

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 15, 1982

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.20 p.m. o'clock on Tuesday June 15, 1982.

PRESENT

His Honour W. C. B. HINDS, J.P., (Speaker); Hon. L. S. CRAIG, (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House); Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Minister of Education); Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, (Minister of Health); Mr. J. G. ODLE, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees); Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, (Minister of Housing and Lands); Mr. L. L. SISNETT; Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.), (Minister of Agriculture Food and Consumer Affairs); Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE; Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN, (Minister of Transport and Works); Mr. L. A. WEEKES; Mr. M. A. KING; Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.A.S., J.P.; and Mr. A. TRUSS.

Prayers were read by Archdeacon F. A. Cayless.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES, Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS and Mr. M. A. KING entered the Chamber and took their seats.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, May 25, 1982.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to move that the Minutes for May 25, 1982 be now taken as read.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no observations from honourable Members, let those Minutes stand confirmed. *(Pause)* Those Minutes now stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received copies of Accounts and Statements for the month of March, 1982 as prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:—

The National Insurance and Social Security (Benefit) Amendment (No. 3) Regulations, 1982; and also

The Statement showing sums advanced to the Postmaster General for the payment of Money Orders for the month of March, 1982.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Sir, I am commanded to lay:—

The Designated Commonwealth Countries Extradition Order, 1982.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:—

The Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for one (1) month ended 30th April, 1982; and

The Duties, Taxes and other Payments (Exemption) (No. 2) Order, 1982.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to lay:—

The Annual Report of the Barbados National Standards Institution for the period November, 1979 to October, 1980.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

A Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Checker Hall, St. Lucy for resiting of residents of Checker Hall dislocated by the Cement Project.

A Resolution to approve of the vesting of Arawak Cement Company Limited of land at Checker Hall, St. Lucy.

A Resolution to approve the guarantee of a loan of a principal sum not exceeding the equivalent of US\$6 000 000 and interest thereon to be made by the Caribbean Development Bank to the Barbados Light and Power Co. Ltd.

A Bill to amend the Customs Act.

A Bill to amend certain enactments.

A Bill to amend the Barbados Board of Tourism Act.

A Bill to revise and amend the law relating to companies and to provide for related and consequential matters.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move, Mr. Speaker, that a Bill to amend the Customs Act be now read a first time.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to amend certain enactments be now read a first time.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I beg to second that.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, Sir, that a Bill to amend the Barbados Board of Tourism Act be now read a first time.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I beg to second that.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill to revise and amend the law relating to companies and to provide for related and consequential matters be now read a first time.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: In begging to second that, Sir, I would just make this observation. This is a new Companies' Act and it is a major Act, and we would appreciate an indication at some stage from the Opposition about when they would like to debate it. It is a major Act. It changes the whole law of companies for the first time in 70 years. (*Asides*)

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the Honourable House that I have today sent a telegram to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in the following terms:-
12.30 p.m.

"I wish to extend on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados our deepest sympathy to those whose relatives and friends made the supreme sacrifice in the struggle in the South Atlantic which has now culminated in the recovery of the Falkland Islands.

We believe, as always, that the creation of a stable international community lies in the adherence to certain principles including the right of self-determination and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Only adherence to such principles can protect small and vulnerable societies.

For the future, we trust that a solution will be found which will bind up the wounds inflicted during the last ten weeks. We also hope that the outcome will discourage aggression in the conduct of international relations."

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY
SPEECHES

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: On Sunday, June 6, this year, the father of the honourable Member for St. Philip North passed away at the age of 76.

Cerone Orlando Franklin — better known to the inhabitants of Brereton and those who were privileged to know him as "Pappy" — was born on 29th December, 1905. He was married 46 years ago to the mother of the honourable Member, Matilda Franklin, and he had five other children — a twin brother, Darlington, land surveyor; Mrs. Barbara Marshall who is the Chief Price

Control Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture; Mr. Boswell Franklin who is the Manager of the Royal Bank of Canada, Black Rock; Vallan Franklin in the U. S. A.; and Mr. Maxie Franklin who is a garage proprietor.

Mr. Franklin, Snr. had his roots in the village of Brereton, and he lived and prospered all his life in the same district. Brereton is now part of my constituency. I was privileged to know Mr. Franklin even before he became officially attached, in a constitutional way, to the parish of St. John, because not only was his fame spread throughout the parish of St. Philip, but it overflowed, like the good cup, into places like Featherbed Lane, Kendal and Cliff — and all the surrounding districts, even Drax Hall, Byde Mill, Frenches and Ebenezer. It was a widespread popularity which Mr. Franklin Snr. enjoyed.

Nowadays the age of 76 is not looked upon as a ripe old age, not in Barbados, because I believe, according to the United Nations statistics, Barbados enjoys, or used to enjoy, the second or third highest longevity for males and females — around the age of 73 to 73½ — after Denmark. When you attain the age of 76, you have just passed the Barbados average. We have people who are centenarians, people who have passed 100 years, but we also have people in these hard times who are being called to their Maker long before they reach the age of 40.

What I can say about Mr. Franklin, Snr. is that his 76 years were fruitful years, fruitful not only to himself and the family which he brought up to take a place in the life of this country, or places in the life of the community here in Barbados, and even beyond, but Mr. Franklin managed to extend to other people outside of the restricted limit of the immediate family, and the extended family, the benefit of his wisdom, the benefit of his experience and the benefit of his skill.

I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that I need to say a lot more. It is customary for us on occasions like this, when close relatives of Members of this House unfortunately pass on, to let the honourable Members know that we are in sympathy with them.

I think the House was well represented and led on Sunday, when his mortal remains were interred, by no less a person than His Honour the Speaker. The large congregation, throng of people, who gathered at St. Philip's Parish Church to pay their last respects is an indication of the esteem in which Mr. Franklin, Snr. was held.

Therefore, as his representative in Parliament, as the father of one of my colleagues in Parliament, as a person who worked with members of his family who

worked in the Public Service of this island, I would like to move that the condolences of this Chamber be sent to the widow, Mrs. Franklin, and be extended to the rest of the family.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I rise to associate myself with the remarks made by the honourable Leader of the Opposition in relation to the passing away of the father of the honourable Member for St. Philip North.

I cannot speak with any great authority of the life of the deceased, since I was not familiarly known to him, Sir. But I know as a very young boy — and this may probably surprise the honourable Member for St. Philip North — I was once a member of St. Philip's Parish Church, as a chorister, and the Franklin name was one that was very well known in the village of Brereton. At that time I lived at Church Village.

I heard many kind sentiments expressed about the deceased, Sir, and I am quite sure from what I have heard in here this morning that that is testimony to the life which he lived, Mr. Speaker.

I am sure that Members on this side would join Members on the other side in saying that he must have lived a full life, and that his children, from what I have heard this morning, are fine examples of the life which he lived.

I did not know of the death of the father of the honourable Member for St. Philip North, and it is sometimes very difficult to hear such announcements.
12.40 p.m.

