

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 5, 1983.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.20 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Deputy 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 Housing and
Lands)
Mr. J. G. Odle, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. V. L. Johnson, M.A., (Minister of Transport
and Works)
Mr. B. M. Taitt, B.A., (Hons.) M. A., LL.B. (Hons.)
Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social
Security and Sport)
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
Mr. A. Truss

Prayers were read by Archdeacon F. A. Cayless.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, June 14, 1983.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, June 14, 1983 be taken as read.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no objections or corrections, let the Minutes stand confirmed.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES entered the Chamber and took his seat.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

The 8th Annual Report of the National Housing Corporation for the financial year 1st April, 1980 to 31st March, 1981.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Customs (Amendment) Regulations 1983.

The Financial Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for the month ending 31st January, 1983.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to lay the following:

The Annual Report of the Department of Labour for the year 1980.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Report of the Fire Service for the year 1980.

Also,

The Criminal Appeal Rules, 1983.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to give notice of the following Resolutions:

Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Highway 5, St. Michael.

Resolution to approve the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land at Clapham, Christ Church and St. Michael, Wavell Avenue, St. Barnabas and My Lord's Hill, St. Michael.

Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Lodge School, St. John.

Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land and building thereon at Speightstown, St. Peter.

Resolution to grant the sum of \$20 000 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1983-84, Part I, Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates, 1983-84, No. 4, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Bills:

A Bill to amend the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act.

A Bill to amend the Liquor Licences Act.

A Bill to grant an additional sum of money out of the Consolidated Fund and appropriate the same for the service of the island for the Financial Year ended 31st March, 1983.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question by the honourable Member for St. Michael West re contract for operating the Heywoods Hotel Project.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To ask of the Minister responsible for Tourism (Hon. H. B. St. John).

1. Has the Government completed the contractual arrangements for the operation of the Heywoods Hotel Project?
2. If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister state the name and other particulars of the company with which the Government has contracted?
3. Will the Minister state whether any other companies applied or made bids for such contract?

4. Will the Minister give reasons why the contract has been awarded to the particular company?

5. Will the Minister give details of the contractual arrangements?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question by the same honourable Member re revenues collected from health and transport levies.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: To ask the Minister of Finance (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams):

1. Will the Minister state the amount of revenue collected under the health levy from its inception up to 31st May, 1983?
2. Will the Minister state the amount of revenue collected under the transport levy from its inception to 31st May, 1983?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question by the same honourable Member re expenses of the IDC delegation to South Korea and Japan.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: To ask the Minister responsible for Industry (Hon. H. B. St. John):

1. Will the Minister state the cost of the latest visit by a Barbados delegation under the auspices of the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation to South Korea and Japan?
2. Will the Minister give details of such cost, including the amount of money allocated to each individual as subsistence and other expenses arising out of the trip?
3. Will the Minister state the benefits derived from a previous similar trip to South Korea of a Barbados delegation, including number of industries established in Barbados as a result?

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question by the honourable Member for St. Michael North re access roads to the Eden Lodge Primary School.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Question is as follows:

To ask the Minister of Transport and Works (Hon. V. L. Johnson):

1. (a) Is the Minister aware that there is a high level of absenteeism among the pupils and teachers of Eden Lodge Primary School whenever there is heavy rainfall in the Lodge area?
 - (b) That there has been on a number of occasions an unusually early closure of the said school following flooding on the access road leading thereto after such rainfall?
 - (c) That the high level of absenteeism and the unusually early closures are due to inadequate drainage of flood waters rendering the access road impassable?
 2. Will the Minister take immediate steps to remedy the said problems by instituting works to provide adequate drainage for storm water?
 3. Will the Minister further state how soon work will commence on the building of an alternative road to the said school as originally planned in order to further improve access thereto?
- 12.30 p.m.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

On separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, the following Bills were read a first time:

A Bill to amend the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act.

A Bill to amend the Liquor Licences Act.

A Bill to grant an additional sum of money out of the Consolidated Fund and appropriate the same for the service of the island for the Financial Year ended 31st March, 1983.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 32 is now ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: With your guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I propose under "Motions for Leave of Absence", to deal with a matter a little later in the day. I would just like to bring this to Your Honour's attention and the attention of Members of the House, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has asked leave to refer to subject matter under (o), Order of Business, at a later time during today's sitting.

If there are no objections, then leave will be granted at the appropriate time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Government Business be the instant Order of the day.

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

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, notice was given of a Resolution in the sum of \$10 million. I have no doubt that courtesy has been paid to the Leader of the Opposition in writing and I believe that this has been circulated. I propose to deal with it at this stage, Sir.

In the absence of the Minister of Finance and Planning, the Minister of Housing is going to deal with this subject matter.

I beg to move that Item No. 4 be the instant Order of the day.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item No. 4.

BORROWING OF THE SUM OF U.S. \$10 MILLION FROM CITIBANK N.A.

Order No. 4 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the borrowing of the sum of U.S. \$10 million from CITIBANK N.A. for the purpose of establishing a Housing Credit Fund.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Resolution before us seeks to bring about part fulfilment of the desire of the people of this country for better housing conditions.

Only five weeks ago I was in Jamaica attending a conference sponsored by the Jamaican Government and the United States Agency for International Development. There I heard an address delivered by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, in which he set out to portray the state of housing in Jamaica. At that time he said that they were looking forward to a projected ratio of persons per housing units of something like four by the year 2000 and considered that to be a very grand thing.

But on making a rough calculation on the present housing stock of Barbados, I discovered that ours was 3.6 persons per housing unit in this country. That says a lot for us. And even though there continues to be a crying

need for housing, since Barbadians believe in perfection and excellence, we cannot deny that we are far ahead of actually all the countries in the Caribbean, including countries like Guyana, which are blessed with forestry. I am sure that if we in Barbados, committed as we are to the betterment of our housing stock, had the kind of natural resources that Guyana has, that every person in this country who desires to have a home would be housed by now.

This U.S. \$10 million loan which the Government has acquired through an agreement with USAID officials, signed between the Prime Minister and the United States Ambassador towards the end of September 1982, seeks to make facilities available to people in the lower income groups.

Too often have we seen in Barbados large sums of lending funds committed to expensive units in the country, West Terrace is a case in point, whereby the people who had were given more, and given opportunities to make better their already reasonably good living conditions.
12.40 p.m.

In saying that I do not seek to deny the right of people who are in the middle and upper income groups to have houses of their own and enjoy better housing conditions, but what I would like to see is that whenever we are projecting funds for housing development all people should be considered; and while it can be difficult to bring about an egalitarian society, there is no harm in looking at the equalisation of the housing needs of all people as far as possible.

When on a tour of housing in Jamaica recently, I saw what was taking place; I looked at the Beverley Hills in Jamaica and then the squalor of the depressed areas, and I was certainly saddened by that situation.

I am happy that all Governments in this country, coming down the ages, have not failed to recognise the need for conditions which should be conducive to the health and satisfaction of the lower income groups, and I would like to see a more determined effort made to bring about better conditions for that group.

Too often people have come to think that housing in Barbados is the prerogative of Government. Government resources must come from some place. If you are oil-rich like Britain, with its North Sea oil, the Arab countries, or Trinidad and Tobago, you probably can look at those resources as means whereby you can develop your housing projects and your social development. In Barbados you have to look at your natural resources, because there are few other resources which you have. You have a good climate, good sunshine and reasonably

good weather where the tourists can come, and if you are a lover of agriculture, you can work in that area.

Therefore, denied as we are the benefits of oil and bauxite and other great mineral wealth, we have got to harness our resources, and the only means we have of providing funds for our infrastructural development is from the taxpayers of this country. So these funds must be harnessed well and managed prudently if, at all, all people are to become fairly satisfied.

I was gladdened when, during a debate on a previous occasion on housing, the spokesman on the Opposition benches for housing, and nearly all the speakers who spoke, agreed that housing in Barbados was one of the most pressing needs. It would seem to me from the type of approach which was put forward on that occasion that there is no question of a division in this Parliament as far as housing is concerned, and therefore I have no doubt whatever in my mind that when this US\$10 million USAID loan comes on stream, we will have at least for a little while, a reasonable amount of monies in our hands.

My understanding is that this loan, while it is made for a specific time and a specific amount, is not a one-time arrangement, but that depending on how well these funds are managed, how well they are disbursed and how well they are utilised between the various interests who will be handling this money, that we may well be able to get other loans from time to time. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am persuaded that this is a step in the right direction. I am told that Jamaica has been fortunate to have about nine or ten similar loans.

There is another area which I think we in Barbados might well consider looking at. Until very recently, I was not aware of the situation in Barbados with regards to building societies, but only last week, I came upon a situation where I learnt that there is an existing building society in Barbados, and there is a Building Society Act as well, which was put on the Statute Book in 1889. On perusal of that Act, I came to the conclusion that with the necessary beefing-up in terms of the fines and structure of that building society, it might become very useful for harnessing available funds in Barbados, and overseas, which people and institutions might be willing to make available for housing development in Barbados.

