

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 7, 1984.

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 H. deB. Forde, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
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. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social Security, Sport and Community Services)
Hon. L. L. Sisnett, (Parliamentary Secretary)
Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.) (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs)
Mr. R. E. Brathwaite
Mr. W. O. Franklin, A.I.A.S., J.P.,
Mr. A. Truss.

Prayers were read by Mr. R. E. Brathwaite, M.P.

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

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, January 31, 1984.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, January 31, 1984 be now taken as read.

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

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

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD entered the Chamber and took his seat.

PAPERS LAID

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

The Annual Report of the Barbados National Standards Institution for the period November 1981 to October 1982.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation, 1980–81.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation, 1981–82.

Mr. B. M. TAITT entered the Chamber and took his seat.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

A Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Brighton, Black Rock, St. Michael for road improvement.

A Bill to amend the Land Tax Act.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, a Bill to amend the Land Tax Act was read a first time.

OBITUARY SPEECH RE LATE J. B.
("BARRY") SPRINGER, M.P.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I crave the indulgence of this Honourable Chamber to record the passing of the late J. B. ("Barry") Springer, who served with distinction in this Honourable Chamber in the days before, what may be termed, "the emancipation of the Barbadian politic", and who was recently laid to rest in the Westbury Cemetery.

In keeping with the simple nature of the man, it is expected, by his family, that not a great deal, by way of eulogy, ought to be said about him. His compassion for the poor was matched only by the passion with which he pursued the progressive development of the state of the people in this country, and the simplicity with which he pursued his task would require that no pomp and circumstance attend what he merely considered his duty, as a man of God and a man of the people. But I think it would be remiss of those of us who now follow in the footsteps of that great patriot if we did not mark this particular milestone in the history of this country.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Rev. Frank Barker, who himself recently retired, and who was a close friend and comrade of the late Mr. Springer, delivered what, perhaps for me, was the most moving tribute I have ever heard paid to an individual in Barbados, or anywhere. The story which he was able to tell, from his personal experience, of this great man is one which I hope will be recorded and placed before the people of this country in such a manner that we can emulate that particular gentleman, Mr. "Barry" Springer.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN entered the Chamber and took his seat.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Rev. Barker was able to tell of a man who had the opportunity to run with princes, but chose, instead, to lead the paupers. He told the story of a man who persevered, in the dark days, when it was extremely difficult for people of colour to subsist in this country, Barbados, and where to take a position that was antithetical if you will, Sir, to the orders of the day, was to endanger not only one's reputation, but one's very life. He told the story of a man who, by choice, demonstrated that an artisan may indeed become an artist.

The late Mr. J. B. Springer obviously placed his mark on the foreheads of a number of persons who have subsequently become great persons in our community. He was able, from his simple position, to influence a substantial number of persons in the political arena in this country. He was able to provide the basis for per-

sons like us who now sit in this Honourable Chamber to look back with pride.

My acquaintance with him was more by way of a student and a teacher, he being the teacher and I being a student, from afar off. In the times when I was able to benefit from his direct conversations, he, himself, still carried the fire or the passion which made him a fire-brand in his time, as he sought to relieve, or to assist in relieving, the yoke which saddled a substantial portion of the population of this country.

In the area of trade union development, while his name might not be remembered in quite the same vein and at the same level as those who achieved high office, the fact that Sir Hugh Springer and Mr. Frank Walcott were there to bear him at the last is, perhaps, ample testimony to the high regard which those two distinguished Barbadians hold for this also distinguished Barbadian, especially in relation to the work he did for the development of the trade union movement in this country.

It does not fall well from the mouth of anyone from my generation to attempt to pay total and complete homage to the people of his generation. We can only hope that, in our own quest for excellence in this society, our efforts are regarded by them, those who are still with us and those who have gone to the Great Beyond, as worthy of the standard which they set, or sought to set, in those dark days of yore.

12.30 p.m.

It is a great honour for me, sad as the occasion is, to be able to say that I have known this honourable gentleman, and that I, like a large number of persons in Barbados, have been able to benefit from his wise counsel. I believe that all honourable Members in this Chamber would wish to join with me as I extend, on behalf of the members of the party I have the honour to represent, sincere condolences on the passing of this great patriot, and express the hope that, in their sorrow in losing a good father and a great friend, they will be comforted by the knowledge that he has made a truly significant contribution to the social and economic development of Barbados.

It is in this vein that I invite honourable Members to join in the usual Resolution of this Honourable Chamber in extending our sympathies to his family and friends.

Thank you very much for your indulgence, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St Andrew): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Government, and on behalf of the people of St. Andrew, the constituency that the late James Barrymore ("Barry") Springer represented,

from 1944-46, it gives me a measure of pride, and sadness, to be able to second this Resolution.

Like the honourable Member who moved the Resolution of condolences to the relatives of the departed, I was present to hear the eulogy which was delivered by the Rev. Frank Barker on the late Mr. James Barrymore Springer. I was very touched by the things which he said, and by the useful purpose which the late Mr. Springer served in this country.

It was my good fortune to know him. I think the first encounter which I had with Mr. Springer was when, as a boy, he and the late Sir Grantley Adams — it was the first time I met the late Sir Grantley Adams — came to what was then the Clennell Wickham Memorial Club, Pilgrim Road, Christ Church, to address the people in that district. At the time the late Senator, Herman Griffith, was the president of that club. I was indeed a very proud man when I saw how the two late gentlemen spoke to the audience. I was deeply impressed with whatever they said, and I believe much of what they said, to a large extent, chartered my life in terms of my politics, and here I am today.

The late Mr. Springer must have been proud to know that it was given to him, as it has been given to few men in public life, to have lived to see a son of his also come to this Honourable House to be a servant of the people. There are other Members of this Parliament, for example, the honourable Member for the City, (Hon. Miss B. A. Miller) and the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. Adams), who are fortunate to have such a succession. The late Mr. Springer would have certainly been proud to think that, because of his great service to the community in which he served, he himself was able to produce a son who was able to adorn this Parliament in its ancient form.

He served, with distinction and with love, the people of the constituency of St. Andrew. It is to his eternal credit that he assisted in breaking the conservative stranglehold which was on this country during that period, and that he joined the forces of progress at that time to break that stranglehold.

Men like the late Mr. Springer, who could be considered as the salt of the earth, were never hoisted on any petard. They were never seen, as it were, by the forces whom they created, and, therefore, they were not given great honour. But I suppose that the greatest honour that can be given to any man is the honour to serve his people, and to know that he served his people well. The tribute paid to the late Mr. Springer by Rev. Barker is certainly the most telling form of recognition which one could have. He was not alive to hear it said, of course, but nonetheless his family was there, and I am sure that they were a proud people.

On behalf of the Government and all of us, and on behalf of the people of St. Andrew, whom he served so well, I extend to his sorrowing relatives our deepest sympathies, and sincerely hope that Your Honour will take the necessary steps to ensure that the communications which are usually undertaken in such cases will be dispatched quickly.

I formally second the Resolution moved by the honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the interment of the late James Barrymore Springer. I have already expressed my regrets to one of his relatives and my condolences to the family.

Mr. Springer and my late adopted father were closely associated for several years. The first occasion I got to meet Mr. Springer was at his business place, and I should like to stress, in the few words which I will utter, the importance of his business place in the political, social and economic life in this country. I doubt whether there was a politician of his generation who did not frequent his business place, not always for the purpose being attended to, but for the purpose of being schooled in the art of politics and hearing erudite and far-reaching discussions on the political, social and economic life of Barbados, the Caribbean, and the world at large.
12.40 p.m.

As a youngster at school, many of us who frequented his work place looked on in trepidation and wonder at the calm with which he presided over work and discussion simultaneously, the pithiness of his comments, and the pungency and relevance of them to world events. I think his outstanding quality was his ability to listen and to give due consideration to every comment, no matter from whatever quarter it came.

Those of us of this generation — there are probably few of us who have not had the benefit of his encouragement and advice — I am sure have all benefited from this advice, have been the richer for the experience.

I have had the privilege of sitting in this House with his son, who followed him into Parliament. He is no longer a Member of Parliament, but he was certainly one of the most down-to-earth debaters that I have come across, a man, of course, filled with a good deal of commonsense, qualities which he inherited from his distinguished father. I am glad to say that both he and his father have made a tremendous contribution to this island. Their words and their work will be remembered, and I hope that others of us coming after both father and son, particularly the father, will find their work an inspiration for the future.

I, too, join in the condolences which are being expressed by this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I, too, would like to join in expressing condolences to the family of the late James "Barry" Springer and direct that a copy of the Resolution be sent to his sorrowing relatives as soon as possible.

In order to mark this occasion and the passing of the Resolution, I will ask the Members of the Chamber to rise and stand in silence for one minute.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

RESOLUTION TO AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 41/1980

Order No. 4 was called – to move the passing of the Resolution to approve the amendment to Resolution No. 41/1980.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in moving the passing of this Resolution, I should just like to say that this seeks to address the problem which arose as a result of the widening and straightening of the Halls Road Roundabout.

At the time when the acquisition was done, we were given estimates, which subsequently turned out to be less than what they should have been. But in order to have a proper and symmetrical arrangement in the Halls Road area, the Government decided that they would widen the area, and that involved the removal of a number of houses and buildings from there.

This Resolution seeks to correct the situation by way of an amendment of what had taken place in 1980 in a Resolution which was passed by this Honourable House. There are no problems involved by way of negotiations or anything like that. It is straightforward in so far as the job had to be done.

Dislocation in any form can be uncomfortable. Government is not unaware of this situation, but, in your move towards progress, there are times when there must be dislocation and unease.

I am happy to report, however, that most of the people who have gone from the Halls Road area are now happily settled, and, to some extent, express regrets that they were not moved long before. The area is now very nicely laid out, and I believe with the National Conservation Commission coming in to do its usual work

of preparation in order to give it some scenic beauty, that it will be a place of joy and beauty.

With those few remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to second the Resolution, and in doing so make a few comments about the tremendous improvement at the Halls Road junction.

The human mind has a great habit of, quickly forgetting. I believe that if one asked 70 per cent of the whole House – all the Members of this House and perhaps the visitors in the gallery – what Halls Road looked like three years ago, it would be very difficult for them to describe with any degree of accuracy what Halls Road did look like even six months ago. But there is no doubt that there has been a tremendous improvement in the roadworks, the outlook and in the drainage conditions that existed before the changes undertaken by the Government, both to the connecting roundabout in the Belleville – Quakers Road – Pine – Belmont junction, and also the roundabout at the Halls Road – Constitution Road – Martindales Road junction.

There is no doubt that the living conditions available to the residents in that area have improved. In fact, a feature of the development has been the Government's undertaking to improve some of the housing conditions of those residents who have remained. There is no doubt, also, that the visibility at those corners has been improved. There is no doubt that the bad drainage that existed along the whole of Constitution Road going to Queens Park has improved tremendously.
12.50 p.m.

I use that road and the adjoining roads, Quaker's Road and the various avenues, on a daily basis. From early on mornings, when I am walking or jogging along the streets, to late at nights, when I am traversing back to my home, and I have nothing but satisfaction from seeing those improved conditions.

I would like, however, to throw out to the Minister of Transport and Works that he gives consideration to completing the pavement between the 11th Avenue, just next to the land of Mr. Dick Sealy, at Belleville Gap. There is still a tremendous drain there, and it seems to me that, since the area is traversed by so many pedestrians and traffic, it would be a tremendous improvement if that path-way is completed.

In relation to Halls Road itself, I am happy to hear the Minister say that the National Conservation Commission will be doing a job of beautification. I believe that along the Constitution River, there is an open area of land that can be attractively landscaped, and benches placed there for the constant use of Barbadians and others, particularly our senior citizens.

If public funds are used for this purpose, one would expect a corresponding duty on the public not to abuse the facilities being provided. I am still horrified that we allow animals, both sheep and cows, to wander freely in that area, causing traffic hazards and, at the same time, destroying the plants which have been placed there by the National Conservation Commission. If the existing legislation is not adequate, I think consideration ought to be given to having legislation to deal with this menace, because it is only a menace. Some people consider it attractive, I consider it a real menace that this should be allowed to occur.

The whole area of Halls Road, which abounds Queens Park, lends itself to proper landscaping architecture. The area can be a work of real beauty. There is a case for voluntary organisations and citizens, including the residents of Halls Road, to participate in this exercise.

One of the pleas I would also make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is for the people not to throw their litter and garbage so indiscriminately on that area. Not only is it a sore to the eyes, but it also can pose a hazard to the health of the people. Sometimes it is not the residents who dump the litter, there are others from outside who do it.

There is another matter which I would like to draw to the attention of the Minister. Some of the water used in the kitchens of some of the residents still run almost uncontrolled on to the main road seeking an outlet. It must be possible for us to control this. I think there are only about two or three houses where I see this happening.

I have the same problem in my own constituency, on Rendezvous Road. The continual leakage of the water on to the Road usually adversely affects the foundation of the road and the macadamized area, and it should be possible in our planning to assist such residents in circulating their water properly, probably into wells, or into some proper drainage system, to prevent this problem from occurring and eventually costing the Government money.

I said that I was happy to see that the blind corner that existed there before has been improved. If you were coming from the Roebuck Street side on to Halls Road, to cross into Martindale's Road, you were presented with a blind corner. And if one thought of coming to Martindale's Road to go down to Queens Park, before the shop was removed you also had a blind corner on the left.

I think the Government is on the right track if it removes these blind corners. I would ask the Minister to bring a similar Resolution to deal with blind corners in the constituency of Christ Church West, for example, Garden Gap No. 1 and Garden Gap No. 2 at St. Matthias,

which seem to have some of the features which one noticed at Halls Road.

I notice that St. Matthias has been improved, but not Harts Gap, I would like to see a Halls Road type of improvement in those areas as well. So, in commending the Government for having done the work well, I wish the example would be speedily followed elsewhere where there is an extreme need for it, along the whole of the main highway running along the south coast, whether it be Harts Gap, Brownes Gap, Garden Gap No. 1, Garden Gap No. 2 or the corner at Hastings, Worthing and the Stream. I hope that these areas will be done in due course.

I see honourable Members on the other side laughing. I hope it is laughter that shows their complete approval and that they are not only listening to the debating skill, or lack of it, which is being displayed in the speech.

I commend the Government's measure. I am pleased to see that the Minister has corrected the description of the areas that have been acquired in the light of the changed physical planning for the area.

I am aware that there are still one or two persons whose lands have been acquired, who have not yet received payment for the areas. I refer, in particular, to the estate of Burke, and I would urge the Minister to look at this point and see how soon people can receive payment for acquisitions.

There are several causes for this delay in compensating people. One person had told me what she thinks is the particular cause. In this case, I think it can be put somewhere between the Government's Legal Department and the lawyers representing the particular estate. But whatever the cause, I believe that we should, as soon as possible, ensure that persons whose lands are being acquired would receive adequate remuneration and compensation in the shortest available time.

The Minister made a general point about land acquisition and its disruptive effect on those whose properties are being acquired. This is always so. I regret when people look at an acquisition being carried out by Government as though the land is being taken away from them without conferring benefit on the public at large.

In this case, it was necessary to acquire this land. I, myself, have had very frequently to explain to people that sometimes the personal interest must give way to the public good. And whereas Government must look for the least disruptive manner of affecting the interest of the private citizen, I think our citizens have to recognise that sometimes the price of progress affects the well-being of an individual. Wherever possible, steps must be, and are taken, to minimise these disruptive effects.

