

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1981-86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 26, 1985.

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

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Speaker)
His Honour R. E. Brathwaite, (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. S. Craig, (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House)
Hon. H. B. St. John, Q.C., LL.B., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade, Industry and International Transport)
Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, (Minister of Education)
Hon. L. B. Brathwaite, (Minister of Housing and Lands)
Mr. J. G. Odle, B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. V. L. Johnson, M.A., (Minister of Transport and Works)
Mr. B. M. Taitt, B.A., (Hons.), M.A., LL.B. (Hons.)
Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social Security, Sport and Community Services)
Mr. L. L. Sisnett, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade)
Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Minister of Agriculture, Food & Consumer Affairs)
Mr. W. O. Franklin, A.I.A.S., J.P.
Mr. O. S. Arthur, M.Sc., (Econ.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

Prayers were said by Mr. R. E. Brathwaite.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, February 12, 1985.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, February 12, 1985, be taken as read.

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

Hon. A. TRUSS and Dr. R. C. HAYNES entered the Chamber and took their seats.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce the absence of our Chaplain this morning, which is only on a temporary basis.

MESSAGES

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay —

Message No. 3/1985 informing the Honourable The House of Assembly of the absence from duty for medical reasons of His Excellency the Governor General for the period 4th to 24th March, 1985 and of the appointment of Senator The Hon. Sir Arnott Cato, KCMG, as acting Governor-General for the same period.

PAPERS LAID

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:—

The Public Officers Loan and Travelling Allowances (Amendment) Regulations, 1985.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:—

The Annual Report and Audited Statement of Accounts of the Child Care Board for the period April 1983 to March 1984.

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

The Health Services (Pathological Laboratories) (Amendment) Regulations, 1984.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

Resolution to grant the sum of \$4 709 580 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1984–85, Part I – Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates, 1984–85, No. 37, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Resolution to grant the sum of \$69 849 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1984–85, Part I – Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates, 1984–85, No. 38, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Cave Hill for the purpose of Housing Development and for the construction of the Airport to the West Coast Highway.

A Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

A Bill to consolidate and revise the laws relating to the keeping of places of public entertainment and relating to the imposition of taxes on entertainment to which the public is admitted on payment of money.

A Bill to amend the Income Tax Act.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Questions:—

To ask the Minister of Trade, Industry & International Transport

1. Is the Minister aware that

(a) as a result of or part of quarrying operations at the Arawak Cement Plant, explosions often emanate from the quarries and

(b) no warning of the explosions is given to residents of the areas within range and sound of the explosions?

2. If the answers to (1) are in the affirmative, will the Minister consider the establishment of a warning device such as a siren, so that residents may not be discommoded by the explosions?

To ask the Minister of Transport & Works

1. Is the Minister aware that, in consequence of the construction of the Arawak Cement Plant:

(a) the major southern access road to Maycocks Bay, Saint Lucy has been rendered impassable and

(b) residents of Half Moon Fort, Checker Hall, Fustic Village and other districts of Saint Lucy have no ready access by road to the beach at Maycocks Bay?

2. In keeping with the commitment of Government to the people of Barbados, will the Minister take appropriate and early steps to ensure that Maycocks Bay becomes and remains accessible to residents of Saint Lucy and to all other prospective users?

3. Will the Minister consider the construction of a footpath to ensure easy access to Maycocks Bay as a popular bathing and fishing area?

To ask the Minister of Health

1. Is Government considering closing the Saint Lucy District Hospital?

2. If the answer to the above is in the affirmative, will the Minister state:—

(a) the reasons for the proposed closure,

(b) when it is proposed to close the Hospital and

(c) Government's proposals for alternative accommodation for present and future patients of the hospital?

3. Since patients of the hospital are primarily drawn from the parishes of Saint Lucy, Saint Peter and Saint James, will the Minister ensure that relocation of the patients will be within the Northern parishes, and not beyond, so as to minimize inconvenience to the patients, and to their relatives and friends who may wish to visit them?

4. Will the Minister further state Government's proposals for the employment of workers of the St. Lucy District Hospital in the event of its closure?

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

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

A Bill to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

A Bill to consolidate and revise the laws relating to the keeping of places of public entertainment and relating to the imposition of taxes on entertainment to which the public is admitted on payment of money.

A Bill to amend the Income Tax Act.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF TRADE AND
INDUSTRY RELATING TO TRADE WITH
SOUTH AFRICA

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker:

In response to recent Press reports indicating that goods of South African origin were being imported into Barbados, I wish to inform this Honourable House that an investigation was carried out in connection with the above-mentioned reports.

The statistics provided by the Government Statistical Service on trade with South Africa for 1979-84 are being made available as a supplement to this Statement for your perusal.

It was found that some of the items listed as being of South African origin in fact originated from, and were sent to, a country other than South Africa. These discrepancies were as a result of data entry errors.

For example, the trans-shipment of onions in August 1984 valued at \$1 225 recorded as re-exports to South Africa should have been recorded as re-exports to St. Lucia. Also, the shipment of personal effects in June 1984 valued at \$2 300, recorded as coming from South Africa, should have been recorded as imported from Zimbabwe.

12.20 p.m.

I must point out that trading contacts with South Africa occurred primarily in trans-shipment of goods, for in the years 1979-1984, 99% of these re-exports were personal effects. It should be noted, in this connection, that genuine personal effects are not usually classified by the Customs Department as items of trade. Furthermore, the Attorney General had ruled some time ago that personal effects brought in by passengers and crews of ships or aircrafts, although originating in South Africa,

should not, under the law, be treated as prohibited goods. However, in accordance with statistical methodology, these items would appear in the overall trade figures.

Because of the time which has elapsed over the years 1979-1982, it was impracticable to search the vast quantities of Customs entries and documentation to trace and identify the dates and names of the importers of the few items mentioned. Further, one light unit of South African origin valued at \$52 was among a shipment of motor car vehicle parts imported from the United Kingdom in January 1983, and 27 kgs of aloes of South African origin, classified as vegetable saps and pectic substances, occurred in the statistics and, valued at \$297, were among a shipment of pharmaceutical products imported from the U.K. in 1984. The aloes were subsequently traced and seized from the importer. There is no doubt that a few items of very insignificant value had slipped through the Customs net.

I wish to give the House the assurance that in future there will be closer monitoring of what seems to be an effort by a few individuals to elude the system and to contravene the laws prohibiting trade with South Africa.

The Government is in no way relaxing the laws prohibiting trade with South Africa, and warns that any person contravening these laws is liable to prosecution and conviction under the Importation and Exportation of Goods (Prohibition) Regulations 1971, which occurs in S.I. 1971, No. 129, made under the Miscellaneous Controls Act, Cap. 329.

The Appendix sets out the values, and honourable Members will see that they are of an insignificant amount, and that 99% to 100% of them over the years were personal effects.

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

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Mr. Speaker it is not a pleasure of mine on such occasions to pay tribute to people who have served in this community at several levels. We learnt, with regret, of the death of the late Frederick D. M. Symmonds, a former Member of this august Chamber. I cannot speak of his life as a politician, since I was not in the Chamber during those days, but I can briefly say something about the man who was able to mould a little of me during my childhood years.

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

I first met Mr. Symmonds in the mid 1940s or thereabouts when I was a pupil of the Roebuck Boys

School, and in later years, I came into contact with him both at a business level and at a personal level. He was a very simple man, pure at heart, always willing to lend an ear to someone, always willing to help the poor in whatever way he could. The testimony of this was clearly recognized when, in the St. Michael South Central area of Carrington's Village and in many other areas, he made loans available to the very, very poor people for the purpose of owning their land and, in some cases, assisting them in the building of their homes.

The late "Mac" Symmonds, as he was familiarly known to those who were personally in contact with him and those within his age group, was recognized as a pioneer. I was pleasantly surprised when I heard the eulogy given by Reverend Wiltshire at James Street Methodist Church, when he said that the late Mr. Symmonds had the foresight that, even in those days when he served in this august Chamber, he had advocated the building of a cement plant and the Deep Water Harbour. I do not know how many politicians in those days would have had that foresight. He lived to see those two dreams fulfilled. I believe that would have made him a very happy man.

(Mr. P. M. GREAVES and Mr. N. K. SIMMONS entered the Chamber and took their seats.)

He was a soft-spoken, gentle, kind man, and I, for one, would wish to add to all of the very kind remarks made about the man who we considered pioneer, teacher, banker and friend. To his relatives, his wife and children I would only add, at this time, that we share their moments of sorrow and know that he has gone to serve his Master at a higher level.

As for me, I am grateful for whatever little he has been able to help me with through my childhood years. There is only one area which I would differ from Reverend Wiltshire on, and that is that he gave tuition to two sets of young students at that time. There were the Frank Worrells, the George Lammings, the Colin Rices the Henderson Jordans and the Harold Brewsters. Many of those persons paid a very small sum a month and they would go to his place in Hindsbury Road to lessons from 7.30 in the morning until 9.30, because at that time school started at 10.00 o'clock. Then, in the evenings, he gave free of his time to what was then called the poor element of the school, the boys in his standard, Standard Four. I was among those very poor ones who at that time was not even able to wear a pair of shoes to school. He was kind enough to put at my disposal whatever little I was able to get from that very kind man. I am very grateful and thankful for what little he has done for me.

Once again, I should like to offer my deepest sympathies on behalf of my colleagues. I am quite sure there are others here who would wish to say something on his behalf.

Mr. L. L. SISNETT entered the Chamber and took his seat.

12.40 p.m.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. JOHN): Mr. Speaker, I did not have the advantage which the Honourable Leader of the House had in attending what Rev. Wiltshire described as "the best elementary school in Barbados," which is the school at which the late MacDonald Symmonds taught. I have to disqualify myself in that respect, but I did compensate for it by attending the best elementary university in Barbados, which is the Wesley Hall Boys School, under the late Raul Parkinson. But the point is that in those days we produced a good education system in Barbados, and all the schools, whether St. Giles, Roebuck or the Bay Street Boys School, under Mr. Wilkinson, or the Wesley Hall Boys School, under the late Raul Parkinson and Mr. C. F. Broome, did produce people of calibre.

It is really to the credit of the teachers like Mr. MacDonald Symmonds that their pupils, like the Honourable Leader of the House and Mr. Wiltshire will argue that theirs was the greatest school, while I will argue that mine was the greatest. The point is that it took a lot of great schoolmasters to lead generations of people who will continue to argue probably that their schools were great schools. Some of us in this Chamber are the products of schoolmasters, and I think that, if I may reflect on an assembly I attended yesterday, at which a late schoolmaster was lauded, they came through a very hard mill — being pupil — teachers, and after working for nothing for five years, they went on. They really contributed to the development of this country in the people who passed through their hands. Of such a stamp was MacDonald Symmonds.

I would like to enlighten the honourable Member about the late Marcus Garvey, who was also a pioneer, a pioneer in instilling racial pride in the many races of African origin — there is not one; there are many. MacDonald Symmonds did not take that road; but he was a pioneer in industry, social organization and in the establishment of banks, things which Mr. Marcus Garvey tried to do. Both suffered in the same respect, in that they did not have the back-up. They did not have people of their own generation who appreciated what they were trying to do, and I think that is the contribution which he made. Like Marcus Garvey, MacDonald Symmonds was criticised because the operations frequently got too large for him, and I dare say that if he were living in the same kind of social atmosphere as Marcus Garvey had to suffer under in the United States, he would have been pilloried and sent from these shores for trying to do some of the things, like establishing the bank, to which the honourable Member referred, he tried to do. Therefore, I think that he made a great contribution.

My contact with the late Member of this House was that sometimes he drove my children to school and

I drove his children to school when I first returned to this country, when I lived in Black Rock and he lived in Barbarees Hill. I think that they felt that I was in the place of a godfather, because driving to and from school, we would discuss the problems that they would have at school or the problems they had had during the course of the day, and they always retained that relationship with me. I was also fortunate to know very well all three of the ladies he married. Two of them are still alive; one of them more or less grew up in the same area in which I grew up, and I was rather touched to see that she attended his funeral.

The honourable Member, according to what Rev. Wiltshire said, also would have had to be corrected, and I do not mean on paper, chastised in the same way as the late Raul Parkinson had to chastise me during my days at elementary school. I do not think that either one of us is the worse for it. I certainly am none the worse for the chastisement, and I wish that, today, the children were exposed to the same rigorous discipline that we were exposed to during our early days. And for that we have to thank MacKie Symmonds. We have to thank all those day school-masters, "the lad", who was the headmaster of Wesley Hall Boys' School, the late Mr. Byer and, first and foremost, "Pa T", as they called him, or Mr. Taylor, who was the headmaster of Roebuck Boys' School.

Mr. Symmonds left the teaching profession and went into business and industry. He served on several boards under the former Administration before the Democratic Labour Party took over, and he continued to serve on other boards during our dispensation. Although he had run and gained a seat as a Member of the Barbados Labour Party, I think he was a man for all seasons, and a man for all the people. We on this side acknowledge the contributions which he has made to this country, not so much as a parliamentarian but as a teacher, a pioneer, an industrialist and as a businessman. I join, without any reservation at all, in the encomiums which have been proffered today by the Honourable Leader of the House.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay a humble tribute to a pioneer, humanitarian, and a parliamentarian, a man who has, in my view, lived much ahead of his time. I believe that if the late Frederick MacDonald Symmonds had brought about the things he did in his time today, he would not only be seen as a genius, but he would be an extremely wealthy man. Mr. Symmonds, when nobody saw the problems of the poor and the dispossessed, and the lack of housing conditions among the working-class and the middle and lower income people in this country, set about to purchase land on behalf of his bank, the Co-operative Bank Ltd., to develop those lands and sell them out to landless people, and also to build houses for

people who never thought in those days that they would have been able to buy houses.
12.50 p.m.

Not only did Mr. Symmonds as a teacher perform a great and lasting task which will be remembered by all those who came under his influence, but, as a banker, Mr. Symmonds ventured into a number of areas that were totally unknown to people of colour, and therefore it is to his lasting credit. When I think of Mr. Symmonds, I do not only think in terms of the Marcus Garveys of this world; I like to come closer to home and think in terms of people like Mr. James Tudor, people who have pioneered, people who had that spirit to get out there and do, and to stir the country into action.

Mr. Symmonds saw the need for having a brick factory in Barbados, saw in the constituency of St. Andrew, which I have the honour to represent that there was clay out there to be utilised, and he set about to construct a brick factory. In those days he also set about to have constructed a kiln to make lime, because he recognised that lime was also important to the building industry in this country. Not only that. At a time when it was unheard of, he, like certain pioneers before him — and I refer to a distinguished predecessor of the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John) — decided that the bank should involve itself in owning factories and plantations. One might consider that the venture was probably one that was not the safest to get involved in, but it is best sometimes in the circumstances to make your mistakes and learn by trial and error.

I recall very well that it was the late Mahatma Gandhi who said that he preferred to be ruled badly by himself and the Indian people than by the British Government. Mr. MacDonald Symmonds, in that spirit, felt that it was good for him and the bank, consisting of a group of inarticulate people, headed by himself, who should venture out into business and get involved in plantations and factories and see what the system was all about. As a trendsetter he thought he was doing something in that field to focus the attention of the dispossessed towards the goals of ownership in the areas of plantations and factories. Therefore, in every facet of life that one can think about in this country, Mr. Symmonds got himself totally involved in it.

Mr. Symmonds, on the floor of this House, had come forward with a number of what was seen then as revolutionary proposals, obviously revolutionary to those people who were not as far-seeing as himself. But as I said earlier on, he was living ahead of his time. Those of us who are still around, and who can understand what he set about to do, must have admiration for him even in his passing. I am sure that his memory will always be long-lasting in this society.

I offer my deepest sympathy and that, I believe, of all progressive minded people in this country to the family of the departed gentleman. I sincerely hope that what he lived for, suffered for, and died for will continue to fire the nation and inspire young people to go forward in the pioneering spirit in the interest of their country.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN (Christ Church East Central): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join with all those who have paid tribute to the late Frederick MacDonald Symmonds. I believe that in the last twenty years of his life, particularly the ten years before 1976, I had a closer association businesswise with the late Frederick MacDonald Symmonds than many, for I was the one to whom he turned in the Sixties when, as a result of the failure of the Co-operative Bank, there appeared to be a journalistic crusade to bring to bear the force of the law upon the administration of the bank. I well recall the headline in the *Advocate* newspaper.

I was charged, along with the late Bennett Niles and others, with the preparation of the essential background material in the event of a prosecution being brought. Very early, as I examined the debtor's letter at the Co-operative Bank, I came to the conclusion, along with his other advisers, that it would have been impossible for there to have been a prosecution of MacDonald Symmonds in Barbados; and even if there was a prosecution, it would have been impossible to find a jury, whether a petty jury or a special jury, that would have convicted him, for some 13 000 people had been loaned money by the Co-operative Bank. What is more important, among the list of bad debtors there was an array of nearly 50 per cent or more of certain professionals in Barbados. After we analysed the names, we believed that it would have been fairly difficult to find prosecutors and others who had not been indebted in one way or another.

