly believe, Sir, that as far as the Transport Board is concerned, we have to look at the question of the minibuses. Politically, Sir, people tend to believe that this is a suicidal thing. Politicians do not like to talk about it, but I think that the facts must be faced. I believe that even if the whole transport system was run by Transport Board buses, I believe, Sir, that they will not be able to adequately staff the shorter routes and, therefore, it seems to me there is room for both. It seems to me that there is room for both the Transport Board buses, even on the lucrative routes, and the minibuses, and some marriage, Sir, will have to be gone into so that we can have a more equitable distribution.

There is also the question of the ZM vans, Sir, which seem to ply on the routes of the minibuses, I believe that, somehow, the Government must come to grips with this situation and see what is the best solution. But I do feel that if this situation continues, Sir, there will hardly be any real solution that we can come to.

It seems to me, Sir, that in some countries you have ugly buses. The buses are not as pretty as the ones you see here. You go to places like India and indeed Pakistan; you will find that the buses do not look as durable and they do not look as pretty as the ones here — but they have people in them all of the time. This is not because the population is 800 million. It is good management, Sir. They are managed properly and I think.....

Aside.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: Sir, I say that the transportation systems in those countries make money, and the reason why they make good money is because they have good management. If Senator Griffith wants to refute that, he can go there and tell us what the situation is.

5.35 p.m.

Aside.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: Sri Lanka is not India.

Aside.

SENATOR W. W. HALL: That is not true. The population of Sri Lanka is about 150 million people and the population of India is 800 million. How do you mean the same population trouble? If you do not know what you are talking about, why do you not shut up?

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order! Order!

SENATOR W. W. HALL: Every time one has to speak about the Transport Board, or the transport

system in this country, it is a sensitive area, so I can understand the members on that side not wishing me to say anything at all. As a matter of fact, Sir, we had a situation — I think it was alluded to by Senator Greaves — where an ex-Minister said he would have an investigation into the Transport Board. I do not think he was talking about bad management. Up to this day, Sir, we have not seen the report on it. I am suggesting that when things happen and you change your Ministers, people do not have any great confidence in you, and I am calling for the Government to tell us what is in that report so that we will understand what were the ills of the Transport Board. I know it is a sensitive area, Sir, and the members of the Government do not wish anybody to comment on it, but I believe that if we are honourable Senators in this Chamber and a question as sensitive as the transport system is debated, everybody should be given an equal opportunity to give of their views.

As far as I am concerned, I will just say what I have to say, and it does not matter to me who on that side or who on this side gets upset. It is of no concern to me, Sir, it does not bother me, they have their job to do and I will speak to the best of my ability. I am saying that there is no one in Barbados who will come and tell you that all is well in the transport system of Barbados. It is as simple as that. I am saying that since that is the case, I think it will do the Government, and the Ministers too, good if they will seek to alleviate the problems that now beset us, instead of every time anybody makes a suggestion, be it constructive or destructive, just put a smoke screen over the whole thing, as if they think that by doing that they can blind all the people for all the time.

I feel, Sir, without trying to speak any longer on this very vexed matter, that the Government should let the people know exactly what is the true position at the Transport Board. We see buses gutted, we see buses broken down, we see the roads they have to go on, we see that the cane holes have gravitated from the canefields and gone to even places like Broad Street, and all these are big problems in the Transport Board. I think it behoves the Government to have a look at it, try and settle the differences with the workers to begin with, because a dissatisfied worker is a serious situation in any organisation. It seems to me, since it has come from the Minister only a few weeks ago — and today I have heard it from the lips of no less a person than an ex-chairman — that if it is a question of the attitudinal changes we have seen in the work force which were not apparent before, I suggest that the Government will have to look very seriously at it. It is a very vital link in our society, it is a very vital institution, and I do feel that unless the Government comes to grips with this situation it will be a problem that will not last for 4 weeks, but it will last for many years.

SENATOR J. E. JORDAN: Mr. President, as I join this debate to support the Resolution, I wish first of all to declare an interest by way of my being a member of the Transport Board. I would not wish to say, however, Sir, that perhaps that interest may not continue for much longer.