1.00 p.m.

It is not unusual for the political representatives of an area, and others, to raise their voices at a particular time and draw to the attention of the authorities the problems arising from such acquisitions and from improvement. I understand that that is necessary in representation. I myself have had to put such a case for my own constituency. But when we are putting the case, I think we must be very careful to caution our citizens that whilst their complaints and their genuine grievances have to be redressed, there must also be a recognition that at times one has to take these steps in the interest of the progress of the nation as a whole.

I think that now we are almost to the end of the Halls Road saga, we all can look back and conclude, without recrimination, that the improvement has been for the better, not only for the residents of Halls Road, but the public at large. There is still a bit of work to be done in helping with home improvement, particularly for those persons to the nearest side of the Constitution River, and I trust that we can see some improvement in one or two of the houses, which could do with the type of treatment that was meted out to residents, for instance, in the Clapham Park area, when they were re-located.

I take great pleasure in seconding this Resolution.

Mr. A. TRUSS (St. Michael Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take pleasure in supporting this Resolution. I myself travel along this very road on my way to and from the constituency of St. Michael Central, and indeed, as the last honourable Member who has just sat down said, there has been a tremendous transformation in the Halls Road Roundabout. The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) — I see him smiling over there — can be extremely pleased at the work that Government is doing for the people in his area. I trust that the people would be grateful enough to this Government to support the candidate of our choice at the next election, realising, of course, that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central had nothing at all to do with the improvement in the area.

Sir, there are a couple of areas in the constituency which I have the honour to represent, St. Michael Central, to which I wish to draw attention. There are a lot of blind corners particularly in the Bank Hall Main Road area, and I would like to urge the Government that there is a very dangerous intersection.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member will have adequate time at a later date to deal with all these other areas in other constituencies. We are dealing with a Resolution in respect of the Halls Road junction.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Yes, Sir, I am guided by Your Honour's ruling.

In supporting the Resolution, which deals with a particular area to avoid blind corners and make it more convenient for passengers and vehicular traffic, I am drawing to the Government's attention the fact that just up the road at Eastmond Corner, where they are presently constructing a new bridge at Bridge Road, there is also a blind corner.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are dealing with something completely different. The honourable Member must not try to extend this Resolution into a general debate on Eastmond Corner. We are far away from Eastmond Corner.

Mr. A. TRUSS: I understand. Thank you very much for your guidance. I am merely trying to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the good work which the Government has done at Halls Road should be extended to the area at Eastmond Corner to help my good friends, the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt), the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, and I, because there are blind corners in the immediate vicinity. I am trying to point out to the Government, because they may not be aware, that there are other blind corners and other areas throughout Barbados which need to be developed and which need to be improved in order to avoid these blind corners, and we would like them to look like Halls Road.

We would also like to see the corner of Bank Hall Cross Road look like Halls Road Roundabout, right opposite Sturdees. I have noticed that two houses have been knocked down in the constituency of St. Michael Central, on the border of St. Michael West and St. Michael Central. I do not believe the honourable Member for St. Michael West is aware of this, because he does not go into the area. It is right next to Sturdees, which is in his constituency.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): On a point of order. The honourable Member, in expressing his belief, really ought to take cognisance of the rules that Your Honour has been drawing to him. I notice he is ranging far and wide, and I notice he is even getting into the area of speculation as to the movement of the honourable Member for St. Michael West. Surely that is irrelevant to Halls Road, Sir.

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member for St. Michael West knows only too well that he is indeed one of the few people I see quite regularly when I am canvassing in my own constituency, so he should not take that aside too seriously.

The point I am making, though, is that he is aware of the area of Bank Hall Cross Road. It is definitely very dangerous, and I would like to see Bank Hall Main Road look like the Halls Road Roundabout. I would like to see Eastmond Corner, which borders three constituencies, St. Michael South Central, St. Michael West and St. Michael Central, look like the Halls Road Roundabout. I would like to know why it is that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central can achieve these things for his own constituency and the honourable Member for St. Michael West and myself cannot achieve the same thing for our own people?

In addition to that, Eagle Hall Corner is a very dangerous corner. There is always a tremendous amount of traffic in that area. It needs cleaning up and it needs widening. Some walls have to be knocked down, and the Ministry of Housing and Lands would have to compulsorily acquire certain pieces of land in order for the MTW to go in and widen the road. Now, certainly, the honourable Member for St. Michael West cannot be against that!

I am dealing with the fact that we on this side, and I am sure honourable Members on that side as well, would like to see many areas in Barbados developed in the same way as the Halls Road Roundabout. I would like to compliment the Government for the transformation that has taken place at Halls Road and other places. I urge them not to forget that there are places in St. Michael Central, Eastmond Corner, Bank Hall Cross Road, Eagle Hall, which border other constituencies as well.

I am not making a parochial statement in my own interest alone. I am dealing, first of all with this in relation to the good people of Barbados. But I must admit and confess that I have a vested interest in St. Michael Central. The good people have elected me to come to this Chamber and speak out in their favour and to ensure that this Government, or any Government, improves the roads, widens the blind corners and make it safe for their children when they go to school and when they, themselves, are going to work. So I would like to emphasise the fact that I urge the Government to look at Eastmond Corner, Bank Hall Cross Road, Eagle Hall, to mention a few, and make them as pretty and as beautiful as Halls Road is.

1.10 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member who just sat down, the Member for St. Michael Central (Mr. A. Truss), wondered how it is that the Member for St. Michael South Central could achieve in his constituency what he could not achieve in his. It is a very simple matter. It is a question of diligence, hard work and of bringing pressure to bear on the Government to ensure that a programme, like the Halls Road Roundabout, and associated road development, is done, as was first conceived by the Democratic Labour Party, and to insist.....

Mr. A. TRUSS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the honourable Member would give way, on a point of elucidation: I never said that the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central achieved what I failed to achieve. What I did say was that he achieved something and I was hoping to achieve the same thing. That is quite a different matter.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I hope not.)

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Profound! Deep!)

Mr. A. TRUSS: He, perhaps, has more contacts in the Ministry of Transport and Works than I. I will not debate that. But the point is, I did not say that the honourable Member achieved what I did not achieve.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I wish the honourable Member a bit of luck. If he would have a chat with me some time, I would tell him how to get these things done.

Laughter

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: As I said, knowing that the Democratic Labour Party had conceived that as one of the smaller capital projects that it intended to undertake if it were returned to power in 1976, and having learnt that the Government was intending to proceed with that project, then, I proceeded to keep a very close eye on what was going on in the Halls Road area.

I brought constant pressure to make sure that all the negative fall-out from the development would not be borne by the residents of the area. For example, I did my utmost to protect the residents of that area from dust. You may recall that I came on the floor of this Parliament to defend the people of Halls Road and St. Michael South Central. And the following day, the Ministry of Communications and Works in conjunction with the Waterworks Department, had their pumps down there putting water on the sand that was lying on the road.

That is the kind of representation that the people in this country want. That is the kind of representation which allows you to demand of a Government, not beg of a Government, that they repair this road and repair that road, and do that kind of construction in your constituency.

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Demand one from me now! Demand one!)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Every Minister who has held the portfolio of Transport and Works would know perfectly well that I do not hesitate to come to the defence of my constituents whenever it is necessary. For example, in many instances I have had to give advice about the amount of money to be paid for land acquisition.

I was not satisfied with the impression given by the honourable Minister, that all land acquisition in the Halls Road area had been completed. As far as I know, there

are one or two persons who have been served with land acquisition notices, and who have subsequently received a letter indicating the sort of price that would be offered for their property. In one particular instance the money offered is totally inadequate for a Bridgetown business property and that notice still remains. If the Government has put an end to all land acquisitions in the area, I would be grateful if the honourable Minister would see to it that those notices are withdrawn, in order to relieve the anxiety of the persons who have been served with those notices.

In relation to Halls Road and related areas, I have had to go into the districts when the Ministry of Transport and Works, under the present incompetent Minister, sent out notices to about 100 people or so, when, in fact, all they wanted was to acquire parts of the land of two or three people. I have had to bring some kind of comfort to the people in the area of Bridge Road to tell them to ignore the notices, since there is no way Bridge Road can be widened to stretch from there to Nurse Land.

That is what a true representative is called upon to do. But there are others on that side, who, when they neglect their constituents, then get jealous of the fact that I have been able to get work done in the Quakers Road area. They are jealous of the fact that I have been able to get the roundabout going up there, in my area.

Laughter.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: They get jealous of all these things, and then they come in here accusing me of pimping or something like that.

Laughter.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have heard them in the lobby complaining that I was able to get work in the Britton's Hill area done.

(Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Congratulate the Government!)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The point I am trying to make is that, no matter how vindictive they are, you can overcome that by a constant assault. Then, they have to respond to the pressures of the people!

Do not forget that when the Prime Minister comes to work in the morning, he has to pass along either Halls Road, Tweedside Road or he has to come across one of those roundabouts. He got so much pressure from the residents of the area that he was only too glad to get this done as quickly as possible. Not that I organized the pressure. That was spontaneous pressure, it was not from me. But it just shows again how, by having your constituents behind you, you can go forward and demand of an Administration that things be done within your constituency.

It is not that I am satisfied. In that Halls Road — Martindales Road area, I have had to call the Ministry of Transport and Works many times about a well that keeps blocking up. All it needs is to be properly drained. At lunch time today I have to go out there and call them again about a pool of water that has been in the Halls Road — Martindales Road area for three or four days. Indeed, I am going to speak to the Minister during the break and ask him to do something about it. And if he does nothing about it, I will go down in his constituency at the first opportunity and tell the people down there how he is treating their brothers and sisters just over the other side. That is the kind of pressure you have to bring when you are in Opposition in order to get things done.

Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. Michael Central were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the Halls Road area, I was in the forefront of suggesting improvements. I challenge the honourable Member for St. Michael Central to deny the fact that I called him, in his official capacity, and pointed out to him that there were already pipe mains in the road in that area for natural gas, and that he should take the opportunity, in the interest of the Natural Gas Corporation, to pipe gas in that area, because there is a tremendous demand from the residents in the area.

When a representative can have that foresight, not only to look at the needs of the people but also to look at the economics of the Natural Gas Corporation, and then put the case and say, "Look, I am not only asking you for something for my constituents, what I am saying to you is that, by meeting their needs, you could also increase the profitability of the corporation," I think that this is a highly responsible attitude to be taken by any representative who is concerned about the improvement of the area which he represents. He cannot deny that.

Aside

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have not got gas yet, but I will get it, and I will get it because I will demand in public, as I do now, that it must be done.

The Halls Road Roundabout would have been much more complete, and indeed, when we look at the dislocation and the inconvenience suffered by the many persons in that area, it would have been nice to be able to report to this Honourable House today that not only has the general environment been improved but also an additional service, namely, natural gas has been put in at the same time as the physical development of the region was taking place. That is the kind of planning that is characteristic of the Democratic Labour Party.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Where?)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is the kind of planning which we would put into a scheme like that.

I have got most of what I wanted, you cannot get everything. But I am still going to make sure that we get some natural gas in that area without too much further dislocation or disruption of the lives of the people of Halls Road—Martindales Road area, even touching very close to Nurse Land, Tweedside Road and across, as it links up with the roundabout at the Globe and goes on to Tweedside Road.

1.20 p.m.

I take great pride for the fact that over the past five years I have made significant inputs into that development. The mere fact that these amendments are before the House now are largely due to many interventions which I, either directly, or by referring my constituents to lawyers, have been able to draw to the attention of the various departments, including the department of Crown Solicitor. We have forced them to bring these amendments before the House.

I can have no difficulty in supporting these amendments. If I did not support this amending Resolution that is before the House, I would be quite wrong, because the Resolution, in a sense, reflects much of the kind of work that I have been doing on behalf of individual constituents over the past five years. The people of Martindales' Road and Halls Road

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): On a point of order. Will the honourable Member say which of the parcels of land in this Resolution belongs to any his constituents? I challenge him to say that!

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not the point. When we are talking about the Matindales Road area, there are many people who I represented who were over in Ellis Land. The way the list is still constructed, there are many people who were even on the other side, as the honourable Member for the City (Hon. Miss B. A. Miller) can attest to, on behalf of whom both the honourable Member and I had to intervene, in order to get some kind of reconciliation of the list in the Halls Road area, because of the mess which the honourable Prime Minister, in his capacity as Minister

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Which of these people are in his constituency? He does not know!

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not here to answer that kind of foolishness. What I am here to do is to deal with the general principles of the Bill.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, without even looking at these plans, I can turn a page now and tell you where everyone of the people mentioned in this Resolution lives. Can the honourable Member do the same, and he is talking so much about his constituency?

Certain remarks made at this point by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am very happy to associate myself with all those who will support this Resolution in the interest of the people of St. Michael South Central. God bless them! They are wonderful people!

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Three Members are on their feet. Will all Members please be seated.

Two Members are on their feet. Will both Members please sit.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: I am sure I caught your eyes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really feel constrained to speak, because as I think honourable Members must be aware, the road programme, which has transformed the ground transportation system of Barbados in the last eight years, is something that is especially dear to my heart. I think it is no secret on my side of the House that the push for the construction of the Spring Garden Road, and now the construction of major highway arterial systems — from the airport to the west coast, and eventually to the north — are all things which I have been advocating for many years, perhaps before the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) was even in private practice in Barbados, far less in political life. I have taken an interest in these matters that, as the honourable Member says, goes beyond partisan consideration.

I have listened to some trumpet blowing this morning, particularly unjustified and unwarranted, in the case of Halls Road. The Halls Road scheme arose very early in the history of the Barbados Labour Party in 1976. We had, in fact, embarked on a programme of road improvement in the area even before December, 1976. We found ourselves faced with the problem of clearing the remaining houses on Constitution Road, on the Delaware Land side. The then Minister of Transport and Works, the present Minister of Housing (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite), who introduced this Resolution today, will, I am sure, readily remember that the improvement of the street systems was

one of the earliest matters which he and I discussed with respect to roads.

I admire the speech about his constituency made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. It is the first one I have ever heard on that subject. Normally, he deals with the IMF, corpses; the IMF, gambling; the IMF, Richie Haynes; and the IMF! At long last, today, he has managed to deal with St. Michael South Central. The facts, of course, bear no relation to the burden to his argument. He would be more accurate if he said that the development in the constituency of St. Michael South Central is more hampered, by the offensiveness of his personality and his approach to public life than by what he describes as his persuasiveness.

1.30 p.m.

I have had to fight a battle within my own party to allow a block of apartments to be built in Martindales Road, not because it can bring him any electoral advantage, since one presumes that they will be completed and will be a credit to the Barbados Labour Party Government that built them — this will be done before 1986 — but because it is thought that somebody who tramples so intensively on the goodwill and the traditions of decency and order, and harmony between political parties, does not deserve the encouragement which development in his constituency should give.

We carry out development in St. Michael South Central, and we really have to do it, because we love the people of that constituency. I would like to assure them it is not because we love their representative. They can put their minds absolutely beyond doubt that when their representative telephones any department, if he telephones — I have never heard of it before, he never mentioned Halls Road to me, nor have I ever had any pressure from the people in Halls Road — but beyond any doubt I am sure that the telephone is picked up by long-suffering Ministers or whoever and they say: "Is it that nuisance again?"