Whenever I go abroad and talk to Barbadians, they are always concerned about the climate for the building of houses and the ownership of lands. It is in this spirit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government, when it introduced the Tenancies Freehold Act, thereby giving over 11 000 people in this country the right to own the lands on which they lived, was taking a gigantic leap to fulfil the desires of all Barbadians to become land owners and

the owners of their homes. Barbadians have a pride in their homes, they believe in the ownership of their lands, and I have no doubt whatever in my mind that they will ensure that, given the right climate for finance, they will do all in their power to own land.

The Resolution before us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is comparatively straightforward. There is a grace period for this loan and it is a loan for thirty years. It is hoped that, with the proper repayment and the proper execution of these funds, more funds will be made available to us when these monies are fully disbursed. I commend this Resolution to Parliament. I have no doubt whatever in my mind that it will redound to the credit of this land and to all its people.

This Resolution is not one which should be seen in a partisan light. It is a Resolution which should commend itself because of what it seeks to do. Except for the mechanics of the agreement, I do not think any fault can be found.

There is another thing. A corporate body will be set up to receive and disburse the funds. There is an existing committee at the moment, but that committee's life will come to an end. Cabinet has already approved the setting up of the corporate body, which will carry on the necessary function of administering the funds, in the same way that the Students Loans Fund is operated in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution be read a first time.
12.50 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): In seconding this Resolution, I would like to commend the Government for bringing this measure before Parliament to provide additional housing for the people of Barbados and to make funds available for people to improve their housing stock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think this Government has anything to be ashamed of in pursuing its present policies in housing. There is no Government, anywhere in the world, which can satisfy the housing needs of its people; not even the all-powerful United States of America, where in some cities you see slums which "make your head grow". And one wonders why in a place like the United States, with all of its reserves, you still find such poor housing conditions.

If you go to South America, to countries like Venezuela, Santo Domingo and Columbia — housing in those countries would make Barbadians shudder and be proud of the housing stock in Barbados. That is not to say, however, that we are satisfied with what we have. We are prepared to push on, to do whatever we can to

make Barbadians happy in relation to their housing needs.

I say "all Barbadians" because very often I hear about West Terrace, a project which was conceived when I was Minister of Housing. I have absolutely no apologies to make to any man on the face of the earth for a project which was conceived to meet the needs of Barbadians in the lower and middle-income groups.

I recall that, initially, on the advice of the technical people, after a thorough study was made of the project and a model house built by the National Housing Corporation, it was said that a unit at West Terrace would cost between \$75 000 and \$80 000. But inflation and things of that nature caught up with the Government, as it has with Governments in countries all over the world, and maybe that has brought about changes at West Terrace.

But I want to say that it is the economists, people like my friend on the other side, who are ruining this world. They say, if you do this, that will happen; but none of them can say what needs to be done when there is a problem. They are a bunch of professional lunatics!

Sometimes you read the views of an economist, and he says that something will happen once you do a particular thing in a particular way. But when the result does not occur, it is "but the rain did not fall" or "we had too much snow." They always come up with some fancy reason as to why we are having these global economic problems. West Terrace was caught in that.

I still maintain that whenever it is completed — and I hope the present Minister of Housing (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) pursues whatever course he thinks best in relation to the project — it will still be one of the most beautiful sites in the country, and one of which all Barbadians can be proud.

I want to lay the fears to rest once and for all. Every minute you hear about West Terrace, but I am not making any apologies for it. Whatever I did, I did in good faith, in the interest of all Barbadians, and on the advice of the specialists. But we were caught by inflation.

Sir, you will hear the economists on that side say, "If we were on the other side, we would do it differently," and when we go over there — I know we have to go over there some time; I hope not in my lifetime — we will say it should be done another way. That is the problem President Reagan's experts are now saying that President Carter's people were wrong, and now President Reagan is in power, Carter's people are saying that he is wrong. That is the problem with the economists.

I will say something else. Around 1961, when the right honourable Member for St. John (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) held meetings in the Lower Green, I used to attend them; and if I did not have faith in the late Sir Grantley Adams, I would be with the honourable Member. He was saying that economics was a new thing, and it sounded good — and he had me confused too!

He used to talk about how he would work things out and how Barbados would have a new life. He almost had me! I used to go down at Seale's barber shop and talk to him — we were acquaintances then — he, "Sleepy" Smith, Lorenzo Williams and that crowd. But I had faith in the Barbados Labour Party, so he could not move me. I was different, I held on.

I remember hearing Frank Walcott refer to him as "a half-baked economist". But he put forward the theories in the Lower Green, and, believe me, he had me confused. It was a big subject then. But now that I am more matured, I realise that he is among the bunch of confused people who have this world in a speed wobble.

In relation to this US \$10 million which the Government is seeking, I hope I do not hear anything about increasing the National Debt. A few days ago I read in the *Nation* newspaper that the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) was asking the Government to increase the National Debt by \$60 million.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): On a point of order: the honourable Member is misleading the House. The honourable Member said he heard the honourable Member for St. Michael West say.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No; oh no. The honourable Member said he read in the *Nation* newspaper.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But he could not have read that. That is not what was there.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member cannot explain the newspaper's account. The honourable Member will have ample time to make a speech and correct anything he may want to correct in relation to the speech of the honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point is taken, Sir. I just wanted to say that he did not read it right.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I was not reading it right the last time either, when I read about the United States going to the IMF. You had the Gallery on skids saying that I was an idiot. When I brought the newspaper, you said it was a misprint!

The newspaper reported that the honourable Member for St. Michael West indicated that Government

should borrow some \$60 million, thereby increasing the National Debt. We are asking for US \$10 million, which would obviously increase the National Debt — but so that people could improve their housing stock, particularly those at the lower income level, and those who would like to add a wall back, as it is called, to their property, a toilet and bath.

1. p.m.

When we increase the National Debt by the \$10 million, which is the only argument which we will obviously hear coming from that side — and if the Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) was in here today, we would have heard that from the opening remarks, the National Debt now climbs to almost \$1 billion. But for whom?

But you have advocated that we should borrow \$60 million! I want to know where we are going to borrow it from. When we borrow it we will increase the National Debt, so I do not want to hear that argument, I want to stop you in your tracks early, let you find another road to travel, because you cannot be critical of the Government's housing policy. I would go as far as to say that both parties have made a contribution in the field of housing. We simply have a more dynamic approach to it.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the Minister who is in charge of this measure. I sincerely hope that the funds which are going to be made available, as indicated in the Resolution, will be channelled through the right sources, by the right people, for the right persons. I look forward in the not too distant future, Sir, to seeing all Barbadians with a better way of life as far as housing is concerned.

I beg to second this Resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, arising out of some activity yesterday, my voice is tired, and I had hoped that I would not have to participate in this debate. But the honourable Member who has just sat down, I believe, provoked response so we can take the opportunity to deal with the Government's housing policy, so-called, over the last few years.

I wish, first of all, to correct a misrepresentation which the honourable Member claimed to have read in the newspaper. Having read the only newspaper in Barbados which carried anything concerning a loan, what the honourable Member would have seen was a call for a loan from the Heads of Government, through either the Caribbean Development Bank or the Trinidad Central Bank, for the CMCF. And I specifically stated, and the *Nation* specifically printed, that there would be no obligation to Barbados, that whatever obligation accrued,

would accrue to those Governments and countries that had defaulted in the first place.

I believe the record ought to show that those are the facts, so that no one could accuse me of advocating an increase in the National Debt in Barbados by some US \$60 million, or by any amount.

I wish further to state that the mere fact that the honourable Member, in an attempt to pre-empt any attack on the Government for increasing the National Debt, by saying that he anticipates we would say that, does not preclude our right to draw to the attention of the people of Barbados that the National Debt will be increased by another Bds. \$20 million.

And furthermore, Sir, if that Bds. \$20 million were going to be filtering down to the people whom the honourable Member just discussed, one could perhaps give some justification for it. But we make bold to say that an examination of the terms of this particular loan would indicate that a substantial part of this \$20 million will be hived off as it passes through the funnel, and by the time it gets to the masses, there will hardly be any of it left.

When we were in Government, loans such as these were proffered by the United States Government, which seeks, through this particular device, to arrange for private sector infusion of money into developing countries via United States financial institutions. Citibank, from whom this loan is being made, is the largest bank in the world, and a substantial part of its portfolio concerns precisely this kind of disbursement to countries around the world. Indeed, it has a division, which is probably its largest division, which deals almost exclusively with making loans to Governments in so-called Third World countries.

You will note from the loan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, without in any way speaking about the details, that their fees and expenses are payable at the rate of seven-eighths of one per cent of the loan principal, payable at closing. So as if to confirm the point I am making, seven eighths of one per cent of \$20 million comes off the top from the time you close. If my arithmetic is correct, that reduces it by just short of an eighth of \$1 million, so it is nineteen and one-eighth million dollars to begin with. Then we have a whole series of obstacle courses which have to be run before the man in the street, or the family, as the honourable Member says, who wants to add on a piece at the back, comes face to face with this loan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member said that we could not be critical of the housing policy of the Government. The honourable Member is probably right. In order to be able to be critical of a policy, you have to be able to identify the policy. The Government has had no policy in housing, but to the extent that what has passed could be described as a policy, the honourable

Member who now holds the portfolio responsible for Housing did a magnificent job soon after he was appointed to that portfolio, when he demonstrated, by what may be described as candid statements, that the Government had had no housing policy before he came. He, if I remember correctly, Sir, made some very strong references to the lack of policies — or the policies for want of a description — which had preceded him.