In the contributions I have listened to so far this afternoon I have not heard mention made of perhaps an integral reason for the size of the operating expenses at the Transport Board. For the current fiscal year, 85-86, it is anticipated that the sum of some \$38 million will be required to finance the operations of the Board, and of that \$38 million the salaries and wages component is some \$28 million, representing 124% of the operating expenses. We are talking basically about a work force of 1 800 people to approximately 300 buses, so that we have a distribution, bus-employee, of 1 to 6. For every bus that the Transport Board owns there are some 6 employees, and I think that if we need to look at measures to effect economies to the operations at the Board, then perhaps we could look at the expenses incurred by retaining such a sizeable work force.

It is common knowledge that the services of some of our personnel could be dispensed with. For example, of the 92 or so bus washers and cleaners that we have, we could replace that operation with automatic bus washers and commercial vacuum cleaners, but I think the Board and the Government recognise that Government statutory boards have a responsibility to provide employment for those people. So that if you are talking about running a Transport Board system economically, presumably many of us can say let us look at the size of our work force. But are we prepared to do that? Is the country prepared to lose 200 or 300 jobs? Senator Greaves in his contribution on an earlier matter referred to the displacement of personnel at the St. Joseph Hospital. Those were 100 jobs that Senator Greaves was concerned about. Here at the Transport Board we are talking in the vicinity of 200 or 300 jobs.

I think it is fair to say as well that one of the problems at the Transport Board, as I suspect at many other institutions of that size, is the quality of management that the corporation has been able to attract and to retain during its operation. Perhaps, Sir, I can cite an example. There is, or there was, on the establishment of the Transport Board a post of Financial Controller, and for a very long time the Board has been advertising to have that position filled. The applicants were few, and of those who applied, many of them were unsuitable. In an effort to attract competent people, the salary and the remuneration attached to the post was increased significantly. But in spite of that, many of the professional people would sooner take a job in some other institution rather than risk their reputation, rather than risk a tenure, short it may be, at

the Government-owned Transport Board. This reflects one of the difficulties, I think, that the Board has been experiencing.
5.45 p.m.

Senator Greaves made the point about the quality of management personnel. You would not believe that the union that he represents was up in arms when the Board recently, over the past 12 months, found a competent person to put in a mid-management position, and that particular individual was effecting savings to the corporation. What happened? You heard that the Transport Board buses were not running! The Transport Board employees were on strike, just because you wanted to bring a change to the corporation and to effect savings to the corporation and, inevitably, to the taxpayers of this country. You know, at times, I think, perhaps to recognize the quality and the slant of the contributions by members from the other side, we have to remember that next year, another fortnight, we are in 1986, and we all know what will be happening in 1986, just as they recognized in 1975, when they decided to standardize the bus fares to 25 cents and then attempted to say that it was not a political gimmick.

Another thing we have to look at apart from the quality of our management personnel, top management, midmanagement, the whole management spectrum, is the level of ridership that the board's fleet has been taking over the past years. In 1984-85, for a 11 month period, the Board transported some 18 000 000 passengers. In the previous year, 1983-84, it was able to move 24 000 000 persons. So that there has been a fall in the ridership of the Board, and when one analyses the situation, one sees that simultaneous with the fall in the level of ridership at the Board, you have had an increase in the number of minibuses operating on routes in this country.

The point has been made time and time again that the minibus operators have taken the shorthaul, lucrative routes. Not only that, not only are they plying the profitable routes, but their overheads are significantly less than those of the Transport Board. I believe it is fair to say that, on average, there must be slightly over 2 persons per minibus, and at the dull periods, 2.30 o'clock in the afternoons when nobody is travelling, the minibus is going to be laid up next to somebody's house, and if it is necessary to effect any maintenance, perhaps it would be done during that particular period. If you live in Pie Corner, or if you live in St. James South — let me talk about St. James South as an example — if you live in Fitts Village, for example, and you want to get to Bridgetown, you are not going to complain that you have not seen a minibus. If a minibus comes and you feel like taking it, you take it, but as far as many of the commuters are concerned, the minibus is under no obligation to pass on that particular route at any

particular time. But when a Transport Board bus does not pass, the radio stations get the calls, letters are written to the newspapers. So I think that we really have to look at the Transport Board against the several factors operating against it.