Now to this particular matter. We started on Halls Road. I think the Ministry of Transport and Works has had a tendency for many years, certainly the last 20 years, to build roads too narrow. The plans for Halls Road always showed that more room was needed and we have had to go over these plans again and again and again. There have probably been three separate plans made, and we are only now coming to a final shape.

I think that in some areas, the road is still too narrow. It is, of course, of some significance that none of these parcels here today are in the constituency of St. Michael South Central, they are in the constituency of the honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

The reason why these parcels are being acquired has nothing whatsoever to do with any representation ever

made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. They do not relate to dust, natural gas or any of these matters — they relate to road considerations. I listened carefully to the honourable Member's speech to hear if in fact, he knows anything of what is planned for the area. He spoke only of natural gas. He obviously does not know what considerations are informing the Government in dealing with the Halls Road area.

The honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John) and I have long entertained the idea of a riverside walk, and part of these acquisitions is to facilitate the creation of Section I of a riverside path that will lead from the Roebuck Street roundabout to the Constitution Bridge, ultimately to go right into the city in one direction and, backwards, up to Bridge Road in the other. We are going to be canalising the gully at the back of Hindsbury Road between the new Bridge Road bridge and the Roebuck Street roundabout. We are planning to landscape it, we will slope the banks properly, grass and landscape them, and we are planning to have an area, which will be like a park, between Carrington's Village and Hindsbury Road.

There will be a walk going down Bridge Road, and we are now looking to get a proper line for a walk at the back of Ellis Village. We are also planning landscaping here, which will be carried out by the Ministry of Transport and Works, rather than by the National Conservation Commission, on this occasion.

In addition we are planning redevelopment for the Ellis Village area — not merely road improvement, but the reshaping and the rebuilding of the houses in the district, and a rationalisation of the plots of land on which they lie. Some of the houses that are too close have already been removed, and we are planning to remove others. When we have cleared the area, we may level one or two more spots so that some people can be relocated in the area itself, although some, of course, will have to go to other areas.

There is one house, not in a very good condition, immediately backing the roundabout, with an old clammy-cherry tree in its yard and some rather rusty galvanise paling. In due course, we will be planning to relocate that house in a better place, and with better facilities.

Ellis Village, where these plots of land all lie, is one of the areas in Bridgetown where many of our friends from other islands, immigrants, St. Lucia mainly, and St. Vincent and Dominica to a lesser extent, live, and it is not an area that has enjoyed the best of urban facilities in the past. Not all the houses have indoor sanitation, and of course the roads to get to them are not very good. We are planning to relay the roads and make sure that all the houses are provided with adequate foundations, proper repair and proper sanitary facilities.

At one time we contemplated entirely clearing Ellis Village and extending Queens Park up to Halls Road, with a bridge over the drain as a grassed area. There are rather too many houses there, plus the Nazarene Church, for this to be a wise policy. In addition, almost immediately after the Government undertook redevelopment of the area, we observed that local citizens, impressed by the general uplifting of Halls Road, have begun to improve their houses, and two substantial houses have been built near the roundabout now, houses which are in good order and good shape, which are a credit to the locality.

Honourable Members will be aware of the pavement and the walls which we built along Constitution Road. I think myself that the wooden picket fence which looked very attractive initially is not the most practical, and therefore we may need to replace that in another section, to rebuild and so on. But all these matters are in hand.

We will be also looking to the other side of the road, and I will give the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central some information which he can carry back and tell his constituents. He does not know it, he has not asked for it, but I am going to tell him what is going to happen. There is a derelict shop, again with a clammy cherry tree, growing out of the middle of it, that is an eyesore. In due course that will either be served with a notice from the Ministry of Health or be acquired and the spot levelled. At the foot of Arthur's Hill itself, at the corner, the area is bushy and not very healthy, and probably breeds mosquitoes. We are planning to clean up that area so that Halls Road will become, on the initiative of the Government, an urban street where the people who live in it can be proud to live and stay and say that they live in Halls Road.

Halls Road is not the only area. We have to do these improvements, despite the bad behaviour of people like the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, and irrespective of how the people voted in the past or how they are going to vote in the future. Halls Road is one of the districts of Barbados where living conditions have not been perfect under the Democratic Labour Party. We want to improve such districts. Martindales Road is another such, so is Taylor's Gap and the lands along there. 1.40 p.m.

The plans that the Government has for Martindales Road will be to build a large block of flats as Phase 1 of a scheme. We would then be able to relocate some of the local residents into the block of flats.

(If the honourable Member, who is not even in his seat and who offered the aside, "Bring in the BLP" thinks that the people who are going to be relocated into the block of flats from nearby substandard housing are BLPs, he is welcome so to think. I am going to revert to that in a moment).

Phase 2 will be to build another apartment block and to relocate the better houses which now exist in Martindales Road.

All of these plans — the general improvement of the area from the junction of River Road, Martindales Road, Jemmotts Lane, and Collymore Rock right through to Roebuck Street — are essentially all part of the Halls Road Roundabout Scheme. This outer boundary of the city must be made an attractive place to live and must reflect the Government's care for the inhabitants of Bridgetown.

There are other parts of nearby areas, which are only marginally relevant to the Resolution, which we are looking at. Government is looking at all the vacant lands in the Dunlow Lane and Henry's Lane area. The Government is looking at lands in Bank Hall, in the Garden Land. The Government is looking along Bank Hall Cross Road, on both sides. We are looking at the smaller plots in Eagle Hall. We are looking all over the inner city area for ways to carry out area development to improve not only communications, but housing.

I have given the Ministry of Transport and Works instructions that they are not to put forward any plans for road improvement unless it is part of a general area improvement. Sometimes I think that their diligence in carrying out those instructions, given in my capacity as Chairman of the Planning and Priorities Committee, is a little less than one would wish.

They are told, for example, that they must not leave piles of rubble, that they must not clear away a spot and leave it for the bush to grow, with a lot of stones in between, as an encouragement for rats to live in in due course. But this is all part of the general brief of urban renewal which the Government has been carrying out, and is planning to carry out even further.

We are not sparing any of the constituencies of honourable Members opposite. St. Michael South, St. Michael West or St. Michael South Central will all come within our urban renewal.....

Asides.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS: The honourable Member for St. Philip South (Mr. H. A. Blackman) is asking about St. Philip. I did not know they have a city in St. Philip that has streets that needed renewal. If the honourable Member would draw it to my attention, I will endeavour to pass his comments on to the Planning and Priorities Committee.

To suggest that what is being done in these places is being done because of representations made by any member of the Opposition is so ridiculous as to make me feel that, on the one hand, it cannot be believed — the person who is putting forward that suggestion does not believe

it himself — or, on the other hand, the person who is putting forward that suggestion believes that he can walk on the water and carry out other miracles, normally the prerogative only of persons with certain divine qualities.

If the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central believes that he has any influence with the Government to persuade the Government to do something that it might not otherwise have done, or might even have overlooked, I would suggest to the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central that he must not just look at himself, but he must ask the assistance of Dr. Mahy and Dr. Bannister as well as that of Dr. Haynes, considering his own view of his place and importance to the world. He is simply not important enough in our scheme of things for us to take him into account when we are dealing with Halls Road and the Halls Road developments.

I want to end with a few general observations. Barbadians do not seem to be availing themselves of the opportunities provided by the Government's new thrust in housing to the extent that I would wish to see.

There are funds available for house improvement, but I know it has been difficult in many cases — demands for collateral are made by the banks which go beyond what is reasonable. But I would prefer to see these things as concrete complaints, if necessary: "I went to a bank, I have a house, I have income, but I cannot borrow the money." If I could see these things as complaints, I would be better armed in any talks I have with the banks about these matters.

Any lands that the Government acquires in Halls Road which are suitable for resettlement will be offered to people for sale. Loans will be available to buy these house spots in Ellis Village or wherever the Government acquires land in St. Michael. We also hope that loans will be available to establish good solid houses on the land, maybe not necessarily stone-built bungalows at first, but certainly houses with solid foundations which could be converted in due course. This is Government's policy, and if there are banks or anybody else obstructing Government policy in these matters, the Government needs information to help it to deal with this problem.

The honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) has been of much more assistance to the Government in drawing this kind of thing, that they help people to the Government's attention than ten people with inflated egos, full of themselves, pomposity to the world, like the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, could ever be. I look forward to the contribution of the honourable Member for St. Philip North in this debate. I am sure he is going to give us some concrete facts about these matters, of which the Government can take note and perhaps act on in due course. And he would not be giving them under any

pretence of constituency interest, he would be giving them in the general interest of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad to support this Resolution.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North) Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we may get back to Halls Road, I would like to draw a few deficiencies in the design to the appropriate Minister.

Firstly, immediately after any rain fall, around the roundabout is always flooded. This is due to the fact that the roundabout slopes inwards naturally to counteract the outward centrifugal force of the motor cars.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Slow down so the fellows over there can understand).....

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: All right. As a matter of interest, because of the natural cross-fall, which is an engineering requirement, there would have, of necessity, to be a drain on the inside of the road leading the water collected into the river.

This is not only so of Halls Road. It is also so at the new roundabout at the bottom of University Drive. Anytime you pass Halls Road when it rains, you can see that around the roundabout is completely flooded. That design deficiency, which can be seen at all of the roundabouts built so far in Barbados, must be corrected.

The second point is that at the Halls Road roundabout, in my opinion, the Zebra crossings are much too close to the roundabout itself. When a vehicle is coming out of the roundabout, it still has some turn, and the line of sight is such that you are taking in the inside corner watching the traffic. Your visibility is divided at that particular point, and it is extremely dangerous to have crossings at the particular points where they now are.

1.50 p.m.

I am very glad that the honourable Prime Minister did draw a reference to the picket fence. In my opinion, it was a very inefficient way of beautifying this junction; it was a waste of public funds. First of all, the material used, being wood, is subject to termites. Secondly, it would entail a maintenance programme which the Government knows it is not able to retain. It would have been a lot more practical if they had used decorative concrete blocks in that particular corner.

The third point in connection with that is that I am wondering if it is practicable that the light that now controls the crossing by St. Michael School could be on

a time switch, instead of having that light all through the night, which could be a bit of a distraction to approaching traffic at that time.

With your leave, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to speak on a matter which the honourable Prime Minister has just drawn to our attention, a concrete matter that has been irritating everyone. I am certain the honourable Prime Minister would realise and know as a fact that although the USAID Housing Programme Funds have been passed on to the commercial banks for on-lending, the Government has not undertaken any responsibility for those funds. The commercial banks are still having to guarantee the risks, and as a result, they are applying the same criteria that they have applied to their own funds, so it is no easier at all to get the funds that Government has earmarked for improvement. It is very distressing, because you have a Government Service programme repeatedly telling people to go and borrow money, and it names the banks where they can borrow money.

I know of a particular case of a gentleman, whose name I would be quite willing to give to anyone, who has a house worth about \$24 000, and who has been going around in circles for \$3 000. He is working for a salary of \$215 per month. I have reported this matter to a gentleman at the Ministry of Housing called Mr. Fitt, and I have drawn to his attention the problems the gentleman is having. He went to the Citibank, he went to Nova Scotia, he went to the BNB — and he has not to this present day got \$3 000 against assets of about \$24 000 of a house in Cave Land.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what are we dealing with, Halls Road or a wide range of housing? I just want to know.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am just providing.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are two honourable Members on their feet.

Mr. A. TRUSS: On a point of order: I would like to draw Your Honour's attention to Standing Order No. 28(2):

"A member must confine his speech to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto."

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Further to that point of order,...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There cannot be a point of order on a point of order.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is exactly the type of problem that we have. I was giving concrete evidence in responding to the request of the honourable Prime Minister for any information that is interrupting the working of a programme designed by the Government to improve housing in Barbados. I am also speaking of the USAID funds that the Government has been borrowing, which are there sitting down. Nobody has been able to make use of those funds. The criteria attached to the funds should never have been there. The people who are transacting the funds.....

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must draw.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On what has the honourable Member risen?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: On a point of order.

I must draw to Your Honour's attention the irrelevance of the honourable Member for St. Philip North in making reference to housing, banks and people not being able to get loans. I take it that Your Honour ruled the honourable Member for St. Michael Central out of order on what you considered irrelevant on that occasion, and I am drawing to Your Honour's attention the appropriate section of the Standing Orders. I am expecting Your Honour's ruling on that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member will continue.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Sir.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order: I am awaiting Your Honour's ruling as to whether I am right or wrong. I am awaiting a ruling from Your Honour if you are prepared to give it after lunch or now. I have drawn to the attention of you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I am permitted to do on the floor of this House, that the Honourable Member is irrelevant, and it is for you to direct whether he is or he is not, and I am awaiting Your Honour's ruling.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: My ruling is that earlier in the day when I warned other honourable Members that they were straying outside the Resolution before the House, that honourable Member not only continued, but was spurred by his colleagues to continue in the vein in which he was going. I cannot rule in one way for the right and another way for the left. The honourable Member for St. Thomas has taken the debate into housing, and therefore I am entitled to allow Members on the other side adequate time to respond, and that is exactly what I am doing.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I respect Your Honour's ruling. Am I to understand that if one Member takes the debate out of its perspective that all the Members can do this?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let the honourable Member please take his seat.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I am only seeking Your Honour's guidance. That is all I am seeking.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now 2 p.m. and this sitting now stands suspended until 2.45 p.m. today. 2.00 p.m.

On Resumption:

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is now Question Time. There being no answers to Questions, we now move to Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, the Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) has indicated that he would not initiate debate on the matter under his name today. He has also indicated that he is likely to start next Tuesday.

He is not in his place and I would like to draw it to the attention of the House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Christ Church West, under whose name the only item of Private Members' Business stands, is not in his place. Therefore, we move to Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (RESUMED)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Government Business is now resumed. When the suspension was taken, the honourable Member for St. Philip North was speaking. He may now resume his speech.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Deputy Speaker, prior to the luncheon break, I had drawn to the appropriate Minister's attention two or three minor faults to which I would like to see some attention paid.

The last point I would like to draw to his attention — this is a general one — is that in all the designs that I have seen so far, including Halls Road, I do not think

enough thought has gone into the question of drainage. In an effort to widen the roads, we have done away with the old culverts for the purpose of drainage and have been using more slipper drains. But it is a known fact that the slipper drains do not accommodate the run-off of flash floods that we have.

It is creating a problem which the honourable Minister must have observed, particularly with the barber green roads. There is a tendency after heavy rainfalls, where the binding between the barber green and the sub-surface is not good, for water to get under and lift the barber green off, and it has been destroying quite a lot of the barber green after heavy rainfalls.

I know it is not an easy thing to do, it will be a bit more costly to go back to the old concrete culverts, but if you do your cost benefit analysis, you might find that the initial outlay to provide this type of drainage might easily more than pay for itself in the longer wear of the surface that you are putting down than if it is not there. And the Ministry should look again at all drainage in association with future expansion of roads, roundabouts, et cetera, et cetera.

I would like to appeal, as well, for the beautification of all roundabouts. I am in complete agreement with the sentiment expressed by the right honourable Prime Minister in relation to the Halls Road area. We really have no problem with this type of Resolution which is before the House.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to the points raised by the last honourable Member to do with the design of the roundabout, that is certainly a matter for the Ministry of Transport and Works, not for me. I suppose it should be known by now that the Minister of Housing and Lands acts on behalf of client ministries.