The Co-operative Bank was liquidated. I was one of those who had to help with the liquidation, and from a perusal of the Minutes of the meeting one was able to glean the kind of man that Frederick MacDonald Symmonds was, and the values he had. He was part, as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said, of the black nationalist movement in the Caribbean. He saw his role as being complimentary to the political role that the political parties were performing in the Caribbean. He felt that it was important not only for there to be political liberation with the gaining of the franchise, but also that black people should know and understand the importance of banks and other financial institutions, and savings, housing and manufacturing and things of that kind.

As has been said, the formation of a Friendly Society, a bank, an insurance company, the investment in manufacturing — all of those was part and parcel of the activities of MacDonald Symmonds. Of course, the financial empire that

he built up failed. Part of the failure of the bank can no doubt be attributable to the fact that they were operating in those days against a banking regime which restricted the rate of interest at which money was lent. When they started it was 6 per cent, and it subsequently went to 8 per cent. But such was the competition for deposits that very often the spread between what they were paying to the depositors in the bank and what they were receiving from their clients as interest for loans was exceedingly thin, and, of course, having invested in relatively permanent investments such as land, whether for house building, for agriculture or for factories, periodically they ran into problems in relation to having borrowed short and lent long.

1.00 p.m.

I think that the portfolio of land holdings is also interesting, and I will illustrate the kind of role that the bank played. Eighty per cent of the housing schemes for housing development between the 1950s and the late 1960s, were created on land which was purchased from the Co-operative Bank. Gazettes in all its phases, Silver Hill, Maxwell Hill, Maxwell Road, Gall Hill — all of those were schemes developed, so he was a real pioneer, a visionary.

The last thing I would like to mention about MacDonald Symmonds is that he was part of a movement in banking which was not only taking place in Barbados, for the Barbados Co-operative Bank was part of a series of co-operative banks that these black visionaries formed throughout the Eastern Caribbean, with the intention at the same time of linking them together in a giant Caribbean banking system. I know of this from first-hand knowledge, because part of the assets of the Barbados Co-operative Bank was mortgaged to the Trinidad Co-operative Bank, the headquarters building there, and I knew the late General Manager of the Kinard Co-operative Bank, Samuel Arthur Walke, very well. As a matter of fact, it was through him and his association with another businessman, namely, the late Mr. Sampson of Stuart and Sampson, who lived at Maxwell Coast, that I first met the late MacDonald Symmonds. They also had another great friend, a gentleman called Mr. Forde, who I believe was a Barbadian and who formed the Co-operative Bank in St. Vincent. The late Mr. Charles of Dominica was also part of the co-operative banks. All these visionaries thought of creating a number of co-operative banks and then linking them together so as to demonstrate to the black people, in particular, that political power was not all.

I am very pleased, that as a result of the public disclosure of the good that the late Frederick MacDonald Symmonds has done, as a result of the careful and particular analysis of the reason for the failure of the Co-operative Bank, no prosecution was ever brought, nor was there ever an inquiry under the Companies Act. The liquidator carried out faithfully the task of collecting

some of the assets that were available and in the last ten years Mackie Symmonds was able to walk Barbados with his head high, and many people who were his bitterest critics in the 1960s, begun to realize that the failure of his bank was as much due to the difficult conditions under which the economy of Barbados operated as to his own personal defects.

I am glad to associate myself with the remarks on his behalf, and I would like to extend to his wife and family my own personal sympathy.

I beg to move that the usual Resolution of sympathy be sent to his relatives upon the passage of this Resolution in this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I, too, would like to join in extending my sympathy and condolences to the family of the late MacDonald Symmonds, and in the manner of passing this Resolution, I now ask honourable Members in this Chamber to stand in silence for one minute.

(Members of the House stood for one minute's silence).

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 16, asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael South is ready.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 23, asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael North, is ready.

The reply to Parliamentary Question No. 7, asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael South, is ready.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: The reply to Parliamentary Question No. 18, asked by the honourable Member for St. James South, is ready.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, the replies to Parliamentary Questions Nos. 24, 25 and 26 asked by the honourable Member for St. John, the Leader of the Opposition, are ready.
1.10 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE POLICY, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED IN THE WHITE PAPER ON HOUSING

Order No. 1 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the policy, objectives and strategies contained in the White Paper on housing.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Speaker, it is seldom that one gets an opportunity to introduce a paper such as this, and I suppose it can be regarded as the first in the history of this country. The only thing that worries me, and I am very unhappy about it – and Members have copies – is the format in which it was set out, because a White Paper or paper of this nature could have been better put out than this one here. You have the paper, which is the preface, you have the tables of contents and you have the introduction of housing in this country. I may be rambling wide as far as this paper is concerned, and in any reply on this matter I will deal with specifics.

On the basis of statistics, the people in Barbados are not badly housed. A look at the figures will reveal that the number of persons in Barbados per living unit would give a range of 3.6 to 3.7. A country that is that well housed in terms of statistics would normally regard itself as comparatively well off, but we do not see it that way, because Barbados has a reasonably large wooden house stock, and a considerable portion of that wooden stock is past the age of 20, some of them 25 and 30 years old.

Any wooden structure that is 20 and 25 years old, and is of a soft wood nature, untreated and not well cared, cannot be much in today's world. Therefore, in looking at any rebuilding programme, we have got not only to take into consideration the present needs of the country, but we have got to look at the present needs in terms of those who are coming on stream for new houses. We have got to look at the age of our present housing stock.

We have come to the conclusion that, according to our present needs for new houses and replacements, what is required in Barbados today is about 1 700 houses per annum. This is based upon our research.

The Royal Commission that came to this country under the late Lord Moyne, as a result of the riots which took place throughout the entire Caribbean, revealed that there was a serious housing problem not only in Barbados but throughout the entire Caribbean. At that time the Vestry of St. Michael, under the late Sir Grantley Adams, moved that they should set up within the Vestry system an arrangement which was known as the Bridgetown Housing Committee. That was as far back as 1936, but it was that foresight which was extremely useful at the time, because basic housing hardly existed in any worthwhile manner during that period of time.

The Moyne Commission reflected very adversely on the very bad state of housing in the country, and the British Government set out to do as much as it could, along with the local resources of the Government, to improve housing conditions in the land. As a result of this you will know that the Bay Estate, the Pine Housing Estate, Grazettes Housing Estate and Bayville all came into being. At the time when they were constructed, they represented a considerable improvement to what existed at the time. In rela-

tion to modern standards and conditions, you would not consider them to be what they should be, but there was a question of living with your resources and cutting the suit according to the cloth. Resources were extremely limited, and Government had to take into account the total financial cake of the country in terms of finance and its ability not only to provide housing for the homeless, but roads, water, health services and all the social infrastructure that is necessary for the development of any enlightened country.

It is against this background that certain surveys were carried out in St. Michael, because they are the areas that are particularly distressed in terms of housing. A look at St. Michael, particularly in the city, would still reveal shocking housing conditions. In Cats Castle, in Passage Road, Passage Gardens and some of the backward areas there, in a number of these places you will still see very overcrowded conditions. As a matter of fact, only recently a gentleman came to see me in connection with a tenantry which exists somewhere in the Passage Gardens area. He said it had something like 40 000 square feet of land, and there were over 30 people living on that land. By any health standards one would know that that is certainly too high a density. At least less than half of that number should be on the land there.

The Government has recently carried out a study of New Orleans, and the recommendations in that study reveal that, in order to carry out a proper and orderly development within the Orleans area, we will have to cut down considerably on the density of housing in the Orleans in order to give it the necessary approach to the type of standards that people are accustomed to. You have to introduce proper drainage, roads, and a number of other developmental things.

1.20 p.m.

For example, there needs to be proper playing facilities within the Bridgetown area. The honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has always referred to what she called, "urban renewal". I will adopt her term as my own, and during the period that I am in Housing, I will seek to ensure that her dreams become true.

(Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Thank you!)

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: To this end, I am looking at the development in the Nelson Street – Pondside area, where we hope that by the construction of seventy-six units – we hope we may be able to make some start this year because; we have already started to acquire the land, and we are at the point where we can move in and carry out works – we may be able to have some high-rise apartments and, at the same time, offer some facilities on the compound, although the land is very limited, in order to make the people there feel contented.

The Pondside area is a depressed area, like New Orleans and Cats Castle. We cannot in this day and age

have the Gentiles, on the one hand, and the Beverly Hills on the other. While it might be difficult to have a classless society – you may be looking at Utopia, if you are thinking in terms of that – my party and I think of the day when there will be comfortable conditions for all Barbadians. It is not my view that a society that offers comfort and happiness to all people is far-fetched. This is desirable.

It is felt, and I am told so biblically, that we will always have the poor with us. I regret that this is the feeling, and I regret that that pronouncement has been made even in righteous quarters. It is also felt that if you took all the wealth of a country and divide it equally among all the inhabitants of the country, in six months' time, you will have the very rich and the poor again, which means that there are always going to be people out there who are waiting to collect what the fools are going to give away, and there are foolish people there who are going to be willing to give it away.

I suppose that, in the context of that argument, one could normally expect that the poor will always be with you – not the sensible poor, the foolish poor – who you may have to contend with all your life. But I believe that if people are given the right climate, one which allows them to do things for themselves, to pull themselves up by their own boot straps and inculcate those positive habits, they will develop the sense of thrift which is necessary for ownership of shelter. To this end, the Government has been de-emphasizing the matter of construction of massive units. Although it considers that it has to do this from time to time, the Government realizes that people do not take special care of properties that are owned by Government. You will find that if a private entrepreneur has a building and it is tenanted, the tenants of that building are largely inclined to the view that those houses should be kept well. You do not find the same attitude of concern for the welfare of Government's properties, which, incidentally, are owned by the very people who occupy them. They do not see it in that light. They see the building as Government's own; that the Government is faceless, a group of nebulous people who sit some place every week to make decisions and govern, not realizing that in a democracy, the few people can only govern with the consent of the greater number of people, and that they help to make those decisions.

It is our view that the time has come when Barbadians should be offered opportunities by way of reasonably-priced land, if you can find reasonably-priced land today, because it is my information that it would take over \$2.00 per square foot to develop land, and by that I mean to put in roads, water, electricity and all the necessary infrastructure. So if a private developer is going to purchase land at fifty cents, or seventy cents per square foot – I prefer to opt for the lower limit of fifty cents per square foot, which, though, is very unlikely – and he expects to

capitalize on his investment, at the end of the day the price cannot be less than \$3.00 or \$3.50 per square foot. But given all the circumstances, the Government is of the view that if lands are made available at a reasonable price, and systems are developed, we will be able to enhance our housing stock.

I want to stress the question of systems, because it is my experience, that of many of the people who I talk to and the people within the Ministry — although I do not take their word as final in relation to my judgment the people who work with me — I listen to all people, particularly those who are in building trend — that unless you are looking at system-built houses, you are always going to come up with very expensive structures. To this end, I have put in train a study to do with starter homes. By that I mean that you will provide the land, give the person, who will eventually take over, certain basic facilities in the starter home — it could be a bathroom and a room which two people can go in — and then they will work towards improvement of that home. You would have the basic foundation where you can continue to develop the area which you started. If you want another bedroom, you put it on; if you want two bedrooms more, you can put them on; if you want more elaborate and spacious accommodation, you are free to go ahead, but you have to tailor your wants to your needs.

In these circumstances, you sometimes have to steer people away from committing suicide. There are some people, as I always say, who have mauby pockets and champagne taste. The view is that even though they are limited with finance, they need to go into an over large house. They search and they search and they search. Government is not here to accommodate people who are over ambitious in terms of ownership of homes. But we want to encourage people to build their homes, because it is our view that people, in building their homes, will give better care and consideration to their property than to Government's or any person else's.

1.30 p.m.

We are at the moment committed to the Sites and Services Programme, and there are a number of areas which are ready or being prepared. Phase II of the West Terrace Project, for example, will shortly be on stream, and will be offering approximately 500 lots. Those lots, in my view, should be looked at from the point of view of involving the private sector and the Government in a type of partnership, in which the Government, because it has the land, and the contractors, because they have the expertise, will be able to come together in a joint venture with the Government and provide houses for the houseless in the community. We have had a very successful experience with Ideal Homes building, I think, 42 houses at Wildey. I believe that this can be stretched further, and that, given Barbadian commonsense, and the attitude of Barbadians to hard work and thrift, and a

desire to see that things are done in a reasonable way, we can have more beneficial joint arrangements, despite the fact that — it is not a good prediction for me to make — we are not doing as well as we did in the past in terms of artisans.

I hope that the Minister of Labour will give very serious consideration to the apprenticeship system, and that wherever possible, finance will be made available for the training of as many people as possible. I know that the Ministry of Labour has done very well with Government's Skills Training Programme. But it would seem to me that with the Government's thrust in housing, and what we expect to accomplish with the Sites and Services Programme, we may well have to introduce — I do not like to use the term "crash programme", it seems to have connotations for people who believe that they can come into a system and get things without working — I would like to see the mobilization of the available training resources in Barbados being put into operation so that the necessary skills that are needed could be acquired. We want to see carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians, those people who go in the development of the industry, coming back.

Today we find that people are skilled in putting up scaffolding and boxing, but they do not know even how to mix mortar, they do not know how to do bell hoods. I recently wanted to have some hoods done at my home — old-fashioned as I am, I like to live in old houses, there seems to be some special character about them — and I had a very hard job to find people who can do them. So, in the whole concept of housing one has to look at training as well, because you cannot have houses unless you have trained personnel to put them together, as you cannot have a suit unless there is a tailor to make it.

The Government set out its desire to improve the overall living conditions of people in this country, as stated in our 1976 manifesto, a document which the Opposition has never failed to use to show us to if, in their view, we are not going right. According to the gospel of the Barbados Labour Party, we set about to let the public understand, especially the landless and the dispossessed in the country, all those in the tenancies throughout Barbados, that we will give them an opportunity for ownership, to get new homes, and a form of security of tenure which they did not have in the past. To this end, the Government was advised that in its bid to introduce legislation to make the plantation tenancies available to the tenants, we would be trespassing upon the rights of the landlord and, therefore, it would call for a constitutional amendment, while many of the plantation owners were quite sympathetic to the plight of the Government and the need to do what we were doing, the law is the law, and the law has to be applied.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that in 1980, when this piece of legislation, this positive and far-reaching piece of legislation, was introduced in this Honourable House, the Opposition voted against it, and voted against it clause by clause, and it called for each and everyone of us — those who were abroad had to come back, because the Opposition did not ease up — we had to pull every stop out to ensure that this revolutionary piece of legislation, which introduced for the very first time in these Caribbean lands that type of social reform, giving the landless land to construct their houses on, was not defeated by the Opposition. I do not charge those of you who were not in here at the time, although maybe if you were here you would have to go along with them — some were here and had to go along with the whip; others who were not here told me they would not have gone with the whip — but it was a shocking indictment in a community such as ours, because the whole objective of this procedure was to give security of tenure to the people on the plantation lands.

1.40 p.m.

There was a time — and this is long ago, during the time of the Labour Location Act, repealed at the instance of the late Sir Grantley Adams — when a tenant or a worker on an estate could not leave and work on another estate. He was not only fired, but he was given notice to move his house. Those were the bad old days, but they were days anyhow. We have graduated now out of that situation, where, from 1980, the tenants have the right of ownership of the land in the plantation tenancies. It is not only the right to own the land on which you live, but the land that you have the right to negotiate or the purchase of that land that you work.

A survey has revealed that with the coming on stream of the lands in the plantations to the tenants, and in the other tenancies throughout the country — and this has nothing to do with the sub-tenants on the plantation lands; it is unfortunate that many of those tenants are disadvantaged, because only the main tenant has the right, according to the Act and according to what we are advised — that over 20 000 tenants will have the opportunity of permanent residence. With the cement plant on stream, and Barbados being of coral formation, with the exception of my constituency, St. Andrew which has a soil structure like part of yours, Mr. Speaker, which is in the Scotland area, the Joes River mud, and with the exception of galvanise and certain foreign inputs, we can construct homes in Barbados mainly with the material from Barbados. It should not cost us more than 25 to 30 per cent, at the most, in terms of foreign exchange if we are building a house of wall.

You only have to go through the country, and through other areas of this island to find out what is taking place. A brief look at St. Peter, the plantation tenancies at Black Bess and further up the hill in Rock

Hall, will show you the type of developments that are taking place. Indian Ground, you go and you will see it! French Village, you go and you will see it!

The type of reform we have introduced in that respect would make certain countries with people less level-headed than ourselves declare a month's holiday and celebrate for ever. But of course, we are a people who are accustomed to these things. We are accustomed to our foreparents doing what is right. Long ago when most countries in the Caribbean opted for the Crown Colony system, it was people like the late Sir Conrad Reeves and a number of those people who fought the Colonial Office and saved the day, rightly or wrongly. We have always been able to carry ourselves, we are a proud people, proud of our heritage, so we do not have to shout and proclaim anything.

We in the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and the Ministry responsible for Social Welfare, have been looking very seriously at the spate of house fires which we have been witnessing in this country. I am concerned, for a number of very good reasons. There could be something wrong about a number of things. I am not here to cast aspersions. What I do know is that there are a number of old people who live in houses and their reflexes are not the very best. Unless they have electrical fittings, they may find it extremely difficult to cope with matters in a home.