It is sometimes very difficult to hear such announcements and then find that Members of Parliament do not attend the funerals of their colleagues' relatives. I would hope that there could be some way whereby it can be made known to you, Mr. Speaker, or to the Cabinet Secretary, or to those persons whom I am quite sure would be able to get in touch with Members of Parliament so that a full representative body of Parliament would be able to attend on such occasions. I am quite sure that had I known I would have attended, and I should like to assure the honourable Member that my non-attendance was not a matter of discourtesy.

I therefore join with the Leader of the Opposition in offering my deepest condolences both to him and the sorrowing relatives of his father. And I am quite sure, Mr. Speaker, that these sentiments are fully shared on this side of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would wish to be associated with the sentiments expressed by both sides of this Honourable House respecting the death of the father of the honourable Member for St. Philip North.

I want to say that I attended the funeral on Sunday last at St. Philip's Parish Church, and I believe I am right in saying that they who are now left to mourn their loss must have felt a fair portion of the weight of sorrow removed when they saw such a congregation at the church to pay their last respects to this good old gentleman and to hear the comments from the various voices as they expressed what each one knew of a man who is said to have done so much for so many, and something that rests very much with me — to have fed so many with his bread.

I want the honourable Member for St. Philip North to know that this Honourable House is in deep sympathy with him on this occasion, and it is for me now to ask all honourable Members to stand with me in silence for one minute as a mark of our respect at the passing of the honourable Member's father.

Honourable Members stood in their places in silence for one minute.

Mr. SPEAKER: As is the wish of this Honourable House, our condolences will be conveyed to the widow and the children of the late Mr. Franklin.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Rt. Hon. J.M.G.M. ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 5, asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael West, is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the instant Order of the Day.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, we have a technical difficulty today in that the Bell is out of order, and I propose to suspend Standing Order No. 41 (4) which reads:

"When a division has been claimed, the officer then presiding shall direct the Clerk to ring the Bell for a division. The Bell shall be rung for not less than one minute after which the question shall again be put by the Speaker or Chairman. All members then present and seated in the House shall be entitled to vote."

Sir, it is on this premise that I am going to move that Standing Order No. 41 (4) be suspended for the remainder of today's sitting, hoping that we can have the Bell working during that time. We will have to operate without the Bell until we get over that technical difficulty.

I beg to move that Standing Order No. 41 (4) be suspended for the remainder of today's sitting.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, Order No. 4.

THE BARBADOS WATER AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1982

Order No. 4 was called — To move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Barbados Water Authority Act, 1980.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I am taking charge of this matter since it concerns the Ministry of Health at this point in time more so than the Ministry of Transport and Works.

In introducing the amendment to this Bill, I want to say that in addition to the Objects and Reasons set out, I also want to move that Section 31 of the Act be repealed. It was inadvertently left out, and I regret any embarrassment caused as a result, but it is not a matter that is so complicated that it cannot be accommodated at this point in time.

12.50 p.m.

Under the agreement between the Government and the funding agency for the Barbados Sewage Project, arrangements were made to assist people, who were unable to do their own plumbing and connections, with loans at concessional rates, or no rates at all; bearing in mind the socio-economic position of the persons involved.

It was with some difficulty that we were able to carry out successfully a survey of the people who were involved, and who would not be able to make their own connections. But the Public Health Inspectors assisted in this direction, and, as a result of that, it was discovered that 322 houses needed in-house plumbing. Some 205 of these can be accommodated by fittings attached to the existing system. The others would not easily be so accommodated.

An amount of US\$3,000 is allocated to this type of facility, and now that the project is about to be turned over to the Government of Barbados, and connections are being made, it is thought that this is a convenient time to make an amendment to the Act; because an amendment will have to be made in order to make provision whereby this can be done.

The Government in doing so is taking account of the situation within the City of Bridgetown and realising the need for improving and upgrading the

standards of living in that area. The honourable Member for the City always speak about urban renewal and that is thought of very seriously in respect of the question of improving and upgrading the standard of life of the people in the City of Bridgetown.

I, myself, have always been concerned to know that in an area where most of the money in the country is made, the least seems to be spent, in terms of social and economic improvement. And I believe that by what is being done now, resiting the people and offering them better conditions and facilities, that the overall health and social standards within the community will be so improved that in the fullness of time the people will forget that they have had to live under such bad socio-economic conditions over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to speak at any great length on the introduction of the amendment to this Bill, but, rather I would be willing to answer any questions that are asked.

But I do not think there should be many questions about this desirable piece of legislation to be introduced and passed. I suppose we will get the unanimous blessing of this Honourable House today on this important matter. And without saying much more, I commend this Bill to the favourable consideration of all other members.

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

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: In rising to second that, Mr. Speaker, I will mention that I have a small function to perform in connection with this Bill, because it was overlooked when a general amendment was being passed, relating to duty free privileges to Statutory Corporations, that the Barbados Water Authority should have also had its duty free privileges amended. And therefore, in Committee, we will be seeking to repeal Section 31 of the Act.

This is not adverted to in the Objects and Reasons, but I believe that the amendment, and another amendment, has been circulated. This coming within the providence of the Ministry of Finance, I just thought I would mention it.

But I would want to speak more widely than on the narrow question of duty free privileges for the Water Authority.

Barbados has been much noticed for the improvement in its per capita income over the last five years; and notwithstanding economic recession that the Island, in common with so many other countries of the world, is going through at the present time, our per capita income can be expected to rise again this year by a fairly

substantial amount. And one of the things that is most difficult for observant visitors to the island to grasp, is how a country with a per capita income like ours — higher than, for example, that of Argentina or Mexico, to think of two examples, in this hemisphere of countries well-known to be large and rich — can have housing conditions that do not immediately impress.

There is little doubt that, even when you make allowances for the fact that Barbados is a hot tropical island with a moderately abundant rainfall, and therefore it is liable to grow a lot of bush and present an unsightly appearance in certain times of the year, housing conditions in Barbados are not what one would expect from a country whose general standard of living, as reflected in the per capita income, and the numbers of other economic indicators, is as generous as ours.

I was told recently, Sir, that there are 10 000 video tape players in Barbados. This would seem that we would have more per capita than exist in Europe, if true. In fact some people put the numbers higher.

I use to think that we had 40 000 motor vehicles. In a recent meeting with the Minister of Transport and Works, I think he indicated to me that we have something like 56 000.

We see that, even in these times in recession, Barbadians can spend \$40 million travelling abroad, as we did last year.

I think that it is time that the whole question of housing, in its relation to the environment, is improved in small ways, such as this Bill now before the House will permit, and in bigger and more significant ways, as soon as the country can find both the will and the improvement in economic conditions to improve housing, to build more houses of a higher quality, generally, in the island.

1.00 p.m.