The Minister of Transport and Works is present, so I would not have to draw the matter to his attention. I would hope that he would take into consideration the views expressed by the last honourable Member. Although I do not always agree with what the honourable Member for St. Philip North says, I think that he speaks from his heart and is a very good position; therefore, I would hope that full consideration be given to any views which he might have expressed.

On the question of loans, I just want to say that the loans that he referred to were loans guaranteed by the Government of Barbados and the IADB as well.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. B. St. John) dealt with water going from people's homes into the roads. This is something which affects, I believe, most of us who are concerned with the

environment and hope to see better conditions on our roads. This relates to the progress we see all around, the Government's desire to see water installed in every home in Barbados.

Many people probably set about to get water in their homes without first looking at the question of drainage, and that is what causes the problem. I would hope that the Minister responsible for the Water Authority would intimate to the Authority that they should give consideration to the disposal of the waste water which flows on to the road. I have my own experience with that in my constituency.

I know that it is also a sore point with the Ministry of Health. During my short sojourn in that Ministry, there were certain complaints in connection with the water coming on to the roadway, stagnating and facilitating the breeding of mosquitoes, which has done tremendous harm.

A lot of play was made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central with respect to the up-grading of the roundabout at Halls Road and the one further up going on to the Pine. These are areas that this Government initiated.

We came into office, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we found or heard about a lot of things. The easiest thing to do is to hatch ideas, but the important thing is to implement those ideas. This Government is a Government of doing. We like to do, the previous Administration liked to talk.

I recall very clearly, and the files would reveal that it was on September 22, 1977, during my period in the Ministry of Communications and Works, as it then was known, that I initiated measures to bring about the acquisition of properties in that area for the construction of the roundabout and the development of Halls Road.

We do not have to go about with sign posts on our backs. The country should recognize our work. The honourable Member for Christ Church West said that people are inclined to forget. As a matter of fact, things seem natural to them. You drive on the Spring Garden Highway and you forget that only a few short months ago, there was no such thing as a Spring Garden Highway. You are now using the Halls Road Roundabout and you accept it as a fact. You consider it to be something that you came along and found, forgetting that it was only there just a short while ago. But I suppose that when things are impressed upon them they will then recognize what has taken place.

We cannot boast, like the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, of what we have in our constituencies. He is fortunate to have a constituency that

needs a lot to be done to it. He is equally unfortunate that the party to which he belongs did not see its way to do anything to improve the conditions in that constituency.

But this Government looks beyond the boundaries of politics when we are doing things. We are not concerned about whose constituency a place is. We are concerned with the overall national good of the country. In our view, people matter; it is not a question of electoral politics. We believe that that will come as a matter of course. If you do good, I suppose good will attend you, and we have no problem with that.

Questions were also raised by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central about land acquisitions and offers being made and settlements not arrived at. There is a tendency abroad that when Government wants something, Government must pay through its hat for it. People often forget that they are part of the Government, except people who do not pay taxes. This is the problem. Whenever Government is involved in anything, people expect that they must get the highest price possible. If you are acquiring the slightest portion of land for the widening of a road, they must extract a pound of flesh and a drop of blood. I would hope that the time would come when this attitude would change, and when people would recognize that the improvement of the areas where they live is paramount.

There are some people who would seek to deny people who live in their areas the right to a road, but the very road will enhance the value of their property. Then, when the road is built and the property is enhanced, and they extract their pound of flesh and drop of blood, they still will get an enhanced value for their property. I have a strong view that those people should be made to compensate the Government for the enhanced value. Of course, they have to pay taxes on it. But I think, further than that, they should have to compensate. People are too greedy!

Aside

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Yes, the Betterment Charge Act comes into being in certain developed areas. I doubt that you may want to invoke that in relation to one spot, but you may see the need to spread it further abroad. You do not want to penalize anybody, but when people feel they have to extract everything, you may well have to resort to that situation.
2.55 p.m.

I believe that I have largely answered the points made. The honourable Member for St. Michael Central (Mr. A. Truss) has been making appeals for developments around the areas for which he has responsibility. I want to assure him that wherever it is possible that

Government can do anything to assist in his constituency, or any constituency, as long as the request is made to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the acquisition of lands to carry out those improvements, this Ministry will be willing to come forward. I have no doubt whatever that the Cabinet will give approval to acquisitions that will redound to the credit of the community as a whole.

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

Order No. 1 was called — To move the House into Committee of Supply to consider the granting of sums for the service of the island.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply on the Bill, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1983-84 No. 21 \$399,773

HEAD 74 — MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM (Christ Church East): Mr. Chairman, in moving that Head 74 stand part of the Resolution, I should like to make a few general remarks both about the Scotland District Soil Conservation Project and about the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme. The lion share of the money now being sought is for the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme; only a very small part is for the Scotland Soil Conservation Project, but I think that I have a responsibility to give honourable Members some update on what is happening in the Scotland District before I deal with the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme.

Some \$14 000 of the money being sought is for the Scotland District Soil Conservation Project. It is needed for the National Insurance contributions, Transport Levy and travel.

Considerable work is going on in the Scotland District area. For the last 20 years, successive Administrations have paid close attention to combating the soil erosion in that area, and approximately \$60 million have been spent in the last 20 years in the Scotland District. The problems are continuing, and a renewed effort is being made, though the use of engineering and agronomic techniques, to overcome the problems in the Scotland District.

We have attracted assistance from two large funding agencies: the European Development Fund, which is financing a programme of work in the Back River area, comprising some 600 acres, and the Inter-American Development Bank, which is involved in a project in the Swan-Turners Hall area and in Greenland. That project will involve 174 hectares, or some 430 acres. At Greenland, the focus is on the rehabilitation of a water course to protect agricultural lands and the infrastructure against accelerated erosion.

The IADB programme, in particular, has a large research and data gathering component. A series of activities are involved in the IADB programme — engineering designs, soil analysis, hydrological data gathering, economy and improved management planning and accounting — with a view to improving the institutional and technical capacity of the unit at the Soil Conservation to continue the work in the future.

The big aim is to stabilise the land, on the one hand, through engineering and agronomic techniques and, at the same time, to make the land as productive as possible. Much of the Government's emphasis on orchard development is concentrated in the Scotland District area. Consultants have identified the soil as particularly well suited to the growing of mangoes, guavas, cherries, pineapples, and limes. The nursery in that area is being rapidly expanded and a large amount of plantings have been done, particularly lime and guava trees. We are hoping that, in another few years, the major increase in food production in this country will be coming particularly from the Scotland District area.

The lion share of money, as I indicated earlier, is for the Spring Hall Land Lease Project. As honourable Members are aware, this is the first serious attempt of the country at agrarian reform. Some 402 acres of land situated in St. Lucy at a plantation formerly known as Friendship has been cut up, and 21 tenants have been offered lots at Spring Hall. The project is about two years old, and certain difficulties have come to light. I should say that the project has been very long in conception and in planning, but it is only about two years now since I handed out the leases to the tenants and since the project was effectively put into operation.

The position is that the consultants originally recommended that something like 80 per cent of all lots should be put into sugar cane and that 20 per cent should be used for non-sugar agriculture, like vegetables and ground provisions. That target of 80 per cent in sugar was not realised in the first two years, and many farmers experienced difficulties in managing lots that ranged from about 10 acres to 23 acres, when a significant portion of the land was not covered down, as they say, by sugar.

3.05 p.m.

It became clear to me recently, when I made a review of the progress of the project, that we had to move with some despatch to make sure that the consultants' recommendation was realised, that some 80 per cent of each lot was under sugar cane. So late last year we took a decision that, by December, 100 acres had to be put in sugar cane, and a little over \$100 000 of the money here sought is to pay for the weed control, the preparation of the land and the planting of 108 acres under sugar.

Some \$22 000 is needed for the recording and approving of the leases for the tenants — that was a bit of unforeseen expenditure — and also to meet the property transfer tax.

One of the problems which the tenants at Spring Hall have been experiencing relates to the cost of the irrigation system, which is hooked into the Barbados Water Authority's portable water system. There were two wells on the plantation, but, unfortunately, the wells were not hooked into the Barbados Water Authority's irrigation system, which they have since introduced. So with the passage of time, we have found that it is costing something like \$4.77 per thousand gallons of water, and the tenants have found the cost of water just too high to make the cultivation of non-sugar agriculture viable for them. In fact, in a five month period last year the water bill was something like \$85 000.

We have taken a decision, therefore, to deepen the wells, test pumping the wells and equip them to supply the needs of the tenants. The sum of \$81 000 is for the precise purpose of activating the wells on site, cleaning them, deepening them and test pumping them, and also installing the equipment.

We are hoping that with the effort being made to put the major portion of lots under sugar, and with the cheaper source of water, we can cut the water bill by something like 40 per cent. Through the reactivation of these wells and the reliance on them in future, as an alternative source of irrigation, we hope that the tenants will have a far greater prospect of making a success of the project.

There are 18 tenants operating right now. Two lots are, as it were, vacant, and the dairyman is getting himself ready to commence operation. A lot of some 65 acres which has been set aside for the dairyman. So we have 21 tenants. The project is conceived of as having 21 tenants, 20 farmers and one dairyman.

It is too early to be particularly critical of the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme. I think we have to give it five to seven years before we made any critical assessment of how it is going, but I found it necessary, just

short of two years of operation, to make a review of the operations and correct certain problems that have been identified. There have been certain modest successes and I felt that these initiatives had to be taken if the project is to be given an enhanced chance of becoming a success.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 74 stand part.

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful to the Minister for enlightening us on these two projects, and I would further seek his enlightenment on one or two things that have been drawn to our attention.

I am a little bit surprised that the consultants have in recent times recommended that 80 per cent of these Spring Hall lands should be returned to sugar cane. I am surprised, because at this particular time, and over the last couple of years, the sugar industry has been going through a fairly tough time and has been kept viable by price supports by the Government. I would think that in a scheme like this, in which you were inviting family farming, so to speak, in order for them to derive an income comparable to other endeavours to assist their families, it is a little strange that they are now going to find themselves with 80 per cent of their allotments, some 20 acres, under sugar cane — about 16 acres of sugar cane and four acres in some other crops.

My understanding is that sugar cane has always been better grown in large areas, in the plantation type setting, where the equipment can be better utilised. I therefore find it a little strange that you have now broken down the plantation type situation and have reverted to sugar cane on a kind of smaller acreage where people are now expected to farm for an economic living.

Four acres out of 20 seem to be what has to provide these people with their livelihood, because if you take for granted that sugar, not an economical possibility, has not been very viable over the past couple of years, it is a little far-fetched to believe that a smaller acreage will become a lot more economic. I would assume that the 16 acres in sugar is only going to break even, and that they are going to have to depend very heavily on the four acres they might have in mixed vegetables or whatever for their survival in this type of setup.

I would like to have my fears, that this is not going to throw a damper on the whole system, allayed, because I am positive that when those 21 farmers went into that project, they did not have in their minds a situation where they were moving their families on to a small 21 acre lot, ultimately they are supposed to have

a house on it, and going back to sugar cane farming, which is costly. It is costly to reap, costly to cultivate, fertiliser is expensive, and the end price at the factories over the last couple of years has not been in any way making it worth their while.

Last year a small farmer did a breakdown for me. He was getting \$60 a tonne for his canes, and when he paid for transportation, loading, cutting, manure into his soil and for a labourer to keep around the hedgerow clean, he was really about \$5 per tonne out of pocket. Unless I can be assured that the assistance of irrigation, which we have just learnt about, is proving to be one of the expensive parts of the operation — it is very feasible that they are not going to use a lot of irrigation for the sugar part of it — it is logical to conclude, particularly on those marginal areas like the lands in St. Lucy, that they are going to end up with no more than 15 to 20 tonnes per acre, which is going to give the farmer around 320 tonnes for his crop.
3.15 p.m.

I would personally like, if the Minister is in that type of mood, to hear the rationale behind this recommendation for this heavy concentration of sugar cane in the Spring Hall Land Lease Project.

In relation to the Scotland District, I would be very much grateful to the Minister if he could give me some indication of the stage of progress of the scheme, particularly the IADB Scheme. It is my understanding that this scheme, which was for grazing trials and forestry, might be some one year behind schedule. If this is so, I would like to know what were the problems in the scheme that have driven it one year behind schedule.

The equipment, I understand, is also in a sorry state due to the lack of maintenance and funds for replacement parts. There is no use having expensive equipment, like DC 9's, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars not being operational because they are in need of batteries costing \$190 or some similar figure. It is a little short-sighted to have this kind of capital expenditure tied up due to a lack of maintenance or small parts. I would like to be assured that the programme is such that the budgeting is adequate and that the equipment is kept in working order, so that there would be no delay in the scheme at all, at any stage, due to a shortage of equipment or unworkable equipment.

Recently, we have seen that there was a little industrial unrest where people, who claimed to have some 22 years service in the Scotland District, had been laid off at very short notice. I heard by way of a notice on the radio that they have been recalled to work and I would hope that they would be no break in service because of this little situation. They went off for three

or four weeks and then went back to work, and I hope that break would not interfere with any entitlement those people, who have been working in the scheme for 20 to 22 years, would have accrued during that time.

The Scotland District is certainly an area to which all of us must pay very close attention, because it involves some one-sixth of the total land area.....

(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: One seventh.)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: One seventh of the total land area. Thanks for the correction by the Minister and the representative for the area. Certainly he is very aware of it.

The Scotland District is one of the most beautiful parts of Barbados, and anything that can be done to make it productive as well, particularly in fruits — and the Minister has said that they have been able to decide that fruits like mangoes, guavas, cherries and pineapples are very suitable to that soil — is good news. We can certainly use every pound of fruit that we can produce locally to improve that part of the diet of Barbadians and to cut down on our importation of the particular commodities.

The scheme, as I have said, is a very important one. I hope that the experts who are on it are beginning to grapple with it. A lot of work has been going on down there for years; the problem is that every expert, so far, seems to have a different opinion. Some of them put down dams, some have dug deep and put down gabions to facilitate drainage into particular reservoirs down there. The technique, I understand, is slightly different from the techniques used before, and I sincerely hope that they have now arrived at the appropriate technology to produce the type of results, in the shortest possible time, that we expect for the money that we are spending in this area.

I must say that I am heartened by the fact that two funding agencies have found it possible to provide the funds for the project. I wish the Minister all success and the maximum returns on both of these projects for the people of Barbados.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I do not have a lot to add to what my colleague said. I am going to give the scheme the benefit of the doubt, I am going to give the Minister the benefit of the doubt. It is a scheme which, I think it is acknowledged on both sides, we conceived, the Spring Hall Project, but I do not think that the project we conceived is coinciding with the one which is being implemented. I understand that there have been some difficulties and that they have had to rearrange the scheme. I cannot, however, accept the Minister's decision to replant sugar cane in that area.

(Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: That was the original recommendation)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That was the original recommendation? That is what you are saying? I might have been misled, but my understanding always has been that this was an opportunity for, essentially, garden farmers, family farms, that they would have a common pool of a number of the resources and that these would have been made available to these persons who would have been allocated the various lots.

The Minister has said *sotto voce* that sugar cane was in the original plan. I saw him recently announcing that he was increasing sugar production, and I formed the impression that he intends to start his increased production in sugar at the Spring Hall Project.

I cannot recall, and I am willing to stand corrected, the Spring Hall Project having sugar cane as one of its major emphases. It seems to me that agrarian reform — if, as the Minister calls it, we can call it agrarian reform which takes cognizance of an inefficient method of farming sugar cane — and it seems to me that unless sugar cane farming is mechanised to the point where the cost can be worked out to the nearest cent almost — is always going to be inefficient and costly.