If I may reflect just briefly on the quality of management, do you know, Sir, that at the Transport Board there was a system, a very bad system, in which some operators, aided by their friends, were able to work for inordinately long periods, whereas some other employees were able to secure minimum employment, and we at the Board recognized that that was not what was desirable and we have instituted two things. One is that there is not supposed to be any over-rostering, because, another thing I do not know whether honourable Senators know, if you are rostered and there is no bus or no unit, then you must be paid a minimum of 4 hours, and that, in a way, has contributed to the large size of our wages and salaries package. The Board has instituted measures whereby there is supposed to be no over-rostering and, in an effort to spread the cake, we have decided to advertise for additional operators. It is not the 250 that Senator Greaves spoke about earlier, but the Board decided that what they would do is to invite other operators to the corporation to take up some of the overtime and extra load that some operators were benefiting from. We recognized, simultaneously as well, that there was a danger of a driver operating for too long a period of time. Frustration sets in, fatigue sets in, tiredness sets in, and then the likelihood of an accident would be greater.

I had a note, Mr. President, to counter the statement made by Senator Greaves about no training being instituted at the Board over the past 3 years, but Senator Hall said it for me. Senator Hall said that 2 persons were sent on overseas training and by that statement uncovered the untruth. Perhaps, it distorts the statement made by Senator Greaves.

I think that, before I move off the point of training, Sir, it is fair to say that 2 or so years ago, the Board embarked on a massive training programme where the operators at the board, primarily drivers, conductors, conductresses, were brought in a classroom environment and given certain instructions in human relations, how to deal with people. I should also say that there is an ongoing programme at the Board where drivers, both old and new, are exposed to techniques of driving, etc. The point I want to make is that it is not true to say that there is presently no training being offered to the employees of the Transport Board.

I think that the point made by Senator Lynch, when she said that the Transport Board system is subjected to much pressure during the school period, is one that we ought to look at. I, myself, by cursory

observation, have noticed that during the vacation period, you see fewer people waiting at the bus poles than during term time. I believe that all of us have made that particular observation, and one thing that I have been thinking about for some time is the idea of staggering not only the school hours, but perhaps the working hours in Bridgetown, in factories — working hours generally — because it is very difficult to provide an adequate transportation system to service the needs of commuters at rush hours. It is projected that to adequately service the schedules of the Transport Board some 249 units would have to be available, and these 249 units would be adequate at peak hours. What happens at off-peak? Do you allow those units to lie idle? Perhaps we ought to give some consideration to inviting the store owners, the factory owners et cetera to stagger their working hours so that when 4 o'clock comes, you do not find the Fairchild Street bus stand and all the other bus terminals filled with people. Some people can go at 2 o'clock, others at 3 o'clock, at 4 o'clock, at 5 o'clock at 6 o'clock et cetera. Perhaps that is one system that would alleviate the stress on the transport system.

5.55 p.m.

Another thing that must be taken into consideration is that in Barbados we have perhaps a reasonably static population, and with the increasing fortunes of many Barbadians, many of them acquire transport of their own. So that there is thus a lesser need for Barbadians and people who reside here to use the system, and perhaps that, too, has partly contributed to the fall off in the ridership of the Board.

Recently the Transport Board has had some exposure, not favourable exposure though, in one of the local papers, and coming out of that article one got the impression that one of the problems at the Board had to do with the availability of units. We have to recognise again that it is necessary to replace your stock. The life of a unit, depending on the type, ranges from perhaps 7 to 10 years. So that recently an order was made for the buying of some new buses, and a programme is presently being pursued where units within the corporation's fleet will be refurbished by the corporation. It is felt that it may be more economical to refurbish a unit perhaps at a cost of \$20 000 or \$30 000 than to buy a new unit costing in the vicinity of \$130 000.