We are working very intensively on this problem, Mr. Speaker. The Bill now before this House covers a small part of the island, the part of Bridgetown, and it reflects a finishing touch being put on an initiative started by the previous Government and admirable initiative, Mr. Speaker, even though in the long run it may have the effects of multiplying water rates by the factor of three or four.

I think that all of us should begin to consider whether it is an accurate fixing of our priorities that we should import tape recorders in quantities of a value sufficient, perhaps, to finance the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation for two years — because that, in effect, is the value of the imports of the retail value

of that number of video tape recorders — and whether it is really desirable that our priorities should make it in a way easier, in financial terms, to buy a mini-bus than to build a house.

The Government, I would want to assure the Members of the House, without straying too far out within the four walls of the Bill, is committed to improving the housing environment of the island, and will, very shortly, be announcing plans to take initiatives such as this many steps forward.

In addition to providing funds for sewerage connections, which, in many cases, may also involve some provision of in-house water facilities, we will be providing funds, generally around the country, for all persons who wish to move the water from the yard into the house and create some element of permanency in their living arrangements.

The necessary legislative framework to allow virtually everybody who now rents land to buy the land has already been completed, and the Ministry of Housing is proceeding with initiatives to give not only legislative provision but actual ownership to plantation tenants and urban tenants as well. This will knock down the first of the hurdles towards improved housing in the country.

The second thing, Sir, is that we are giving a number one priority to housing in the search for overseas assistance, and we have entered into negotiations with the United States Government for very substantial sums of money indeed, which will be provided to Barbados under a housing guarantee scheme.

I have recently received a letter from President Reagan, which thanks me and the Government of Barbados for endorsing the American Government's initiatives to include Barbados under its housing guarantee facilities, and it is to be hoped that before many months have passed, that we will be able to make an announcement relating to sums of money, which will be deposited in the Central Bank from American sources for on-lending, through local sources, to persons who wish to carry out house improvements, who wish to build houses, and for associated purposes generally.

Substantial sums of money, under this scheme, will be provided for house improvements of the sort that were initiated in this country more than twenty five years ago, when the Barbados Labour Party instituted a system of housing loans through the National Housing Corporation.

So all of those who want to borrow some money to put on a kitchen and bath in the back, I ask them to hold strain for a few months. Before very long, we hope that

the well will be full and water can once again be dipped therefrom.

The scheme, as conceived in the negotiations between the United States Government and the Government of Barbados, will deal with lower income persons, persons who have incomes below the medium income of Barbados, which has been estimated at \$986 per month. We are pressing, since we know that this figure may not be entirely realistic, for annual revisions as incomes in Barbados increase. But there will be no bar on persons who earn more than that getting loans — the only limit will be the amount of the loan, which is going to be limited, no matter how much you want to borrow or how much your income is.

We know that there is a need for loan funds for house building and house improvement on behalf of persons who earn much more than this. The Government is now seeking out ways and means to build up to a total, hopefully in three years or less, of providing, by all means as much as \$30 million a year for Barbadians to borrow on mortgage for house construction and for general home improvement.

In this time of recession, Mr. Speaker, you cannot expect we are going to reach that total immediately, but, already, we are taking steps to rebuild the finances of the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation, and we are investigating initiatives, now, that we will channel funds through the private banks as well as through the BMFC, for this very worthy purpose.

A White Paper will be published — and this should gladden the heart of the honourable Member for St. Michael South, for all to see and analyse — by the Ministry of Housing on the housing initiatives which the Government plans.

Necessarily, to change the face of Barbados will take a long time. It will not, I surmise, be granted to me to remain in office for so long a time that I can say at the end thereof, as the Emperor Augustus did, that "he found Rome brick and left it marble." I do not expect that it will be in one Prime Minister's reign to find Barbados built of wood mainly and leave it entirely built of stone, but that is the long term aim of the Government.

1.10 p.m.

I would also issue a general word of warning to suppliers of building material. (*Aside*) A careful analysis has been done on the costs of building materials in Barbados. It was discovered that the average cost of imported building materials in the island is 140 percent more than those materials are available free on board at the Port of Miami, Florida.

In some strange way, two Governments have looked at prices in the island, and have been perhaps a little obsessed by the price of a tin of corned beef, or by the mark-up that you allow people for cold storage in supermarkets.

We have held down mark-ups on food to a quite remarkable extent, Sir, and, of course, we have been rewarded by seeing food prices in Barbados become more stable over a period of ten years — I am not claiming it all, Sir, — so that many countries which used to have cheaper food than us ten years ago now have food significantly more expensive.

You only have to look at the price of meat in Barbados and compare it with meat prices in the United States, not to speak of Europe, to realise what has been achieved by letting competition have free play.

And you only have to look, say, at the price of spaghetti, a locally produced food, and see how much cheaper it is than spaghetti in other parts of the world, to see what price control can do.

But there are a lot of areas, which are important for economic development, as opposed to the mere interest of consumers, where we have paid insufficient attention to price controls.

The matters covered by this Bill are among them — the cost of piping and sanitary ware, the cost of lumber, Sir. The enormous mark-ups on lumber, perhaps of all items sold in Barbados in quantity, that is the one that has the highest mark-ups.

You only have to look at these things to see how remiss the politicians have been in not approaching the question of building costs by looking at the cost of building materials.

And I am happy to announce that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs is now carrying out an investigation into the prices of building materials — which have escalated in Barbados, I think beyond, far beyond, import costs they have really escalated to match the general increase in building wages and the amount of money available to pay for the imports — with a view to either price control directly, Sir, or to adopt the system of price guidelines, which has worked so well in many areas with the present Government.

I think I am right in saying that we do not control the retail price of cement, we merely control it at wholesale level. (*Aside*) But we observed that there is a standard retail price of cement, which I understand is liable to be reduced within the near future, and this not broken.

Two major facilities are coming on stream in Barbados, the Cement Plant and the Clay Block Plant at Greenland, St. Andrew, within the next two years.

We do not wish those responsible for the sale of the clay blocks, or the concrete blocks made from cement, to think that, because they are local products, they will be exempt from price control, or price guidelines, under the new regime which the Government plans to introduce on the cost of building materials.

A great deal is also written about the price of sand. My Ministry now deals with mining and the like, and I am advised that sand, in the form that it is now mined in Barbados, is a scarce resource and we should not encourage misuse of it by seeking to make it so cheap that it will be wasted.

Already, I am told that there is some wastage, because you cannot get anybody to bring a half load of sand for you — you have to buy a load, even though you do not want to do a whole job. I am also told, although I have no wish to deprive any small hauler, that the increases in the price of sand are due more to the increase in the cost of haulage than of any increase at the sand pits.

Nonetheless, my Ministry when the new Mining Bill is fully operational, intends to take a look, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Consumer Affairs, at the pricing of sand and the supply of sand so as to ensure that a scarce resource is not misused — there is hardly another Caribbean island — indeed I must say, I do not know of any — which has a sand hill from which you merely have to shovel the sand down and into a truck — and that excess profits are not made.