I think that at the moment Barbados has probably the highest cost per tonne to produce sugar. And while one accepts that sugar is an easy crop to grow — and I believe that the cost of production has been inflated over the years; in fact, I am certain of it — I still think that it is a crop that ought to be reaped by a large scale farmer rather than a small scale farmer. Those who happen to be in it as small cane farmers may remain, but I am a little concerned when you attempt to put small farmers back into sugar cane production.

As I said, I am going to give the Minister and the project the benefit of the doubt. Obviously, they have information and they are on top of it, but we will hold them accountable. The Minister says it is only two years since the project has been implemented. It takes 18 months before a sugar cane crop comes to fruition, so I will give him the benefit of the doubt. But we will hold him accountable.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member for St. George South (Hon. L. R. Tull) knows a little bit about this, even though he does not own a plantation that can be described as a plantation.
3.25 p.m.

There is one aspect of the scheme that has caused me some concern. Recently it was brought to my attention

that the housing that is being built on the scheme or in the scheme was being built (a) from imported timbers and, (b), with imported workmen. I do not know if it is true, but this was represented to me.

The idea was that, because the cost per day for the Barbadian artisan and/or workman was deemed to be too high, there were some Guyanese who were coming in and were willing to work for almost nothing. These Guyanese were therefore being employed to do the construction work in the building of these houses at a cost that was far beneath what Barbadian workers would have earned. I am not certain whether my informant was indicating to me that Guyanese were also participating in the scheme, but I have refused to believe that, because I do not think that the Minister could, in all seriousness, consider making the Spring Hall Project available to other than *bona fide* Barbadians here.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member for St. Michael West Central (Hon. V. L. Johnson) believes that to know the names of places is to have knowledge. These things happen.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is the beginning, but I wish he can have the beginning of wisdom. We have been trying with him for a long time. On both sides of the House we have tried with him, but his head is hard.

I do not have much more to say about the scheme now, but this is a little indication to the Minister that we will hold him responsible.

I would also like to ask the Minister whether he is able to tell us — he has not given us any information on this — what are the criteria that have been used in the selection of the persons who make up the scheme. Do you have any family farmers without a family? Do you have young people? What is the average age of the person who has been given a farm? What kind of prospects do you anticipate in terms of passing on the farm to the progeny of the current farmer?

It would seem to me that the project would not be worthwhile unless this kind of transformation in land ownership in Barbados will be the prime result of the project. It seems to me that the investment which we are making now cannot be judged in terms of whether there is profit at the bottom line in a year or two. We would like to see this as a long term investment — it certainly was so conceived — in which the children and the children's children will tend to benefit.

I saw one article in the newspaper about the project, in which a lady, who had had tremendous difficulty

before, was deemed to be doing a larger scale farming than she had previously done. But, on the other hand, there have been reports that there are persons who have, in fact, become part-time farmers within the scheme. I have had reports of persons who have substantive work in other fields, for example, taxi driving, and then they come home to the farm as persons used to do in the old days.

I do not know that a man who is a farmer is necessarily precluded from owning a taxi, and it may very well be that the information is either misguided or malicious. But if in fact this is so, then it seems to me that you would be defeating the object of the scheme. I think the Minister should clear the air and tell us what are the criteria which are being used in the allocation of the farms, in the methodology on the farm.

I would like to know, for example, whether they have been able to solve the problems which, we heard earlier, caused the project not to get off the ground, that you are having difficulty recruiting the engineer. The original scheme, as I understood it, called for, shall we say, an engineer to look after the entire project, that you will have one to each on the site, and I have not heard anything of that subsequently.

One is not probing for purposes of criticism, one is probing here for purposes of knowledge so that we would be able better to monitor the scheme, to assess it and finally to pass judgment on it. In the meantime, I would say that in this project the jury is still out. We would prefer to observe it and give the Minister the benefit of the doubt on this occasion.

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE (St. Lucy): Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Resolution, which is a very progressive one. I cannot altogether agree with the last two previous speakers. I believe that the Minister of Agriculture is moving in the right direction because as a small farmer, I know that there are a lot of people who tell you about farming who really do not know anything particularly about it. I know it is always most profitable, if you have 20 acres of land, to put the most of it in cane. As you know, after you weed canes about three times a year, the canes automatically clean themselves, they kill the grass seed.

This method and the management which the Minister of Agriculture is introducing to these small farmers is the only way that you can get out of what you are in right now. I live in that area, and I am quite satisfied with the progress that I have seen down there over the last few months. And if the Honourable Minister and the management staff down there continue to assist and bring their ideas to bear, that place will be something of which we all can be proud.

There are some people who tell you about sugar cane, that you do not make anything out of the land and all kinds of things. I was a small farmer from age 18, I would say, and if I cannot plant canes, I would not work the land, no matter how much people tell you that you do not make anything out of cane. You do not make a fortune, but sugar cane keeps the soil clean, then it brings back something into the soil, and you manure the soil at the same time. When you have food crops alone on your plot, they have a tendency to deplete the soil, and eventually you have to look for special fertilizers to bring back life into that soil. This is the only way that the farmers in the Spring Hall area would really develop.

If a small farmer has 20 acres of land and he puts 16 acres in cane and four acres in provisions, the next year when he has the grass controlled and he wants more room for planting vegetables, he can then move out another two acres or another acre, whatever he can control. But if you just give a small farmer 20 acres of land to work, just to go into that 20 acres of land with a family of three or four, he cannot control that land at all.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) spoke about those houses that the folk built down there. I think he should commend the Minister of Agriculture because the lumber alone for those houses that were built at Spring Hall cost more than the \$19 000 the people have to pay for these houses.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, if the honourable Member would give way. He obviously did not listen to my speech. I did not even advert to the cost of the houses, I did not discuss the quality of the houses, nothing of the sort. I merely raised the question concerning the labour employed in the construction of the houses. I know the honourable Member has a propensity to.....

3.35 p.m.

Asides

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I would commend the Government for building those houses, because in putting houses on agricultural land plots where you have canes, and you have quite a lot of worms and things like that, the greenheart wood is the answer. A house in Barbados of similar size, from either one of the lumber companies, would cost approximately \$30 000. So I would say that the price of those houses at Spring Hall are quite reasonable, and they could exist for over twenty to twenty-five years without repairs because of the material they are made from.

There is nowhere where you grow sugar cane that the factory closes down and leaves out your cane. There is a demand nowadays for the factories to help you, and this Government is encouraging you to grow more cane. At present, we are getting help in the parish of St. Lucy where you can cut down on the cost of freighting. Canes will be hauled cheaper this year than last year, although labour has gone up, because the Government is trying its best to help, assisting with loaders and trucks that operate at a cheaper rate.

I would like to speak a little on the forestry in St. Andrew. I think that we should commend the Government on that project, which I believe, is a very progressive step. You have to go and see the project, because it is one thing to hear about it, and another thing to see it. When you go and see the strides that have been made in St. Andrew with the forestry down there, you would be quite happy and satisfied.

I visited that project! We found out that we have some greenheart down there. I am sure that if we take good care of it, we can have our house frames and so on from greenheart in Barbados, through that forestry.

We all know the use of trees in Barbados. It is a very dry island and we know that trees help attract rainfall. In the Scotland District, because of planting trees in the Back River area, we now have some potential up there. We have trees there where there were none before. I saw some mango trees down there in the midst of a gully. Nobody knew that those trees were down there.

I would say that, because of the planting there, Barbados would soon be self-sufficient in lime juice. And not only lime juice, we have quite a lot of other fruits planted between the forestry which is doing good for this island. Last year our import bill on fruits was somewhere in the region of \$3 million. I am sure that a few years from now Barbados will be self-sufficient in fruit.

At present, over 500 new trees have been planted in Back River, a degree of indigenous flowers introduced and a water shed management programme drawn up. Forestry is necessary in all countries, in particular in countries like Barbados, which is a low rainfall area and is subject to soil erosion. That area being one that has 90 per cent of the country's surface water and 100 per cent of the elevations over 700 feet, Barbados needs forest there for the following reasons:

- (1) The protection and management of the water sheds in the Scotland District where rivers like the Brucevale, Turners Hall, Joe's River cause annual damage as they flow to the sea.
- (2) The slopes in the Scotland District can only maintain their stability under forest cover.

- (3) Forests induce rainfall — more trees, more rain and more vigorous growth of the crops.
- (4) Barbados requires a heavy coast cover to protect the Eastern coastlines from the ravages of rain from the Atlantic.
- (5) Barbados as a prime tourist resort needs more parks and recreational facilities for its own people and visitors.

I went to the highest point in that project, and I can tell you that, in a few years from now, the area will be one of the most beautiful spots in Barbados. When you look at the way the roads are being built and how you manoeuvre about them, it is really something to see. I believe that, in time, people will have to pay a fee to go up there, and I am sure that everyone would enjoy the view. When you are on top of that hill abutting and bounding Turners Hall, you can see all of St. Andrew, all of St. Peter and a part of St. Lucy. The project is very, very important to this country as far as tourism is concerned.

The wild life of Barbados is essential. If there are no trees, there will be no insects, there will be no birds, no pollination of trees would be possible, all wild life will disappear, and the natural balance of nature would be upset. There are also other factors:

- (1) Barbados needs trees to reduce the high glare effect of the sea—sun combination during the day.
- (2) Barbados needs shade to protect workers and holiday-makers during the hot, sunny days.
- (3) From the commercial viewpoint, Barbados can use these products for the production of timber and in the construction industry; timber for the fabrication of toys, trees for posts, trees for the production of hammers, brooms and agricultural tools.

We still import hoe sticks and so on, and yet we have so many trees in St. Andrew and other parishes. I feel that even some of our mile trees, the casuarina trees, which can be compared very, very favourably to the greenheart wallaba posts from Guyana, can do a good job. I hope that we would all look into the forestry that is going on, and try to do all to promote it, so that it would help the foreign reserves position of this country.

Trees can also be used as fuel. As we all know, Barbados is very involved with the tourist industry and we import quite a lot of charcoal. I believe the time will come when we can use some of these same hard wood trees in the forestry to get coal, so that we could also cut

back on the importation of coal and things of that nature. The list of usages can be stretched as far as one can go.

At present, the areas under forestry are Joe's River, Turners Hall, Morgan Lewis, Boscobel, Back River and Haggatts. There are numerous woodlands throughout Barbados, the sugar estates once grew trees for the burning of their boilers.

You can look around and see some massive mahogany trees in this country, which people keep as a souvenir. I agree we cannot destroy all these trees. But there are some trees, in the gullies, that we could cut down and cut back on the particular kind of wood that we import. A lot of mahogany and cedar that we import, we can get it here. We have some of the trees as big as some of those trees in Guyana.

I am happy with the work that I saw in the Scotland District. I am sure that if all of us join hands in trying to encourage the Government in this project, in a few years it will be something of which we will all be very proud. I hope that we will all try to co-operate, and that this country will continue to grow from strength to strength, so that we can see the progress, so that we can cut back on a lot of these foreign imports and make this country produce things which other countries produce.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Chairman, I just wish to make a few comments on this particular Resolution. Like the other Members who have spoken, I would speak from the point of view of wishing this scheme all the best. I hope that it turns out to be a very successful one, of which all of us can be proud.

Other Members have adverted to certain aspects of the scheme, but I would like to raise some questions, because I do not recall that this Honourable Chamber has been given any detailed information on the operation of the scheme, even though, as the Minister indicated, it has been in operation for about two years.

The Minister did indicate that there were some problems. I would like to say that, to the best of my knowledge, there is experience at the top of the project, that the project is managed with sympathy and understanding, and that, perhaps, it has been fortunate that such management could be provided for the programme.
3.45 p.m.

However, apparently the problems have been many and varied, and I hope that the Minister will correct me if any of the aspersions which I make may be not based on fact. I understand that while we have experience at

the top, and the project management may be very knowledgeable about agricultural matters and the management of agricultural products, the problems are so many that the top management cannot deal with all the problems in this multi-faceted scheme.

It is my understanding that the original idea was to develop some kind of agriculture which was not heavily based on sugar cultivation because of the rainfall patterns, the quality of the soil and other factors. Indeed, the whole Spring Hall area was under sugar cultivation for many years, and it is not unlikely that the previous owners bought out of sugar because it was not in the most appropriate area for sugar cultivation.

I believe that in the late 1960s, the programme for agricultural development called for a concentration of the major agricultural effort in the high rainfall areas and on the better soils, which, indeed, would have ruled out those parts of St. Lucy, parts of Christ Church, and some parts of St. Philip, those which are more coastal and where the rainfall pattern would have not been appropriate for sugar cane cultivation. Those areas which might have been marginal for sugar cane cultivation would have been allocated for some kind of market gardening or vegetable production, dairy farming and such projects.

So I, myself, am a little concerned to hear the Minister indicate that some 80 per cent of the land of the Spring Hall Project will be devoted to the sugar cane cultivation, when, in fact, in years passed, the production of sugar cane on those lands did not prove to be as economic as they should be.

I understand the problems being raised to which the experienced Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite) was adverting, in terms of land management. It is good to have sugar cane on the soil if for no other reason than for the weed control, and that may be a consideration. But perhaps those who are experts in the area of agriculture will have to turn their minds and put their heads together on this particular matter to see how you can get good market gardening and dairy farming in that area, and how the problem of weeds may be controlled.

I am wondering if the Minister can give us some more details about the size of the lots allocated to those 24 farmers who have been selected. I think he did say they were five acre lots per minimum.

Aside.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: More than that? Perhaps the largest lots may be some 20 acres, I do not really have that information to hand. But I am really wondering, in terms of the experience of the small farmer in Barbados, on what grounds can you say that 20 acres, ten acres, or even five acres, would be manageable for the

kind of project we are talking about? The point that I am really raising is that it may very well be that, in concept, the amount of land allocated for the plots may very well be too large for the management of the plots by the persons selected to operate them.

I am wondering if there can be some rethinking on this, to give those people who go on the project lots which they can actually manage. It does not mean that, if you have one acre, two acres or three acres, the land has to be cut up into areas that are too small. If you have the necessary professional advice and provide the necessary back-up services, small areas managed by individuals can be co-ordinated into larger areas, still retaining a measure of individual control. I would like to hear the Minister addressing this particular problem.

I would like to know whether there are any extension officers allocated to the project to offer advice on a day-to-day continuing basis to the persons who manage or work the lots that they have been allocated. I am not talking about the experts at the top of the project who are managing it. They are experienced, they have the expertise, but an experienced manager, with overall responsibility for a project which involves utilities, land, fertilizer pesticides, legal problems — the whole range of inputs — cannot really give the day-to-day professional expertise that a farmer might require from day to day, week to week, or month to month. So I am wondering if this kind of advice is available; how many extension officers are actually available on an ongoing, regular basis to the people in the area?

I will not say very much at this stage about the problems of irrigation — the Minister himself has admitted that there is a problem as far as that is concerned. I am wondering why these wells were not hooked into the system in the first place, because it would have been known by some other arm of the Government that the cost of utilities might have been high.

I wonder if any large sums of moneys are being built up and owing to the project by the people who are on it. In other words, are we getting a pattern as in other areas? Is this the kind of pattern that we hear complaints about in the Ministry of Housing, that the tenants are building up large arrears in terms of the rents which they may owe? I am asking if this is a problem emerging in this particular scheme, or if everything is going all right.