Sir, you will recall that prior to him, the honourable Member who held that portfolio came into this Honourable House and castigated the policies of the honourable Member for St. James North. Indeed, he accused him of not having any policies. He never directed the information in that specific way, but the honourable Member is on record in this Honourable Chamber agreeing with me that that is what the honourable Member said.

I cannot refer to a debate that has gone on in this House in any detail, as Your Honour knows, but when the honourable Member gets up and try to suggest that the Democratic Labour Party cannot criticise the Government's policy I wish to tell him that the Government's members have been criticising each other. And if the honourable Member says that he conceived West Terrace, let me say to him that that is the last definitive specific policy that anyone can identify with the Ministry responsible for Housing, according to the honourable Member, and yet the honourable Member for St. Michael South East, (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw) when he speaks on the matter, tells us an entirely different story. What the Member for St. Michael South East had to say about West Terrace is not fit for print — and I will not be the one to put it in print, Sir, things being as they are these days.

I do not wish to get into the details of respective administrations of housing in Barbados. The honourable Member only has to tell us where are the last set of houses which have been put up by the National Housing Corporation. Tell us where they are, tell us what was projected as the cost and what the cost is. If it is West Terrace, he said he projected them at \$75 000. They have come in at not less than \$120 000.

Now, Sir, we have heard of inflation; we understand inflation; but from \$75 000, which was conceived by the honourable Member who was responsible for dropping the first set of materials — responsible in a symbolic way, Sir, — the honourable Member therefore was the Minister when it came to fruition — how could it move from there to \$120 000 for the lowest priced unit? And if I remember correctly, the honourable Member for St. Michael South East said that when they were conceiving the housing they did not include the land. Am I quoting you correctly? The honourable Member nods and indicates that I am quoting him correctly.

1.10 p.m.

Now, I want to draw to Your Honour's attention that the honourable Member said he was advised by the technical officers. The Rules do not allow me to say anything about the technical officers; I have to deal with the then Minister. Any Minister who spouts, or shouts, that he had a housing policy, and that he has no apology to make to no man, to quote him, who could tell me that he presided over a set of plans presented to him for building houses out of cement and that there was no provision for the land on which the houses were going to be built — he has to be a genius. It is the first time I have ever heard of wall houses built on something other than land.

The honourable Member for St. James North presided over them, because the honourable Member for St. Michael South East said that the reason why the price had gone up so significantly was because the original projections did not include projections for the price of the land.

One of them is very deeply mistaken, Sir. I do not know how they can be so deeply mistaken about the same set of facts. I do not believe that they are persons incapable of understanding the facts, and therefore another equally comfortable conclusion is obvious.

But, there is more, Sir. When anyone examines the actual cost of West Terrace, we are going to discover that the price of a house is not \$120 000 but that it has cost the people of Barbados almost \$200 000 each to produce those houses. It is simple arithmetic: you take the number of houses, you look at the total cost of expenditure on that site and divide the total cost by the number of houses. Tell me if it does not come out to nearly \$200 000 in expenditure?

The price that we have heard is the price at which they have to be offered, but even that is not an economic price for those houses. There is an element of subsidy built in, and if the honourable Member who is now the Minister does not believe me, I invite him to examine it in a little more detail, because he has been taking his meticulous time about getting his policy off the ground.

He has been taking his time. He said that he is examining everything in some detail because he does not wish what happened to the other Ministers, whatever that is, to happen to him. He came after them, and he is in a position to make those kinds of statements and those kinds of evaluations. But I really wish that the Government would not use housing as one of its examples of a forward thrust.

As I have had occasion to say before, when the honourable Member was Minister of Housing, he had a good public relations programme going, and according to

that public relations programme, there was indication that a lot of thought was going into the provision of houses. According to him, the Minister of Finance did not see it his way, and therefore he was not able to fulfil his mandate nor did the Prime Minister see it his way, because just at the point when he should have been ready to take off, the Prime Minister yanked the portfolio from under him.

I do not wish to repeat old history, but if they are going to use housing as an example, then we would have no alternative but to produce detailed examination of their performance long before the time comes, because there is a time coming when that is going to be done. Each man will have to account hour by hour, week by week, month by month.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: You mean all of us?)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: All of us; those who were in and those who were out. The Chairmen of Boards and everybody else will have to account when the time comes. The Minister responsible for Agriculture (Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham) will have to account like anybody else, but today we are going to look at the Minister responsible for Housing.

I find, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in the context of the \$20 million, if we really look at what is required in Barbados, that \$20 million, which was promised to the people of Barbados four years ago is hardly anything. This \$20 million for housing from the United States was talked about four years ago. As a matter of fact, I think it is longer than four years. This particular loan was hanging fire from the time when the honourable Member first took up his portfolio, in the first session of the Barbados Labour Party.

I believe that, arising out of the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, the people of Barbados had a right to look forward to this kind of thrust into the marketplace. And I have wondered, but I want to be scrupulously fair.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South East promised us a White Paper. We were promised before President Reagan came to Barbados that we would get a \$20 million loan from the United States. We were told — and this is before the interest rates went up to the astronomical level they reached — that it was going to be a soft loan over 40 years. We were told that it was going to be for on-lending directly through the Barbados Mortgage Finance Co. Ltd. We were told that little people, who were having extreme difficulty getting money from the commercial banks for mortgages or for repairs, would be able, through this gargantuan loan that was coming from the United States to do these things.

Now, Sir, what we are getting is an attempt on the part of the Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams), the Minister responsible for Housing (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite), the previous Minister responsible for Housing (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw), and the previous Minister responsible for Housing (Hon. L. S. Craig), and the Attorney General (Hon. L. R. Tull), on one occasion, is a subtle attempt to link this loan with the passage of a piece of legislation making house spots on tenancies, which people occupied for a very long time, available.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker: I take very strong objections to the remarks made by the honourable Member, because it is not true that.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What remarks do you take strong objection to?

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: He mentioned that the Prime Minister, the former Minister of Housing and some other Minister are making a subtle attempt to mislead the public that this loan is not for house spots.

I would categorically say that an element of the US \$10 million goes towards the purchase of house spots, so the honourable Member is not telling the truth on this occasion.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not quite sure I understood that statement. I am going to repeat what I said so that the honourable Member would understand: I am saying that, for some considerable time, we were hearing of the \$20 million. It was to purchase houses for the poor people who could not get loans in Bridgetown. We heard that in the Manifesto of 1976. We went through the first session from 1976 to 1981, and there was none of that.

In the elections of 1981, we were told that the United States was going to lend us \$20 million. Then, soon after the elections, the honourable Member himself said there was going to be a White Paper on the entire question of housing. He indicated that that White Paper would deal with the \$20 million coming from the United States' Government.

And then, recently, they have been suggesting that this \$20 million, which is the same \$20 million, will be somehow attached to the house spots emanating from the transaction arising out of the Bill which was passed here, giving people the opportunity to purchase all lots in tenancies.

1.20 p.m.

Now, Sir,.....

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must rise again, on a point of order: I have laid a state-

ment on the Floor of this Honourable Chamber to the effect that the US\$10 million will be proportioned in the ratio 2:3:5, that is Bds\$10 million will go towards new housing loans, Bds\$6 million will go towards the repairs of houses, and Bds\$4 million will go towards the purchase of house spots.

Why doesn't the honourable Member understand that? He must not be allowed to get up in here and say that we are making people believe that what we said, or what is being said today, is not what we said earlier.

I take the responsibility for saying that, and I am saying in this Honourable House that there will be an element in the loan for the purchase of house spots. There is no misleading about that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, he just got up and said exactly what I was saying. No wonder they removed you from the Ministry of Housing, you know.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member must address the Chair.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I beg your pardon. The honourable Member has demonstrated on this occasion that the Prime Minister was probably right to remove him from the Ministry of Housing, because I said exactly what he just got up and said that he said, and he did not understand it.

The difference is, you were not a Minister of Housing long enough to matter anyhow. He was Minister of Housing for a short time. And none of the substantive Ministers of Housing are complaining — but he who held the portfolio for a little cold pone time is coming to quarrel!

The fact is that the honourable Member was the Minister of Housing during this second session, and before that the impression was given that the \$20 million was going to be for small people housing. Is that correct? Then the honourable Member, suddenly after they passed the legislation concerning the tenancies, said that \$4 million was going to be attached to the purchase of house spots.

Sir, I will show you why even that statement is not accurate. I have already pointed out that seven-eighths of one per cent of the total loan is going down the drain. When one considers the spread which \$10 million would have in the society, it could not go near the number of houses which have been identified by the current Minister. The number of houses identified by the current Minister is nearer to \$19 million than to \$10 million. And if my understanding is correct, the present Minister indicated that this will also build some houses.

All this money is not going to be available for mortgage, for repairs, etc; so I do not know what the Minister is talking about.

Let me continue. I am suggesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government has taken, in essence, seven years to bring this particular \$20 million which they have come and asked us to approve. They understand that no one who is in public life, who is familiar with the 5 000 persons in Barbados who visit the National Housing Corporation on an almost weekly basis, or who write to the National Housing Corporation, asking for housing — no one in Barbados who is aware of that situation could ever say that they would not like to see money allocated to the development of housing.