Not only that, Sir. Related to this refurbishing, preventive programme is the idea of adequate facilities within the workshop and competent people to man the operation within the workshop. Presently the Board is giving consideration to having a 24 hours system in place in the workshop. I certainly hope that when the proposal is made to the union, they view it favourably. Indeed, if the union is concerned about people saving their jobs, if Senator Greaves has been saying that people have lost their jobs because they got to work late, then I am sure

that he ought to be able to use his influence within the union to say to the union, let us try a 24 hour system within the workshop, so that on mornings when drivers turn up the buses would be in ship-shape to transport the workers of this country.

Another thing that we have to look at when you look at the workshop as well, is an error, I think, that was made by the Transport Board. In an organisation that is supposed to supply or provide service 7 days per week, the Transport Board should never have been faced with a situation where they should have been paying double time on weekends to their employees. They should have had a system where employees would have been expected to work any 5 days in the 7 days, because we recognise that transport does not shut down on Sundays. It does not close down on Saturdays. You will have breakdowns, and it is necessary to effect repairs as speedily as you can so that the people of this country can get about their business as they wish. But do you think that the union would wish to revise its own position on that? If they are so concerned about saving the jobs of the workers, why don't they revise their own position on the 5 day week as presently instituted at the corporation?

I believe as well that it would be easy to conceive that in a corporation of 1 800 persons you are going to find some difficulty, difficulty in monitoring the activities of all of your employees, and given the diversified nature of the Transport Board — 4 depots, some terminals — it is going to be difficult to effectively police all of the property of the Board. From time to time allegations have been made about all of the Board's property not being secured. The Board has taken this matter and given it some consideration and presently an internal audit department is to be set up. The rudiments have already been set in place, but a larger and more efficiently operating audit department is to be instituted at the Board to monitor the movement of the Board's property, and to effectively set up checks to secure the Board's property. I only hope that if one of the Board's employees is found not to be acting in the best interest of the Board and disciplinary action is taken that Senator Greaves will not cry foul, because he, like all of us, I imagine, would like to ensure that we have an efficiently run public transport system.

I think, Sir, that when Senator Greaves referred to the \$4.2 million which is being budgeted for the purchase of new buses, he did not appreciate at the time that one of the objectives of the Transport Levy Fund is to provide parts and to capitalise the Transport Board by way of buses, in addition to pushing highway and road development generally. So that in itself, Sir, is not worthy of my attention.

I must at this point make mention of his referring to the Minister selecting yard fowls. I am wondering, Sir,

whether he was calling this honourable member a yard fowl. I would invite him to elucidate that particular comment.

6.05 p.m.

I think as well, Sir, that we have to decide how much money we are prepared to spend on public transport. This is a question I think that I have posed from time to time if you want to subsidise the Transport Board to the tune of, let us say, \$2 million so that the operating expenses can be in the vicinity of \$20, that can be done, but are we prepared to pay the consequences? Are we prepared to bear the consequences which may presumably mean some cutbacks in the levels of our staff?

Aside.

SENATOR J. E. JORDAN: And services?

We know that it is, as I said, approaching an election year and that the Transport Board will be the whipping boy for members of the other side, but I think it is fair to say, Sir, that here in Barbados we have a reasonably good transport service. There is room for improvement. I remember one case that was brought to my attention where the supervisor despatching one of the units failed to use the initiative to extend by one and a half miles the route to be followed by a particular unit. What had happened is that there was a cancellation of a particular route and one hour later a bus that was directed to a district within one and a half miles was not sent through the district that was not previously serviced. That is the quality I think of some, not all, Sir, of the employees you have on the staff of the Board. But yet, when you identify an employee who can do a reasonable job, you hear that the employees of the Transport Board on strike. If you doubt me, Sir, and I do not imagine that you do, you can ask Senator Greaves. He represents the Barbados Workers Union.

I think one can only draw the conclusion that at times there appears to be some collusion between some employees of the Board to embarrass the Board, if only for political reasons.

Aside.