It was my experience early last year, while on a visit to Liverpool, to observe a system whereby they have a house for the elderly and the infirm, mainly the aged, people who can help themselves, with a housekeeper and just a few people around to assist. This housekeeper is able to monitor the movements of all the people who live in this home by a computer device. It is so structured that if by 8.30 to 9 o'clock there are no movements on the computer with respect to room A, room B or room C, she will either go or send somebody to that room. The reason behind that is that a person who is not constantly in bed would normally get up between 8.30 and 9 o'clock to either go to the bathroom or to go to the kitchen to make breakfast for themselves. These old people are all encouraged to do this. I feel that the Ministry responsible for Social Welfare and the aged, and the Ministry of Health as well, may well consider a monitoring scheme such as this if we want to save the old people from themselves.

1.50 p.m.

A lot of people have talked about putting the old people back into their homes. This may be quite good, but sometimes you only know that these old people are dead when, after days, you go and knock on the house and you do not get an answer, or you do not see any movements. This happens with the aged, and you need to have a lot of them put together where they can be

company for themselves. I would suggest that an arrangement such as the one I witnessed in England be looked at for the elderly and save them from these fires, which do not only destroy the houses and the furniture but also destroy lives.

Every year the Ministry of Housing and Lands has to put aside a number of houses to replace those burnt. It is unfortunate that this is so, because we are not provided with welfare money to do it, so a strain is put on us in the Ministry of Housing and Lands. We feel that Government may well have to consider this type of arrangement for the elderly.

It is my view — a lot of people might disagree with this view, because they may feel that we are opening the flood gates to the arsonists to make money.

Asides

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I am making a point. You have not even heard the point.

In any society you get sick minds. You get people who will go and murder somebody. You get people who will break and enter and do bad things. You get people who light fires, and would light them just for the love of seeing them. You get people who like money quickly. The point I am trying to make is that Government should, and this recommendation will be put to Government, insist that all houses in Barbados be insured, all uninsured insurable houses.

To me it costs very little to insure a house, if you are doing it on a monthly basis. Fire insurance is not a very heavy cost. Probably a comprehensive insurance maybe a little different, but I would even like to see a comprehensive insurance. I feel that it should not be beyond the resources of the Ministry responsible for Welfare to insure all uninsured, insurable old age pensioners homes, and I feel that that is something which should be considered urgently.

A true calculation would reveal that well over half a million dollars — it goes to about \$800 000 — is lost in house fires yearly. I have had discussions with the Chief Welfare Officer, the Deputy Commissioner of Police and the Chief Fire Officer with respect to the cost of fires to the country, and what could be done to reduce the number of fires, especially fires that involve life — that is what I am particularly concerned with. If we lose \$500 000 to \$800 000 in timber houses and a mixture of timber and wall houses a year, it would cost the Government less than that, in my view, to insure all the houses in Barbados that could be insured, and particularly with emphasis on those people who are unable to meet their commitments.

Government should assume this responsibility for the aged and the infirmed, but insist that all people insure their homes. I do not believe, despite what has been urged on me, that people might decide that there should be a wholesale burning of houses. I do not believe that in a Christian society where people are not normally prone to do anything that is wrong, except for the sick people in your society, that this will ever happen.

Construction costs have been steadily rising over the years, more so because of the cost of labour than the cost of materials, although that has been costly as well. Labour has been going up in a very significant manner, and I was looking at the possibility of home help construction to let people get into the village and see what they can do for themselves. I was persuaded that this might not be the best approach at this point, but I still believe in the concept that people should assist whenever they can in these home help efforts. They take a pride in it, and.....

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now 2.00 p.m. Will the honourable Member be able to complete his speech in the next 10 minutes?

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: No, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. SPEAKER: In that case we will take the suspension. This sitting is now suspended until 2.45 p.m. today.
2.00 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time.

Parliamentary Question No. 7 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael South. He is not now in his place and the Reply may be laid.

Parliamentary Question No. 23 was asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael North. He is not now in his place and the Reply may be laid.

Parliamentary Question No. 16 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael South. He is not in his place and the Reply may be laid.

Parliamentary Question No. 18 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. James South, who is not in his place. The Reply may be laid.

Parliamentary Question No. 24 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. John.

QUESTION RE RELIEF WORK AND ROAD REPAIRS DURING NOVEMBER 1984

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of State responsible for emergency relief — 1. Will the Minister state how many persons were employed on relief work and road repairs during the period 6th November, 1984 to 30th November, 1984 in the parish of Saint Peter? 2. Will the Minister state how many persons are still so employed? 3. Will the Minister state how many:— (a) refrigerators (b) washing machines, (c) stoves, or (d) other appliances were:— (i) purchased (ii) distributed by his organisation during the month of November 1984 in the parish of Saint Peter?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 24, asked by the honourable Member for St. John, is as follows:

1. Fifty-nine persons were employed by the National Assistance Board in relief work and repairs to houses. Between forty and fifty workers of the Ministry of Transport and Works and an unknown number of employees of Rayside Asphalt Limited were employed on road repairs.
2. Seven from the National Assistance Board and five from the regular work force of the Ministry of Transport and Works.
3. Nine refrigerators, no washing machines, forty-two kerosene oil stoves, eleven gas stoves and one electric iron were purchased and distributed to persons who proved to the satisfaction of appropriate officials of the Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board that they had lost these or similar articles as a result of flooding.

Mr. SPEAKER: Parliamentary Question No. 25 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. John.

QUESTION RE HOUSES DAMAGED DURING FLOODS IN ST. PETER

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW (St. John): Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of State responsible for emergency relief — 1. How many houses were damaged in the

parish of Saint Peter as a result of the heavy rainfall and flooding which occurred on the 31st October and 1st November, 1984? 2. How many houses were destroyed at that time? 3. How many houses in Saint Peter have been repaired since the flooding took place? 4. How many houses have been replaced by new ones?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 25, asked by the honourable Member for St. John, is as follows:

"1. 38

2. 14

3. 19

4. 7"

Mr. SPEAKER: Parliamentary Question No. 26 stands in the name of the same honourable Member.

QUESTION RE AMOUNT SPENT IN REHABILITATION OF ROADS IN ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Mr. Speaker, the question reads as follows:

To ask the Minister responsible for emergency relief — 1. How much has been spent on rehabilitation of roads in the parish of Saint Peter since 1st November, 1984? 2. How many persons have been engaged on road work and rehabilitation since the flooding? 3. Is the Minister aware that the highway at the bottom of Coach Hill in the parish of Saint John was broken during the heavy rains in October and November, 1984? Is the Minister aware that this road has been closed to all vehicular traffic ever since? 5. Will the Minister state when the highway will be reinstated?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 26 is as follows:

"1. \$283 141.50.

2. 25 to 30 on road work and 59 on building and resiting of houses.

3. & 4. Yes, the Minister is aware of the damage and that the road has been closed.

5. Work is expected to be commenced during the latter half of February and will take approximately three to four months."

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: As a supplementary, will the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, if he knows, state

when work will be done on the road leading to Martins Bay from the Church Hill which was also broken away at the same time?

Mr. SPEAKER: Would the honourable Member repeat the supplementary?

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: The road which was broken at the same time, the Church Hill road leading to Martins Bay, is he aware that this road is also broken and could he say when it will be repaired?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I thank the honourable Member for bringing it to my attention. I was not aware of that. It was not the subject-matter of the question. I will certainly draw it to the attention of the Ministry of Transport that, in addition to Coach Hill, there is another area in the honourable Member's constituency that needs attention, namely, the road leading from Martins Bay.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Is the Minister aware that there is a house in close proximity to the first road, which is the subject matter of the question, which is in danger of being physically removed if there is any further heavy rainfall, a substantial building?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Again I will give the honourable Member the assurance that that question which has just been asked will also be brought to the attention of the Minister, but I remind the honourable Member of the answer to this question, that it is proposed that work will be commenced during the latter half of February and will take approximately three to four months. I am fairly sure that when that work commences — this is the latter half of February, so if it has not already started, it should soon be — they will take into consideration the need to get ahead with this area as fast as possible.

Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW: Is the Minister aware that they dropped stones on Monday and nothing has happened since?

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the relevant Ministry has commenced work in its usual fashion and style.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no other supplementaries, that brings us to the end of Question Time.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS RESUMED

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no Private Members' Business, so we revert to Government Business and Orders of the day.

When the suspension was taken, the honourable Member for St. Andrew, Minister of Housing, was speaking. He may now continue his speech.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the White Paper on housing, the Government has sought to put its policy on housing in the correct perspective. I spent a reasonable length of time this morning outlining a number of things affecting Government's policy with respect to housing. But there are still a number of things which I need to develop as we go on, and which I will do in a very short period of time.

In 1983, there were 558 housing starts, as notified to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and 1 014 completions. The reason for that differential is that some of these houses would have started before 1983; maybe the year or two before. The Barbadian attitude is that as you work and progress, you continue to throw some finance into building projects. Those of us who have constituencies that are not as affluent as the honourable Members' on the other side, we have to be very careful to make sure that they do not lead the kiddy out of the bag. They are very thrifty in their efforts to improve their housing conditions.

2.55 p.m.

The housing starts in 1984 were 622, and the completions 1 002.

I want to bring Members up-to date on some information which is available to us. The Central Bank of Barbados feeds in the Ministry of Housing and Lands, on a quarterly basis, information about loans for housing. What I will read will give you an idea of the loans that were made by commercial banks and trust companies for mortgages. This has nothing to do with other improvement loans, which do not have the same significance as mortgage loans. Mortgage loans are invariably long term, and at a later stage I will advert to the question of secondary mortgage loan money. That has not finally been crystallized, but the Government is looking at the area of secondary mortgage loans.

Traditionally in Barbados, until a few years ago, all the mortgage money lent in Barbados came from individuals who were plantation owners or managers, or people with sums of money, who lent to others for three, four or five years. Lawyers would know that, because that is what a number of law firms depended on in the past. But as we progressed, lenders realized that short term loans could not answer those people's problems, especially with the limited finance in those days. You had to put down about half of the money, but the most of the people who now take loans do so with 10 per cent down. In the

days when I bought a home at Pilgrim Place, I had to look for 50 per cent of the value in order to get a loan. That was pretty reasonable then; today, it is not so.

People are not now in a position to lend long term loans, except for the trust companies. The Central Bank, in association with a number of people whom I have spoken to from time to time, and the insurance companies in Barbados, as well are looking at this. It is all co-ordinated by the Central Bank of Barbados. The honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin and, I believe, the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) has some appreciation of this, since they are two people who have had to deal with matters of this kind from time to time, and they have maintained an intelligent interest in these matters.

The Central Bank of Barbados is looking at putting within a pool of money a number of short term loans for, say a five year period, because a lot of people of a certain age might not want to have a long term mortgage; they figure that at the end of the twenty year mortgage, they might have gone to the Great Beyond. The bank is also trying to create a situation in which the long term borrowing for, say, twenty-five years would not be affected by the short term loan. As a matter of fact, the mortgagee would not be aware as to the recall of the short term loan. The loan would go into the pool and be withdrawn by agreement in, say, five years, but when it is withdrawn, other monies come into the pool in order to supplement what has been taken out at the particular point by the short term borrower. Today, twenty years is a short term loan on a mortgage as compared to what it was in the past, and this is what people are looking at. This secondary mortgage loan will answer that type of arrangement. I want to congratulate the personnel of the Central Bank for having embarked upon a programme of this nature, which is very important to the financial needs of this country and the drive to assist people in getting loans for acquiring properties.

In the first quarter of 1983, the commercial banks and the trust companies disbursed 1 769 loans for mortgages. I am not quite sure if the figures I give would agree with the figures Members might read from the Central Bank figures, but these figures are sent to the Ministry; probably they might be updated or revised as they go on. For June, the amount was 1 765; September, 1 786; and December 1, 1 830. One wonders why the amount would have gone up in December. My view probably is that is the time.....

(Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: That is cumulative.)

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Yes. I do not know why it is done that way, but I suppose a lot of things are done during that period.

3.05 p.m.

In 1984, in March — 1 809; in June, 1 854; September, 1 891 and December, 2 253. You will note that there is a significant increase in September. I believe that it is because at that time people like to do their spring cleaning, to ensure they look spick-and-span for Christmas.

With respect to the Plantation Tenantry Freehold Purchase Scheme, I am sure that Members would like to know that progress is being made. The plots delivered to the Ministry up to now are 3 398. We believe that there could have been more progress, but there have been a number of imponderables, to which I do not want to advert at this particular time. But I want to assure the Opposition and the spokesmen on Housing that if they want to know, I might not be unwilling to discuss matters with them on a private basis. I take it that at all times the affairs of the House should be the affairs of all people, and that there comes a time when the Government must take the Opposition into its confidence. So long as the Opposition is willing at all times to be responsible in its attitudes to matters they are privy to, Government should not be reluctant to share knowledge with them. If you believe in the principle of democracy and the duties of the Opposition in a democratic system, you have to observe the niceties of those principles, and be willing to give information, even on a private basis, to the Opposition.

On page 19, and forgive me if I do some moving around, you will find comments on the General Workers Fund and the role and function of the National Housing Corporation. Shortly after I assumed the post of Minister of Housing and Lands, I was sufficiently courageous to come here and say what I thought of the National Housing Corporation. I said a lot of things on that occasion, things which were taken, to some extent, out of context, even in an interview in New York, and portrayed me in the wrong light. I am accustomed to being portrayed in any light but as the goodly book says, "If you do good and you suffer for it, that is acceptable to Christ." I take that as my own motto. If I see that a cancer exists in the body politic, or in any institution under my administration, I will have the courage of my conviction to say so on the floor of the House or anywhere. But there is one thing that I defy anybody to say, and I do not care who you are, that I am dishonest in my deeds. I come straight and shoot it as it is. It may not be what you like, but I will shoot it nonetheless.

National Housing has always been a sore thumb. It has been so because it was allowed to be so. It operated like a law under itself. I thought the time had come when it should be held by the scruff of its neck and dealt with. My colleagues were very busy with policies and the more elevated things about government. Your humble servant was concerned with the nitty-gritty and the down-to-earth aspect of things. I am not a diplomat, and I do not look

for diplomatic problems. I look for those problems that are particularly related to Ministers of Transport and Works, Ministers of Agriculture and Ministers of Housing and Lands — and this has nothing to do with the past Ministers — so I undertook a serious examination of that Ministry.

Very quickly on coming in, I realized that the Ministry had a very serious defect in its management structure. The honourable Members opposite did not agree with me; at least the spokesman on Housing said so. They thought that I was on a blood-letting exercise. But what is wrong in being on a blood-letting exercise? If you do it in the interest of the country and the taxpayers, what is wrong with it? Does the executioner at Glendairy Prison, when he has a task to do, concern himself with what is happening, or does he know that he has a job to do? When I have a job to do, I do it, and there was no problem about that. I had no pangs of conscience about the decisions which I took. I took them in the interest of the people of this country. Charged as I was with the serious responsibility, bearing in mind my commitment to the people of St. Andrew — poor as they are — I did not think they were able to lose their money, so I looked at a number of things.

Notwithstanding the strictures which I made against the National Housing Corporation, notwithstanding the very serious decisions which I took at the time — dismissing the Board and sending people on special leave, and insisting that they remain permanently on special leave — I was aware of what was happening — I am now pleased to say that National Housing has redeemed itself and is today one of the most efficient corporations operating in the Government of Barbados. I want to compliment the Chairman and his Board, and the Technical and Administrative sections.

Asides.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I praise them because I think they deserve the praise. When I do not think you deserve the praise, I will say what I have to say about you. The public expect that of me, and I will have no hesitation in letting the public know how I feel about any corporation under my administration.

Several years ago I committed myself to public life, and at a very young age then I got involved in politics — I made up my mind there and then that I would be fearless in my approach at all times, and uphold the dignity of any office which I hold on an elected basis. It is for that reason that I have always felt that the glamour of elections is always better than the selection for other office.

3.15 p.m.

I am happy to report that in November 1984 there was a 92 per cent collection of rent in National Housing Corporation, and in January this year 100 per cent collection. That was not done by the waving of a magic wand, that was done by firm and consistent tackling of the problems. It called for a single-minded approach to the task that laid ahead. It was unpopular, I know, but again if a task has to be done, it has to be done.

I have said on numerous occasions that we are all taxpayers. We sometimes operate in here in a carnivorous form. We behave like centipedes which, when you touch their young, eat the young; but whenever the day of reckoning comes, the public sees us all as one. You are in today and out tomorrow. We have got to be very careful, lest in our actions we cause people to believe that we are not even taxpayers. But we are heavy taxpayers in this land; not only heavy taxpayers, heavy givers of money — all of us.

If a person lives next door to a millionaire and he runs into trouble a morning, he never goes to the millionaire for assistance. He goes to his M.P., who is invariably poorer than Job's turkey, because Job's turkey had some feathers and he might have nothing. But there it is, that is how it is. Whenever there are problems, we too have got to carry the burden, and to a greater extent than a lot of people, but we do not ever seem to realise this.