It would be a very strange politician who would say that he does not wish to see money allocated for housing. But if the honourable Member or anybody believes that a belief that there should be proper housing in Barbados must necessarily be attached by another belief that you cannot speak out against inefficiency and bad management, then honourable Members have made a mistake.

I believe that this is nothing more than an opportunity which has been taken by the United States Government as a result of the visit of President Reagan. He came here and announced that he would make something available, and he has gone via the so-called private sector. His concept of the private sector involvement means that the Government of Barbados must go to the commercial banks in the United States and borrow this money, and the Government of the United States is going to take on a contingent liability for US\$10 million.

I say that it is contemptuous of the people of Barbados to talk about US \$10 million as a contingency liability for the United States Government. The United States Government is going to guarantee US \$10 million to build houses in Barbados. That is contemptuous! The people of Barbados do not need any contingency liability of US \$10 million. If it was US \$100 million which the United States was making as a grant to the people of Barbados to demonstrate how friendly they are, one could understand it, but you come here with a Resolution and tell me that you wish me to approve it. I will approve it; I will not bother to vote against it.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do you want to bet? Do you want to see me vote against it?

He comes here with US \$10 million and tells the people of Barbados that they are doing a great thing for the people of Barbados. Look around you and see the houses which were built by the Democratic Labour Party

and tell us which Government held them as a contingency liability? The people of Barbados can build their own houses if the Government of the day would take the money which they take from the taxpayers and manage it well.

If the Prime Minister wishes to know how to get money to build houses, tell him not to build any Central Bank for \$78 million. You are spending \$78 million for the Central Bank and you come today and tell me that you want US \$10 million in contingency liability to build houses. You wish the Press to go out and say what a marvellous Government you are, and in the meantime you are putting up a Central Bank for \$78 million!

You have a Prime Minister who not only drives the most expensive car in Barbados, which he should according to you, but he puts in a telephone at \$500 a month. We have no objections to the Prime Minister driving a proper car. The Prime Minister should drive a proper car, but there should be enough planning so that when he is buying MP-1, he should buy one MP-1.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member should get back to the Resolution.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am trying to show how you can get funds for housing. I am showing where the Government's mismanagement has resulted in our inability to have funds for housing. I am showing areas in the context of US \$10 million. Remember, Sir, that what I am saying is in the context of US \$10 million. I am saying that \$500 a month for a telephone is \$6 000 a year. For five years that is \$30 000. That is one house!

Seventy-eight million for the Central Bank will build you more houses in the next three years than you have built in the first seven years you have been in power.

And I am going further. If you stop the mismanagement which is going on, that resulted in your having an overrun of \$30 million for the Heywoods project, you would have had more money for building houses.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order: I cannot allow the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) to continue giving the impression that the money of the taxpayers of Barbados is building the Central Bank. That is money being raised by the Central Bank themselves, not by the taxpayers of Barbados out of the Consolidated Fund. Do not try to give the impression that the money from the Consolidated Fund is building the Central Bank. That is not true!

If the Central Bank can go out of Barbados and raise money, build their own building and service it

themselves, and then turn around and rent it out, that is no problem — it is not the taxpayers money.

I do not know what you are trying to tell the people. I would have thought the taxpayers money would have come out of the Consolidated Fund. Do not give that impression.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Two honourable Members are on their feet.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member has said what he understood, and I have no quarrel with him, but the honourable Member to whom he directed the query, the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham), really ought not to do that, because he knows that the Central Bank Act makes specific provision for the funds in the surplus of the Central Bank to go into the Consolidated Fund. And he knows that, to the extent of that \$78 million which we have to repay for the building will not be available to the people of Barbados, the people of Barbados are building the building. He knows that!

It is a liability on the country, it is a liability on the Government. And nobody would lend the Central Bank \$78 million! The Central Bank is not like R. L. Seale and Company, Sir.
1.30 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are we going to discuss the Central Bank,.....

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:.....or are we going to discuss US\$10 million?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was dealing with housing, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please let us discuss what is before the House and not deal with any extraneous matter.

The honourable Member only has three minutes left.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir! I am the first speaker from this side.....subject to your wishes, of course.

I really feel that I owe it to the people of Barbados, via Your Honour, to straighten out a few matters. First of all, it should be patently obvious that if we build a Central Bank, we have to pay for it. The taxpayers in Trinidad do not have to pay for it. If we overrun Heywoods by \$30 million, the taxpayers of Trinidad and Tobago will not be paying for that.

To the extent that we have had mismanagement of governmental affairs, it is proper that we on this side should allude to that, because that is what they did. I recall, since the honourable Member touched a little on the political aspect, when all they could talk about was Bath — Bath, Sir — and Heywoods — this same Heywoods — and the myth which they have been putting forward about the Spring Garden Road belonging to them.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It was conceived during our time and built during your time.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: As I was saying....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we have a little order. There is too much crosstalk.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When we are looking at this question of housing, the honourable Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite), who has been known on occasions to examine housing in terms of how poor people benefit from housing, should take the previous Ministers of Housing and explain this to them. Well, not the honourable Member for St. James North; he understands it too. It is just that because he feels bound to preserve the unity of the Barbados Labour Party's front bench that he does not get up and say what he thinks. And the honourable Member for St. Michael South East (Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw) can do a similar thing. But that is another story.

One of these days they are going to tell us the true housing story, and the people of Barbados are going to be enlightened. But in the meantime, do not come here with a US\$10 million loan, with a contingency liability by the United States Government, and tell us that you are doing everything possible for the majority of people in Barbados, and that no one in any country has been able to do this, and that the economists are confused.

The economists are confused, but not as confused as the Government Ministers. The economists stick to their confusion. They say one thing and stick by it — even if they turn out to be wrong. But what we have here is Government Ministers, speaking on policy, indifferent in the same portfolio, saying different things every year or so.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are appealing, and I understand, from another point of view, that it is desirable that I come to a conclusion. But this is not the last statement that I will make on housing in

Barbados, and we have not heard the last to come from the Member from this side who is our spokesman on Housing, who happens not to be in his place. Had he been in his place, I am sure that there are certain details this House could have if it required them.

What we will do, however, is monitor this US\$10 million. We wish the new Minister of Housing to give us an up-to-date monitoring of this money — let us know when he draws it down, let us see the benefits. Let us see the lines at the National Housing Corporation changing, or let us know that persons who go to the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company for funds to repair their “back houses” can be told: “Yes, we have funds”, and not, as they are being told today; “We have very limited funds.”

I will recommend to him that if he wishes to see housing in Barbados take off, he should take the US\$10 million and channel it to the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company. It has been an efficient institution. All he has to do is to tell the policy directors there that the money is for on-lending for certain purposes only — and list them — and instruct them not to allow the people who ought not to benefit from this loan to come and benefit from it.

But unless you are going to infuse something as massive as \$20 million in mortgages for the smaller people in this country, all you are going to do is compound the problem. What is needed in Barbados at the moment is a massive infusion in the area where people, who will be able to repay the money, will be able to instigate an economic revival in the country. Instead, according to what the honourable Member said, we are going to have some people who are paying six cents a week, or a year, now becoming eligible to borrow \$500 or \$600 to buy a piece of land that was in a tenantry for so many years. And you know who is going to benefit from that? All the plantation owners!

All the plantation owners, who benefitted from time immemorial, are going to have cash flows again. There will be no one like a plantation owner with ten or twelve of these tenancies to cut up in the little \$500 lots; he is going to get his money one-time. He is going to get the same man who ought to convey to do all the conveyances, so he will get his money one-time. These will be the ones to benefit from this largesse.

But that is not the wholesome policy which was once articulated by the honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig). There was a time when he articulated a housing policy which was very close to that followed by the Democratic Labour Party.

I will end on this point: it is a time for regret when we have to make housing and we necessarily have to,

given the circumstances — a partisan matter. I have said this before. I believe that each succeeding Minister should improve on what went before him, rather than tearing it down.

The Democratic Labour Party had a Housing Minister for a fairly substantial length of time. We had the Barbados Labour Party, in opposition, going for his throat. We had them in Government going for his throat by way of an enquiry. The enquiry has come to nothingness, more or less. And then we had another Minister, under the Barbados Labour Party now, who, despite his grand-charging and feigned dislike of the previous Minister of Housing, nonetheless picked up on some of the areas which the Minister of Housing in the Democratic Labour Party left off.

Then, we had another Minister. And, suddenly, what we have had is a tearing down! Each succeeding Minister is seeking to prove that the previous Ministers did not know what they were doing in Housing, and, as a result, it takes about eighteen months before the new policies get into gear. Then you have the Prime Minister, who is so insensitive to this particular problem — some would say to all the problems — that, as soon as that Minister gets organised, the Prime Minister moves him so the confusion could continue.

1.40 p.m.

It is as if our housing policy has had a lack of a sense of direction; it is as if we do not really care why we have a housing policy; as if the people for whom the housing is designed are not so important in our scheme of things. The only thing that is important, apparently, is that at the end of the day we in our respective capacities can look at the world and say, “look how well we have done.”