3.55 p.m.

I believe the Minister should be able to help this Honourable Chamber considerably by adverting to this particular matter. Are there problems in that area? If the answer is in the affirmative, what are the proposals in that regard?

We must consider that, for agriculture to be successful, there must be an integrated approach; from cultivation, through to the planting, harvesting and marketing stages, there must be planning. I would like to know whether contracts and so on have been worked out for those who produce, whether the management has worked out for the farmers, or the farmers have worked out for themselves, contracts in relation to their produce and for the sale of their produce, so that you can look down the road and say the marketing end of it has been taken care of?

I am not talking about any generalised statement: 'Well that will be taken care of, there are big super-markets,' or 'There is a big hotel in the north — Heywoods — but when we get in the north we will then deal with all these matter.' I am wondering if there is really a pattern of contracts worked out between supplier and purchaser so that the produce from these pioneer farmers can be got off with a minimum amount of trouble.

We are told that some money is required for the irrigation in relation to the wells which are now to be brought into the scheme. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us how much money to date has been spent on the irrigation works on that particular project.

I do not live in that area, there are Members of this House who live down there, but I understand that when the irrigation is going now on the project, it is difficult for people in the area to get water because of the competing demands from the project in relation to their own domestic requirements. I am wondering if this is one of the problems in the area, that the fact that the project is hooked into the national water system means that the people who live in that area find difficulty in getting water for their normal domestic needs, and so on.

As I said when I started, we wish this scheme well. But that does not mean that we must turn our faces away from the problems, and problems there obviously are, some of them identified by the Minister, and I have not adverted to all of them during this particular speech.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Chairman, I am much indebted to Members on both sides who have spoken on this Resolution. I particularly appreciate the tone of restraint with which they spoke. I thought the Opposition was right not to have pronounced any judgment on the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme, since it is still in its early days. I do not think that enough time has run for us to say it has been a success or a failure.

Equally, I think it is too early to determine whether the lots are too large or indeed too small for the tenants. I think that whether a lot is too large for a particular tenant depends a lot on what sort of labour support and

assistance he has, and the extent to which mechanisation is relied upon in the cultivation of the farm and the mix of crops which he has on the farm.

This brings us immediately to the question of the decision to ensure that some 80 per cent of the lots is covered with sugar cane. I just wish to say for the benefit of the House that that was the original assumption on which the project was structured. It was the recommendation of the consultants in the early that upwards of 80 per cent of the lots should be under sugar cultivation.

In the last two years, we did not realise that part, for a host of reasons, but the passage of time did prove that we were wrong in not putting large tracts of the land under sugar. That is borne out by the fact that after two years they could not get the lots under cultivation, the pace was extremely slow and the greater part of the lots was overrun with bush and weeds.

As has been rightly pointed out by the honourable Member for St. Lucy (Mr. R. E. Brathwaite), sugar cane is very important when you have a large lot, because it is very difficult for a family, two or three persons, or a single individual to have upwards of 20 acres under vegetables and mixed farming. The close attention that vegetables and mixed farming call for means that one man, or even a family of two or three people, cannot easily control and see to the demands of 20 acres. But on a 20 acre farm, if you have 16 acres under sugar you will find that four acres in mixed gardening will be quite appropriate to give a viable income return for that farmer to enjoy a reasonable standard of living. That is the premise on which we are proceeding in ensuring that the original recommendation is implemented. It is not a creation of the Ministry of Agriculture at this stage, we are only making sure that it is implemented, because it seems wise to us that the early recommendation is carried out.

With respect to the question raised about the IADB project in the Scotland District, we did lose some time. I am not sure that it is as much as one year, but it is really related to the fact that the pre-qualification criteria that had to be met, the tendering to the contract arrangements as insisted upon by the IADB, did take a long time.
4.05 p.m.

The other part of the project, funded by the European Development Fund, is ahead of schedule. There are also components of the IADB project that are ahead of schedule. For example, the fencing was supposed to be completed in April and I am assured that we will complete it in March.

I have every reason to believe that there is enough flexibility in the accounting system to ensure, for example, that an expensive piece of equipment is not tied up be-

cause of the need for a battery or spare parts costing \$200 or \$300, as the case may be.

Questions were raised relating to the average age of the tenants at the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme, and also about the criteria that were employed in the selection of the tenants. Generally, the persons chosen are between 18 to 45 years of age. We insisted that they have an agricultural background and must have demonstrated their willingness to work in the field on a full-time basis, and past experience in agriculture was taken into account. All the tenants agreed on the desirability of the criteria which I have mentioned.

One farmer is believed to be part-time; he is combining salesmanship with the working of the land down there. But except for one farmer, all the others are full-time on the job.

I am glad that the honourable Member for St. Michael South (Mr. L. E. Sandiford) did allude to some of the other problems which have surfaced at the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme, because I think that this matter, although it should be spoken about with some restraint in its early days, should also be spoken about with candour. I think that it is only proper that the difficulties should have been identified.

I did refer to some of the difficulties in my opening remarks. It is a fact that marketing has been a problem in some cases. It is nothing new. Barbados is a small community, and it is possible for a hundred acres, properly cultivated, of vegetables to completely saturate the domestic market. As long as we have no outlets, there is a limit to how....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: I regret that I have to draw to Your Honour's attention that there is no quorum in the House, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let the bell be rung.

The bell was rung and a quorum formed.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I was making the point, Mr. Chairman, that marketing is a problem in Barbados because of the ease with which the domestic market can be saturated, small as it is. Unless we really have outlets, it is very difficult for all vegetables produced locally to be sold on the domestic markets, and some of the tenants at the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme did experience difficulty in the marketing.

But attempts are being made by the management to ensure, as much as possible, that they produce for particular markets. The hot peppers, for example, were produced by some tenants for the export market in the

United Kingdom last year. Some of them had arrangements with the BAS to take a certain poundage of the produce off them every week, and also with institutions and private individuals.

The management of the project does play a significant role in coordinating and assisting in the arranging in some of these outlets. Some tenants insist on going their own way; sometimes they are successful, sometimes they fail. We do not have any total control over how they market their produce.

We have already alluded to the problems being experienced due to the high cost of water rates. The position is that the consultants at the time, when they assumed that it would have been reasonable to use the potable water system as provided by the Barbados Water Authority, did not remember that the honourable Member for St. Michael South, in his capacity as Minister of Health in the Democratic Labour Party Administration, had made the arrangements with the IADB, as a result of which the water rates would have climbed year after year. The consultants did not remember that. They made the assumption that water would have been, let us say, \$1.50 per thousand gallons, but today, as a result of that agreement, we are paying \$4.77 per thousand gallons.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: I am grateful to the right honourable Prime Minister for reminding me to respond to the question raised by the honourable Member for St. Michael South with respect to the sizes of the lots, whether they are too large or too small. It was really the Prime Minister himself who insisted that the lots had to be reduced. The scheme was conceived by the Democratic Labour Party, and they wanted lots two and three times the size of the existing lots, which range from 10 acres to 23 acres.

But the consultants, although there were two wells on the site, did not at that time think that it would have been necessary and it would have been cheaper to link those wells into the potable water system provided by the Barbados Water Authority. They did not take into account that fact that we would have suffered considerable escalation with respect to water rates, resulting from the agreement signed by the honourable Member for St. Michael South and the IADB.

There is scarcely any further point

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member would give way: In the absence of my colleague for St. Michael South.....

Mr. CHAIRMAN: On what do you rise?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am explaining the speeches on this side, Sir.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Is it proper, Mr. Chairman, to explain another Member's speech?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Minister may continue to wind up.

Mr. L. E. SANDIFORD: I rise on a point of elucidation. We referred to the matter of the irrigation, and in response to that point, the Minister is referring to some agreement that was made, and he is saying that the consultants forgot to take into account that water rates would go up year after year.

I would like to explain that the cost of water on that project is in substantial part due to the high cost of electricity for pumping the water, and we did not make any agreement for increased charges for electricity.

The major charge for the water increase has been due to the charges for electricity which the Water Authority has been called upon to pay. There was also supposed to be a study put out on that whole matter of water charges, and, up to this day, that study has not been made public so that we can see what was determined as a result of that.

We did not make arrangements for electricity charges. That was a Government matter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have explained your point. Please continue to wind up.
4.15 p.m.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honourable Member for St. Michael South has sought to extricate himself since 1975, I think it was, from the embarrassing position he has put the people of this country in. I thought that by now he would have come up with something better, and I will leave his explanation, and indeed it is such, where it is.

I just want to say that we are addressing the problem which has been identified at the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme. We think that the answers which we are coming up with will ensure that the project go forward now with greater success, and I am very much hoping that the next time I repeat to the House on the development at the Spring Hall Land Lease Scheme, I will be able to speak about much greater success than we have thus far.

The question that Head 74 – Ministry of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs – stand part, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Head 83 – Civil Aviation and Tourism Division – was called.

Hon. L. L. SISNETT (St. Michael North East): Mr. Chairman, this is a matter pertaining to the Civil Aviation and Tourism Division, and is indeed quite straightforward and non-controversial. It relates to professional services, and basically is seeking a supplementary of \$5,168 for services to professionals who were on contract to the Government some time back in 1977 when the Civil Aviation and Tourism Division was carrying out certain construction works at the new terminal building at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

As it turned out, there was some disagreement between the company and the then project office with regard to a sum of \$588,529.54 allegedly due to the company. A claim was filed against the Government and the matter was subsequently referred to arbitration in accordance with the provisions of the contract. A Dr. N. J. Liverpool was appointed arbitrator, and, in 1983, he delivered judgment in favour of the Barbados Government.

A number of these claims have already been settled, but the amount required is due now to complete the payment of the amount of money owing to the arbitrator and the technical adviser, Mr. B. S. Ferdinand. We are simply asking the House to approve this supplementary.

The details are that the contract was awarded in 1977, and as a result of some differences between the company and the project office in respect of sums totalling \$588,000 due to the company, a claim was filed on September 25 against the Government of Barbados. These costs were as follows: loss in expense, \$478,910.82; wrongful reductions, \$73,898.32, retention moiety wrongfully withheld, \$35,720; bringing a total of \$588,529.54. The Civil Aviation and Tourism Division is of the view that the outstanding claims should now be met during the current financial year and has therefore recommended that this supplementary provision of \$5,168 be duly awarded.

I beg to move that Head 83 – Civil Aviation and Tourism Division – stand part.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Chairman, I am not going to contest the amount. I just wish to be certain that I am not crazy. I do not understand the note, and the Minister introduced this and used almost the identical language in the note.

Now, Sir, if we sent it to arbitration and the Government won, why are we paying the claim? I really do not understand.

It says here the matter was referred to arbitration, an arbitrator was appointed and judgment was delivered on 28th September in favour of the Government of Barbados. So far, so good. The next paragraph begins:

“A number of claims have already been received and settled.”

I do not understand why, if we won, a number of claims had to be received and settled. I want to know why, if the Government won the arbitration, are we paying claims? The note as it stands does not make sense.

A supplementary of \$5,168 is being asked for to pay the arbitrator and other people. Is that what is being asked for or is it to help settle the claims, because it says:

“However, two claims are still outstanding and the balance of funds in hand is inadequate to effect settlement.”

Either you had enough money to pay the original claims, you took some out to pay the arbitrator and now you need this additional amount to pay the two outstanding claims.....

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is not what the note said. Which paragraph? The honourable Member says the last paragraph says that. It says in my copy:

“A number of claims have already been received and settled. However, two claims are still outstanding and the balance of funds in hand is inadequate to effect settlement. A supplementary of \$5,168 is therefore being requested.”

If you read this note, it would seem as though, as a result of the arbitration, we have to pay two claims that are outstanding. Could the Minister just explain if, in fact, it is that we used some of the money to pay the cost of the arbitration and we are now supplementing that vote in order to pay the claims as originally in the Estimates? That is all we are asking.

Hon. L. L. SISNETT: At the end of the appointment of Dr. Liverpool, the Attorney General's Chambers informed the Division that the hearings would have lasted around seven days at a cost of \$5,000 for the first two days and \$1,000 each day for subsequent hearings. There were 22 hearings in all over the period September to December, 1982. Other costs were expected to include fees for the preparation of the judgment and for the technical advisers which the arbitrator considered necessary.

I am informed that the Attorney General's Chambers advised that the charges were reasonable and they were to be shared by the two parties. A number of claims were received during the 1982-83 financial year and were settled. The Civil Aviation Division included in its Capital Estimates for the current year 1983-84, under Head 83, Subhead 2: Construction, Item 3 - Professional Services, a sum of \$5,000 to meet the anticipated additional costs resulting from the arbitration hearing. Expenditure at December, 1983, amounted to \$2,968, which left a balance of \$2,032. I hope that general detail will explain your query.

The question that Head 83 - Civil Aviation and Tourism Division - stand part, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
4.25 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Resolution was read a first time, a second time and agreed to.

TRAVEL TICKET ACT, 1984

Order No. 6 was called - To move the Second Reading of a Bill to provide for the imposition and collection of a tax on travel tickets.

Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS (St. Thomas): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the original decision to impose a tax on travel tickets was based, primarily, on two considerations. The first was that Seawell International Airport, as it then was, was about to be reconstructed, and the second related to the amount that Barbadians spend generally on travel abroad.

The idea of a travel tax had its germ in the last days of the Democratic Labour Party Government, and was, in fact, introduced in the Budget of 1976. When we came to power, the airport had not been completed, and, for one reason or another, we thought that perhaps there was somewhat of a panic approach to taxation in the previous two years; the five per cent Sales Tax and the Travel Tax, and we therefore decided not to proceed with those two particular impositions.

However, the airport was finally completed. The whole value of the airport is now set at some \$60 million, on a cost basis, constructing the building and the ancillary facilities. The annual cost of providing customs, immigration, security services and maintaining the airport is in the vicinity of \$12 million. We have recently had to

expand fire protection at the airport, as well as provide rather more extensive facilities for transporting staff to and from the airport than was the case formerly.

The second point is on Barbadians' travel abroad. It is not Government's policy to restrict the freedom of movement of persons wishing to travel abroad, on vacation or otherwise. But a quarter of a million Barbadians are spending between \$40 million and \$50 million a year on foreign travel, and this represents almost as great an expenditure on foreign exchange as we are moving towards spending on imported petroleum, because the petroleum import bill has dropped enormously during the last twelve months.

I therefore considered that the time was ripe for a tax on foreign travel, and I introduced it in the Budget earlier last year. Although in the Budget I had said that the tax would apply to tickets in respect of journeys originating in Barbados, after discussions with travel agents and others, it has since been decided that the tax should be applied also to tickets bought or issued in Barbados in respect to any journey commencing anywhere.

We had to widen the coverage so as to prevent people from buying tickets outside Barbados on any large scale; we did not wish to cause a loss of business to travel agents and airline operators. We also had to cover up some loopholes, such as people, being in Barbados and purporting to buy tickets, say, to go from St. Vincent/Barbados/London/Barbados/St. Vincent, which cost no more than the tickets from Barbados.

The tax is collected by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue and we have had very few complaints, after the first few weeks, about the tax. Perhaps because we put an upper limit of \$200 on the tax on a long journey, we have not had the difficulties that we might well have had with really extensive journeys and the desirability of avoiding payment of the tax.