We will be considering — and I just say this, so that when the blow falls nobody can say that they did not have warning — the imposition of royalty payments, and, perhaps, also way leave payments, if we find that haulage charges for sand are becoming excessive.

We hope then, Mr. Speaker, that the combination of a reduction, and I mean a reduction, in the price of building materials — you cannot hold a reduction forever but in the short term, Sir, we intend that it should be reduced — and the provision of more money for housing mortgages and housing repairs will begin to change the face of Barbados and begin to make us look more like a country that has a per capita income that puts it not only in the ranks, high up the ranks for the middle income developing countries, but, indeed, at the same level as the less well off European countries — Portugal, Greece and the countries of Eastern Europe, except East Germany.

So, an initiative of this sort has been some time coming, but you have to build up a country on a secure

economic base before you can hope to build it up in items that are not necessarily production oriented, or export oriented.

We have been very successful, so the overseas pundits tell me — everybody seems to know that except honourable Members on the opposite side — in avoiding certain development pitfalls and in taking certain development initiatives that are peculiarly suited to bring progress to very small islands and very small developing countries.

I see that we have recently been praised for being, alone in CARICOM, the country that within the last five years — we have to take this one for ourselves, Sir, because it is really our initiative — built up its manufacturing capacity on a basis that was oriented for export outside CARICOM; so that when you got depression within CARICOM you were not so liable to unnatural depression within Barbados.

We are determined to maintain an export based agriculture, no matter what difficulties the sugar industry may go through from time to time, and we are equally determined to maintain the tourism base; so that we will have export levelled from three separate sectors.

But it is no use, Mr. Speaker, having a healthy development base unless you are going to put it to the benefit of the people.

During our first term of office, I think that the economic historians were probably right, the unemployed were the principal beneficiaries of the island's development. Unemployment was halved in five years.

During our second, third, and any subsequent terms of office that we may receive, we would want the house owners of Barbados to be beneficiaries of development within the island. We start small sewerage connections in the city, home improvements in other parts of the island, and we will go on to bigger things.

It remains to say only, finally, Mr. Speaker, that we have reversed a number of policies in the previous Government in respect of these small home improvements. When we took office, we discovered that, under the direction of the honourable Member for St. Michael North, who was then the Minister of Housing, an edict had gone out — that when people are relocated, if they did not have water closets in the place that they moved from, they were not to get water closets in the place they moved to.

1.20 p.m.

So that when the people from Chapman Lane were to be moved up to Clapham.....(Mr. P. M. GREAVES:

That is not true). It is there on the file that if they did not have a water closet down in Chapman Lane they were not to have one. They would get a pit up in Clapham. (Aside). It was a Cabinet decision, the honourable Leader of the House reminds me, to that effect; so I should not blame only the honourable Member for St. Michael North. We have rejected all that, Mr. Speaker, and the first fruits of it were seen at that resettlement and relocation.

I would want to reassure all those, in any part of Barbados, who are moved because a road is going to be built, because a tenantry has to be realigned — since there are too many small spots, or whatever, and some people may have to be moved off one small spot and put somewhere else on a spot more ample for them — that the Government, where this is done within the sewerage district, will connect them up to the sewerage plot; that where they had a dry pit before the Government will give them stone in the back and proper water borne sewerage facilities — and a bath and kitchen with running water inside the House.

Already the fruits of this are being seen. I see the satisfied face of the honourable Member for St. Michael South East, who has seen his constituents at Mount Friendship in handsome new premises with stone backs — no more galvanise palings — and nice, good looking stone wall on the fringe of their resettlement area. Now they can go and press the handle and the toilet will flush. And that is the Government's general start for those persons who may not yet be in a position to go entirely over to new bungalow type dwellings.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all honourable Members, and you, Sir, for the latitude which you have allowed. I think I saw the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable Member for St. Michael South smiling at the range of my speech. But we are dealing with sewerage and water and so on, and I think I have talked a lot about that.

And I shall not object if any honourable Member on the other side wishes to rise to congratulate the Government and thank it for the newer housing initiatives which it has announced here today. We will not object on the grounds that it is irrelevant, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I have much pleasure in seconding the motion that this Bill be now read a second time. (Applause)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, I must thank you for allowing the honourable Member for St. Thomas to give us an insight into the Sam Lord's Castle retreat and what resulted from the gathering of the brains at Sam Lord's Castle.

This particular amendment to the Water Authority Act is welcomed on both sides, Mr. Speaker, since the development of environmental conditions for the less privileged people in Barbados has always been a priority with the Democratic Labour Party and should be a priority with any Government that has the goodwill of the depressed Barbadian at heart.

It is a start in the right direction, but I would like to draw to the Government's attention one or two areas that are needed in this new housing thrust that has been enunciated by the honourable Prime Minister.

It is with some type of gratitude that I am fairly certain that the Minister of Housing and his colleagues must have followed my contribution in the Budget Debate very closely, since I note that they have started to turn their attention to a few of the things that I mentioned.

There is a very close connection, Mr. Speaker, between the quality of housing and the ownership of land, and, if you do a historical review, that connection is not very difficult to follow, since one would have noted an improvement in the housing stock of Barbados going way back from the passing of the Tenancies Control Bill. Anything further to secure and bring security of tenure to individual owners could only help to improve the quality of housing by the owners themselves.

In this respect, the area that I think the Ministry of Housing needs to turn its attention to quite urgently is the area of private tenancies. This is an area that is causing the problem in Barbados at the moment, because I am certain that any housing survey, or any White Paper on housing, will show a close relationship between the slummish type of housing existing in Barbados and private tenancies, or lands not owned by the owners of those houses.

In quite a few of these tenancies the problems are real; real for the owners of the tenancies since, due to the controlling of the rents paid by the tenants, there is not enough generation of income from the land to enable the owners of these tenancies to provide the infrastructural arrangements to improve the tenancies. And one can sympathise with some of the owners of these tenancies.

So the ball is going to be placed fairly closely into the corner of the Government in its approach to the improvement of these tenancies under two lines. The first has already been done in certain places, in that the Government has already provided infrastructural arrangements in places like Waterhall.

And the Betterment Duty Act can apply, which will mean that in any sale of those lands, which would bring

an increase in price due to the improvement of the infrastructure, Government quite rightly would expect to have some part of that increment due to the work they put in.

I think that they will have, of necessity, to speed up this type of development in the private tenancies. But even before they speed up this type of development, Government will have to have a very serious look at some type of legislation which would almost compel owners of these tenancies to allow residents of the tenancies, on their request, when they want to improve their facilities, particularly their sanitary facilities, to give them permission.

What has been happening in quite a few of the tenancies, that I know very well, is that the tenants are willing and able to provide some type of water borne sewerage system for themselves, but when they apply to the owners there are some owners who are not giving permission for them to proceed with the improvement of their houses by way of water toilets, etc., and this is certainly an area that the Ministry will have to turn its attention to fairly shortly.