I would like to suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, perhaps, with this US\$10 million we can start to see a new direction where, instead of the Minister believing that the housing policy has to demonstrate that it is different from what went before, we get, if you will, some kind of non-partisan committee for the allocation of houses so we do not have rows.....

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not asking for a non-partisan committee selected by the Leader of the Opposition, I am saying you can select a non-partisan committee for the allocation of houses so that the row as to who has the key and who does not have the key becomes secondary.

Whether you believe it or not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister had better be aware that there is a

substantial part of this community which is in need of housing, the members of which believe sincerely that you have to know the Minister personally or you have to go and do something specially in order to get a house. It may not be true, Sir, but there is no doubt that that is the belief, and to the extent that a Minister can restore the acquisition of a house to a level of dignity in Barbados, that Minister has to do no more to win the praises of the vast majority of Barbadians.

People who need houses are totally disinterested in whether the DLP or the BLP is in power. What they want is reasonably decent housing at a reasonably decent price. Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the extent that this US\$10 million is going in that direction, we have always said on this side that we will give critical support to the Resolution, but to the extent that it is a manifestation of cosmetics by the United States Government or the Barbados Government, we cannot lend our support to that. To the extent that this US\$10 million is going to be bruited about as some new thrust in the area of housing rather than as what it really is, we cannot participate in that.

We are not going to vote against it, because we do not believe that we can take away even the few benefits which will accrue from it. But we wish you to know that, in supporting it, all you are getting is critical support, because we recognise that you need to have some kind of housing policy and you need to get housing started again.

In the final analysis, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member, I hope, will make that the last time that, in defence of his policy at West Terrace, he allows himself to suggest that the people of Barbados.....

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Not in defence of West Terrace, in defence of the Government's housing policy).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In defence of the Government's housing policy? I have to believe the honourable Member when I am in here, Sir, I have to believe him when he says it is in defence of the Government's housing policy, but I will end as I began. It is impossible to defend something that does not exist, and I hope that you will in fact create a housing policy which we will be able to watch you defend with a lot more success than the attempt that was made today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a very sad day in Barbados when we become so much the surrogate and the satellite of the United States of America that in an area of our domestic affairs which under previous Governments was under control going back to 1947 when the Sugar Industry, Price Stabilisation, Rehabilitation and Labour Welfare

Funds were established by an Act of Parliament and arising out of that legislation what was then the Barbados Housing Authority was able to allocate considerable sums of money and develop the housing estates in Pinelands, Bayville, Grazettes and other parts of the island out of our own resources — we now have to go and borrow to get development in this area.

We did not have to go cap-in-hand to the United States Government or any other Government; we did not ask them to help us out of our difficulties; and I respectfully submit that the infusion of US\$10 million into the economy, particularly in the way in which it is projected by the Minister, is not going to make any serious dent in the housing problems with which we, in keeping with other areas in the Caribbean, happen to be confronted today.

I am not the first person to mention it, but let us say West Terrace housing. You are going to get approximately 73½ houses out of the US\$10 million if the complete amount is allocated to the construction of middle income houses. My arithmetic may be out, I may be a half or a quarter house out. I did not have my calculator here today, it is over in the office on the other side of the compound.

As my colleague who has just sat down, and who made such an able speech, has allocated, \$4 million is a direct subsidy to the plantocracy of this island. Because do not let us forget that although it has been the policy of both political parties that people living on plantation tenancies should own their own house spots, unfortunately, within the present Government they are only speaking about house spots and not about the agricultural land which they occupy up to now, although there have been some grumbings about agricultural land. The 4 900 acres of tenantry land in Barbados is a direct transfer payment of \$18.5 million to the plantation owners of Barbados. It is a transfer payment from the poor to the rich in the same way that the \$25 million allocated to the sugar industry last year was a transfer payment from the taxpayers to the owners of sugar plantations in Barbados.

These are economic facts, it is not a question of accusations against anybody or in favour of anybody. These are the hard economic facts. It is true that the honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig) is a revived economist, pointing out that he was a bit confused when, as probably the first graduate economist in this island, I used to try to explain the simple economic facts of life in this community. I do not apologise for that, but he is still confused. The honourable Member appears still to be confused, but it is nothing to be confused about, it is a question of understanding.

It is a transfer payment of \$18.5 million; \$4 million out of the \$10 million is a transfer payment, if it is going

to be allocated for the purchase of land. It is a sad day in Barbados that people who live on tenure of house spots do not even have the money to pay for the small house spots on which they live.

Now, let us look at how much, how soon and when. What is killing development in this country is the high interest rates and the inordinate profits which the banks are being allowed to make out of mortgages, personal loans and everything else, following the economics of the United States of America.

Half of the economists, led by Professor Samuelson, are urging Mr. Volker to reduce interest rates. The monetarists under Milton Friedman — and I do not know what he got the Nobel Prize for, whenever he did get it — well both of them did get the Nobel Prize — are saying that you must dampen expenditure by keeping up high interest rates in the United States. We do not have to follow them, because the ordinary Barbadian cannot borrow money abroad, it is the Government of Barbados which is absorbing all the capital formation in this country, so it is making it difficult for young married people and people who want to build houses and want their own property to pay the high mortgage rates which the banks are demanding.

1.50 p.m.

I hope that in relation to such proportion of this money as may be allocated to the Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation, an institution which was established at the time when I was Minister of Finance, and there was nothing in anybody's programme other than the Democratic Labour Party to set up such an institution, the interest rates would not be above the rate, of nine per cent, which prevailed before this matter started. That is the only way we are going to get middle income housing established in Barbados, because people, even though they may be married and have joint incomes and working in the public sector or the private sector, cannot afford to service loans on houses which are costing \$110 000, \$115 000, \$130 000 or \$170 000 at the rates of 14 and 15 per cent, or even 12 per cent.

The comparison which was made by the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) is a very important comparison for members of the public and members of the Government to bear in mind: at a time like this when the Central Bank of Barbados is housed in a building, and is starting the construction of a \$78 million headquarters, how can you talk about US\$10 million for housing.

And I have not heard any of the officers in there complaining about being cramped, like the staff of the House of Assembly or the staff of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition are cramped. I can go further and say that they are probably quite happy with their

accommodation. Even the Governor of the Central Bank, I understand from my messenger, has a very luxurious suite — I cannot call it an office — which would do credit to the President of the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States — a cocktail cabinet, a refrigerator, thick pile carpeting, chairs which are much better upholstered than the ones which we have to endure during sessions of the House and that kind of thing.

But do not forget that we cannot be proud of spending US\$10 million in housing in Barbados in the same year when you are restarting the construction of an office building, which does not produce anything, which has a contract given out to a foreign contractor at an estimated cost of \$78 million in foreign exchange. And all of us in here know that it is going to end up costing not less than \$100 million, or ten times the amount of money which we have in this Resolution for housing for the whole of Barbados. An office for Dr. Courtney Blackman is considered to be ten times more important than the collective housing needs; and I do not mean for the poor people alone, but also for the middle income people, who are supposed to be getting mortgages and so on out of this loan.

There are many building contractors and builders queuing for this US\$10 million. How long is that going to last? The banks are queuing up for this money because they have been victims of the propaganda, that there is going to be an unlimited amount of money available for mortgages.

I would like the Minister to say exactly how much money is going to be available for mortgages and at what percentage the mortgage rates are going to be. He is going to say that he is not the Minister of Finance. And it is a very suitable day for him to come in and introduce this Resolution, because nobody would be in a position to answer this question.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: There is no acting Minister of Finance, as far as I know. You are not in the fortunate position of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago where they have four Ministers of Finance and neither one of them can ever answer a question, because you never really know which part of the portfolio is being controlled by which Minister of Finance. That was instituted by my revered friend, Dr. Eric Williams, and with a very clear mind. He could never pin down any one particular Minister of Finance as being responsible for what was going on in Trinidad. But that does not work here in Barbados.

We have to be concerned. All of us as representatives, including the Minister himself, must be concerned; and not in the light of a political issue, because this is

one of the basic things in this country. Food, jobs and shelter are the most important things in this society, and we have to deliver these things to the people, or the people are not going to be satisfied when we return to them and ask them for their suffrage. These are the basic things.

The Barbadian is not an ideological animal. The Barbadian is a man who — I do not want to use a derogatory word — is a hustler. He goes to Brooklyn; he goes to London; he gets a mortgage; he moonlights — he wants to get on in the world. He is concerned with material things, but, basically, he wants a decent house to live in and he wants a decent job; and unless you can deliver these things to him at a reasonable cost, you are not really providing the basic requirements for your constituents.

So it is in the interest of the Minister. The Barbadian is not really an ideological animal. We represent him and we have discovered this. That is why we sometimes see that people who have no particular ability, no particular training, can sometimes secure the suffrage of the people — because they are going to get houses for them and provide the necessities.

You probably would have had the experience, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of people coming to you and asking you for a letter to go to the Housing Authority to try to get a house. It is rather pathetic. I enjoin my Ministers not to write letters to anybody because it puts an imposition on the public officers; they feel that they have to give priority to somebody that the Minister represent. One or two Ministers listened to me. I would not like to say that all of them played it according to the rules. As a matter of fact they used to say, home drums beat first. They regarded it as a game of politics, that you try to do things for your constituents.