There are some exemptions: persons travelling on Government business, persons exempt from the payment of direct tax under any agreement to which Barbados is party, people who may be connecting to flights in Barbados. I have also reduced the tax to people who go on chartered tours operating out of our airport to any Caribbean island to \$15 flat rate, and for people who go on the farm labour programme, the tax, which I believe the employers have to pay, is \$25.

It seems that the tax will produce what I have estimated, which is some \$2 million in a full year. It will not be possible to project forward from that how much travel Barbadians do, because of the upper limit of \$200, but I think that it is a useful tax, especially at a time when the value of our currency is rising constantly. I think that the public should not complain at having to share a little

of their windfall with the Government. Vacations now cost very much less in Europe, particularly, than they were costing when the pound stood at \$4.00.

I really believe that this is not a tax that is a great burden on the public of Barbados. Fundamentally, it is a tax on purely discretionary expenditure. It exists in a number of other West Indian territories, certainly Guyana, St. Lucia and Antigua. It exists in Canada and many American jurisdictions in the form of sales tax, airline tickets are assessable to sales tax in many parts of the United States, and I believe indeed that VAT is applied to travel purchases in Europe at a much greater rate than 10 per cent.

4.35 p.m.

I would only drop a hint or two, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Barbadians can perhaps expect that a corollary of a currency which is increasing in value is some attempt by the Government to take advantage of the windfall which arises from the cheapening of imports and the cheapening of foreign expenditure. The alternative in most countries, where currencies are rising sharply in value, of course, is devaluation, if you feel that your trade position cannot stand the increase in the value of your currency.

We import so much that we have long ago rejected devaluation as a useful economic remedy in Barbados. Where you import two-thirds of your GDP, you can impose a very great hardship, perhaps not at all commensurate with any trading benefit that you may get by devaluation.

On the other hand, the Government does have to consider that importing and spending money abroad should not be made too easy. I throw this out for honourable Members to consider. I am sure the problems being considered have been looked at by all of those who think about Barbados' international economic position.

I take this opportunity merely to mention that the Government is not looking at devaluation as a solution. We may look at other measures to give ourselves the opportunity of protection from the worst consequences of an over-valued currency, which, left to ourselves, we would never have pitched at today's level.

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

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES (St. Michael South Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my contribution on this matter shall be very brief. Firstly, I want to say that I welcome very much the statement by the honourable Minister of

Finance to the effect that Government's policy will not be influenced by the artificial appreciation in the value of the Barbados currency in respect to other currencies, in the direction of a depreciation of our currency as an instrument of policy.

My own feeling, since the matter has been adverted to by the honourable Prime Minister, is that I believe that the inventory levels of Barbados have constantly declined over the past three years. When you take the contraction of the economy and a reduction in demand for imports together with a reduced inventory within the island, it means that this country has an extraordinary capacity at the moment for what I would term "trade deflections". By "trade deflections", I mean making use of the fact that your currency has appreciated to reduce your import bill by diverting trade to those areas where the currency is much softer.

It is my feeling that the Government has not been doing enough in the area of influencing the import policies of the commercial houses in Bridgetown, so that they would take full advantage of this.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I beg to interrupt the honourable Member. I have said in here already that, as far as I am concerned, Ministers of Government are permitted to stray outside of their portfolio to give an indication of Government's thinking at any time. But that cannot be the basis for a full-fledged debate. The matter before the House is the Travel Tax.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Well, having made that point, I would like to continue on the question of this tax. I, myself, feel that this country is already very significantly over-taxed. Any additional tax will have a tremendous spread, and that burden will be spread right through the entire community.

We talk of Barbadians travelling overseas. The facts are, in my experience, that there is a large number of old age pensioners, for example, who travel overseas. This measure will constitute a burden to them, because it would have to be deducted from any available money they have. Very often, a relative, who is not earning money in Barbados, might send the money, or the ticket, so it becomes a burden to the relative who sends the money and who does not earn money in Barbados, or the old person might save up in order to go to visit relatives. In any case, I am sure that this tax will constitute a particular hardship to this group of people, the retired and the old age pensioners, who travel from time to time.

I wonder if there can be some exemption made, for example, for retired persons who are travelling abroad — say persons over 65 years, — rather than have the tax across the board for everybody. I say this because I am very cognizant of the fact that the Barbadian community

is, in a sense, a very international community. They are not only the Barbadians who live here; we have a very large community in New York, particularly in the Brooklyn area, and in the U.K. These trips abroad are, in fact, attempts to try to keep some cohesiveness in the family situation among those who live here and those who live abroad. I really do not feel that they should have to bear the burden of this kind of taxation. I will make a plea for, certainly, those who are retired and those who are travelling to visit their relatives.

In terms of foreign exchange lost by such travelling, I would say that the main expense incurred to Barbados would be the purchase of the ticket. The truth is that many of these persons arrive at the airport at the other end with very little money, and they are looked after by their families; in fact, they usually come back with money and other things that have been given to them by friends and relatives in the United States. In my judgment, that kind of travelling by Barbadians probably constitutes between 30 per cent to 50 per cent of all travel by Barbadians, the elderly, children and even people in the working stages. It is not like an American who travels to Barbados, pays a hotel bill and probably brings along U.S. \$1 000 or U.S. \$2 000 to spend in a hotel.

4.45 p.m.

How many Barbadians go abroad and stay in hotel accommodation? I would say it is probably less than 5 per cent of all Barbadians who travel abroad who would be making use of large amounts of foreign exchange. Indeed, I would doubt very much whether outside of the business community, or in cases of sickness and so on, you would find many people using up more than the normal allowance that is given. That has been my experience of Barbadian travel overseas.

Then, you have business travel. I believe that business in Barbados is already very heavily taxed, and I would suspect that businessmen would find this to be an additional tax burden on businesses in this country.

So, by and large, I believe that you should not bring in this kind of legislation as, say, it would be introduced in the United States or Canada, whether through a sales tax or some other means. We have to be more discretionary in this kind of tax arrangement and look very critically at the type of persons who travel, the purposes for which they travel, and the extent to which the tax burden should fall among these people.

Another group of people who travel abroad are people who go for medical care. Strange enough, as our health facilities deteriorate in Barbados, more and more people are going abroad for medical care, and I really do not think that you should be slapping a tax on people who have to hussle up a few dollars to seek attention. Their friends have to put together the money, and they probably have

to buy either three or nine seats if they are travelling by stretcher; and then on top of that, to pay a tax on those seats, is placing a tremendous additional burden on a sick person who is travelling abroad. I would think that would be another case where there could be an exemption for Barbadians travelling abroad, for those who are sick and who have to travel for medical care. I believe that we really have to look very critically and see how these burdens fall on the community before we start implementing this kind of tax.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I rise on a point of order: Can the honourable Member tell us approximately how many people he would estimate travel every year for medical care?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will continue, Sir. There is another point I would like to draw to the attention of the right honourable Minister of Finance. There seems to be a tremendous discrepancy between the official exchange rate, which can be obtained at the banks in Barbados, and the exchange rate paid by airlines. I make this point to emphasise that the Minister of Finance might be slightly mistaken in the belief that Barbadians might be benefiting because of any appreciation in our currency in terms of the amount that they pay for airline tickets as a consequence of exchange rates.

It has been drawn to my attention, for example, that some airlines are still charging the rate of \$4.80 for a pound. Again, as far as I know, there are other currencies on which the airlines seem not to be following the global daily bank rates posted in Barbados. I wonder whether this particular area, rates chargeable by airlines when people purchase tickets in Barbados, the exchange rates they actually get at the counter, should not attract some kind of regulations from the Government. As far as I know, the hotels usually stay within a reasonable range of the posted rate at the banks, but this does not seem to me to be a case in respect of any airlines in Barbados.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all let me declare an interest. I happen to be a director of a travel agency and, subsequently, I shall speak against that background here.

The Minister of Finance announced at the imposition of a travel tax during the last Budget. I believe that would have been some time in April, and I believe that that tax became effective as from some date in May last year. Now we have travelled way beyond the four months permitted by the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act, and during that period all the travel agencies and the airlines have been collecting taxes on tickets. This makes it retroactive. They were doing that on the basis of what the Minister of Finance had to say at that time.

Now, Sir, this Bill has effectively widened the scope of coverage of collection of taxes on those tickets. It means that all the travel agencies, I believe, would be in a sense guilty, in that they had not been collecting the taxes on all the travel as provided for by this Bill. This Bill makes the collection of those taxes retroactive from 16th May, 1983.

I would like to know from the Minister of Finance what the position of the Government is going to be, and what the position of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue is going to be, as regards those taxes that were not collected, but were not done so in good faith, because this Bill has widened the scope, and has widened it to the 16th May, 1983, and it is only now that this Bill has been published. As a matter of fact, I do not even believe that the travel agencies are even yet aware of all the taxes that they should be collecting on those tickets.

We sit here from time to time and we pass laws all in good faith, but the fact is that they do not always work out in the way in which we believe they should at the time that we are passing those laws. I will just give an example. This law makes provision for regulations. When we discussed the Travel Services Act in 1982, the Act required that provision should be made for the posting of security by travel agencies. We all sat here and we passed it in good faith, not knowing the kind of burden at the level of security that would be demanded of the travel agencies, to the extent of \$100 000.

There are very few travel agencies, not more probably than 2 per cent, that would ever survive the provision of security in that way. Only those other travel agencies that have other supportive resources, like Dacosta and Musson, which supports Gardiner Austin, or Niblock — I have forgotten who they support — can survive. The other travel agencies cannot survive.

4.55 p.m.

What this Act is going to do, and we are sitting here discussing this in good faith as well, is to take further revenue away from the travel agencies. If you were to impose a tax, as this Bill is going to do, on tickets paid for in Barbados, but for travel beginning outside, it means that that kind of business is going to be lost to the travel agencies in Barbados.

For example, if you travel from the United Kingdom to Barbados and the return ticket is \$1 000, and you were to impose a travel tax of 10 per cent, it means that the cost of that ticket is now \$1 100 instead of \$1 000. The chances are that no one is going to ask for a pre-paid ticket and pay the extra \$100 when they can get it for \$100 less. It means that all the travel agencies in Barbados are going to lose what they call the "PTA Revenue". So, to some extent, the revenue of the travel agencies operating now are going to be affected by this tax.

This is not simply a collection of a tax on behalf of the Government. It is a question now of your having to tell your overseas client that he has got to pay a tax in Barbados, when he can do without that by purchasing the ticket elsewhere. So this, relatively speaking, forms not necessarily an inconsiderable portion of the travel agencies' revenue.

I invite the Government to have a look at this aspect of the tax, because, instead of gaining from this 10 per cent imposition, they might even lose more. A ticket would not now be bought in Barbados, in the first place, Barbados and the agency would still lose that revenue, and the Government will lose taxes because of reduced revenues of the travel agencies. I would urge Government to have another look at this. I do not believe it is too late. I think that part can be reconsidered.

Another thing is that all of the agencies have been required in recent times to undertake more and more responsibilities. You are adding to the cost of their daily operation and at the same time, you are reducing their revenues.

Now here you are making the travel agency the Government's own agent. It is not only now a travel agency, it now becomes an agent for the Government for the collection of taxes. A travel agency is exactly what it is, an agency; it is nothing more than that — it is an agency, not a principal. As such, I think the Government ought to consider the question of giving them a little commission for the collection of taxes on behalf of the Government.

I would invite the Government to have a look at this Bill again.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to comment on a few points raised by the honourable Member who just took his seat (Mr. P. M. Greaves) and the honourable Member who is not in his seat, but who made a contribution, the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes).

To hear those two honourable Members put forward pleas asking Government to reconsider the tax as it relates to the old age pensioners and travel agencies, one would really feel that this is the first time that we are hearing of this Bill.

In 1976, the honourable Member who just spoke was a Member of the then Government. This matter was discussed by his party and his Government, and his Government brought into this Honourable Chamber a Bill, the same Bill, to put a 10 per cent tax on all tickets originating out of Barbados.

I did not hear the voice of the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. He, at that time, was the second most powerful man in Barbados and he did not put in a plea for exemptions. He did not ask the then Minister of Finance, now the Leader of the Opposition, to consider the poor people, the old age pensioners and the burden that it would have imposed on them. Not a word was heard, but today you are hearing him. He has now become *fidei defensor*; he is a defender of the faith, the plight of the old people.

I am beginning to wonder how a man can be transformed overnight. Not a word was said when his Party was introducing this; now it is a burden on the old people! I am beginning to wonder if there are only old people now, but in 1976, when the DLP Government was in power, there were no old people.

I want the honourable Member who talked about the old people not to forget that this Government recognises the contribution of these people, and wherever possible, we are prepared to do everything possible to relieve them. But as far as the travel tax is concerned, we believe that most of the people who travel on vacation are people who can afford it.

The honourable Member for St. Michael South Central said that families overseas send for their relatives who are old age pensioners. Well, if the family overseas have bought the tickets, I do not know what he is worried about it cannot be a burden on the old age pensioners. I really cannot understand the argument that he is trying to put forward.

The position is that we believe that this tax is necessary. We have got a beautiful Airport, the finest of its kind in the Caribbean region. All of us know that it takes vast sums of money to maintain it. We hear the honourable Members over there complaining time and time again about taxes on poor people, but all we are asking in this particular measure is to place a tax on the people who are well-known to be able to afford these pleasures, and the money will go towards helping with the maintenance of the airport.

Before August 1976, the airport was not completed, but the then DLP Government came in here for this tax, when the maintenance bill was not that high. We now know that it cost a considerable amount of money to keep the airport going, and that is why we feel that we should bring this measure at this time, so that we could recoup some of the money in order to defray the expenses incurred in maintaining the airport.
5.05 p.m.

I would want to know, because it is only fair that if honourable Members from that side, or any side, are appealing to the Government to reconsider a particular

measure as far as it relates to taxes and easing the burden off people that we would want to see some statistics. We cannot just ask that these things be done without statistics. This Government is willing to reconsider any matter or consider any reasonable suggestion about anything, but, first of all, we would want to know where the figures are coming from.

I would want to know what percentage of the people, to which the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is referring, are needy and poor, and on whose shoulders this financial burden will fall. I certainly would want to know this, so that I could put forward a proposal, maybe not in respect of taxes, but certainly as Minister responsible for Welfare, and old age pensioners, to the honourable Minister of Finance. But we are not going to just rely on statements like that and ask the Government to act with statistics.

As I said, I support this measure; it is nothing new. That point has got to be made abundantly clear. And this is a measure that will help the country. If we do not tax the people who can afford to pay, we will have to tax those who cannot afford to pay, and this Government feels that it should not tax all and sundry. We have given a lot of tax relief to people, while the Democratic Labour Party Government was slapping on a sales tax on "Harry Right and Harry Wrong"; on people left, right and centre; everybody, old and young. We did not hear any plea of consideration or reconsideration from the other side. They revelled in that, they did not care for the poor people of Barbados, and I do not want them to come in here sounding as though they are holier than thou. They have put on the sacrilegious gown to come in here to plea on behalf of the poor people of this country when they taxed the blind man, the poor child, toothbrush, toothpaste, everything — they did not care — including drugs.

I fully support this measure because I know that it will fall on those persons who are willing to pay. I have not heard the people complaining about any tax. I travel and I come in contact with a lot of people who travel, and I come in contact with travel agents too. I have a lot of friends. They are not complaining, do not mind the honourable Member talking about tax.

I would like to ask the honourable Member who was going to collect the taxes. He is complaining that the travel agents have got to collect the tax. The travel agents are not the only ones in Barbados who were asked to collect taxes, employers are asked to collect taxes.