I understand and I know that some of the houses, in the allocations in some of the tenancies, were not properly placed. But there are some tenancies in which this can be done.

I would suggest that in the thrust a very detailed survey of private tenancies should be carried out immediately, with a rough survey, which would show the Ministry those tenancies that the houses are fairly well laid out. And, with some cooperation between the Ministry and the owners, a programme of cooperation and encouragement should be started immediately to persuade the owners of those tenancies to allow the people to put on their water borne toilet systems whenever they want to do so.

1.30 p.m.

I would also suggest that the Ministry, as a priority, should begin to think about compulsory acquisition of most of those tenancies, because a lot of the places and lands that have been compulsorily acquired during the last year or so should not have had a higher priority in acquisition by Government than some of the tenancies existing in Barbados — where the people are willing and ready to go — but are being hampered in the development.

Housing, as the honourable Prime Minister has said, is an area where a country's development and a country's care for its less fortunate are always judged by the quality of housing. And it is indeed a bit of a shock sometimes, when we boast of having such a high per capita income, when you drive through places like Greenfields at the back of Roebuck Street and certain places in New Orleans etc. to see that we have not been

able up to now to have improved the quality of housing of these folks. And anything that is being done to start the ball on the roll would be welcome on this side.

I have heard the signal, and for a long time it was being signalled, that there is to be a fair amount of money available for mortgages, particularly for working class houses. I note that the Honourable Prime Minister on this occasion made the announcement from his side of the bench. I think that the Minister of Housing would have been happy to have made the special announcement, but it really does not matter where the announcement comes from. The only hope is that the money will shortly be coming, and not being signalled and signalled all the time. The people are looking and looking and the money is not available.

So anything to speed up the introduction of mortgage money in Barbados is needed, because the construction industry is grinding to a halt, and the grinding to a halt of the construction industry means a high unemployment situation in Barbados developing.

And where we are going into the season where the sugar crop will be finished in another two to three weeks, and those people will be cast back on the job market, it is absolutely necessary for the industry to be given an injection if the industry is to take up the people that are going to be coming back out of the sugar crop and on to the job market again.

I would say that I look forward to the White Paper that is being prepared on housing, and any initiative in housing will be welcome on this side. You will certainly get the support of the Democratic Labour Party as long as it is for the development and improvement of fellow Barbadians.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few brief comments in response to certain statements made by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

For the first time, Sir, we have heard it stated from the Floor of this Honourable House, in a quiet admission, that this country is in a deep recession. Then, Sir, he proceeded to refer to the per capita income of Barbadians, and that it is expected to rise — despite that recession.

I would just like to make the point that that kind of propaganda statement does not speak to the fact that the per capita income in a country like this can be very meaningless in the assessment of the number of people who are disadvantaged in respect of housing or who can take advantage of any money facilities made available to them.

I do not wish to analyse that statement any further. I am quite sure that those who are familiar with these indices will understand what I am talking about.

Sir, from this side of the House, we have again and again been making the point that the cost of building materials in Barbados is unnecessarily high, and that there is, and has been for a considerable amount of time, a rip-off of the people of this country in relation to the prices that they have to pay for building materials.

You only have to go in town, Sir, and try to buy a wash-basin. You may go to three different places and find that the price will fluctuate by as much as \$50 for the same item right here in Bridgetown. And there is little point in addressing yourself to the problems of housing in this country unless you deal with the question of cost.

This Administration has sat down for six years now and has just discovered that the cost of housing in Barbados has been rising disproportionately high in relation to other prices in this country.

As far back as April 1, 1981, I produced a list of items of building materials in this country, showing that, during the period September 1976 and March 1981, the prices of those materials had risen by over 100 percent, and in many instances as much as 200 percent, and in some instances 300 percent in Barbados.

So you wait now, until the cost of housing has become prohibitive, then to say that you are going to do something about it — when all along you should have abandoned the kind of philosophy to which you found some strange addiction — about competition in a free market place, when in fact there is no competition in the free market place generally in Barbados — and paid attention to the interest of the people of Barbados in bringing price controls to bear in the cost of building materials.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order.....in his speech, I hope he will state that there were price controls on building materials between 1961 and 1976. I want that point to be made by the honourable Member. If you are saying that you drew it to our attention between 1976 and 1981, I want you to tell this House if you had price controls on building materials.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The cost of building during that period was not rising at the present rate, and cement, a very important factor in the cost of housing, was under price control.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order, what I hope the honourable Member will state on the Floor of this House is that there were price controls on building

materials between 1961 and 1976, outside of cement. Cement is still controlled.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us have some order.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The cost of building materials was not rising at the kind of rates at which it has been rising between 1976 and the present time.

I would also like to draw attention to another major factor in the cost of building materials in this country, and this is entirely within the power of the Government, and particularly within the power of the Minister of Finance, and it is the cost which is added on to materials in this country as a consequence of the widespread Consumption Taxes on building materials.

I believe that these Consumption Taxes should be reviewed, and that they should be lowered or removed if we are really serious, depending on the economic situation in Barbados. And certainly, it is necessary for Government to make its own contribution towards reducing the cost of building by reducing the amount of taxation.

1.40 p.m.

This is a serious matter, Sir, because if you were to build a property with the benefit of Hotel Aids in Barbados, and you built the same property without the benefit of those aids, you will find, Sir, that the property built without the benefits of those aids will cost about 30 per cent to 40 per cent more than the one built with the benefit of Hotel Aids. (ASIDES — that is a little high). No, it is about 30 to 40 per cent — not a bit high. And this, of course, give the lie to the whole question of the role of wages paid to people, who work in the construction industry, in respect of the increased cost over the years. Taxation is a very significant element.

I would like also to point out to the honourable Minister of Finance that he cannot come in here today and discover that housing is more important than bullets, because the \$60 million that he will be spending over a three year period on the Defence Force, if that had gone into housing, there would be no need to go and borrow hard currency for housing in Barbados at, probably, an interest rate which would certainly be burdensome to the country. In any event, the repayment of that loan will have to be in hard currency.

It is a question of the misallocation of priorities by the present Government that have landed them in a situation today where they have to go back to the same agency, to try to raise funds for housing, which the Democratic Labour Party turned down an offer from in 1968 on the grounds that the terms of the loan were quite burdensome and that we did not require that kind of loan for the purpose of housing in Barbados.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I rise on a point of order. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is wrong in saying that the Barbados Government today is applying to an agency that they had turned down. It is completely opposite. They applied, and they were turned down. It is the complete opposite. They applied, and they were turned down. We in 1981 have applied and we have been accepted. There is no truth in that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I was a member of the Board of the Urban Development Corporation at the time when that money was offered to the Barbados Government. The Minister had referred the matter to the Board of the Urban Development Corporation, and we made our comments on the matter at that particular time, and the Government took the decision, taking into consideration the comments which the Board of the Urban Development Corporation had made in relation to that particular offer of a loan. They offered us — we turned it down!