National Housing has been doing very well, and I believe that given the goodwill, given the understanding of the public and what National Housing is designed to do, in the fullness of time it will be able to meet a number of obligations and to serve the public in every way that is possible.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt), when I made a statement in here with respect to one of his constituents, was very upset and up-tight about what I said. But if he researches well, he will discover that I am not what he thinks in terms of employment practices. He will realise that I put the best people into the job and insist that they go there, and not put square pegs in round holes.

The public was to a large extent ill-served by the bad behaviour and the short conduct of the employees in National Housing, who operated as though they owned National Housing and not put there to serve the interests of the people who came to be served by National Housing. The public was treated badly and felt extremely upset about it, and it became my painful duty to relieve the broad public of that unpleasant behaviour by hiding the people wherever I could from the public. When I went there I saw these situations and they had to be dealt with, you understand. It is as simple as that.

Take the General Workers' Fund, on page 19, which I mentioned just now. That fund is something like \$1.5 million, and there is an outstanding amount which is owed to Government by people. In the past, that was a political fund — until we came in in 1976. Let me be very frank about it. I particularly refer to the people on the Board, I am not dealing exactly with Members of this House. The Board operated as they liked.

I will tell you another thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Ministers have got to be careful while running Boards not to allow people from outside, no matter how highly placed, to constantly meddle with what is going on. Authority must break down. There are a lot of Ministers who like to call and say they want something done — and not only Ministers, a lot of faceless men who believe they are powerful. I derive my power from St. Andrew, and I will go back to them in the fullness of time. I have no fear about that. There are some people who cannot go near a ballot box. I am not afraid of ballot boxes, I am accustomed to them. I am accustomed to losing in them, and I can go back to them. There is no problem about that with me. They must not, because it is a housing Ministry, say that they can call up people and get this done and the next thing done. I will not allow it. It is not going to work. I have given instructions, not a directive, that all such requests be ignored and that they must operate on certain basic principles. Housing must be treated as water, roads, electricity, transport and all other things. The resources of this country concern the whole country, and they have to be looked at in that light.

A lot of money is owed to the General Workers' Fund. A lot of people had loans, and advances, were made to them. I feel that the time has come when that loan system should be looked at again. There are many people who cannot meet the criteria of banks in Bridgetown. Banks can be very hard and brutal, and I do not exclude the Barbados National Bank from that category. To me, they can be more heartless than the others. They want all types of feasibility studies. They want to know how much you owe the butcher for a leg of pork or beef, or in your case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, fish. They impose all sorts of demands upon you which you cannot meet.
3.25 p.m.

Any Mr. Lord Haw-Haw can come in from abroad with a special accent, acquire money from the bank and walk out and do not pay. Barbadians can get nothing, or very little. That system must stop. They must be a means whereby people who cannot meet that wicked and vicious criteria can get loans, and the Government has a responsibility to the poor and defenseless, the inarticulate majority, to make some form of provision for them, and I will work to ensure that this is done. It might not be an easy task. It might be a lonely road to walk, but Jesus walked that road, and in the end he succeeded, and I will walk that road without any fear.

In the past five years, there were several thousand applications for housing in the National Housing Corporation's units. Other people might have applied long ago, but I do not believe that they are still in the market for National Housing houses. We have within that time been able to satisfy 1 387. That is a small number compared with the applications, but there are a number of people who just go through the motions of applying, but they are not always serious applicants. They never satisfy the criteria for a house, but they go through the motions.

The National Housing Corporation has 3 957 units. The feeling abroad is that you can apply for a unit today and get it tomorrow. It is impossible so to do. People must not believe that houses are just there to be given to somebody. There are times when there are harsher cases, for instance, fire victims, people who are evicted, women who have to leave their homes because of problems with their spouses, or even men who have to leave their homes. Men sometimes have to run out. The women are very powerful these days. We have introduced a piece of legislation that has made them all powerful. Whatever the instance, we have to make some provision for harsher cases.

During the flooding in St. Peter, we had to come to the rescue. It was not easy to do, but we had to do it. That was an act of God, but Government must always, in the public's view, be ready to meet those conditions. I am looking at what Government can do in order to provide housing for people who suffer during such acts of God, if you want to put it that way. God is a good God, and I do not think that he wants anybody to suffer, although he creates these problems. Put it however you like, you have to make provisions for the acts of God.

I know there are certain honourable Members in this House who have provisions for the people within their constituency. I am not as affluent as that and therefore cannot make those provisions. I hope the time will come when I might be able to do so, but until that time comes, we will have to look for a long time at Government's provisions. I feel that there should be some community area somewhere, not necessarily looked after by Government but probably by some service club or group, where buildings can be let from time to time on a short term basis, with a proviso in the arrangement that with one day's notice, if a disaster takes place, you can put people into those units. Those are some of the things that we definitely must look at, because the pressure on National Housing is so great that National Housing by itself cannot carry the entire load.

It is because of that that in this White Paper, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will see that provision is made for involving the private sector into the provision of housing for rental. No person in housing in the private sector can

subsidise rents to the tune of 42 per cent or any per cent for that matter. It has to be strictly commercial and, to me, that would be in the Government's best interest, because Government would have no repairs to do, no subsidies to give. But you need to look at certain incentives for people in the private sector who may want to look at long term building for rental of units, if not necessarily to the lowest socio-economic group, at least to the lower income groups. It is important that this be done, and the Ministry of Housing will embark very shortly on the submission to Cabinet of a number of proposals which will give effect to a number of incentives which will encourage the private sector to involve itself in housing for rentals.

I come to another point. The National Housing Corporation must not be considered for all times as a permanent provider of homes for people. There must be a time limit given to people who come in to National Housing. I propose that the time should be about five years, an agreement being signed to that effect, as there is a present agreement now, and that agreement, bearing in mind the circumstances of the tenant, can be further extended. But people should graduate themselves out of the National Housing Corporation and give opportunities to people who are now starting life. The Ministry of Welfare might well have to consider having blocks for permanent dwellers. It is not within the portfolio of the Ministry of Housing and Lands to provide for welfare cases, and therefore I am looking at the question of graduation.

3.35 p.m.

We have just completed a number of flats at Kensington Lodge. Many people have looked at them with envy and admiration, but these flats have nearly cost the Government over \$90 000 each. I agree that working class people are entitled to be properly housed and looked after, but one has to bear in mind that the population, in contributing towards the subsidisation of those houses, has got to pay insurance and do repairs. It is only fair then that they should not be unduly sacrificed on the altar in making provision for some. While we cannot throw the poor to the wolves and allow the jungle system of the law of the fittest to survive and exist, we still must consider those people out there who have continued to carry the country and its burden at every turn. We have to ask ourselves, can they tighten their belts any more? Can they carry any more burden? If you ask yourself these questions and you consider that they cannot, you must then look at the areas where you will ease them of these problems and their burdens.

I will therefore be proposing, in a very short time, that certain rental units of National Housing be removed entirely from subsidisation, especially to those people whose means can afford them to pay an economic rent. If they are in houses and they do not want to come out, they will have to pay an economic rent. Those people who cannot afford to pay an economic

rent will continue to enjoy a subsidised rent. The income of the household will be taken into account in calculating who will pay. We are looking at all this to ensure that, with the limited national cake and the opportunities that would be given to people to own their own homes, nobody can say that they are disadvantaged in this direction.

Government is looking at long term mortgages and at the question of insurance to insure against the evil day. Government has already in place unemployment benefits, which though not long lasting and forever, will help cushion the evil day. A country that conditions itself to a welfare attitude will never progress. Japan has shown it, West Germany and a number of countries throughout the world.

I have explained some aspects of Government housing policy, what we hope to do and what we hope to achieve. Our programme might not on the surface appear to be dazzling. A lot of very solid work has been done from 1976 onwards in a very quiet way, without any fuss or fanfare. All of this has led to the presentation, and the first presentation, of a White Paper on housing.

I want to thank all those who involved themselves in the preparation of this White Paper and gave assistance in whatever way possible. We have worked very hard together — the Chief Housing Planner and his department, the two Permanent Secretaries who were much involved, and my predecessors in office — to put everything together. I lay no claims to anything. I have only come at a time when I can cross the "Ts" and dot the "Is", but in doing so, I have tried my best to bring some understanding, if not hope, to the situation of housing in this country.

I end on the note on which I started. On the basis of the statistics, Barbados stands out as a beacon light in terms of housing. All Governments right through the ages, before party Government and since party Government, have made their contribution towards the housing development in this country, and no Government can lay claim to all that it has done. It would be foolish and unwise to make such a statement. I have tried to help in any tightening up process which I could have assisted in.

We can still be proud of, at the time a single crop economy, sugar cane, little or no tourism, little or no manufacturing industries, no oil at all and nothing to offer beyond a healthy and stable climate, a firm and settled political institution, a good judiciary rooted in the law and christian in background. With those few vital qualities so vital in content, we have well to keep this small country together. And although housing continues to be, to some extent, a problem, we in Barbados have weathered the storm, and continue to be a trendsetter in the Caribbean Sea.

3.45 p.m.

Applause

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to second the Resolution, and I reserve my right to speak.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all I want to thank the honourable Minister of Housing for some insight during his discussion on the White Paper, which I propose to deal with at length.

The Resolution before this Honourable House reads as follows:

"BE IT RESOLVED that Parliament take note of the White Paper on Housing which was laid in the House of Assembly on the 8th day of January, 1985, and express its support for Government's Housing Programme.

2. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Assembly approves the policy objectives and strategies contained in the White Paper.
3. Approved by the House of Assembly....."

This is the first Resolution brought by this present Administration that has some semblance of modesty. It is the only Resolution that has not ended with, "And praises Government for the work it has done."

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: Do you want an amendment to do that?)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I do not want to do that.

The tone of the debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, well supports the soberness of the Resolution, since this present Administration cannot be happy with their achievement in housing since 1976.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the honourable Member please give way for one minute, please.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. SPEAKER took the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member may now continue.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the Resolution before this House is the first one couched in modesty brought by this present Administration. One of the points raised by the honourable Minister of Housing, about which he was very incensed and took turn in the Democratic Labour Party's Administration — and it was repeated continually in Parliament that the

Democratic Labour Party voted against the most novel, the biggest piece of social legislation ever brought before this House — when they voted against the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, 1980.

(*ASIDE: Perfectly true!*)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I think we need to explain this, because it would get rid of the myth. It was done because there was a technicality in amending the Constitution, and I should now like to read from the appropriate debate, of the Second Session, 1976–81. The debate started at page 4281 and the vote was taken at page 4306, and the vote on that particular one was:

"Ayes: Rt. Hon. J. M. G. M. ADAMS; Hon. H. B. St. JOHN; Hon. L. S. CRAIG; Hon. H. deB. FORDE; Hon. C. L. BOLDEN; Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE; Hon. L. R. TULL; Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER; Mr. ALLEYNE; Dr. CHELTENHAM; Mr. SISNETT; Mr. JOHNSON; Mr. WARD; Mr. SIMMONS; Mr. BRADSHAW; Mr. ODLE; Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW and Mr. GREAVES — 18.

Noes: Nil"

I hope that this will, once and for all, lay to rest that which is continually being put in this Parliament, that the Democratic Labour Party voted against the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

This White Paper is written against the background of some very interesting statistics, and I need to highlight a few of these statistics to give an appreciation of the background for this White Paper. In the 1970 Census, we are told that there were 58 596 households. In the 1980 Census, there were 67 138 households, of which some 23 600 are what we call "loose rock" or "lose foundations"; so those would be timber houses, 15 000 being in tenancies. There are some 31 500 houses more than twenty years old, and my certain knowledge is that those houses would have to be renewed, since with the present soft wood, even the wood that is treated, no person gives you more than fifteen years guarantee on treated wood, and we all know that with the termite situation in Barbados, the only way that a wooden house can exist with that is if you continue renewing and rebuilding that house.

There are some 35 000 houses still with pit latrines. Of these, 19 000 are in tenancies. The last report available to me shows that in the 1982–83 year, there were 1 206 applications for rental units, of which 259 were accommodated. I would like to see the spread of those rental units and those applications, because it tells a story. In the parish of St. Michael, between 1982 and 1983, there were 775 applications; accommodated, 234 or 30 per cent; Christ Church, 190; accommodated 20, 10.5 per cent; St. Philip, 29; accommodated none; 0 per cent; St. John 17; accommodated none; 0 per cent; St. James, 49; accommodated none; 0 per cent; St. Thomas 25.

accommodated, none; 0 per cent; St. George, 53; accommodated, 4; 7.15 per cent; St. Andrew, 17; accommodated 1; 5.8 per cent; all the others, no accommodation.

Mr. SPEAKER: For the benefit of the Record, would the honourable Member inform the House of the document from which he is reading.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, it is the Annual Report of the National Housing Corporation for the Financial Year 1982-83, and I am reading on page 15 of the Report.
3.55 p.m.

There were 585 applications for house spots. Twenty-eight people were accommodated as follows: 13 in St. Michael; 11 in Christ Church; two in St. James; one in St. Thomas and one in St. Philip. All the other persons who applied for house spots could not be accommodated.

Under the General Workers Fund in 1982-83, 186 people applied for loans, but there were no loans granted under the General Workers Fund. The honourable Member made mention of his intentions in respect of this fund, and I hope that during my debate to join with him and encourage him to fight relentlessly for the administration of that fund, and to make sure that it is administered more efficiently, because we are agreed on some of the problems.

We hear of situation where, according to the 1983 report, some 50 per cent of the families in Barbados have an income of less than \$16 000 a year. The statement also says, that about 26 800 people can afford houses and that 23 498 households cannot buy any type of structure or build on conventional lands. Those are harsh statistics, and it is against this background that we have to examine the performance of the present Administration.

The present Administration's policy can be found in the document which they took to the people of Barbados when they were offering themselves as an alternative Government of the day. Their doctrine was so well received that they were voted as the Government of the day. I refer, and I believe that it is already a document of the House, to the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto for the General Election, 1976, and at page 10 under the heading of "Housing", it says:

"The Barbados Labour Party believes that every Barbadian has the right to decent housing at reasonable cost. The Party will therefore, on being returned to power, embark on a programme for the building of at least 800 houses per year."

This has subsequently been explained that what they meant was 800 houses collectively, and not that the Barbados Labour Party, through their housing agency,

would build 800 houses. I would say that if the Barbados Labour Party at that time had only the aim and objective of a total 800 houses in private and Government enterprise, they would be found shooting far short of what has been achieved before, and even after, and certainly not in keeping with the projection of the needs of 1700 houses per year. At a later date, I will illustrate to you that the number of houses that were completed far exceed 800, and it is my contention, and I am certain that the people of Barbados then interpreted this to be so, that the Barbados Labour Party Administration, as their contribution to the housing stock, would build 800 houses, and with what the other people in private enterprise did, that would allow us to have the 1700 houses per year. That was the feeling in 1976.

In 1981, on page 22, they went on to say:

More than any previous administration in this country, the BLP Government of 1976-81 set out to house a nation by employing policies geared to stimulate both private sector and public sector housing. The National Housing Corporation first had to be cleaned up and rid of any scandal and private sector bodies had to be encouraged by way of fiscal incentives."

It was stated then that the National Housing Corporation had to be cleaned and rid of any scandal. I am happy to note that the Minister has just reported to this House that the National Housing Corporation of 1984, after the strong-arms tactics that he admittedly took, is now an institution he is happy with, and the most efficient. I hope that we will see the results of that.

Let us now look at the performance of the Barbados Labour Party over the years to see how they have matched up to what they have put on paper. Unfortunately, I could not find the 1976-77 Report, but documentation in the subsequent Annual Reports shows as follows: In 1977-78 - 154 houses; in 1978-79 - 233 houses; 1979-80, a very good year - 365 houses; 1980-81 - 153 houses. But look at what has happened since 1981. In 1981-82 - 73 houses; 1982-83 - 120 houses; 1983-84 - 66 houses, and in 1984-85 they will be only completing 68 houses. So from 1981 to 1985 the Barbados Labour Party has built 327 houses.

Asides

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: The sources are the National Housing Reports for the various years, and you can check it with your technocrats. I will be happy to be corrected if they are not as stated.

In 1983-84, you will see that 170 houses are listed as completed. Of course, that includes 34 at

Maynards and 15 at Lammings, both of which have been abandoned for a long time and have not been restarted. In other words, from 1977 my record shows that this administration has built 1 222 houses or an annual average of 154 houses a year. That is the performance of the Barbados Labour Party in housing.

I know that they would ask for the DEMS performance, so I took the opportunity to have the figures available. Houses built since 1962–1976 – 223 one-bedroom and 1 483 two-bedroom stone houses.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not want to interrupt the honourable Member, but as I mentioned before, the Member is well aware that he should give us the source of this information, if no more than for the information of the opposite Members and for the Record. Otherwise, I will have to ask the honourable Member to make that a document of the House.
4.05 p.m.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, the figures are the result of my research over the years of the National Housing Reports which were available. There is no single document. The Minister has the resources and he can check the information I am making available to the House. They are all laid in Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then the honourable Member should have prefaced his statement by saying, 'My research has shown....' Then we will know it is your research and not being taken from anything else.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Fine, Mr. Speaker. My research, by way of perusal of the Annual Reports of the National Housing Corporation and its predecessor shows the following: Houses built between 1962 and 1976, a total of 3 539 houses, and under construction at the time, 363 houses. That works out at an average of about 254 houses per year as against the present Administration's 154 houses per year.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: May I rise, Sir, if the honourable member will give way on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: On what?