The point is that, if you are going to have an impartial policy about housing, then you cannot have Ministers putting political power on officers. The answer to housing is not rent control or Ministers writing letters. The answer to the housing problems is to build houses and more houses and more houses. And when you build more houses and more houses, it means that you generate secondary employment, not only the direct employment in the construction industry, but you are generating employment in the hardware stores, the trucking industry, the concrete blocks industry — everything!

There is just one point I would like to make. I do not intend to be longer than two minutes. I had an unfortunate occurrence in my constituency a few weeks ago. I remember, let us say about 10 or 12 years ago, when I had a similar occurrence in Kendal, when a family lost a house — I could call the name — that

within five days the Housing Authority in Barbados was able to put up a house in Kendal for that unfortunate family and rent it to them.

You cannot tell a family that has been the victim of a fire that you do not have any houses in stock, that it would cost \$22 000 to put up a house. I want the Minister to look into that. When people are the victims of a catastrophe, a hurricane or anything, you should have a stock of housing there to rent them. The Housing Authority never used to sell houses until our day. You should have prefabricated houses available to rent to the people.

Here I am chasing all over Barbados to try to raise funds now for these people to buy a house from the Lumber Company because it is cheaper than the Housing Authority, which cannot deliver a house to me. I do not like to go into this kind of largesse. I think, as of right, anybody who is a victim of any unusual circumstance — earthquake, fire, hurricane or anything like that — should be able to get a house from the National Housing Corporation to rent.
2.00 p.m.

We have two situations in St. John; one in Kendal, the other one in Society. In Kendal they got a house to rent within five days, and the house is still there. I can take you and show it to you. I do not know whether the occupants of the house have purchased the house since, but they were able to get a house to rent.

I want the Minister to look into the other case. This man is a grave digger on the verge of retirement. His children have grown up and gone away. The cheapest house that you can get, if they had one from the Housing Authority, costs \$22 000. He cannot get a house to rent anywhere at all.

The Housing Authority should be the provider of houses; not of the last resort, but should be the first recourse. I am sure the Minister agrees with me, but he is not unaware of what the people are doing there. I hope I can talk to him about this family up in St. John, because I really am at the end.

He could not get a loan from any bank because of his age. His wife works at Codrington High School. She cannot get a loan because of her age. The children have gone and left him already. He can probably scrape together a few hundred dollars, together with what the school children at Codrington High School and we have been able to do, but that does not even go one-fifth of the way towards replacing what he has got. It would probably only replace the pots and pans and a few chairs and so on.

The point is that when you have a Housing Authority, that Housing Authority should be there to do things, not the private sector, no matter how charitable they are. You have the Lions, and I am very grateful to them for their contributions and so on, but they have a lot of calls on their resources. I would ask the Minister to look into that.

I would like to assure the Minister that I am going to support the Resolution, but I would like to see \$100 million not US\$10 million. One hundred million is still not going to solve the housing problems in Barbados, but it would be better to spend \$100 million on housing — you would go a fairly long way — than to spend it on an office for Dr. Blackman; and I invite the Minister to go and see the kind of office that Dr. Blackman has; the kinds of brandy and all kinds of things inside the liquor cabinet.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now 2.05 p.m. This House now stands suspended until 2.45 p.m. today.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now Question Time.

Question No. 32 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford). The honourable member is not now in his place, so the Reply must be laid.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I hereby lay the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 32.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That brings us to the end of Question Time for today.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now time for Private Members' Business.

Items Nos. 1 to 4 stand in the names of honourable Members whom I do not see in their places. We will now revert to Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

RESOLUTION TO BORROW US\$10 MILLION FROM CITIBANK N. A. — Cont'd

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Resolution for US\$10 million to

assist the housing programme of Barbados is a Resolution which we on this side will not oppose. We welcome any amount of funds that can be used for housing purposes, and for this reason we welcome this loan. As has been said previously by other Members on this side, we would have welcomed even a far greater contribution towards housing from the United States Government.

There are a few things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that strike me as being absent, both from the Addendum to the Resolution and from what the honourable Members on the other side who have spoken, in terms of presentation. For instance, we do not know what the on-lending rate will be.

We are told, in fact, that this loan will be disbursed by various financial institutions. I think the Addendum states this. There is the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company, there will be the commercial banks and whatever institutions there are that normally disburse funds for housing purposes, but we do not know, Sir, what the ultimate borrower — not the borrower of first resort has to pay.

In other words, not what the Government of Barbados, who will be the borrower of first resort, is going to pay, because we understand from the Addendum to the Resolution that the rate of interest there will be 11.65 per cent. What we really and truly want to know is what it is that the ultimate borrower is going to pay for the loan.

Now, I recall, Sir, that many years ago, and this would have been in the late Sixties when the said United States' Agency proposed to lend the Barbados Government some money for housing purposes — I believe at that time it was somewhere in the area of US\$4 million to US\$5 million; I cannot remember the exact amount — that it was insisting on a number of things. Firstly, it was insisting on a ceiling. At that time the money was being loaned for the purpose of middle income housing, urban development in the Cave Hill area, and they were insisting on a loan which, at that time, was incapable of doing much more than getting beyond the foundation stage, and that was their ceiling.

I would like to know if a similar thing applies in this case, if the agency is insisting that a ceiling be placed on the loans. In other words, the agency may insist that a borrower may not be able to borrow more than \$20 000. Now, today, \$20 000 cannot go anywhere at all in terms of constructing anything — hardly more than a chattel house, and probably not even a good chattel house.

In fact, the amount of money that they were insisting these many years ago, 15 years ago, 1968 it was, that a borrower could have, could not at that time

construct nothing more than a good chattel house. So with the amount of money that was being lent to us, in relation to loans to individuals, unless that individual had funds of his own in order to supplement that loan, and a considerable amount of funds at that, was virtually useless.

There was another thing. At that time interest rates on mortgages were 8 per cent, and they insisted that the borrower should pay a 12 per cent rate of interest. When we thought the loan was intended to help those who were less well off, we found that they were expected to pay 50 per cent more than was the case generally. So we — I was then Minister in charge of Urban Development — gave due consideration to the loan and told the United States Government that we appreciated their consideration, but we could not make use of the funds because of the interest rate being charged.

2.55 p.m.

I would like some information on these aspects of the loan when the Minister replies. I understand that, in the first instance, these funds will be disbursed through the Central Bank, which comes under the portfolio of the Minister of Finance and Planning (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams), but I believe the Minister of Housing should have some knowledge about the conditions of the loan. After all, it is he who would have to appraise the loans to borrowers and see that they fall in with the policy of Housing, so that they become acceptable both to the National Housing Corporation and, ultimately, the borrower.

Now the last time I heard the Minister of Housing speak on Housing in this Chamber, I think he said that a White Paper would be delivered to him by the end of June. If that is the case, the Minister must have received the document, because at that time it was near the end of June — the month only had a few more days before it ended; possibly a week. It would have been useful to the House as a whole if the White Paper could have preceded this Resolution, or if, now that we are considering the Resolution, it could be made available to us. But we have not got the White Paper; we are still looking forward to the same White Paper the Minister says he is going to receive, and which, I believe, he is going to let us have.

I noticed in the Addendum to the Resolution that these funds are intended to assist the Government in reducing its role. This is where I take some exception to the Government. And this must be a Government Addendum, although I notice some American phraseology, like programme being spelt in the American way instead of the usual English way; so I do not know if the Americans had a hand in drafting this document. The important point is that, to my mind, Government's role in housing should be increased — not reduced.

I accept what the Minister is saying in terms of the ratio of housing to population — 3.6. It has been around 4 for many years, and this is one of the reasons why Barbados has been victimised in relation to getting funds for housing over the years. It was claimed that we had no housing problem, and the reason why we had no housing problem was because the ratio of housing to population indicated that we did not have a housing problem in Barbados. So we could not get funds from any source whatsoever, and that has been so for years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will make the point that while we had an acceptable ratio in terms of housing to population, at the same time we had housing that was really in need of renewal, in need of considerable repair. If you were to look at the housing which was really substandard, you would find that the ratio would be much more than 3.6. That is why I welcome the fact that a portion of these funds will be going to the repair of houses.

Nothing has been done in this area for years. The National Housing Corporation has not been lending money for repairs for some years, so I am glad to see that, at last, they will be able to restart lending in an area which has been one of the functions of the National Housing Corporation.

The National Housing Corporation is not only there to build houses, but to lend money for repairs. The honourable Leader of the Opposition (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) referred to the fact that a portion of the Sugar Rehabilitation Reserve Fund, when there was such a fund, used to be allocated for loans to general workers. When the National Housing Corporation took over the responsibilities of the old Authority that loan element was retained. I believe that when there was what they like to call "the rationalisation of lending in Government institutions" — I may be wrong — that that function was either taken away or it ceased to exist. However, they still maintain people on the National Housing staff to look at the houses of people who apply for loans and come to some assessment of the funds that would be made available for such repairs.

I understand that a number of applications have been approved for some time, but these cannot be serviced, people cannot get funds to repair their homes, because no funds have been forthcoming. I would like the Minister to look into that aspect of the National Housing again to ensure that persons are not only in a position to repair their homes, but improve them, because nowadays people want to improve their homes in a number of ways.