Sir, there are other areas where I think it is important that the Government itself can take some action in relation to the cost of housing in Barbados. I think Government must review its policy in relation to interest rates charged on mortgages and interest rates charged on bridging loans in respect of housing.

The Government has to look again at its taxation policy in relation to householders. It has to look and see whether it is correct to keep Property Taxes at the present level that there are at, or whether or not the rate should not be reduced, and whether they should not once again restore tax deductibility for Property Taxes paid by householders.

Government also has to look and see whether or not it is desirable to restore tax deductibility for insurance payments paid for houses, as it was in the past. They have to look again and see whether or not they should not allow greater deductibility for repairs and maintenance of houses, because you are finding yourself in a situation in Barbados, typical of this Administration, where you are going to borrow a whole heap of money in order to build new homes, yet you have a package of disincentives to make sure that your existing housing stock deteriorates as you go along.

Government has to review the decision taken in 1979 in respect of the matters such as deductibility of insurance, deductibility of taxes paid for property, that is Property Tax, and the deductibility of repairs. They need to look at these three things if they really want to make sure that at least our existing housing stock is maintained whilst they go and borrow hard currency to put up new houses. Because there is no point borrowing money to build new houses when people cannot maintain the existing houses in a reasonable state of repair.

The problem, Sir, is that there has been no thinking about housing. We have had the bombastic statement made from the Floor of this House again and again about building 800 houses a year. We have seen in Economic Reports figures approaching 800 houses a year. When you analyse those very carefully you see an asterisk at the bottom saying that this may include condominiums and apartment buildings built in the tourist sector, because the criteria or the statistical base was the number of water connections and the number of electricity connections. (*Asides*)

Look at the Economic Report and you will see. You have it inside there. It is your Economic Report, the one that you hide every year and would not bring to this Parliament until after the Budget Speech is delivered.....Yes, Sir, the honourable Member for St. James North, as Leader of the House. We can help you in determining the financial policy in relation to housing if you can bring that Economic Report before the House a little earlier.

Now, Sir, let it be clearly understood that when that Cement Plant is completed, it is very reasonable to assume that the cost of cement from that plant may well be higher than what it is today. So I do not think that it is right, when you look at the capital investment, and the need to get a reasonable rate of return on that capital investment, to hold out hopes to the public that there will be any reduction or any moderation in respect of the increases in the price of cement as a consequence of the investment in the Cement Plant up north. (*Asides*).

You should have built it in 1976 and then it would not cost the kind of money it is costing now. That is what should have happened. If there was proper planning you would have had a Cement Plant built at a much cheaper price six years ago, providing cheaper cement today for the people of Barbados at the cost of which you are building now. But at the cost at which you are building it now, will almost make it sure that the price of cement will go up rather than come down.

Now, Sir, there is one other point I want to respond to. The honourable Minister of Finance, in his usual manner, talked about water rates going up again and again as a consequence of the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant. Firstly, Sir, we on this side did not enter into any commitment to bring a Bridgetown Sewerage Plant at the price at which you built it. We did not do that. It was gross mismanagement on your part and also the delays and the bad contractual arrangements that resulted in the escalation of cost. So that is your problem.
1.50 p.m.

I will tell him this: if he wishes to control the cost of water in Barbados, he should direct his attention to the cost of electricity. Electricity, Sir, is one of the higher components of the cost in getting that water out of the

ground and getting it into the homes of the people in this country.

He knows that. I heard him say that in a television interview not so long ago. As a matter of fact, it was in February 1981, when he made the startling confession that the increase in the water rates had nothing to do with the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant; it was really due to the increased cost of electricity.

Now today, Sir, he comes back with a completely different story — that it is due to the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant. But what is correct?

If you will look and analyse the various factors that go into the cost of bringing water to the homes of people, then it is necessary for them to reduce the rate at which electricity prices are rising in Barbados, and the rate at which they will rise, and review at the same time.

Sir, these things have tremendous inter-linkages. You see what they do, Sir? They enter into an agreement to borrow almost \$200 million in foreign exchange for the expansion of the Barbados Light and Power Company. They entered into that, Sir and as a consequence of that agreement, the water rates have to go up, so the electricity rates go up. And then they come back now and say that the water rates have gone up because of the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant, when they know perfectly well that if they are going to say that the cost of water is related to the cost of the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant, then they know they must bear the responsibility, because it was them who allowed the cost of that particular project to escalate in the way in which it did.

Now, Sir, I am speaking in a non-controversial manner, because there is really no controversy about this Bill, Sir — no controversy at all. We are going to support this Bill. But what I am saying Sir, is that fewer people would have had to have recourse to borrowing for the purpose of putting in water borne installation within their homes if those prices had been kept within a reasonable limit.

And I say that even if you provide the money for borrowing, that this money will be borrowed essentially by the poor people; and even if the interest rates are reasonable, it is important to make sure that the initial expense incurred by the poor person who is borrowing the money is kept to a minimum.

In fact, this means price controls and it means that the Minister responsible for Consumer Affairs must reject, once and for all, the conservative notions that have been pushed into him since he became a Minister of Government; because prior to that, he understood very clearly that the market forces which exist in an indus-

trialized country, where you would talk about a free market regulating prices, and even bringing prices down, do not exist in Barbados. A few wholesalers and a few retailers maybe. They can go down town one morning, or send a man across the road and see how much a man is selling a toilet seat for or something like this. If one man in one part of Bridgetown is selling it for \$20, and he has a shipment in that he could sell for \$5, therefore he sells it for \$20.

Mr. SPEAKER: If you go to Cuba a toilet seat is a luxury.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That may be so, Sir, but under this Democratic Labour Party we do not consider it a luxury, we consider it a vital necessity and this is why we always fixed our programmes, and we have always felt that housing was not only fundamental, or if I should say like the honourable Member for Christ Church West "fundamental", but we actually believe that, apart from the impact on the economy, through housing you can have a very beneficial effect on health and on education and you might find that money spent on housing eventually reduces the outlay that you have to make in those two other service areas, and in many other areas, too. We have always accorded that the highest priority.

We have also recognized, Sir, that if ever there is to be a construction boom in Barbados, then that construction boom must be in the area of housing. Compare the construction boom that took place in Barbados last year, financed by massive external borrowings, from the printing of money, with the boom that took place in Barbados in the 1960s where that construction boom took place in the 1960s was financed largely domestically, that when the cranes were flying in Barbados they were flying for the purpose of providing homes for the people of this country.

That is what they were flying for. The Hon. Leader of the House would recognize the term "the cranes are flying". It is a great film, I think it won an Oscar award, I think it did, "the cranes are flying", an indication of massive explosion in the construction area. But, Sir, we have had a so-called construction boom, at the same time we had a contraction in the area of housing.