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the honourable Member please take his seat while I listen to this point of order?

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I would be very grateful if the honourable Member would recite what he said earlier in the light that he said from 1962 to 1976. I am not quite sure if I heard that.

(Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Yes, 1962).

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: From 1962 to 1976, but you quote us from 1976 to 1984, eight years. You are looking at yours for 14 years and you are looking at ours for eight.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. The honourable Member may continue.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, if I may repeat. You have the situation of 1 232 houses built over an eight-year period, or 154 houses per year average, as against 3 539 houses per year over 15 years, or 254 houses per year. It is against this background that I would like to examine this White Paper.

As the Honourable Minister quite rightly said, the White Paper, in my opinion, is a recital of what has been done, a historical research, with, at the end of it, some proposals put forward, what we call the strategy, and finally how it is proposed to solve the problems. I, too, would have liked to see this White Paper written in an easier style to make it more meaningful to most of us. In order to debate it, I am going to have to go through the White Paper and, as I go through the White Paper, lead discussion under the appropriate items and make my observations.

The White Paper starts with an introduction, and the introduction is the usual stuff – it states that Barbadians have always been happy to be owners of their own land. It gives the historical background to the White Paper, saying that we had the plantation system, that as a result of the plantation system there were tenancies, that as a result of the tenancy situation the houses were substandard since there was no security of tenure, and as set out earlier, people were moved from place to place. It goes on to say that there are now new demands on the housing market as a result of improved earnings, better education, the end to the extended family, emigration and the results of emigration where funds are coming in, and the demand placed on the housing stock for housing by our visitors from some of our neighbouring islands – St. Vincent and St. Lucia, – are also part and parcel of the problem faced by any administration in providing housing.

Next, the document states the nature of the current housing problems. It states that it is evident that there is a need to remove the barriers, and they list the barriers as institutional, economic and legal. I would like to deal at this stage with those barriers as seen in the White Paper and to give my views on those barriers.

The first barrier is institutional. I suppose that by this they mean those demands placed on prospective owners of houses, what steps they have to go through, and what criteria they have to meet. One of those demands, quite naturally, would be meeting the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Department, and while I am

on this point, I would like to draw to the attention of the present Administration one of the most recent problems arising from the Town and Country Planning Department.

I am the first to say that the Town and Country Planning Department is there to introduce standards and to police regulations. But within the last month, through some very zealous young men, who I must admire for their zeal, but would say that their understanding of Barbadians, particularly old Barbadians, is sadly lacking, we have had a number of households that have had some very traumatic times, and I will tell you what has been happening. You now have the Enforcement Section.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The law was always there).

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Thank you. The law was always there, but it is a matter of not what you do, but how you do it. Out of a clear blue sky simple country folk, who over the years have built houses, are waking to find the postman at their doors with some very frightening documents saying that their houses will be knocked down within 14 to 28 days if they do not remove them, since they are at variance with the Town Planning regulations. But you have to understand, as I said before, it is not what you do, it is how you do it. Some of these people are very simple folk who are not accustomed to this type of stuff.

There is one particular case I had. There is a situation where a man died since 1972 and left a parcel of land on which five of his children have put houses.

(Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: What does that have to do with the White Paper?)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: It has something to do with the White Paper because it is an institutional problem we have in housing. You have to provide places for people to put houses on.

As I was saying, these people woke up and found themselves served with notices that their houses will be knocked down. I am saying that that is not the best method to have chosen. It is very easy for the Town Planning officer to ask those people to come to the department, draw to their attention the problem and their infringement and also educate them on how they can go about applying for retention, so that they will not have this problem on their hands. I would like to invite the appropriate Ministry to have a little bit more heart in the way they execute the policies of the Government, so that no unnecessary stress and strain is placed on the people of Barbados, either in the short term or in the long term.

4.15 p.m.

In relation to the economic problem, quite naturally you would have to examine more carefully the situation of mortgages in Barbados. I would say that the main

problem in housing in Barbados has always been a shortage of adequate funds. It is a fact that the present savings in Barbados are not enough on a yearly basis, together with the other demands on it, to provide all the mortgage money that would be needed for mortgages to meet the demands for housing in Barbados. It is also a fact that because of the variation of interest rates in Barbados there are very few people with money that are depositing their money for any long term. Most of the money is short term money, for a year or two, and because of the lack of long term money, the mortgage institutions, the Barbados Mortgage Finance and the trust houses, find that they have an acute problem of getting long term funds for mortgages, since one of the worst banking situations to be in is to borrow short and lend long. So you have a situation where, in reality, the mortgages are rolling over almost every five years, and this is creating a problem with some of the people on the mortgage market because the mortgages can move very quickly. You go into a mortgage at 8 per cent and in two years' time you can get a notice saying that, because the Central Bank has raised the mortgage, the mortgage has gone up to 10 per cent, which means an increase in the monthly payment.

I am happy to hear that the Government, through the Central Bank, is now looking into a secondary mortgage market. This is absolutely necessary. Proposals are being put forward that there should be a pool of money for a five-year term; the pool would be replenished to at least allow the institutions to put out mortgages on a fixed rate for up to five years, which would certainly be a lot better than the situation where your mortgage rates can fluctuate at very short notice.

It would be a lot easier for people if, when they go into a mortgage, they know that the mortgage rate will be fixed for a period of up to five years, but that they can expect a review of those rates any time after the five years. I would like to certainly encourage the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing and Lands to get behind the Central Bank to make sure that they go through with providing that type of secondary mortgage market, which will go a long way towards solving the problems that we have in getting mortgage money.

The other problem is the legal constraint. Under this heading, we all know that there are a series of problems that we have. The Government has introduced a short form for the conveyancing of land under the Tenancies Act, and some of the lawyers are still restricting the use of this short form, although the titles are guaranteed by that Act. The other system of conveyancing on the other market still has a series of problems, and we are back to the point where you will need, at the earliest opportunity, to make sure that the conveyancing procedures in Barbados are brought to the stage where

you cut out a lot of the procedures and make it a lot easier that it is now.

At page 8 of the White Paper, there is a summary. It says that there is a need for 1,700 units. The second point is that the National Housing Corporation has been able to build approximately 200 houses per year. The third is that approximately 57 per cent of the houses are made of timber, and a large portion of these need repairs. You have substandard housing on small lots of land restricting extensive and permanent improvements.

At this point, I want to discuss the present situation with a section of West Terrace. I have noticed that Government has embarked on a policy reducing the size of the lots at West Terrace to some 3 500 sq. ft. Let me be the first to say that we have to apply some type of standard to lots because there is the very obvious situation that there is a scarcity of land, and we cannot encourage people to own massive lots. But I would like to suggest that the standard of 3 500 sq.ft. might be a bit small, and I would have preferred if the Ministry had considered 4 000 sq. ft.

It is a known fact that as families progress income wise, they expand their houses. This is one of the main reasons for problems in places like Carrington's Village, where the lots are so small that even if the people are in a position to expand their houses, it becomes almost impossible. I would not like to have a situation where we would not be encouraging people by giving them the little extra land that they can put on an additional bedroom and still have the little space in the back, so that they could dry their clothes, and a little space in the front, so that they can have some nice gardens and do a little landscaping. So I would suggest that a standard of 4 000 sq. ft, as was used by the Town Planning, would be a good standard to look at.

The section says that approximately 550 lots will be provided this year. It appears to me that the present administration have now shifted their policy from building units to providing service lots. The Minister said that they intend to have about 1 000 of these lots available this coming year. It is true that you have a backlog of 550 applications, because as was shown, of those 585 last year, only 28 were able to be accommodated, but when he has worked off that backlog, I am going to invite the Minister to consider the wisdom of such a policy.

It is my contention that the need for sites and services is felt mostly by those people who now buy houses and cannot find any place to put them. Secondly, there are those people who are on rented tenancies where the infrastructure is bad, and they want to get away from them. The third point is that it is a fact that, up until now, the sites and services programme has been

used by the working class. When you provide a sites and services programme of 1 000 sites per year and you get back to the equilibrium of 200 of these sites being used, you are going to have 800 of these sites and services available for sale by the National Housing Corporation, and it is my contention that if you do not put proper regulations on who can purchase these lots, these lots can fall into the hands of people for speculation purposes.

4.25 p.m.

You will also find that if you go back to the Sixties, when that was the norm of development, there was a lot of money tied up in infrastructure for a considerable period of time before houses were put on them. Grass starts to grow in the roads and the sidewalks are completely obliterated, and when the houses finally come, the roads are in complete disrepair. What are you doing? You are creating a situation where these people who buy these lots would have to wait once again before they can start to move forward, and I want the Minister to consider whether this is a wiser policy than that pursued with Ideal Homes at Wildey. I do not think it is a wise policy.

What are the problems creating the need for these sites and services? One is the private tenantry programme. The Ministry of Lands will have at some time to face up very squarely to this problem. The problem in the private tenancies is becoming worse. The law states that if you buy a lot of land in a private tenantry, it is subject to sale at the market value, not taking into account any work done by the owner of that tenantry. It also sets out procedure; if there is arbitration, the Smallholdings Committee should be arbitrators — but no fixed procedure has been laid out for this arbitration, and people in the privately-owned tenancies are having problems. This is one of the main factors creating the pressure on sites and services, and you are going to have to consider quite seriously going into these private tenancies and providing infrastructural work and work out a programme for those people to buy those lots. If you do that in the private tenancies, you will immediately remove the pressure from the Government's sites and services programme.

The other pressure you get on Government's sites and services programme comes from the plantation tenancies. It is imperative that you work out a programme immediately for providing the plantation tenancies with the infrastructure. The USAID Loan Scheme that deals with the purchase of the lots in the tenancies is far behind your programme, and it is far behind for the simple reason that the rents that were paid by the tenants before were very small, six cents a week, four cents a week, eight cents a week, so at the end of a year they would have paid, some people, no more than \$3.00. To ask these people now, despite the fact that it might be a small sum, to go and borrow \$900 to buy the land, they are going to be reluctant.

A lot of people in Barbados have not realised the significance of that piece of legislation of 1965, the Tenancies (Control and Development) Act, and I will state here that, unlike what the Minister said, it is not true that only with the introduction of the Tenancies (Freehold Purchase) we started to see development of the tenancies. Those of us who are observers of the development of tenancies will know that from the time that Tenancies (Control and Development) Act was passed, which gives security of tenure to those people, a lot of houses immediately started to have wall backs built on them. That is a fact. It did not start with the Freehold Purchase Act, it started way back then. You can go, if you research it as I do, and see that that was the first stage in the permanency of houses.

The second thing that is slowing down that programme is that immediately the people purchase the lots, they become payers of Land Tax, and in some cases, the Land Tax at the end of the year is in the vicinity of twenty times the rent they used to pay. It is a good programme, but you need to restructure it in such a way that when the people purchase it they have (1) infrastructure and (2) they will be able to go and do what they like with it.

There are other problems in that programme. A further problem is, and I heard the Minister mention it, the situation of sub-tenants. I would like to draw to the Minister's attention that that section of the Act has to be considered very carefully. You have a situation where only the person on the rent book is supposed to be the owner of that land. The officers of the National Housing go in and they find three houses on a spot, and in some cases, they are only conveyed to one person.

Let me give you a situation which can lead to blood-shed, and I want to draw to your attention that already matters like these have gone before the courts. You had a situation where an old lady was the original owner of the land. She gave her grand-daughter, since 1975, permission to put down a house, and she put down a house with a wall facility. The old lady was in the house in the front; that collapsed and the Government provided her with a house. She died and left the house for her son. The son immediately became the tenant and, as a result, is now given the freehold in that lot. Now, there is bad blood between the son and the grand-daughter.

Under the present Act, the son, after five years, would have the right to do what he likes. In other words, in reality, the house of the grand-daughter has now become the property of the son, and that has been happening in more than one case. You have to change that immediately or you are going to end up with a lot of matters before the court.

(Hon L. B. BRATHWAITE: Are you going to vote for the amendment?)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Of course, I will vote with you on the amendment. You have to change it. Laws are made, but as you go along and find difficulties presented by those particular laws, you have to change them.

The stipulation of being able to sell lots every five years has been stopping some of the commercial banks from coming into the scheme, because the commercial banks are saying that if they come into the scheme and lend, they are not in a position, if for any reason they have to, to move for the redeeming of their collateral. They are keeping out of the scheme, because the Act states quite clearly that at the end of the five years, you have to make the offer to the National Housing Corporation, or the original owner. You have to look at that.

4.35 p.m.

Another problem which you are having is that the lots are now owned by old people who are not working, who therefore cannot use the land as collateral or security to borrow any money, but the son or daughter, living with the mother or the grandmother, cannot go to the bank and use the land because it is in the grandmother's or the mother's name. So you are further frustrating the process.

Asides.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I am talking about rural development now. That is a problem. The Honourable Minister would understand that in my style of debate, I try to be constructive, because in the long run, it is our country, it is our people, we have to house. I am the first to hope that we have proper housing right through the country.

I think we need to put down some minimal standards in the USAID Scheme. Under the tenancies programme, they should have a minimum size lot of 3 000 square meters or 3 500 square feet. There are a lot of lots in the tenancies that are smaller, and they are being allocated as they are. You also need, if people are going to make maximum use of it, to lay down a minimum access to these houses of three meters or ten feet, because we all know that at some time a grandson or granddaughter, a son or daughter, would want to get his or her car to those houses. Any lots not matching up to those requirements should be re-adjusted or the people relocated, and the Ministry of Housing's staff, in conjunction with the surveyors, should have legal aid for up to 10 per cent without having to go back to too much red tape. That would solve a lot of the problems.

I have dealt already with the problem of the sub-tenants. I would want to draw the Minister's attention to another situation that I know about, where the tenant has four houses on the parcel of land that has been allocated to him and it is within my own knowledge that he intends at the end of five years to sell those lots under the Freehold Purchase Act where he would be entitled to negotiate at what would be called market value. You have to look into these things right now and do not create the situation where you have a lot of matters ending up in the court. Let us deal with it now, even if it needs an amendment. I am certain that we would support you on any amendment like that where you set about to solve the problems as they exist. These are not situations that I am thinking about, these are actually situations that I know of.

Another problem in the tenantry scheme is that, during surveying, it becomes too tedious and untidy to only go in and survey the residential lots. You should survey all, including the agricultural lots. You should delineate the agricultural lots. The plantation owners who are able to negotiate a market price for those should pay for that surveying. If they do not want to pay for them, the Ministry can operate a scheme within the Ministry and subtract the cost from the sale when the sales are done, plus interest. It would make a much tidier job to survey the agricultural lots as well, because you are going to come back to the situation where you need these agricultural lots. It would be tidier, easier and cheaper and more expeditiously done if you deal with it now that you are out there.

I talked earlier about the situation with the tenancies and Town and Country Planning. I hope by now that Town and Country Planning have been able to appreciate that there are certain existing tenancies that would not meet the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Regulations, but that should not be allowed to hold them up. There was a time when the Bay was held up for a long time because of certain demands in the Town and Country Planning for certain requirements. Let us be practical. The Bay has been there for a long time, and to deny people from having their title deeds because they might be two or three feet too close to the road, I think that is drawing the line too straight. You need to look at it.

It is my understanding that the funds for purchasing tenancies are under the BNB and no other institution. I would invite the Minister immediately to extend it to other institutions. All of us know of the management shortcomings of the BNB. If the BNB handles the loan, you are not going to get any of these tenancies sold. I would suggest to you that you extend it so that other banks could share the portfolio and therefore speed it up.

The Minister has given a report on the USAID Scheme, in which he showed that some \$6 million were

drawn down. I would have thought that by now more would have been drawn down. My understanding is that the home improvement section of the scheme is the one that is most on schedule and that they have disbursed up to about \$240 000 of the amount allocated to them. That is doing all right. The mortgage section is now beginning to come on stream, and I am happy that at least, at last, some chattel mortgages are going. The purchase, as I said, of the lots by the tenants is the one that is not going as well as it should go. If you alleviate the problems that I have outlined to this Honourable House, as I see them, you can well go a long way in moving that forward.

I am suggesting that one of the incentives that the present Administration could consider is that when people in those tenancies purchase land, you do not put a Land Tax on them until they are provided with infrastructure, but at the time when the infrastructure is in, then you start putting tax on them. I am hoping that they give a very high priority to providing those infrastructures in that particular one.

The income level for qualification in the USAID needs raising. Sixteen thousand dollars is not a lot of money now for a household. You have a situation where a bus conductress marries a bus driver and cannot qualify. It is a fact. You have a situation if a carpenter is married to a bus conductress, they cannot qualify. These incomes were fixed around 1982 at \$16 000. I would suggest that you have to look to extending it to \$20 000, because you will find that you are beginning to lose the people you are aiming at, the artisans in a family situation, because it is easier, believe it or not, for a single man to qualify than a man and his wife. The man and his wife and the children are the ones that we are trying to house, but if you make the income situation as such so rigid where even a bus driver married to a conductress are over the salary limit, you begin to cut it a little neat and you create the same kind of problem that we were trying to solve by having the scheme.