While I am on this subject, I want to make a suggestion to the Minister about the so-called housing

schemes. I know that there has been a problem with surveying.....

Aside.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I am hearing that there are no problems. That is because there is now at least one surveyor on the staff — there was none before — and the private surveyors have now made themselves available to do some of this work. I would like to know if some of these funds could be used in some way to assist people living on such Government lands, housing areas or landing schemes, with surveying the properties. I do not know if these form part of the 11 000 persons who want to purchase house spots — maybe not — but I believe that some assistance should be given to those persons as well.
3.05 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to get into West Terrace and that kind of thing, but I believe that the Corporation could once more try to provide houses and housing for a wide sector of the population. If they cannot do it, at least it should make it easier for people to acquire houses. And maybe some priority, in some form of assistance, should be given to those who already live in public housing to own their own houses. The houses which are vacated can be made available to the real low income person, who is not in a good enough financial position to pay for and own his own home.

This, I believe, is probably part of their policy already. I would like it to be given some kind of a push, but I would like to see provision made for low and middle income house owners, because the houses for those persons whom we say are middle income owners are exceedingly expensive, and I do not believe that Government will get into that. I do not believe that Government can get into providing houses for persons at a cost of \$200 000, but it might be able in some way to make mortgages become more easily available to those persons than obtains at this time.

With those few remarks, I want to repeat that I would like the honourable Minister to respond to some of the matters related to this Resolution, in particular to the terms on which he has been able to secure this loan.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all I would like to apologise for not being here during the earlier part of the debate, but my contribution is not controversial in any way; it seeks more to gather information from the Minister than anything else.

My regrets about this Resolution is that the sum is so small and that it could not have been obtained on more favourable terms than 11.65 per cent. But the market being what it is, I am certain that the Minister

and his team did the best they could in negotiating these terms. If it is necessary at this time to pay that money for housing, even if it means that the Government has to subsidise the interest on the lending rate in a small way, I think the cause is deserved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I note here that the loan was acquired for two purposes really, as is stated in the Addendum, the first of which is to facilitate the ability of the private sector, both institutions and individuals, to provide new homes and home improvement for low-income families.

At this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me declare an interest, since, as is usual in these debates, I let it be known that I have some connection to a company that deals indirectly and directly with housing.

The first question I would like to ask the Minister on this particular one is what is the present criterion for low income families? What is classified as a low income family? What happens in a family where there is a husband and a wife both working, or how is that calculated in order to qualify, or to be disqualified, as a low income family?

Also by way of enquiry, I happened to glean some information, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in order to qualify for this particular programme, you would have to come in at a price range of Bds. \$25 000, of which some \$24 000 would be provided.....

(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: You are answering yourself).

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I would like to enquire from the Minister whether or not this is the cut off point, and if this is the cut off point, what undertakings he has of companies that would provide housing at that particular unit.

Section (ii) of the Addendum states that it is to provide the financing for the implementation of the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act. I interpret this to mean that funds will be provided to the tenants in these tenancies to purchase the freehold land that they now occupy.

I would like to enquire from the appropriate Minister what progress has been made so far in providing infrastructure for these tenancies. This is a point on which there has been very little information available, and on which we can no longer continue to turn our backs. Some of the original tenants of these tenancies are now freeholders, and some will soon be freeholders and hopefully will be able to use the availability of these securities to further enhance their borrowing at the banks and other lending institutions. But some of these tenancies, as you

are aware, are very badly served with roads, water and electricity, and there are some where there is not even a marl-bound road providing access for the owners of these freehold tenancies.

I am not sure what sum will be made available to the plantation owners, but I do not think that it is unreasonable if, by way of persuasion, the Ministry, after discussion with the plantation owners, should ask them to consider allocating a percentage of the funds that will be coming in towards providing at least a marl-bound road for some of these owners. I am particularly concerned about the roads and their access.

Over the last couple of months in some of these tenancies the people working in the plantations were going without work, completely against the regulations whereby they were guaranteed a certain amount of work out of crop season. It is a known fact that some of the plantations were not honouring this commitment. I am not sure if it was drawn to the attention of the Ministry of Labour, but on numerous occasions I counsel the people who appeal to me to draw it to the Ministry's attention through their appropriate union.

I think that, considering the fact that prior to this programme the income from these tenancies by way of rents was such a nominal sum, now there are going to be collective funds in hand assisted by this programme, we can ask them as a further contribution to allocate a small portion of it to provide marl-bound roads at least for some of these tenants, to allow them to get in and out of their houses if they are sick, or if they are going to church, without the terrific inconvenience that they now suffer when rain falls.

The programme whereby money will be provided to improve the housing stock in the country is an admirable one, since it is now a known fact that loans from the commercial banks for home improvement have slowed down. Such loans are becoming a lot more difficult to qualify for; you now need guarantors and that type of stuff. As a result, quite a few houses have not been able to be upkept in the way they should be done, and it is a known fact that, particularly for wooden houses, a maintenance programme is absolutely necessary if you are going to keep up the value of those units.

As I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only regret I have about this Resolution is the small sum being made available for the programme, and I sincerely hope that the Minister on some other occasion will apprise this House of the other initiatives being undertaken by the Government to provide mortgages for all sectors of the community.

Thank you.

3.15 p.m.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take it that all honourable Members who wished to speak have made their contributions. I want to make a few brief replies to the points raised. So many questions have been asked on this Resolution that I would prefer to see them in terms of Parliamentary Questions, so that I could probably go into detail on them. However, I will try in the short time at my disposal, to see what I can do by way of answers.

Let it be very clear to you that this Government, and I believe all Barbadians, would like to see unlimited monies made available for a renewal in housing in this country, therefore you are pushing an open door as far as this side of the Chamber is concerned. We would hope that in the fulness of time we would so commend ourselves to international agencies that we would be able to get the funds which we require.

The right Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) talked about Barbados being a surrogate state of the United States and what have you. I do not want to go into that at this moment. What I would say is that Barbados continues to be a sovereign country, and I hope it will always be so.

Because you take a loan from a country or from a person, it does not mean that you have become servile. What it does mean is that the person might be more affluent than you are and that the person's funds might be available to you. There comes a time in the life of nations when they will seek assistance from other countries, which are more affluent than themselves, in order to be able to carry on development within their land. Large countries in the world do this.

Countries which one would never have thought of in the past, during last year and the year before went to the International Monetary Fund, a name that we dread and fear in this country. Nobody quarrelled about their going. They made arrangements to go and they went. A lot of big countries that were once affluent and powerful became bankrupt overnight and fell on evil days.

So we welcome the idea of having large amounts of money at our disposal whereby we can dispense with loans in order to assist people who are desirous of owning their own lands and their homes.

There is a point which I want to correct lest it be felt that there is something strange about mentioning any development when you get up to speak in this area. When I introduced the subject of West Terrace in my opening remarks on this Resolution, I was primarily concerned with the amount of money that was tied up in a small development. I myself am partial towards any dispensation of money which serves the widest good,

and when you look at the limited amount of people that might be served in West Terrace, you have to be concerned about a number of people out there who have nowhere to live, and who, if they have homes — their homes might not be in the best condition — would like to see improvements made. I feel that if you are really tying up large sums of money, the money should be tied up among the widest sphere of people, and that is why I mentioned the question not only of West Terrace, but other places as well.

The conceptualisation of West Terrace was a very noble idea, and nobody could quarrel with it. It was a great idea; therefore we applauded it and we supported it. But in terms of the amount of money which is involved, we must confess that when you find that there is a squeeze of finance, you have to be concerned about where a lot of money is going.

As a matter of fact, the last speaker for the Opposition, the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) said that the source of financing for mortgages in this country is drying up. It is not drying up; it has dried up, and therefore you have to find money wherever you can find it. So long as it is not unreasonable, you have to find it.

The point was put forward by the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) about the loans which used to be made available to people from the National Housing. Now that is not being carried on for a number of reasons. Unfortunately, people are not willing whether you like to hear it or not, to pay Government for rent or for monies borrowed. Barbados has a good rating for loans, but loans to the private sector are not loans to Government. Barbados has a good rating for rental payments, but to the private sector and not to Government, and therefore you cannot forever, if you hope to improve your housing stock in Barbados, have a situation where you set up a revolving fund to discover that the fund is not revolving, but on the contrary, is in the reverse gear. There comes a time when you have to make a check.

My view is that that system was not well administered by the people who had it to operate. Systems might be all well and good, but unless you have people to administer the system, the system will not work. Computers are good, they can do a lot for mankind, but computers can only bring out what is put into them by man, so you can only get the best of a system if you have good people to man that system.

The honourable Member for St. Michael North was the last Member from the other side to be Minister of Housing and Lands, and he would know the headache that can come the way of any Minister performing in that Ministry. It is not an easy Ministry to handle. If you want

to handle it, you have to hold it by the scruff of its neck and deal with it in a positive way.

There is no question of criticising anybody when you take a stand on a certain matter. A person might have a method of dealing with something, the next person who comes in has a different method and the next man who comes in has another method. It is not that the policy of the Government has changed on anything; it is that the Minister has changed and therefore his impact is made upon his Ministry.