Sir, whereas we welcome any statement that an opportunity will be given once again for people to build their own homes, and recognizing Sir, that the public sector in Barbados would never be able to cater to the housing needs of Barbados, you have to restore what you have taken away from the people; restore those financial incentives.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, can the honourable Member complete his address in exactly eight minutes?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, I will complete it in one minute. Restore what you have taken away from the people and allow individuals once again to feel that pride that the human spirit derives from being able to buy a piece of land, to lay that corner stone, to complete that house at a reasonable price. Give back to the people what you took from them and housing will start back again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting now stand suspended until 2.45 p.m.
2.00 p.m.

On resumption:

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. There is a reply ready for Question No. 5 asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael West, whom I do not now see in his place.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Sir, I beg to lay the reply to Question No. 5.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let the reply be laid. This brings us to the end of Question Time.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now time for Private Members' Business. There is, under Private Members' Business, Item No. 1, standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, whom I do not now see in his place. Similarly, Item No. 2 stands in the name of the same honourable Member. (Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Who is on the premises but not in his seat.) This brings us to the end of Private Members' Business for the day.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the Instant Order of the Day. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central had just completed his address when the lunch break was taken. If there is no.....The honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I rise largely because in the amendment before us, in the words, "within the defined district", which may be found in the

"OBJECTS AND REASONS" attached, that "defined district" is almost exclusively the constituency of the city of Bridgetown.

It pleases me, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the honourable Minister of Health and the Rt. Hon. Minister of Finance should both have spoken on this amendment because the whole question of urban renewal for the city of Bridgetown is becoming overdue.

Urban renewal is moving apace in Oistins and is moving apace in Speightstown but in the city of Bridgetown, or that part of the city of Bridgetown which I represent, the city of Bridgetown where people live as opposed to the city of Bridgetown where people pass and do business, the whole question of urban renewal has long been on the table so to speak.

Now, I am very pleased that the Minister of Health should be fully aware of the fact that there are well over 300 installations which are expected to be done, 320, and that of those 205, according to the figures he gave us, are expected not to require any major construction or installation work so that the installations might be made.

But that leaves, Mr. Speaker, at least 117 residences in the city of Bridgetown which will require some major alteration so that water borne systems, which can be attached to the Bridgetown Sewerage System, can be made.

I do believe that it is not going to be an easy thing. It sounds good and it is good, but it is not going to be as easy an achievement as some people might think. And this is why I want to ask all of those ministries and authorities, statutory and otherwise, all those agencies and persons involved in this whole question of the in-house installation, to bear in mind that there are special features.

In the first place, Mr. Speaker, Sir, those main streets — and it is almost only the main streets and not the side streets which are going to be affected — are parts, themselves, of urban tenancies. Many people are not properly aware of the fact that Bridgetown really is made up of urban tenancies, some of them quite large. The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that the householders involved are more often than not, tenants rather than owners.

Now when we are talking about installation of water borne systems and construction of certain parts of the house so that you can carry the water borne system, you really are going to be expecting the authorities to be dealing with owners rather than with tenants. And that has implications for the sitting tenant, it has impli-

cations for the loan which may or may not be available for a particular house owner. You will then find yourself dealing with improved premises and, I have no doubt, in due course, improved rentals. So there is a great deal of social consequence which will flow from this business of in-house installation.

It can be very sensitive in certain areas of the City of Bridgetown which are still depressed and will require very careful handling.

I know, to my certain knowledge, that with many of these installations, and particularly the ones which are going to require certain structural alterations so that you can accommodate the system, the tenants are old age pensioners.

I have reason to believe, and I am hoping that the honourable Minister of Health when he replies will give me the assurance that old age pensioners, and other specially deprived people, will find themselves in a situation where the cost will not preclude them or put them in the situation where they may have to give up the tenancy of a particular property simply because they cannot afford the hook up to the Sewerage System. (Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: No. We will not allow that.)

I know. I hear very promptly behind me the Honourable Minister of Transport saying that there is no way that we will allow that. I am happy to hear it from him. But the point has got to be made, I do not want to slip anybody. I do not want the people in the City of Bridgetown to feel that we are glossing over these things, or that they are not important. They are very important. They are very important indeed.

It is also very important to note, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that this is a consequence of the Bridgetown Sewerage Project and that those people who moved from Emmerton to Clapham moved on account of the Sewerage Project, and that anyone who is going to be inconvenienced in any way by that project in the City of Bridgetown is fully expected to enjoy the kind of amenities which their former neighbours, who now live at Clapham, are enjoying.

And it would be very unfair, simply because some people were going to remain in the City of Bridgetown — even though they went to great inconvenience and were put to a great deal of trouble during the three years while the project was being installed, especially during the stage when we were actually laying the sewers — if in their opinion, Mr. Speaker, they were not compensated in some manner. And the special fund, which I know was set up to bring certain relief to these people, has got to be very humanely exercised.

Apart from the fact that we have old age pensioners who simply cannot afford the installation cost — old age pensioners as house owners and old age pensioners as tenants — and I know that certain grants are going to be made so that the system can be run in, we are dealing with the question of urban renewal — and the fact that one old age pensioner in a street of six or eight houses cannot afford to connect up really must not prevent the system from going into operation.

But there are a number of people who live in very depressed conditions in some parts of the City, and my understanding is that this special loan fund is to provide soft loans at minimum interest rates so that those people, who are in some position to help themselves some way along the road to improving their property, will be able to do so.

I know it would be very difficult for a person whose house is a wooden house not in such good repair to be expected to go out and put themselves into debt so that they can install a water borne system. All of these are factors which I know the Water Authority is going to bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, but I think it is my duty to remind them that there are some special circumstances.

I would like to think that I, as representative of the City of Bridgetown, would be available for any kind of consultation, or if there is any way in which I can be of help to any of the agencies which are going to be responsible for these installations, I want it to be known that they have only got to call on me — and it is not difficult to find me.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are two other separate points that I want to answer. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke about the Bridgetown Sewerage Project and the cost. He made statements to the effect that the overall cost which the Democratic Labour Party agreed to before 1976 was not the overall cost which the Barbados Labour Party Government agreed to after 1976.

Now, this is another of those spectacular impressions for which the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is so well known. You would get the impression that there were severe cost escalations, whereas, Mr. Speaker, there were not.

The fact is that when the Barbados Labour Party took up the reins of Government in 1976, and we looked at the Sewerage Project and we had our first conversations with the Inter American Development Bank, who made it clear to us that there was absolutely no hope at that stage of changing the site for the main Sewerage Plant, there were still some areas in which we insisted that there had to be change, and one of those

areas had to do with the design of the treatment plant itself.

I think there has been enough publicity, so that most Barbadians know by now that down in the treatment plant there are two vast concrete vats open to the sky, each designed to carry one million gallons of sewerage, right in the heart of commercial and residential Bridgetown. And there were no seismic specifications, Mr. Speaker. That is what I discovered when I first went to the Ministry of Health.