There has been a lot of complaints about the cost of administering this loan. It is a fact that the legal and other fees in a mortgage of \$42 000 are high. So that is also an area that is a disincentive, and one of the problems that we have.

4.45 p.m.

Page 16 contains the meat of this White Paper, because it outlines the strategies and objectives. Under "Home Ownership", it says that greater emphasis should be given to service lots. I have already spoken on that and asked the Minister to examine that, because if the Minister looks at it logically, he is going to find that persons buying those lots will have to wait until they pay off for the lots before they move towards getting homes. Why would you prefer a policy like that as against a policy in which, in conjunction with private enterprise,

you encourage persons to use that same money as a down-payment towards house and land?

At the end of the payment for those lots, those people will still need to build. Where are they going to find the money to build? They will have to go back to the same USAID, if it is available, and borrow some money, or go to a trust company, or a commercial bank. Why delay the building for up to three years, the time they are paying off for that land? Why not consider very seriously the joint venture programme that you have spoken of and that have proven so right, where you provide the lots, but not as serviced lots, sell about 200 or 300 of them to people who have houses to put on them immediately, and use the other 800 in conjunction with the private enterprise, to start houses immediately, and let the people use their savings for immediate down payment. Later, I will show you that we have the facilities and the workmen here to undertake such a programme.

The objectives notes that continued emphasis should be placed on the transfer of freehold title in the tenantry programme. We have dealt with that and the problems with it. I am also in complete agreement that you should continue, wherever possible, to sell single units to persons and provide incentives for ownership. If you continue to sell, you are going to solve one of the same problems mentioned, that is, the cost of maintenance. You have said that it is expensive, and I have heard the figure of some \$4 million a year for National Housing to maintain its housing stock.

If you continue with rental systems when there are people willing to buy, what are you doing? You are going into the public funds on two occasions: you are providing a subsidy, you are subsidising the rent, and you are going into the public purse for monies to maintain those houses. So you will find that if you work out an equation, maintenance plus subsidy, you can jolly well come to a conclusion that the Ministry should consider very carefully if it would not be better to sell those single units, even at a reduced price than what they would fetch on the market. When you do that, you have done two things immediately. You have removed the subsidies that you are now providing for them, which is money, and you have removed the maintenance outlay which is more money. If you take the amount of money that you have subsidized a house with for ten years, plus the maintenance costs, you will find that in some cases, even if I am being ridiculous, even if you give the houses to the tenants with an understanding that they pay for them over a ten-year period, National Housing would come out the better. This would immediately shed the maintenance costs, and you would be going the other way — far from funds going out, funds would be coming in on a monthly basis for the purchase of

those units. So there are all good reasons why you should encourage, as you said, the sale of individual units. Speed it up, because there are people I know who are willing and ready to buy those units, and do not let the lack of any conveyances, any surveying or Town Planning regulations or anyone at all hold it up.

The next point made said that the incentives for ownership of units, utilizing various fiscal and monetary instruments, should be strengthened. You said earlier that you have taken a package before Cabinet in which you are going to provide the incentives for people in private enterprise to provide houses for rental. I want to caution you that when you are doing this, to examine it straight through. Your problems in rentals are at the bottom where there is tremendous pressure being put on National Housing and we are beginning to get the situation in Barbados again where, because National Housing cannot fill that breach there are some landlords who are again putting up some wooden houses with unsatisfactory toilet facilities and charging more rents than the National Housing. Some people are paying \$35 and \$40 a week for rent, for little, two-roof houses with the toilet in the back leaking, and allowing anybody a look inside. They are being forced into this situation because, as you have said earlier, National Housing cannot meet that demand, (2) the commercial banks are not very sympathetic to those people, (3), the General Workers Fund is not operational, and (4), these people do not have any land, or anybody that they can get some from.

We have to correct that. And when you are looking at incentives, you also have to look at the machinery that would make sure that the people who benefit from those incentives and provide a house for rental, particularly to the working class, do not exploit the workers by having exorbitant rents for the accommodation that they have. The problem higher up the social economic ladder is not so bad as it is at the lower level, although somehow, those people have been able to survive and take care of themselves over the years.

Another objective is the identification of special development areas, particularly within the urban area, for major upgrading of the housing conditions. I have no problem with this. You mentioned that we are looking at Pondsides and that a study has been done at New Orleans, and I encourage the Ministry to continue along this road.

Under the strategies you are going to use, you have as the first one, the provision and upgrading of infrastructure in tenantry areas as a phased programme. I have illustrated to you that this should have a very high priority, because it would remove the pressures from your Sites and Services Programme.

4.55 p.m.

The documents state that the provision of serviced lots and the provision of dwelling units of varying types

and sizes by Government, through co-operation with private builders, at subsidized rents, shall also be made. I heard the Honourable Minister make a long speech on subsidizing rents, and I want to spend some time on that as well. It is a known fact that Government would have to subsidize rents for the working class, some 35 000 people as they said, but there must be some policy on subsidisation.

The Honourable Minister made a very good point about the most recent units. Let us examine that carefully. Those most recent units cost, as I was told, \$90 000. An economic rent, when you analyse rents in Barbados now, is approximately 5 per cent return from a gross rent. That would put those units at about \$375 a month, an economic rent. My understanding is that the rent is \$40 a week, and it works out to about \$200 per month. You will find that Government in that particular instance is subsidising up to \$175 per month to those people at Kensington Courts.

We have to ask ourselves a question. If you are applying a subsidy, how are you going to justify providing a much higher subsidy for one sector of the National Housing than the other sector without examining their wage means? You have just moved, rightly, against defaulters at places like Thorpes, but if you analyse the rents that the people at Thorpes are paying, the subsidy is certainly not the same as the subsidy you are now giving to the people at Kensington Courts, because those units are far cheaper, and are a lot nearer the economic rents than the rents at Kensington Courts.

You will have to have some fixed policy on subsidisation. Are you going to say that you are going to subsidise at, let us say, 50 percent of the economic rent, therefore you are going to take the cost of the unit into consideration? Or are you going to say that you are going to subsidise according to family needs? Are you going to charge an economic rent to everybody and then they will have to go and justify the subsidisation, prove to the National Housing Corporation that they really have needs, and by drawing up a proper yardstick of allowances for children, wives who do not have working husbands, salaries and the like, you come to a proper and equitable rate of subsidising? If you continue other than in this way, you will begin to make people think that you have some special tenants of Housing Authority and others who are not special. It is a fact that everybody has been envious of those units down there, and if the people at Thorpes know that the people are paying the same money as they are paying, they can only conclude that there must be some preferential treatment given to certain people and not to others, so you will have to look at that very carefully.

I agree with the Minister when he says that we cannot encourage people to stay in National Housing units for a long time. I know that there are certain people who

have private homes who are tenants of National Housing, and it cannot be right for them to be receiving subsidies from the taxpayers and at the same time drawing their rents from their private homes. I am in agreement with that. If you are going to provide the houses for the people you want to help, your management programme is going to have to be tight. As you said, there are certain measures that you will not be popular for, but in the interest of fair play, in the interest of bringing to the masses and the needy proper housing, it will have to be done. It is not fair, and those people in NHC units, with private houses will have to be looked at, however you look at it.

This brings me a little closer to one of the big faults in the White Paper. Nowhere at all in this White Paper have they quantified the money that the solving of these problems is going to take. There is absolutely no projection in this White Paper saying how much money they are going to need in 1985, 1986, 1987, or over the next five years to tackle the problem. They have only given us the situation by way of numbers. We need 1 700 houses, and in the breakdown they give you, 1 252, I believe, is to replace stock that has gone out, 440 is new stock and some 95 units are needed to replace houses lost in fires. I am saying that the White Paper is deficient in that it did not put in terms of dollars and cents what money you are going to need to get this programme going.

In any housing situation, you need certainly to examine the role and the performance of the institution that is closely connected to that housing. We need to examine the role the National Housing Corporation has played over the last couple of years, and is playing. It is a fact that the present National Housing Corporation is well staffed with technical people. I believe that, for the first time for a long time, National Housing Corporation has a broad base of professionals in technology that you need. I know there is a Quantity Surveyor on the staff. There is a chap trained in housing management, there is a chap trained in construction management, there is an architect and you have surveyors. The only area you are short in, I think, is that there are no engineers on the staff.

This Paper has not set out very clearly, to my mind, what are the functions of the National Housing Corporation. If you are going to de-emphasise construction by direct labour — and there is a good reason for that — I want the Minister to understand that some of the deficiencies then were due to the fact that National Housing Corporation did not have the kind of project team to supervise and manage the construction, and you should look at it again, now that, in my opinion, you have built up a good project team.

The National Housing Corporation is now ideally fit for the role of project management, project management both to those schemes in conjunction with private enterprise and project management to direct housing in

a limited area, because I think that National Housing Corporation has to do a few things. The National Housing Corporation should be doing that building research that is necessary. The National Housing Corporation would have to put down some model houses demonstrating the proper use of materials in quantities and proper techniques. They also have to oversee the Sites and Services Programme, as well as provide the management for the existing estates.

I am indeed happy that the Honourable Minister has been able to say that he is now satisfied with the performance of the National Housing Corporation. Despite the fact that it took some strong handling, as he said, to get to that stage, it is good that you have reached that stage anyhow. You now have to make sure that the National Housing Corporation functions in those areas in order to further project the programme that you are hoping to introduce and to achieve the objectives you are hoping to meet.

5.05 p.m.

I want to look at some of the things that have been done by this Administration which, in my opinion, have frustrated the same objectives that they are striving for in the development of housing in Barbados, and have had the direct results of restricting and making it more difficult for the housing targets to be met. Let us start, first of all, at the planning stage. There has been a steep increase in Town Planning application fees, and it is very expensive to meet the requirements of Town Planning. Wherever a person is putting down a little wooden house under the same USAID Scheme, they have to provide plans of that house, and regardless of whether a draughtsman is worth his salt or not, you cannot get any kind of plan to submit to Housing unless the TCPO collects their \$300 or \$400.

I am in agreement that you cannot allow unrestricted development in Barbados, but you have to look at the possibility of asking the Town and Country Planning to accept a floor plan, only in a location where Town Planning would be able to see what position the house is going to be taking on the land, and which would allow the Ministry of Health to see where your toilet would be. You are going to have to look and see if you really need the requirement of sections and elevation on every single application, particularly in respect of applications in the USAID Scheme where people are putting in wooden houses. If Town and Country Planning could see fit to consider that, it would not only speed up the process, it would make it a lot cheaper for those people. As it is now, someone buys a house from the Lumber Co., which is pre-built, but they still have to get a plan drawn on that house to submit to Town Planning. Until I can be advanced some other reason why you need sections on every single application, I am contending that a floor plan is satisfactory, particularly under the USAID Scheme. In a floor plan you can see where the house is in relationship to the overall size of the lot, and the people at Health can see where the toilet facilities are.

There have been increased fees at the Registration Department. All of the fees have gone up at least 100 per cent. The Consumption Tax has been increased from \$4 in a thousand to \$6 in a thousand. Stamp Duty has gone up from \$6 in the thousand to \$10 in the thousand. You have most recently placed a tax on quarries, which obviously has been passed on to the end product which the householder has to buy from the quarries.

There has also been a tax on the sand pits, and it is a fact that that has not been absorbed by the owners of the sand pits. That tax has been passed on, and any Administration that does not believe that all of these voluntary impositions will be passed on is not being realistic. Unless you have some control system, they are all going to be passed on and dropped at the bottom of the bucket, on the persons purchasing the lots.

In your Income Tax, you have now restricted the amount of money that can be claimed for repairs at 4 per cent of the assessed value of the house. You have to look at that very seriously, because one of the things we have been complaining about is the situation of housing going into disrepair. It is no sense bringing new houses into the stock and at the same rate you are bringing in houses, others are going out due to lack of maintenance. You must look at anything to allow people to maintain their houses, and this would be a plus to the administration of the day. People do not have to use resources to buy materials which, most likely, would have a foreign exchange component, if they are able to maintain their properties by painting them and upkeeping them so you have to examine that very carefully again.

There have been increases in water rates, and I want to take issue with the Water Authority for a little while. I have had numerous calls from old people about the new imposition of \$14 for toilets and \$7 for taps. Let us be practical. If a person has three persons in their household and they have three bathrooms, does it mean that because you have three bathrooms that you are going to use the toilets three times as much as if you had one bathroom? Does it mean that you are going to use three times the amount of water in your water system as if you had one bathroom and the persons in the household have to line up on mornings to have a bath, or line up to use the facilities of the toilet? What is the yardstick that you use to charge water rates depending on the number of toilet facilities you have and the number of taps? This is stupid. You cannot use more water. If you have a family of six, would a family of six use the toilets more often than if you have one, or a wash-hand basin? What criteria are you applying?

It is a fact that a lot of old people, retired civil servants who are on fixed pensions, and old aged pensioners, whose property the Honourable Minister has said, quite rightly, they have tried to electrify to make sure that they do not have smut lamps to fall and burn them up, are now

in a situation where they are saying quite frankly that they cannot pay the water bill or the light bill. Do not worry to say go to the Welfare people, because the Welfare people are working on a system where they are only paying one of the bills, whichever is the smaller of the two bills. If the Light and Power bill is the smaller one, and you can establish that you are living alone, they pay that. If the water bill is the smaller one, they pay that. So those bills still dig into the small resources of old people. This needs to be looked at, because we are paying them extra money now to help support the sewage scheme that only 200 people have hooked up to. You cannot even get people to hook up to the scheme. We must examine this new imposition being attached because people are coming around and looking at your house, noting that you have three toilets, you have three baths and reporting it back.

I must say that the Waterworks Department is one of the most efficient Government institutions. I have always admired the Waterworks Department in that respect, except in their accounting. But there is a policy by the Water Authority where if a developer is putting down a new development, he is not allowed to cut his own pipe tracks. Whenever you ask why it is so, the Water Authority always tells you that they have to provide work for their workmen. Because of this, while you estimate that you are going to pay \$40 per running foot for a four inch main, when you get the final bill it works out at about \$59 a running foot. So if you have a development with a hundred foot frontage, the water alone is \$5 900, and that is due to the fact that when they are finished they put on a 60 per cent surcharge on the material and labour.

5.15 p.m.

I want to be told that this is not true, because no other private enterprise I know of with competition can put on a 60 per cent surcharge. When they are finished, they add their labour and they add their material and they add 60 per cent, and as a result it is now extremely exorbitant. And what is the net result? As was rightly said, it now costs about \$2 per square foot to develop land, and it has to be passed on to the purchasers of the land. You have to consider the situation. If you are a developer and you can cut the tracks to their satisfaction, and you can cut it cheaper than they, you should be allowed to cut the track and they come and lay the pipe in order to reduce the cost of developing. You should also have a look at the overhead mark-up on the work that they are doing, because whenever you come down to it, you have to make sure that the man at the bottom is not unduly penalised by prices etcetera.

The next topic is the Light and Power. If Natural Gas wants to provide a service to the people and sell their gas, Natural Gas lay the mains at their own expense. If you go up to Wildey now you will see Natural Gas putting down a main at their own expense and the people only have to pay to connect. Light and Power charges some tremendous amounts of money to put electricity

in a development. Up to now nobody knows how they work it out. It works out at least to \$1,000 per pole. And then after charging the developer, who in turn passes it on to the purchaser of the lot, the householders have then got to pay Light and Power for their current expenditure. All over, the Light and Power can never lose, and you have to examine it. It is not right.

There are a few places in Barbados where a few people are not electrified. I am inviting the Minister of Transport and Works to do something about this. They cannot get electricity at all because the Light and Power tells them that they need \$1 000 as a contribution to a pole. It is a good thing it is only a contribution, because if you had to pay for it, you would have to pay \$10 000. There are these few people who are way inside. If those people could have the facilities of Light and Power, it would remove the pressures from your Sites and Services Programme. These are the people that are moving to benefit from your Sites and Services Programme, and they are moving because people like Light and Power are making it impossible for them to have the amenities that all of us think they should have in this present day. They have reintroduced the rural electrification programme this year. They have put in a couple of dollars, but it is not enough. By now every single place in Barbados should have available current to them at the expense of Light and Power. They are making enough money from the current they sell us to do that, and there are not so many people now. I have been checking out some statistics, and I can show you that there are not too many people now that would need lights in some areas.

The last thing I notice here is that in 1980 there were some 60 800 subscribers to Light and Power, and for the same period, 1979/80, the Waterworks Department had 59 956 domestic supplies. Those are a lot of subscribers. You have not worked out how much money these people are taking from the subscribers every month and then turning around a few people who do not have. You are telling them that because they are unfortunate to live in the country, in the constituencies that I and the Honourable Minister represents, away from the beaten track, they cannot get electricity so that they can have a little fridge. In the constituencies of St. Joseph and St. Andrew, the Minister will take care of that, but we need to put more pressure on them; they need to make it possible for every single remaining house in Barbados to have electricity at the expense of Light and Power.