SENATOR J. E. JORDAN: I think sabotage is the word that is being prompted from the front benches.

I am not going to say that if Senator Greaves was concerned about the level of subsidy he could have told his boys, "Well, let us not bother with the 12%. Let us see whether we can work something out for 10%." I am not going to say that, Sir, because I recognize that he has to protect the interest of the people he purports to

represent. So I have no quarrel with that particular aspect.

I just wish to say in conclusion, Mr. President, that the Board is giving active consideration to introducing measures at the Board that would effect savings. Indeed, some consideration is being given to the installation of tachometers, which is a type of glass, that would indicate the number of stops that an operator has made, would indicate whether he is speeding, would indicate over-revs on the engine, et cetera. The analysis has shown that where those tachometers have been used effective savings have been made to the maintenance of the fleet. I only hope that, again, if that proposal is made to the union it will meet with Senator Greaves' approval. Perhaps I may be anticipating, but I certainly hope that it meets with Senator Greaves' approval.

But that is not the only thing that the Board is doing. Sir, I have mentioned the refurbishing programme. I have mentioned the idea of operating the workshop on a 24 hour basis. We at the Board are also looking to strengthen the quality of our management team. I believe as well that if we want to operate a not efficient but economical service, we could possibly look at the fare structure. Is it fair for someone who is travelling 2 miles to pay the same fare — f-a-r-e this time, Sir — as someone who is travelling 10 or 12 miles? These are things that we have to ask ourselves. I think that what is critical is that we have to decide what is the level of subsidy that we are prepared to put into the Transport Board.

I wish, Sir, just before I sit, to say that I support the Resolution, and I accept the explanation given by Senator Barrow as to why it was thought necessary to bring this particular Resolution at this point in time.

Thank you, Sir.

Applause.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I have to say it is a pity that the speech made by the Senator who just sat down could not be made required reading for the people who would seek to pour scorn and criticism on the transport system in this country. It is unfortunate that we could not get full coverage of that speech. It is a real misfortune in this day and age that we could find ourselves subjected to some of the nonsense we hear about the Transport Board and that it would be carried in the Press tomorrow, and something of the nature and the quality of the presentation just made will be lost to the public, except they purchase the *Official Gazette*. It ought to be required reading.

Sir, I will not be very long in this wind up, but I just want to take issue with one or two things. In relation to the presentation made by Senator Greaves, which, of course, one would expect to be a series of fulminations without reason, misrepresentation of fact, we ought to correct some things that have been thrown abroad. On a very personal note, Senator Greaves tried to give the impression that I was trying to make an excuse for the problems at the Transport Board by alluding to the 65 cents drop to 25 cents. I remember very correctly stating at the time that the drop from 65 cents to 25 cents could not be explained by any economic reasoning, and I said that even if one wanted to be charitable, one could not even misconstrue it as a crude approach to Fabian socialism. I do not know if because he heard me say "Fabian socialism" he would mean as a carry forward to 1985 of the problems, but Fabian socialism does not mean that.

I was making the point that, in a spate of rising costs at every level, the Democratic Labour Party Administration could not properly justify a dramatic drop in bus fares, except for one reason, and that was because an election was around the corner and they had nothing else to offer the people, and therefore they thought they would fling a sop to Cerberus by bringing bus fares from 65 cents to 25 cents. I say it was gimmickry, pure gimmickry, the kind that the Democratic Labour Party has been capable of, and they have not even learnt their lesson. If you look at the *Sunday Sun*, you see some vulgar promotion about "Do not do it again." If one were to think of the people in the Democratic Labour Party who would want to do it again, one would have to go very far to look behind and see who did the ads. But that is what you get from that side.

6.15 p.m.

If you go back.....

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Don't blow it again? Well, if you do not blow it again, it is worse. You can tell who is the author of the ads. Don't blow it again, insulting to the intelligence of the people of Barbados! They have not learned their lesson as yet. In 1976, they blamed the people of Barbados for throwing them out. It was never their fault. In 1981, they blamed the electoral process for throwing them out. Never their fault! They never did anything wrong!