If there were an earthquake or an earth tremor in Barbados, as sometimes happen — it is not frequent — Mr. Speaker, it would have been likely that we would have two million gallons of sewage covering the southern tip of Bridgetown. Four houses would have been covered by it. That is the kind of scenario we would have. They are huge and heavy, and they are piled into swampy ground. And we took an immediate decision that the foundations for the treatment plant itself would have to be redesigned to seismic specifications, and naturally that involved a cost factor.

To that extent, the overall cost of the Sewerage Project was increased, and I felt that it was a more than reasonable increase, because we were looking, as we do at all times, to the well being, and the safety, and the security of Barbadians. So that was the first, and the only revised cost for the Bridgetown Sewerage Project.

In recent weeks, we have heard the Project Manager and the Minister of Health declare that it turns out that the Sewerage Project has come well within that revised price; something which does not happen often with large projects, something which does not happen often with Government projects.

So it was really quite misleading for the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to suggest, or to imply, or to give the impression, that there were significant cost escalations in the Bridgetown Sewerage Project. It just is not so.

Then, of course, the debate ranged farther than the question of in-house installations for sewerage and the Bridgetown Sewerage Project.

There has been talk already this morning in this Honourable Chamber about the whole question of the Government's policy on housing, the whole question of building, the cost of building. And the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, again, just as he was about to lift off into orbit, or so it seemed to me, Mr. Speaker, declared in a loud voice that one of the reasons why the cost of building has escalated so dramatically in recent years is that we have put the wicked Consumption Tax on building materials.

Mr. Speaker, this comes from the mouth of the Opposition, the Opposition that when we came into Government in 1976 had a Consumption Tax on building materials. And we not only found a Consumption Tax.

The Opposition gives the impression that the Consumption Tax is a new thing that originated with the Barbados Labour Party Government between 1976 and 1981. It just is not so. It is another of those impressions.

There has always been a Consumption Tax of one kind or another. They existed in the Democratic Labour Party's time, and they existed on building materials. Not only consumption tax, Mr. Speaker, but also a Sales Tax. 3.10 p.m.

So in 1976, we came into Government and we found Consumption Taxes on building materials and we found a Sales Tax on building materials. We immediately abolished the Sales Tax.

But the honourable Prime Minister made the point, and we make absolutely no apology for it, that we were focussing our attention during that first term of office on sectors other than housing.

The time for housing is now, and we are dealing with it now, and no histrionics from the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, no impressions, no loud speaking in here, or outside of this Honourable Chamber, is going to fool the people of Barbados that the Democratic Labour Party had any great master plan or any plan for housing. That was not how we came and found it. We came and found a sorry state, not only in the Ministry of Housing but at National Housing, and that is partly what the matter before us is about.

I just want to reassure the people who live in the City of Bridgetown, Mr. Speaker, that their time for urban renewal has arrived. The honourable Minister for Housing assures me that work will re-start at the St. Cecilia site at a very soon date.

I am fully aware that the housing survey, which was commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, has been completed, and that a draft report has been submitted to the Ministry of Housing — they have been so kind as to oblige me with a copy. So I just want to say to those people out there who have seen all the housing estates going up in outer Bridgetown or greater Bridgetown, or however you chose to term the suburbs, that I am relieved and heartened that at last we are taking off in the area of housing in inner Bridgetown.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, this debate on the amendment to this Bill has covered a very wide

range, and indeed I am happy that it has covered such a range. I was happy to hear the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister enunciating Government policy with respect to housing and the question of control of building materials in Barbados. I, myself, have over the years been very concerned with the high rise in the cost of building materials and especially the local inputs in housing. I think that even if it were not possible to do a lot with external materials, we had a bounden duty to do something with respect to what we have locally.

I represent a constituency from which the Government gets a tremendous amount of raw materials in terms of sand and clay, and I would hope that the resources are so marshalled that the people in the constituency of St. Andrew would be able to get some worthwhile benefits. I have always said that if a worthwhile royalty were imposed upon the products of St. Andrew, the national budget would not have to contribute towards the social development of the area; and I am happy to know that with the coming into being of the Mining Act and the matters connected therewith, that such levies will be made.

We have got to bear in mind that the resources of the earth are God's great gift to the whole human race and they should be used with due consideration for the needs of the present and future generations. And, therefore, I am happy to know that the time has come when these matters will be looked at very seriously.

As representative of that area, I will, in the fullness of time, have to give an account to the younger generations about where the material went and what was put in its place. Therefore, if the material goes from the sand hills of St. Andrew, I will have to see good infrastructure in terms of roads, housing, schools and what-have-you. And we have got to hold the bull by the horns and take the necessary measures to rectify the bad conditions which existed in the past.

The Bill before us makes provision for the improvement of living and environmental conditions for people within the area of Bridgetown, and it might be good at this point in time to say that the Government is now looking at, and tenders have been out as well, the sewerage of the south and west coasts and greater Bridgetown.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central stated that we are always talking about the question of the cost of water and its upward climb, and at one stage the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister said that it was because of the type of agreement that was made, and at another stage he said it was a question of electricity.

Now as far as the question of electricity is concerned, we have got to look at that. That is something

we have to live with, but we also have to live with the question of the agreement that was signed with respect to the sewerage of Bridgetown. The agreement calls for an economic rate of return on the money that was put up; and it can only be achieved as a result of an increase in the cost of water over a given period of time, according to the agreement that was signed. Therefore, that point has to be made clear.

The question of the cost of lifting water up from under the earth, sometimes over 100 feet, is terrific in itself; and that has a bearing on the question of the cost of electricity. But with respect to the other factors of cost relating to the agreement, that is entirely a different matter. So if the Prime Minister dealt with those two issues at separate points in time, it does not mean that there is a contradiction, but rather that he tries to put the issues into their true perspective.

The debate has been very enlightening and, on the Government side in particular, I recognise that there is a clear understanding as to where we are going and where we should go, and I look forward very shortly to a complete change in the social environment of the people of Bridgetown.

As the honourable Member for the City has stated, we have seen certain changes in Oistins and Speightstown, which they are indeed entitled to, and they should not be denied any improvements which are given to them, but at the same time we would like to see the City not lagging behind, but marching abreast with those two very important areas.

I would therefore hope that the Ministry of Housing, along with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Transport and Works, would combine their vast energies in making sure that in the not too distant future the City of Bridgetown is given the necessary face-lift that it lacked over the years, and which it is certainly entitled to.

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

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

On motion of Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and

the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed

Clause 3 was called.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 2 be recommitted.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to second that.

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

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the amendment as circulated stand part.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to second that.

The question that Clause 2 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On motion of Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, the new Clause 3 was read a first and second time and added to the Bill.

On motion of Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the Speaker the passing of one Bill with amendment in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, the Bill as amended was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, that brings us to the end of Government Business and Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House now stand adjourn until Tuesday, June 22, 1982 at 12 o'clock noon.

The question that the House now stand adjourn until Tuesday, June 22, 1982 at 12 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
3.30 p.m.