Look at the deferred earnings that they have, look at the balance sheet. They make millions of dollars every year. The returns are about the best returns from any company over the last couple of years. Why can they not use some of that to provide a service for the people of Barbados? These are the things we need to stop. You had better believe that if you can get Light and Power to work for us your infrastructure cost in tenancies would be a lot cheaper, and you had better believe that if your infrastructure in

the tenancies is there, the problems that you now face would be relieved. The problems of any administration would be relieved, because there are some 20 000 lots there, and if we can make these 20 000 people satisfied with the infrastructure, if you can provide the facilities to allow them to improve their houses as they go along, we would have contented house owners in Barbados, and Barbados would be a lot better off for it. Let us tell the Light and Power that they have an obligation to the people of Barbados for the fees that they are getting to install electricity.

The present Administration stopped the General Workers Loan Scheme. I am happy that there is a move afoot to reintroduce the General Workers Loan Scheme, and I would encourage you to go ahead full speed to put in the machinery that is needed.

Now you are making it more difficult every day for the people who are practising to close a conveyance. That is proving to be a frustration in housing development. It is well nigh impossible to close any conveyance. Impositions on the legal profession include that you have to get the Central Bank's permission as long as the purchaser or the vendor is a non-national. I have no quarrel with that, but that is also there. You also have to provide a certificate stating that the land is not in a betterment duty area, and I want to talk a little bit on this betterment duty area. I invite the appropriate Ministry to have a look again at the delineation of these development areas.

A place like Retreat Terrace in Black Rock, unbelievably, now comes under the betterment duty area for Spring Garden. There is no planner in the world that can show me how Retreat Terrace would benefit from any increment in value to these lots because you have developed Spring Garden. If that is the case, every place from Hometown back up should be deemed betterment duty. The net is spread too widely under this designation. There are too many houses caught up under it. I believe in the policy and the whole objective of the betterment area, but you have to be sure that you are only taxing those people who really are getting a betterment, and you are not having a line drawn so wide that people who are not really getting a betterment are caught in the net.

The legal people also have to provide a certificate to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue saying that no commissions were paid. You must have a certificate of Land Tax, and now you have to get everything up to date, otherwise you are in a problem. These new impositions on the legal profession have made it more difficult than it was before for them to close transactions, and it is now almost an ordeal for those of us who have anything to do with development to get the legal work done. And while they are spending time like that, overdraft at the bank and the interest rates are killing you dead, and you are collapsing a lot of companies because of that situation.

5.25 p.m.

We have on the Statute Book, the Land Registration and the Land Adjudication Act. I have heard that the reason that they have put off implementing that is that some of the technocrats are saying that you need a \$6 million headquarters, you need this and you need that. That is foolishness. You only need the guts and the drive. The same way that the Member for Christ Church East Central (Hon. H. B. St. John) said that he needed to get behind them to get the new Companies Act introduced, somebody has to get behind them to get the new Land Registration and Adjudication Act on the Statute Book working.

You have increased the Property Transfer Tax from three per cent to five per cent to the owner, and you can be very sure that that has been passed on. For the first time, I am told in eleven years, legal fees have gone up. That has passed on.

There are some seventeen items which over the last seven or eight years have added to the problems and the frustration in housing. In summary, I will take a broad look at what I feel are the reasons for the failure and the lack of performance by the present Administration. It starts right at the beginning, and the blame has to be placed squarely on the shoulders of the Prime Minister. From 1976 until now there has been four Ministers of Housing. The first Minister of Housing was Sir Ronald Mapp, as he is now. The only thing we could remember about Sir Ronald Mapp during his tenure in Housing is that he discovered he was a genius — he discovered that we could have a cement plant that would cost \$300 000. That is the only thing I could remember of his tenure as Minister of Housing. We had the Honourable Lionel Craig, two. We had Honourable DeL. O. Bradshaw, three. And we had the Honourable....

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the honourable Member doing?

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I am now talking of why, in my opinion, there has been a failure in the housing policy.

Mr. SPEAKER: May I remind the honourable Member that this is not the time to do that.

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I am very sorry, Sir. There was no continuation of policy-makers. You had the honourable Member at that time for St. Michael South East. You had the honourable Member for St. James North. You have now the honourable Member for St. Andrew. There was no continuity. As soon as one of them settled down to have a look and examine the policies, they were out. Further, the chairman have been transient. You had a Mr. Alleyne, a Mr. Simmons, a Mr. Hinkson, and now you have a Mr. Shorey. Four Ministers, four Chairmen! I am saying that, despite what you might think, if you gave a team time to settle down and

implement the objectives of the party, it would be easier for them. They would get to know the Ministry. It is a fact that if you examine the successful Ministries, they have been successful because they have had time to examine the situation, size up the policy, work on their objectives and implement them.

(ASIDE: Changes!)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: You had it. Changes will come.

(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Do you wear the same clothes every day?)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: I am saying that you have to consider whether or not that is not responsible for some of the movement in this one.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Come home!)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, I cannot quarrel with a lot of the objectives, because a lot of the objectives coincide with my objectives.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Take your time. You have all the time in the world.)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: If you refer to Hansard of April 19, 1983, at page 3353, you will see that I advocated a sites and services programme, and I said that sites and services should include sewerage wells.

(Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: You said that several times. You are repeating yourself.)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: When you ask a person to move on to a new lot, they have the problem of providing a semi-permanent foundation. You encourage them to provide an internal toilet facility, but a sewerage well and a slab is some \$2 000. It is one of the major expenses of resiting.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: How do you know where to locate the well?)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: That is not difficult. As long as a well is placed where there can be a gradient from the toilet to the well, you could locate a well a hundred yards away. What do you mean by, "How do we know where to locate the well?"

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Teach them!)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: You do not have to have a well any particular place. What silliness are you talking about, how do you know where to locate the well? In a small lot, 40 by 100, 4 000 square feet, could there be

any problem in locating the well, when the house would have to be at least fifteen feet from the beginning of the road? If the house is twenty feet, you already have thirty-five feet. The most you have is fifty-five feet to go, even if you have to buy two lengths of pipe to carry it to the well.

(Mr. B. M. TAITT: Do you hear the expertise?)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: You need it. We are encouraging our people to uplift themselves. I would invite you to put sewerage wells as part of the sites and services programme. I heard and I read somewhere in the White Paper a statement that is alarming, that there are certain people who would never be able to afford a house, if built by the conventional method and not by systems. I am the first to acknowledge that we have to keep pace with new technology. I am also very aware that if you have a situation where available manpower is unemployed, you have to be careful how you introduce new technology. There has never been a time, except during Janet, and one or two times of the year where there has been so much pressure on the building trades, that you could not find people to work. It has not been so within the last couple of years. But a lot of us are fooling ourselves that systems-built houses are going to automatically overnight reduce the cost of housing. If you look at it carefully, you are going to see that this is not necessarily true. There was a very disturbing tender put out by National Housing, not only to the people in the industry but to a lot of observers in Barbados, and I want to draw it to the present Minister's attention, because I am not sure that it was during his time. You had a situation where on the 23 September, 1984, a Sunday, a notice went out from the National Housing, inviting the supply of twenty-two systems-built houses, with a minimum floor area of five hundred and fifty square feet, to be ready for occupation by November 15, 1984 and you had the ridiculous situation where tenders were closing at 4.00 o'clock on September 25. You invite people on 23 September, a Sunday, to tender for houses and you close the tender on the 25 September, the Tuesday! So you only gave people Monday and Tuesday, and you specifically wrote in the tender, systems-built houses, when there is presently no single operation in Barbados that is producing systems-built houses locally.

5.35 p.m.

I know that a certain firm, a firm that this present Administration is very satisfied with, put in a tender. They offered 600 sq. ft. houses at \$34 998; 700 sq. ft. at \$40 409 and 697 sq. ft. at \$41 881. That institution said that they could not say they were going to build systems-built houses since no operation existed in the island, but they undertook to supply the houses by December 31, 1984. They did not even have the courtesy of a reply. Those system-built houses were brought in already com-

pleted from Puerto Rico and they did not install them to meet the deadline of November 15. As a matter of fact, as of 31st December they were not completed.

At that particular time of the year, coming into Christmas there were hundreds of artisans in Barbados who were not working. But the Administration of the day took the decision to employ labour in the developed country of Puerto Rico, to buy Puerto Rican concrete when there is a cement plant here, when we have aggregate here, when we have sand. They took a decision to employ Puerto Rican technicians, to pay a boat or barge to bring them here, while our artisans in Barbados with the Christmas season coming, were unemployed — their tools were down and some of their children were hungry. And that company did not meet the demand. The houses were not put up in place on November 15. I visited the site. The houses were not ready for December 31.

I am not against system-built housing. But if they were manufactured here in Barbados where our electricians, plumbers, cement, bricks, sand and our transport were used to put the money in our Barbadian workers pockets, it would have been a lot better and beneficial to this country. It is even worse when you realise that the agency that offered an alternative has worked for the present Administration in a successful joint venture, but was not even treated with the courtesy of a reply to its tender. Something is not right when you can have that type of thinking.

I must say that this present Minister, as he always says, has always taken these things into consideration. When we have the situation where these units are being assembled here, I will have absolutely no objection to them competing in the market. But we have to examine what we are doing. It has disturbed a lot of the workmen. We need technology, but we have to examine what we are paying for the technology. When the technology arrives here and when they are being assembled here, I will be happy that they can compete, because I am certain that some electrician will be working in that system, some plumber, somebody will be in the casting yard, and somebody has to be at the stage where they are controlling the aggregate.

We talk about incentives. This is very important, because when young couples go into their first house and finish furnishing that first house, they are usually out of all their savings and cannot catch their hands for some time after that. When you are considering your incentives, you should look at possible ways of relieving the pressure off these first owners for a little while.

The other measure that I have advocated, which I am happy to see included, is that you have plans to get hard woods from Guyana.

The Ministry should look now at prohibiting all untreated soft woods from coming to Barbados. I think you should look at it immediately, because it is only ripping off the poor people. Let me explain to you what happens. The very poor persons going to buy a house always look at the cost first, so they look at the difference between treated and untreated timber, maybe some ten to fifteen cents, and they buy the untreated timber. They are not in a position to get the house treated by one of the exterminators, and within three to five years that timber is no use to that poor person. I think the Government has an obligation to stop the importation or sale of all untreated soft woods. Go ahead with your programme of trying to get out of Guyana hard woods, and those soft woods that are here make sure that they are properly treated before they can be sold.

5.45 p.m.

We need to have a look at the possible extension of mortgages. At present, because most of the mortgage institutions have a mortgage insurance indemnity where the insurance companies are not usually prone to giving them to people over 65 years, you find in most cases that mortgages are restricted to 20 years because of the age of the person. The highest sometimes is 25 years. I am saying we should consider mortgages of 30 to 35 years, and even if you have to treat it as going on from the life of the present incumbent to the life of the person who is the beneficiary by way of a transfer of the insurance policy, that can be worked out. That is no big problem.

I want the Minister to look at the present tenantry programme very carefully, because there are real hardships out there. A lot of the owners of the private tenancies are hoping to cash in by selling these lots at prices they are not worth, and the arbitration system needs to be put in place. There was a good policy advocated of devaluing those properties, where you took tenancies and you took the rents they were paying, and you valued the tenancies at ten times the gross rents. I think that is a policy that should apply to valuation of tenancies for purchase and development.

The Minister referred to self-help — he called it by another name — but I am in agreement with him. If we can have our people getting together again and helping themselves, I am in agreement with him. You talk about start-up houses. That is the same thing as shell houses. That is a firm policy. You provide the shell and toilet facilities, allowing them at some time to go on to put in their partitioning. I am certain that the Minister has been advised on this already.

It is a fact that if people are satisfied to have the same facility in a concrete structured house as in a wooden house, there would be very little difference. The

difference comes the moment a person has a concrete block unit. They immediately want the floors tiled, they want kitchen cupboards, they want bedroom cupboards and they want trowel plastic on the walls. But if you take the basic shell house and compare it with the wooden house, you will find that there is very little difference in cost, and we should certainly encourage that type of situation.

More mortgage money and quality control of local products is a must. There are some local products on the market that we have to protect the people against. They are not worth the money that the people are putting up for them, and you have to make sure that the people are protected.

Let us look back at system houses as against conventional houses. If you take the breakdown of a conventional house, about 10 per cent of that conventional house is in the foundation alone. About 6 per cent of a conventional house is in walls and partitions, 16.5 per cent in the roof, about 6.7 per cent in floor finishes, 3.4 per cent in ceilings; wall finishes, 8.5 per cent; plumbing fixtures, 6.25 per cent; electricity, 7.2 per cent; fittings and sundry, 12 per cent, I am reciting those, Mr. Minister, to show to you that when you go into system housing you still have to provide a roof, 16 per cent, you still have to provide the foundation, 10.4 per cent. Where are your savings? Your savings are in the walls when you put in the electrical fittings and plumbing fittings, but the walls and partitions are only 6 per cent of the house. Your savings might be in time, but tell me, have we reached the situation in Barbados where we really cannot build the amount of houses with the funds we have available by conventional labour in time?

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Why did you want to bring in systems? You came to me to bring in systems.)

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, I have examined all of them, and I have said that when those systems are available locally, let us use them, but certainly do not make it impossible for a non-system to qualify in any situation. That is what I mean. Do not make it impossible.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I want to say that we on this side share the objectives of the present Administration to provide housing for our people. We sincerely feel that, despite the mouthings, housing has not been given the priority that they want us to believe they have given it, and the statistics are there right through to support it. You cannot support in your budgets that you have really given housing that priority that you claim you have given it. Give it the priority it needs. House our people, continue to improve their health, give them ownership

and keep them happy. I can assure the present Minister and the present Administration that anything they bring to this House which in our opinion would advance housing the people of Barbados will be supported on the Opposition benches.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Speaker, I have been an observer for some time now of what has been taking place in housing. I have said very little on the subject. For one thing, we have a very competent spokesman on housing on this side, as illustrated by the speech that he has delivered here this afternoon, but from my own observations, I am convinced that debate on housing will be never-ending. There will always be a debate on housing. Of that, I am positive.
5.55 p.m.

In all modesty, what I have seen taking place in housing has strengthened my conviction that we were on the right road, operation wise, with the plan that we were carrying on in 1976. All that was needed then was an intensification of the programme that was in hand and that this Government found in place at that time. There were some problems in administration, but that only needed some structural adjustments.

In 1976, we had on-going programmes for middle income housing, low middle income housing and low income earners. For example, in the middle income housing, we had the Oxnards Development in St. James. Low middle income housing development at Lodge Terrace was in train at that time, and for the low income housing we had a sizeable development going on at Wildey in 1976. We also had on-going programmes for houses for rental, even though at that time we were de-emphasizing construction for rentals. Work was going on at that time for rentals at Haynesville. We had infrastructural development going on for low income rentals and sales at Wotton in Christ Church. We also had infrastructural development going on for the low middle income earners at Free Hill in St. Michael. We were beginning our rural housing programme and infrastructural works at Sion Hill and Orange Hill in St. James in 1976. There was also work on slum clearance by way of removal of houses from Emmerton, and infrastructural work at Clapham Park had begun. We were also at that time working on the physical layout of land at Belair in St. George. Mr. Richard Gill, Town Planner, did the physical layout and made some proposals. We also intended doing a similar thing for Parish Land in Christ Church.

Asides

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: We have not been there since 1976. You are doing it now. You have had eight years to do it. It was already in the plans when you came into power.

Asides.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I believe that the execution and the intensification of this programme offered then, and still offers up to this day, the best way forward in our housing thrust in Barbados.

A sociological analysis of housing highlights two basic problems. One is costs. Land costs have been rising considerably over the years. To some extent, taxes have been responsible for the increases in our land costs, and I would suggest to the Government that they should take some steps to stabilize the price of land in this country.

The second problem is unemployment. Housing in this country will never be successful unless we have a proper strategy for employment in Barbados. People must be put to work and receive reasonable wages, because basic to housing is employment. Unless people are earning they cannot own houses — they cannot even pay their rent. I do not intend to launch into any debate on employment or unemployment here today, but housing is always related to income.

I regret that no mention is made in the White Paper of the lower income workers, because these are people who also have to be sheltered. There are persons in our midst who do not earn incomes. It is estimated that there is between 16 per cent and 18 per cent unemployment in Barbados. That would mean that about 34 000 persons are out of work in this country, and who would not be able to rent or own a home. They would not be able to own a host of other things. And even if 20 per cent of those have partners who are working, there would be still a very sizeable proportion of persons who are not earning at all, because 20 per cent of 34 000 is somewhere in the vicinity of 7000, and I have not found anything in the White Paper that would take care of these workers who also have to be sheltered. So I wish that the White Paper was wide enough to spell out Government's total policy on housing. That is one criticism that I have of the White paper.

The other criticism I have of the White Paper relates to the generalisations that are contained therein. We do not see any specific solutions for the problems in the country. We see generalisations that they will intensify, they will enlarge or they will continue emphasis in certain areas. These are generalisations that one would find in a manifesto. You look in a White Paper for specifics, but we have not been able to find any specifics in this White Paper for the tackling and solving of housing problems.