Senator Barrow was able to deal with the allegations of the yard fowlism. They say that you cannot get a job unless you have a Barbados Labour Party passport. But it is the Democratic Labour Party that introduced the most vulgar form of patronage dispensation in this country. Leroy Sissett is a classic example

He is the MP for St. Michael North East. He had to pretend that he was a member of the Democratic Labour Party to get a job at CBC. This is how Leroy Sisnett went to CBC. He had to join the party and get a party card. He never went back, never paid a cent, but he got a job at CBC. They talk about patronage! They are a lot more like that. We can cite specifics. We do not want to generalize and tell lies.

Another point has to be made, Mr. President. Of course the point about not training was contradicted by his own colleague, his fellow traveller, but Senator Greaves misled this House today, again for dramatic reasons, when he made the point that there is allocation of some \$4 million for the purchase of buses and no money for spare parts. Now that will be carried in the Press tomorrow, I have no doubt, but it is a plain, palpable untruth. It is an untruth to say that there is no provision made for spare parts, and I deliberately went and checked it with the Transport Board myself after he made the allegation. In the Transport Board's budget there is a provision for maintenance. There is a provision for body, electrical and mechanical repairs, and an allocation for \$1.5 million. Included in that allocation is a provision for the purchase of spare parts. There is also an allocation for servicing of \$80 000, and another allocation specifically for the procurement of batteries of \$156 000. So when we hear these wild allegations being made, they must be corrected. Unfortunately, those allegations will be spread all across Barbados tomorrow by someone who would not take the time to foist the truth on us in this Chamber.

I would like to be charitable to the other Opposition Senator, but it is difficult, very difficult. I tried not to speak this morning on another matter, but this afternoon I could not help it. It is about time in this Chamber and it is about time in public life, Sir, that if people really want to represent the interest and the cause of the people in this country, they get into more depth than that. They need to get into depth, because if I say more depth, there will be an assumption that there is some depth. We hear today of a trip to India. A man goes to India to manage a West Indies Cricket team, and because he sees a bus full of people, the transport system is well managed! A country with over 600 million people, like flies all over the place, and because you see a lot of old, broken-down buses, with fenders dropping off, people hanging out through the doors by the hundreds, fowls on the buses, all kinds of nonsense I have seen! A country with 600 million people, over populated, and on a cursory examination — in fact, no examination at all — just from town to town as a Manager of the West Indies Cricket team — and he did a good job, congratulations — concerned about winning a one day competition, he comes back here and say that the transport system in India is well managed and paying, and it is a successful

transport! A country like India! Have you ever looked at the GNP of India? This is what we are faced with in this country from time to time.

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: You would not know what the GNP means, because if you can tell me that the India transport system is well managed, I have to take you up on it. And you compare it with Sri Lanka and all of the Asian sub-continent. In Sri Lanka where 100 million people live, where you can see them like flies walking about the place, some of them cannot even get on the buses, cannot wear clothes, do not wear clothes, barefooted, millions of them on the street.....

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Curse me, but I am telling the truth about you. You do not understand one thing about the transport system in this country. You do not understand anything about the hospital system in this country. You do not understand anything about anything. It is about time that you understand that. Stop trying to fool the public that you understand what is going on in this country. It is disgusting!

And you talked about we do not want anybody to comment on the Transport Board because we do not want criticism. We stand here daily and say criticise us, give us constructive criticism, criticise the system, yes. It is not perfect. Every Minister of Transport in this country will be criticised — firstly, "Sleepy" Smith, who started talking about the potholes in Canada that could sink a bus. But, all of a sudden, the potholes come in the time of the Barbados Labour Party. I lived in a country, the richest country in the world, where they cannot do anything about the potholes at all at all, and they have all of the technology in the world. But we have got potholes in Barbados, so it is Vic Johnson who is causing the potholes. Vic Johnson stopped the buses from running. There is nothing at all you would believe that Vic Johnson, Don Blackman — who else did we have? I am talking about people who did a good job — L. B. Brathwaite — there is nothing they did good for this country, but you could find now in this country a transport system which you never had before. As Senator Lynch said, you can stay up in Christ Church and get a bus and go all over this island at anytime.