It is what the Minister is and what he believes in; what he stands for. He may be dead wrong and those who have gone before him quite right. I just hate to hear the continual harping on the fact that because you have to stand on the Floor of the House and make comments on matters which might not be satisfying to one section or another, you are critical of somebody.

What is very important and what is of interest to us in this Government here is that we have the courage to criticise ourselves, we have the courage to look inward and say how we feel about things, and you did not have the courage to do that. If you did criticise, you did it at the risk of being fired unceremoniously.

I myself would be part of no show in which I would not be able to stand up like a man on my two feet and give an account of myself; and not only stand up on my own feet, but bear at all times in mind that my primary function and concern in this Honourable Chamber is to represent the best interests of the constituency of St. Andrew. So when I speak, I speak, in my view, with the conscience of the people of St. Andrew. Whatever anybody might say about the front bench or the back bench, it is more important to me as a person to be the representative of St. Andrew than to be a Minister of the Government, and I hope my position is clear all times on that.

Touching on this loan, as you will see in the Addendum to the Resolution that it was negotiated at a fixed rate of interest of 11.65 per cent. The Barbados Mortgage Finance Company will be taking part in this loan along with the Co-operative Societies. The Co-operative Societies have low rates of interest and we have been able to work out a method as to how the system could be incorporated in such institutions.
3.25 p.m.

I am not in a position at this moment to tell you what the on-lending rate to the banks will be. A team of negotiators is now dealing with the various banks involved.

As you know, the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company cannot go beyond a certain fixed rate of

interest — it is controlled in that regard. One would like to think that the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company would be able to carry all the loans for mortgages and home improvements, but it is not possible to do it that way. Banks in this island have a responsibility, and from time to time they have been carrying the bulk of mortgages. I think they will continue to participate, and I do not think any Government should hinder them from participating.

What I would like to see in the future is that we could look to our own nationals living abroad for contributions to building societies, and not have to depend on any external agency to mobilise the funds needed for mortgages. The legislation is there, and it can be beefed up to make it relevant to present-day needs. The Act was passed in 1899, and we are getting on to 1989, so it is necessary to bring such an old Act up to date and see how we can utilise that piece of legislation to mobilise financing internally — and externally, because there is a lot of goodwill out there.

I cannot agree with the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) more when he says that we should not only concentrate on the building of new houses, but we should also think in terms of improving the existing housing stock. This is a vital issue. To this end, Government has allocated a portion of the funds to that, and the sum which we are seeking will be disbursed as follows: new housing mortgages, \$6 million; home improvement loans, \$10 million and house lots on tenancies, \$4 million.

We agree with you that this money will just scratch the surface of our housing needs. But we will continue to look for funds to assist in this area, and I understand that USAID might be very willing to make further contributions in this area.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) enquired whether the plantation owners could not be asked to make a contribution to improving roads in tenancies, and he further enquired about what Government is doing about putting in the infrastructure in these areas. These are things we have to face squarely.

The right honourable Member for St. John (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) talked about plantation owners creaming off a lot of money and putting it in their pockets. That was rather unkind. It is not a question of creaming off anything. He only has to go in the plantation tenancies and see what is happening. I am sure that if the honourable Member for St. Philip North was in his place when the Leader of the Opposition said that, he would not only try to shout him down, but he would have probably tried to pull him down, because the Member for St. Philip North knows that there are a large number of people in his constituency who, as a result of

the passing of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, have been building new homes.

I am amazed to see in my own constituency of St. Andrew — an area which people do not try to see, but which is very progressive — what is happening — in Chalky Mount, Sedge Pond, Hillaby. In fact, I am amazed to see the development taking place all over the country. If we did not free the people, by giving them the opportunity to get the title to the land, they would not have been inspired to construct homes and put in various improvements.

It is not fair to say that the plantation owners are creaming off millions of dollars. It was their land — it is true that the rents were low — and they did not get any great returns. And we gave the landless peasants a stake in the community and made them feel that they, too, are people.

The Government will continue as far as possible to carry out the enlightened programme of tenancy development and road reconstruction in this country, to which it is dedicated and committed. If this is not done, it would mean that, although we have freed these 11 000 lots, people will not be able to get to church, as the honourable Member for St. Philip North said, without dirtying their shoes.

It is a fact that there are still some areas where people are still required to leave home with two, and even more, pairs of shoes — one to get to the main road with and the other to wear to church or town. We are not living in a day or an age when such conditions should exist. There are bad conditions all over the world, but we in Barbados believe in excellence; we believe that not only should there be water in every house by 1985, and health for all by the year 2000, but we believe there should be good housing and proper roads for all people in this country as soon as possible.

The right honourable Leader of the Opposition mentioned that the Central Bank is spending more than \$78 million of the taxpayers' money to build a new headquarters. I am not sure of what the building is going to cost, although I imagine it will be a fair sum. But my understanding is that the money for the building of the Central Bank's new headquarters would not have been available for housing anyhow; and even though it is money which will be backed by Government, in the sense that the Central Bank is owned by Government, it will not come out of the Consolidated Fund.

3.35 p.m.

Over and above that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the building of the Central Bank is a revenue earner. There are a number of international bodies which have already indicated a desire to share in the tenancy of that structure

when it is put up. My understanding is that it can produce sufficient revenue to service the debt, and I would not like to see, or to continue to hear, that we are berating ourselves and whenever Government moves forward that there are reasons to be critical of every move that is made.

We were told today that the Governor of the Central Bank has an office that has in it all the brandy and the whiskey, and an office that any person would envy — it is so luxuriously adorned and appointed. That is a creature of the right honourable Leader of the Opposition. He knew before us that the occupant of that prestigious office has peculiar tastes, and despite that he was appointed to the office. What does he want us to do? Does he want us to get rid of his friend? We promise him that we will not be unkind to his friend, and that is the position as it is.

The right honourable Member also raised the question of two fire victims in his constituency, one in Kendal and the other in Society. My understanding is that a number of houses are always kept in reserve for people who are fire victims or who are evicted by the courts.

We hear about 5 000 people a week making a trek to National Housing. National Housing has in the region of 5 000 units, so if 5 000 were making a trek there every week, there is no way that we can accommodate them, and it has to be put as straightforward and as bluntly as that.

Government cannot supply all the housing needs in this country in terms of rentals. Many people call me and admit to me that they are in rented units, but the cost is high, so they want to opt for a Government house, which is subsidised to the tune of 200 per cent of the taxpayers' money. Yet, people scarcely pay for them!

The private sector must be encouraged. The honourable Member for St. Philip North referred to the Addendum and the Government's non-involvement, or the removal of the Government from too much involvement in these areas. Government cannot by itself satisfy the total housing needs in this country, it has to be assisted in this direction.

I do not want to deal with National Housing again today, I have already dealt with that both on the Floor of this House and elsewhere, and there is no need to deal with it today.

I just want to throw this warning out and let those who have ears to hear, hear. National Housing must conform with the directives given by the Ministry of Housing and Lands, that all fire victims and people evicted by the courts must be given priority, and they must be housed as soon as their position is known. It is improper to say

that they do not have houses. If they do not have houses, something is wrong; and if I know the officers involved, I would take the necessary action, which would be to put them on special leave. Who is unhappy about that situation, it is entirely a matter for them.

I cannot stay in ivory towers, and I have never gone into any and allow a situation to develop where suffering people are not housed; women with children, who are unsure where the children will sleep in the night, that they are denied the opportunity and the privilege of sleeping in a house when houses are available.

I have had the unfortunate experience of the honourable Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs (Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham) calling me for a whole day when one of his constituents lost a home, and there were several members of that family. I found it extremely difficult to get hold of anybody in National Housing. They are a special breed. You cannot get them on holidays, you cannot get them even on work days, let alone the days they do not have to come out to work — but here are people in trouble and those people need to be attended to. I told them there must be somewhere where they can be reached. If they do not have a telephone, the public can pay for a telephone where they can be reached, because people are not to be suffering.

I want to thank all honourable Members on the other side, those who made very good suggestions and those who tried to make but, because it is not their policy, did not make good points. I believe that they tried. I want to thank them for the suggestions which they gave.

The Agreement which brings this matter into force makes provision for negotiation on areas that might not be too happy for the Government as we go along. In three to six months' time we will see that there are problems which will affect the proper administration of this negotiation and Agreement. The Government will at that time seek to have amendments made to the Agreement. The Agreement on the loan itself is binding, but the mechanics of the Agreement in terms of the distribution of the funds and matters connected therewith are re-negotiable, and as required by the other side, I will endeavour at all times to bring you up to date on what is taking place as a result of this Agreement.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a corporate body will be formed which will deal with the disbursement of this money. Although it will be lodged with the Central Bank, there is a body of officials which will administer this fund, and will have the power under the Act to do so, so honourable Members need have no fear about how this matter will be administered.

I hope that if I am sitting in the seat of Minister responsible for Housing and Lands, on another occasion I might be coming to you to ask for your agreement that Government will not only be borrowing U.S. \$10 million, but in the region of \$100 million, which you have suggested.

3.45 p.m.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that brings us to the end of Government Business for today.

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, July 12, 1983, at 12 o'clock noon.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

3.46 p.m.

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