I do not want the honourable Member to give people or give this Honourable Chamber the impression that the travel agents are now being asked to collect a tax as though it is something new. This is normal. They are responsible for issuing the tickets, they are responsible for seeing that the tax is collected. Why didn't they com-

plain for the betting pools and betting shops when they are mandated to collect the tax from the sale of betting tickets? I really do not understand the wishy-washy argument the honourable Member is putting forward in this Honourable Chamber in respect of this Bill.

I am sure that honourable Members on that side with a clear conscience are ready and willing to support this Bill. I am sure that if the Leader of the Opposition was in here today he would not raise one objection. He would have nodded his head or just sit back in his chair and allow the measure to pass, but you find two honourable Members getting up and making comments and asking this Government to reconsider! Reconsider what?

We have not introduced any measures in here that are not for the good of this country, and we believe that the public understands the situation in which this country finds itself. They understand that this Government is a Government that exercises prudence and care, not only in collection, but also in the spending of the taxpayers' money. The people are satisfied when they have to pay when they see what they are paying for. But the difference between the Democratic Labour Party Government, when it was in power, and this Government is that we show the people what we are doing with their taxes. They are seeing and they are actually sharing in what we are providing for them from their own taxes, and that is the difference between the two Governments.

I felt that I should get up and rebut the statements of those honourable Members who got up and tried to convey the impression that this Government is inconsiderate, unsympathetic and that this is something new and burdensome. I suppose I will hear one or two of them get up in here and try to cry, saying that this is a wicked Government. All of that is the sort of thing we are accustomed to hearing from that side. It is only fair that we get up and let the public know that this measure is not new and that it is aimed at generating revenue so that we can continue to maintain the airport, so that we can continue to make Barbados' airport one of the leading airports in this area, and so that we can attract more tourists to this country.

Mr. A. TRUSS (St. Michael Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of this Bill for the imposition and collection of a tax on travel tickets. *Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose* — the more things change the more they remain the same. I remember during the debate in this Honourable House when the right honourable Member for St. John (Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow) said that it was this Government that built the Deep Water Harbour in 1961 but it was his Government that had to pay for it. We may lay claim to the same thing. It is perhaps the Democratic Labour Party that may lay claim to building Grantley Adams Airport, but it is this Government that has to pay for it. And even before the completion of the airport, as was pointed out by my

colleague who just sat down, a Bill was brought in August 1976, before the election of September 2, for an imposition of a 10 per cent tax.

This Bill deals with a ceiling of \$200, because we recognise that when people travel internationally, the bill can be as high as \$15 000 and \$20 000 if you are travelling around the world, and 10 per cent of that would represent \$1 500 or \$2 000. So we have put a maximum of \$200 on that; on anything beneath that, 10 per cent would apply. I believe that is reasonable.

There is justification, in my view, for this tax. The cost of construction, buildings and ancillary facilities at Grantley Adams Airport is approximately \$60 million. The annual recurrent expenditure to maintain the provisions at the airport, customs, immigration, security services and the maintenance programme itself is in the region of \$12 million. These are facts. The cost has to be borne by someone, and obviously the people who use the airport are the people who should bear a small portion of that cost.

Secondly, as has been pointed out by the Prime Minister, last year Barbadians spent \$43 million on travel, so a small charge can be made to boost the country's revenue in relation to supporting Grantley Adams Airport. When people can spend \$43 million on travel in a year, when there is total chaos internationally, when there is international recession as we hear from the other side, when things are so bad, do you mean to tell me that the same people who travel and spend \$43 million cannot spend an additional amount of money in order to ensure that the airport and the facilities are maintained, especially now that we have proper security, proper immigration facilities and customs?

As has been pointed out by the Prime Minister, this particular type of tax has been introduced before. It is nothing new, but we have covered certain grounds to ensure that people do not in any way get around the law. We have learned from the mistakes of other countries, because there are always anomalies within the law. In Guyana, for example, one way of getting money out of the country was to buy a ticket to travel overseas from Guyana and travel all over the world. This Bill deals basically with two areas to ensure that no one can get around the law: every ticket "purchased or issued in Barbados in respect of a journey commencing anywhere" must pay the tax, secondly, every ticket "purchased or issued in respect of a journey commencing in Barbados" must pay the tax.

5.15 p.m.

In relation to the last point, a person can buy a ticket from Barbados and the ticket can read St. Vincent/ Barbados /Barbados /London /London /Barbados. They

would not have to pay the tax, because the point of origin is St. Vincent. Now they are not going to go to St. Vincent and leave St. Vincent and come back to Barbados, but they would stay in Barbados and book the ticket St. Vincent /Barbados /Barbados /London /London /Barbados, avoid paying the tax, and when they return to Barbados, cash in the unused portion of the ticket, St. Vincent/ Barbados, at their travel agency. We discovered that.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: How?)

Mr. A. TRUSS: This is a Government that when we go into something, we go into it properly. We ensure that when we apply a law, the smart people cannot get away with it while the poor people are subjected to it.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: You can say that again.)

Mr. A. TRUSS: In addition to that, there are special considerations for chartered tours, where only \$15 per head is charged; not 10 per cent or \$200, but \$15. In relation to the farm labourers on the Farm Labour Programme in Canada, there is a special rate of \$25 per person. These points must be made. This is all inside the Bill.

Provisions are also made within the Bill for exemptions, and certain people travelling can be exempted. There are exemptions for:

- (a) persons travelling on Government business;
- (b) persons exempt from the payment of direct tax under any agreement to which Barbados is a party;
- (c) persons connected with flights in Barbados;
- (d) such other persons or classes of persons as the Minister by order specifies"

not to pay the tax.

I will deal with a point made by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes), only because he dealt with it, which relates to retired people and old age pensioners. He made a special plea to this Government on behalf of these categories of people.

My view is that when you are retired or you are old aged, when you reach the age of 65, and you can afford to travel, you cannot be classified as poor. If you are travelling because your family or your relatives from overseas are paying for the ticket for you, they pay the tax. But when you get down to the nitty gritty, I mean the real poor people, the real pensioners that cannot afford to travel, this Government has taken a different attitude entirely, and I dare say that we have a very remarkable record in relation to that.

We are the people, this Government, who introduced special allowances for old age pensioners, and it is important for us to remind those on that side. If an old age pensioner is single, we give them an allowance of \$4 000; and if they are married and the spouse is not working, they have an allowance of \$5 000. We introduced that. We consider the old people in this country, not the ones that can afford to travel, but the ones that really find it very hard to make ends meet when the week comes.

We introduced the Home Help Service and we increased the old age pension, time and time and time again. In the seven years that we have been in power, we have done more for old age pensioners than the Democratic Labour Party did for the fifteen years that they were in power, from 1961–1976. Let that not be forgotten. We introduced free travel on buses for the old aged. We cannot tell them they must travel on an aeroplane free, because then, if they can afford to travel, they are not poor. We are dealing with the poor people. Those who can travel cannot be classified as poor, they fall into a different category. I am not saying that there may not be some special cases in the future, but we will deal with those special cases as they arise.

The qualifying age for pensioners was reduced under our Administration. When the Democratic Labour Party was in power, it was 68 years old. We reduced it to 65, and brought on to our list an additional 2 000 people. The honourable Leader of the House was the Minister responsible at the time.

We have a good track record. How dare the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central get up and make a special plea on travel for old people and give the impression to the Members of this Honourable House, to the press and to the gallery that we on this side have done nothing for old age pensioners and they on that side are begging for the old people of this country. Where was he when the Democratic Labour Party was in power? Where was he when the Democratic Labour Party introduced this very same Bill, on August 9, 1976 calling for a 10 per cent tax.

The spouse of an old age pensioner is now able to receive a pension in his or her own right. When the Democratic Labour Party was in power, if two old people lived in the same house, only one could get a pension. We changed that, and we said that if two old people are living together, irrespective or regardless of which one gets a pension, the other one is entitled to the same pension.

We paid the water bills and the electricity bills of over 2 000 old age pensioners when we came into power, we have and continue to pay them. They were

never paid before 1976. We introduced food stamps, cash grants, clothing, gifts in aid and in kind through the Welfare Department for old age pensioners. We fix their houses, we paint them, we give them new houses.

It is all well and good to get up and make a speech and plead the cause of the old age pensioners in relation to travel, but one must also be realistic enough to recognize that this country, with its limited resources, can only go so far. We would love to see the old age people travel without the tax. In fact, we would love to see them travel free. But let us be realistic. There are old age pensioners who can afford to travel and there are old age pensioners who cannot even afford to eat — they cannot afford to feed themselves, they cannot afford to clothe themselves and they cannot afford to house themselves. Those are the people that we are going to look after, those are the people that we are looking after, those are the people that we list as our priorities as far as the old age pensioners are concerned.

I have diverted a little bit, because this subject of old age pensioners was introduced by the honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. But, to get back to the Bill, I am proud to stand here and to say that it has been my experience that this would not in any way create a hardship on the old people who are travelling. It provides for the collection of a tax. It is very straightforward. The Commissioner of Inland Revenue collects the tax. The tax is expected to yield over \$2 million a year, money which we could use, and that very same money would go towards meeting the needs of real old age pensioners.

There is justification for the tax. It is well covered in the Act, it is well administered in the Act and, as far as I am concerned, the rate of tax is reasonable. There is a ceiling of \$200 on certain travel and then 10 per cent. The tax is expected to realise some \$2 million, which no one can deny is revenue which is required, and the precedent for this has been already established in St. Lucia, Antigua, Guyana, the United States of America, some South American countries and, indeed the measure was thought about by the Democratic Labour Party on August 9, 1976, before we came into power.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Sir, it is only left for me to put the question, but I just would like to briefly clear the air on one point. The Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) did say that you should have had consultations with the persons involved. I think.....

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I did not say that.)
5.25 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: It is out of consultations with travel agents that the Government came up, out of their recommendations, with this Bill to cover the areas which we now have here.

The agents have been collecting taxes and collecting them well, because out of the \$2 million which have been earmarked, some \$1.26 million have already been collected. There is no doubt that Government's estimate of collecting the \$2 million is well on target.

I do not think that there is much more to cover than my colleagues have covered in this particular Bill. This plea about old age pensioners and so on, I know that too well. There is a tendency to play on old age pensioners and so on. We have a good track record in relation to the poor in this country, and I am happy to say that I can blow my trumpet on this occasion that I have been recognized in the country as a champion of the old age pensioners, in Government and out of Government. I can say that for myself; I know that and it has been said repeatedly, and I will probably go to my grave knowing, at least, that I have made that simple contribution.

The other aspect, which I thought the Member for St. Michael South Central (Dr. R. C. Haynes) would have been able to make some contribution, since he is a medical man relates to people who travel overseas for medical care. I believe the percentage is probably negligible.

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

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: On a point of elucidation Sir. It seems to be believed that what I had to say was directed against the Bill, but that is not so. My comments were directed to one aspect of the Bill, because I support the tax, and it is only in respect of where the ticket is purchased in Barbados for a journey elsewhere. That is the only criticism I have of the Bill.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Before you put the question, I would like to answer that. Recommendations came from the travel agents and these people. The honourable Member is only the spokesman for one of them. He is bringing the wrong message or he cannot deliver the message well enough. He cannot deliver a message and that is all.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Please leave the Chair, Sir, and let the House go into Committee on this Bill.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think that is rather discourteous of the House. I have always known that a motion was moved.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, you can rest assured that I would never be discourteous to the Chair. If you want the formality which has been used over the years, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee on this Bill.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill. Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that Clause 2 stand part.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I wonder what is the reason for including the word "pilot". Clause 2 (1) (b) states:

"The pilot or other person in command or control of the transporting aircraft."

What is the reason for including the word "pilot" in the definition of the word "carrier"? It imposes a responsibility on him. Obviously, he would not operate in this area, especially when one looks at it in relation to Clause 5, which states:

"No carrier, travel agent or charterer shall provide or cause to be provided to a person, transportation for a journey from Barbados unless that person is in possession of a travel ticket that specifies...."

What in fact it is doing is to make the pilot check to see if every passenger has paid the tax. If he flies a passenger out of Barbados who has not paid the tax, he is in trouble. I think this is a bit too wide

Aside

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: In Clause 2(b) the word "pilot" is included in the word "carrier" as part of the

stipulation. But further on it imposes upon him a responsibility which he never had before, and which, in fact, is virtually impractical, because if he flies any one at all who has not paid the tax, then he can be fired. He would not know who paid the tax unless he checked the ticket

Aside

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Maybe there is a stipulation where a pilot is also an owner of an aircraft and is giving someone a ride some where.....

Asides

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

Clauses 3 – 25 inclusive were called and passed.
5.35 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. L. SISNETT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: This brings us to the end of Government Business for today. I beg to move that this House do now stand adjourned until February 14, 1984, 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.
5.42 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting of January 31, 1984	354
---	-----

PAPERS

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM	354
---------------------------------	-----

The Annual Report of the Barbados National Standards Institution for the period November 1981 to October 1982.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation, 1980-81.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation 1981-82.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. Craig	354
------------------------	-----

A Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Brighton, Black Rock, St. Michael for road improvement.

A Bill to amend the Land Tax Act.

FIRST READINGS

Hon. L. S. Craig	354
------------------------	-----

A Bill to amend the Land Tax Act.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

SPEECH RE LATE JAMES BARRYMORE SPRINGER	355
--	-----

Mr. Taitt, 355; Mr. L. B. Brathwaite, 355;
Mr. H. deB. Forde, 356; Mr. Deputy Speaker,
357.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

RESOLUTION TO AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 41/1980	357
---	-----

Mr. L. B. Brathwaite, 357, 367; Mr. Forde, 357; Mr. Truss, 359; Dr. Haynes, 360; Mr. Taitt, 359; Mr. Adams, 362; Mr. Franklin, 365, 366, 367; Mr. Craig, 366.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1983-84 No. 21 - \$399 773	369
---	-----

HEAD 74 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS	369
---	-----

Dr. Cheltenham, 369, 376; Mr. Franklin, 370;
Mr. Taitt, 371; Mr. R. E. Brathwaite, 373;
Mr. Sandiford, 375, 378.

HEAD 83 - CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM - \$5 168	379
Mr. Sisnett, 379; Mr. Taitt, 379.	

TRAVEL TICKET ACT, 1984	380
-------------------------------	-----

Mr. Adams, 380; Dr. Haynes, 381; Mr. Craig, 382, 387; Mr. Greaves, 382, 387, 388; Mr. Bradshaw, 383; Mr. Truss, 385.

SUSPENSION	367
------------------	-----

ADJOURNMENT	388
-------------------	-----

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ADAMS, Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. (St. Thomas)
BOLDEN, His Honour C. L. (St. Joseph)
BRADSHAW, Hon. DeL. O. (St. Michael South East)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. L. B. (St. Andrew)
BRATHWAITE, R. E. (St. Lucy)
CRAIG, Hon. L. S. (St. James North)
FORDE, Hon. H. deB. (Christ Church West)
FRANKLIN, W. O. (St. Philip North)
GREAVES, P. M. (St. Michael North)
HAYNES, R. C. (St. Michael South Central)
SANDIFORD, L. E. (St. Michael South)
SISNETT, Hon. L. L. (St. Michael North East)
TAITT, B. M. (St. Michael West)
TRUSS, A. A. (St. Michael Central)