I have friends who lived in the country and when 4 o'clock, under the Democratic Labour Party, they had to leave. Do you know what was the impact of that? Let me teach you something, since you are a sportsman. The impact of having children leaving school at 3 o'clock and 4 o'clock to make sure they got home was that it interfered with their ability to do well in games, because

they had to leave and try and get home because the last bus would leave at 4 o'clock. Now they can leave anytime at all at all, thanks to the Barbados Labour Party Government. I was really shocked to see in this country when I came back here to live that you can get a bus up to almost 2 o'clock in the morning to travel all over the place in Barbados. It could not happen before under the Democratic Labour Party Government, and all I can hear is criticism, criticism. How many developing countries in the world that can find air-conditioned buses? How many?

Do you believe that Vic Johnson is sitting down there deliberately trying to mess up a transportation system. He has got more sense than that. He has sense enough to know that he has to do a good job to ensure that people like Senator Hall remain Senators. Do you think he can go and fritter away transport because he wants to sit down in here or wants to get out of politics? No, it is not that at all, at all, at all, and the biggest problem that you have, and Senator Hall I must say this, is that the more you walk through the constituency, the more despairing you become of ever going into the Lower House.
6.25 p.m.

The question that the Senate concur in this Resolution was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 3 — RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY GOVERNMENT OF A LOAN OF U.S. \$2 MILLION BY THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK TO THE CARIBBEAN AIR CARGO CO. LTD.

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, the position with this Resolution is that Caribbean Air Cargo, which is a joint venture between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of Barbados, has been, like many other airlines flying into certain airports in the United States of America, subjected to certain noise standards by the United States Federal Aviation Administration. There are certain airports, like Miami International Airport and JFK International, where noise standards are enforced by the FAA. There were several countries, particularly Latin American and Caribbean countries, and indeed the City of Miami, that had asked for some kind of reconsideration of the enforcement of this noise abatement order and this reconsideration was given if the airlines, particularly the 707s, that were flying these routes would move to instal some kind of kit called a hush kit which could be attached to the 707 aircraft to meet certain noise level standards that were stipulated by the Federal Government.

CARICARGO on September 28, 1984 made arrangements to purchase these hush kits manufactured

by a company in Texas called Aviation Technical Support Incorporated, and the cost of these hush kits is U.S. \$4 million. The Caribbean Development Bank has agreed in principle to finance the purchase of these hush kits on the condition that the loans are guaranteed by the Governments which own CARICARGO.

It is therefore the position of this Government that we have to support by a guarantee \$2 million, which is 50%, reflecting our share of the cost plus interest. In essence, Sir, all we are seeking to do by Resolution is to provide a guarantee of 50% of the cost of the purchase and installation of these hush kits. I think the amount will amount to something like U.S. \$2.5 million in the guarantee, because the total cost for fitting the two aircrafts which are owned by CARICARGO is something like \$2.5 million plus spare parts.

I beg to move, Sir, that the Senate concur in this Resolution.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, that concludes the business of the Government for today.

I would like to take this opportunity, even though I am a bit warmed up, to say once again, as I said today at lunch, how appreciative I have been for the guidance that you have given in this Chamber, and indeed appreciative of the contributions made by members on all sides, even though sometimes we take issue with the quality of the contributions.

I just once again would wish the compliments of the season to you, Sir, and the Deputy President, all fellow Senators, the Press and the staff of Parliament.

I beg to move that the Senate adjourn *sine die*.

SENATOR E. E. GREAVES: I just wish, Mr. President, on behalf of our side, the two Opposition Senators, to publicly express our best wishes to yourself and to other Senators for the season.

Thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before I put the question, I would like to associate myself with the remarks made and wish the compliments of the season to all members and to the staff of Parliament, and hope that you will return refreshed after the recess of the Christmas and New Year holidays.

I wish to add my personal thanks not only for the remarks made but for the co-operation that has been given me over the Session.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourn the Senate accordingly.
6.35 p.m.

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