Everybody knows that the problem in Barbados where housing is concerned is insufficient stock, and the housing stock is insufficient because there is not sufficient financial resources. I do not accept that there

is any lack of physical resources in terms of land space for building, and I would reject completely out of hand any thesis that we have insufficient manpower resources to tackle the housing problems in this country.
6.05 p.m.

According to the White Paper, the National Housing Corporation has only been able to develop 200 houses per year. I would assume that this is by direct labour, but there are other methods that can be used in the construction of houses. One is through work on contract, and that can be used to supplement any direct attempt at housing construction in this country. We did it between the years 1973 and 1976. In some instances, we used about three different contractors sometimes on the same site, and Wildey is an example of that. There was Mr. Lisle Reid and two other contractors, whose names I do not now recall, doing terrace houses at Wildey. The point I am making, therefore, is that although Housing by its own labour might be able to provide 200 houses, yet there are other ways in which Housing can increase that number by, if you like, farming out an additional portion of houses, so that instead of being able to provide 200 houses, maybe you could provide 600 houses. All these things are possible.

One other way, and a way mentioned in the White Paper, is by self-help. I am not enamoured of self-help, and that is because of the history of self-help housing in Barbados. Clinketts in St. Lucy is a classic example. Those persons who are engaged in self-help programmes, once they know what house is theirs, when their house is built, they stop working on a co-operative basis on the houses. Co-operative effort has never taken on well in this country. That is regrettable, because I believe that in a place like Barbados, where resources are limited, and I will go further and say in any underdeveloped or developing country, co-operatives can provide an excellent answer to productive effort. But in Barbados you find that self-help housing has not had a good history, and in St. Lucy, after the first set of houses had been completed by co-operative effort, in the final stages the Housing Authority, as it was then, had to step in and by its own labour complete the houses that were begun by co-operative effort.

That is the history of Barbados. Why that should be so, I cannot say. I have had the privilege of seeing co-operative housing in Guyana. In Guyana, what they do is that they do not identify the owner of any houses until the whole housing estate is completed, and when the estate is completed, they then draw lots to decide who should get what house. Maybe that is something that could be tried in Barbados. If those who are working on the houses do not know which house is theirs, then you may be sure they will complete all to the bitter end, knowing very well that at the end a house will be allocated towards them.

Another method is to reactivate and develop our own expertise on the koolam house. The koolam house is a system that has been developing in Housing itself. Many people do not know that National Housing Corporation has been engaged for years, in a limited way, it is true, in system-built houses, systems that they put together and used. There are examples of this of houses in Long Gap and in Parkinson Field, some were done for private enterprise and one or two were also put in in Wildey. I would recommend to the Minister that he has another look at the koolam house. In my dying days as a Minister for Housing, it was my plan that we would go back into a system by our own efforts and develop a koolam house in such a way that not only would we put it on our own estates, but we would have enough available for individuals to come to Housing and buy one; we would have all the components there ready and available for persons who want to put up their own houses on their own land, wherever they might live.

This brings me to the question of the system-built houses. Like our spokesman on housing, I think we should be very careful with our system-built houses. I, as Minister, allowed a couple of houses to come into Barbados. Some houses came in from Colombia and were set up at Lodge Terrace. Not only did they come in, but they also sent in what they called their own assemblers of these prefab components to construct the houses on site at Lodge Terrace. Our experience with that kind of house, the components for which were built outside of Barbados and assembled in Barbados by Colombian workers in order to show our own workers what we can do, has shown that they were no cheaper than the houses at that time built by conventional methods. So I have not been enamoured as well of system-built houses.

We have to be careful that system-built houses are not subsidising labour in countries where the components are manufactured, and do not drain the country, for that reason, of very precious foreign exchange. What I said about the Colombian houses would let the House understand that I have nothing against system-built houses, but these system-built houses must be of components manufactured in Barbados. It is my understanding that there is a private firm that is setting up a factory to manufacture components for housing here in this country. With that I am in complete and full agreement, but I will again warn the Honourable Minister against allowing components which are unnecessary to come into the country.

We can use these system-built houses, even the Colombian house, both in our urban and rural housing. We have an urban population and we have a rural population. What has been happening in the past is that we have been pushing urban housing on to rural communities. That is a mistake. I am not blaming the Minister for this. I observed this when I was a Minister,

and Haynesville is an example of this. I feel that rural housing has its place and urban housing has its place, and it is no more right to impose urban housing on rural areas than it is to impose rural housing on urban areas. There is an incongruity there, because each segment has its own character and its own characteristics, and each of them must be catered for.

I referred to our rural housing development programme at Sion Hill in 1976. We were not able to complete it, we were only able to put in the infrastructural work, but the plan at the time was that each purchaser of a lot would be given a sufficient amount of land — at that time we estimated that a quarter of an acre would have been sufficient — but land that had a narrow frontage, because we did not want any housing density appearing on that particular lot. We had a lot of frontage of forty to sixty feet, and with the length it would be very long. On that lot, the owner would be able to carry out his little gardening and stock rearing. The rearing of sheep, goats and other animals, which they had been accustomed to all their lives. That is what I mean by rural housing. In other words, they would be given a sufficient area of land on which they could carry on their traditional living and not be forced into a little spot on which they would be able to grow little or nothing — probably no more than a few lime trees or some bougainvillea. That was the plan for Sion Hill and a part of Apes Hill Plantation in Orange Hill. We also had plans for the acquisition of land at Fairfield and Mount Gay, at Nesfield, for this same purpose.

6.15 p.m.

(Aside).

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: We did not buy the land, but we carried out negotiations and we had agreed on a price. The Minister who succeeded me, Sir Ronald Mapp, will know this. We had agreed on a price with the owners of Fairfield and Mount Gay, and we had done this because Nesfield was designated in the Physical Development Plan as one of the district centres, although I cannot remember which one it was.

The Minister I certainly believe, is on the right track when he notes that it is wrong to deal with housing — I am talking about those new housing estates — on a constituency by constituency basis. A lot of pressure would be put on the Minister, by politicians from both sides, to develop housing estates in each area. I know that the Honourable Minister is strong enough to resist that, as he said this afternoon. That indeed would be very wrong, and I caution him to be very careful about this, because after all, it is for the people that we are developing the houses and certainly not for the politicians.

I want to invite the Government to have another look at the Physical Development Plan, to which I made refer-

ence just now. That plan made provision for district centres, for regional centres, and for rural centres. I believe that that Physical Development Plan should not be treated as an intellectual exercise in semantics, because if you follow the Physical Development Plan you will find that we will know precisely where we can site our housing estates and what we can develop in those areas. There were six district centres, if I remember correctly, identified in the Physical Development Plan. There were two regional centres, Speightstown and Oistins. Oistins has been developed to a great extent, and commendably so, with some input from the private sector, although not all our recommendations for a regional centre have been put in place in Oistins. I believe Speightstown is now ripe for such a development exercise. Work is already in train, and I believe that it should be carried out to its fullest.

I listened to the Minister on the question of site clearance. I have noticed that some work is going on in the Wanstead area of Cave Hill between Husbands and Wanstead Terrace. I would invite the Minister to give us the details of what work is going on in that area. I would hope that they are not having what would, in fact, be a continuation of the kind of housing that we have in Husbands and in Wanstead, because I believe that such a vast expanse crowded with houses of a similar size would be aesthetically displeasing and, in a technical sense, overcrowded. That would have within itself seeds for its own decadence, and not long, next thirty years perhaps, we might find that that Wanstead area, which I think is an excellent area, might become run down. What we want in that area is balanced housing, with a proper mix of houses, and then the monotony of housing of a similar character stretching from the University Drive right up almost to Haynesville would be relieved.

Let us look at New Orleans. I believe that the time is right, and I hope that the Government takes full advantage of an excellent situation that they are in now and carry out urban renewal in the Orleans area. They are in an excellent position because of the work that has gone on at St. Cecilia. I hope that the Government would allocate about six or so of those housing blocks to temporarily resite persons from the New Orleans, until the work in the New Orleans is completed. Then, those persons could be returned to the New Orleans and a proper allocation made with the housing in St. Cecilia. I would hope that Government takes advantage of this.

I note with some regret, as shown in the White Paper, that Government is de-emphasizing its commercial role, that is, providing houses for sale. I am in agreement with emphasizing rentals, no tears will be shed by me about that, but I believe that houses for sale should still be an important plank in the housing policy and programme of the National Housing Corporation. And let Housing make sure that it recovers its full cost and a little

on top. It is not that I am suggesting that the National Housing Corporation should get into this kind of housing with a profit motive, because it should not, but it should resell those houses at full cost with an additional percentage, if you like, as seed money for further developments.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Your time is up, man.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid that the honourable Member has utilized all the time allotted to him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Not even a couple of minutes warning, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing in the Standing Orders which says that the honourable Member must be warned.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: I know, Sir, I am well aware of that, Mr. Speaker, I am coming to an end in this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: One minute.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Sir, if that is what you put at my disposal, I will see what I can do with this one minute.

Mr. SPEAKER: And that would mean two minutes more than you are entitled to.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Thank you, Sir.

I want to ask Government to do a few things: To return to housing through the housing developments that have been taking place; to take steps to stabilize the price of land; to remove the Consumption Tax on concrete blocks, sand, quarries and on any other house materials on which they have imposed it; to again permit repairs in full, with interest to be deducted from one's Income Tax; and to return to Housing responsibility for general workers loans.

6.25 p.m.

I would also like to ask them to look at the maintenance programme, particularly at the lots in Eden Lodge, which are certainly run down. I would invite the Minister to see what he can do in order to bring that housing estate back to where it was before.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member who just took his seat and the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) felt that this Government should not be proud of its record since

1976. They said that when they were in power, the then Government was on the right path. I would not like to be on the path that the honourable Member and his government was on in 1976. Surely if I were on that path, I would end up with the people in Barbados stoning me, and the honourable Member ought to realize that he should be glad that this Government stayed away from that particular path. The record of the Democratic Labour Party is not good and that is why this government was justified in setting up the Hanschell Commission to inquire into the misdeeds, irregularities, and the corruption of the National Housing Corporation under your Administration.

I would like to reflect on some of the things that happened during the former Government's regime, because the honourable Member talked about the right path. Is he telling us that a Government that allowed the people to occupy houses in Friendship, that were supposed to be sold, free of cost, without paying any rent is something to be proud of? Is he inviting this Government to allow that to continue? Is he saying that that was travelling on the right path? The honourable Member, who is now the Member for St. Michael North, was the Minister at that time, and he permitted people who were not qualified for a mortgage to occupy those houses, and when we took over in 1976, we were forced to allow those people to remain in the houses. The alternative would have been so embarrassing to this Government and to politicians as a whole that this Government decided to use its discretion and invite the people to rent until they were able to qualify for mortgages. But that is the sort of path that the honourable Member is inviting this Government to pursue!

The honourable Member was Minister in 1976 when he allowed a gentleman by the name of Carl McClean, his friend and a supervisor at the Housing Corporation, to occupy a house for one full year without paying one cent. Let him get up and deny that. He canvassed for him at election time, and he allowed him to sit in a house for one year without paying one cent!

Mr. SPEAKER: On what does the honourable Member rise?

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the honourable Member take his seat.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Sir, I deny that I allowed any Carl McClean, friend or otherwise, to occupy any house free of cost from the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter of explanation.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat — Carl McClean, a supervisor of the National Housing Corporation, occupied a house at Eden Lodge for one full year during the time that the honourable Member for St. Michael North was Minister responsible for Housing. He must take the blame for that, a dereliction of duty. Is he asking this Government to permit that? We are not going to allow anyone to occupy houses free of cost for any one year, whether it is a house to be owned or not. They will have to get a mortgage or pay the rent. It is as straight-forward as that.

Is the honourable Member saying that when his Government allowed a lady to have two houses in Wildey, one for her children and herself and another house to keep a band in, it was correct? The honourable Member should have sat down; he would have done himself the world of good! The honourable Member knows about Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries in his Government who were allowed to buy the land at a very, very cheap price in Husbans. The honourable Member was Minister — and he got some of the land, too!

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.....

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please let me hear the honourable member.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES: The honourable Member is misleading the House. He is totally incorrect. He is not only misinforming. I have never had, and never sought to have, any land at all in Husbans, Wanstead or any part of St. James. Never!

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I know the facts. I know that a piece of land of some four spots was reserved for a particular Minister who went out of office in 1976. That was told to me by a senior officer in National Housing, and I was told the Minister's name.

Asides.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Do you want me to call the Member for St. Michael North's name? I will not do that. A friend disclosed it to me.

Is the honourable Member saying that they were on the right track, by inviting this Government to pursue a policy where they allowed Livy St. John, the President of the Young Democrats.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Now...

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I withdraw that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now, Standing Order 28:10 states:

- “(a) No reference may be made in debate to the character or conduct of any person except in his official or public capacity.
- (b) Any Member who desires to refer in debate to the character or conduct of any person in his official capacity must deliver to the Speaker written prior notice of the proposed reference: the notice must set out the facts on which such reference will be based and must be signed by the Member giving it.”

All Members as of now will comply with Standing Order 28:10 (a) (b).

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that the President of the Young Democrats was given a loan of \$5 000 from the General Workers Fund of the National Housing Corporation in 1971. That member did not have a house, and the rules then were that, in order to qualify for a loan, the applicant should have a house. The member of the Young Democrats never had a house, yet he was given \$5 000. What is worse, that member of the Democratic Labour Party has never paid back one cent up to this day. That is what the honourable Member is inviting this government to pursue as a policy. I say no, no!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: I draw Your Honour's attention to the Rules of the House with regard to the Conduct of the Debate. The honourable Member said “the President of the Young Democrats”. The fact that a person was President of the Young Democrats does not mean that that person, by virtue of that office only, was entitled to whatever loan he got. That person was also a civil servant, and I think that the honourable Member is required, while giving the House information, not to give the information in such a way as to mislead the House, according to the Rules. I am just drawing it to Your Honour's attention. I am submitting that the honourable Member is contravening that rule and the tradition concerning the Rules of debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that the allegation is a little bit too general when he says the President of the Young Democrats. I do not know if he means now, last week, last year, or what. I am not going to ask him to identify any person, because if he falls under Standing Order 28:10, I am going to ask him to take his seat. The honourable Member must be very careful how he is sailing.

6.35 p.m.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: I am very careful, Mr. Speaker.

In 1976 \$1 million was given to the National Housing Corporation to spend on repairs to welfare persons' houses. That money was not spent on welfare houses but instead was spent on able-bodied persons, persons who were capable of working and who did not qualify as welfare cases. That is why this Government, when it assumed office in 1976, decided to separate welfare housing from the National Housing Corporation. I say that because when an analysis is done, when people compare the performance of this Government with the Democratic Labour Party during their 15 years in office on the question of housing, they must consider that in order to arrive at the number of houses built by this Government, they must also take into consideration the number of houses built by the Welfare Department now under the National Assistance Board as well. The White Paper did not allude to those houses built by the National Assistance Board, and therefore anyone who is drawing a conclusion would not be doing so fairly if they went by the figures put out by the White Paper on housing.

Notwithstanding that, this Government recognised that the cost of housing was escalating and it decided to address itself to the particular problem. What did we do? We looked at the question of system building. We felt that part of the answer laid in system building because it was reputed to be cheaper than the conventional system of block building. Several persons became interested. We are told that it is no less a better system than the conventional system. Several persons have come forward, and as a result of the system building encouraged by this Government, we have got competitive house prices in Barbados. No one can deny that.

What more did this Government do? This Government decided to encourage the private developers to work alongside with Government on a joint basis so that we could meet the needs of potential home owners. We have one such project, in Wildey, which was entered into with one of our construction companies. That has been a successful project. No one can deny that that was one of the finest projects entered into by Government, and I am sure that it was lauded by members of the Opposition. I feel that more of these projects ought to be entered into, in which Government provides the land, puts in the infrastructure and allows the private developers to build the houses. In that way the cost of housing could be reduced considerably, because it would breed more competitiveness among the private developers.

We also thought about the availability of mortgages. We realised that the mortgage finance companies in Barbados and some of the other lending institutions, including the banks, were not providing mortgages to potential home owners, and we approached the USAID with a view to getting mortgage money in Barbados and to make it available to those low income earners. We

cannot, and should not, be faulted for this particular enterprise, because not only does it have a component for new mortgages, but it also has a component which allows for repairs and home improvement as well. Also built in that particular scheme is a component to allow potential land purchasers to get money to buy a piece of land, so that they could use the land as security to get another mortgage to build their houses.

Recognising, too, that house spots were becoming very difficult, and at the same time becoming very expensive, we felt that as a Government we should take the initiative and at the same time force developers to reduce or to even contain the cost of house lots. We introduced a sites and services programme. We identified areas of land, we acquired portions of land in various parts of the country, and we have put in the infrastructure. The land and the cost of the lots are lots cheaper than those that are sold by private developers. That is a contribution very much welcomed by potential home owners in Barbados.

We also realised that tenants living on the housing estates — and I refer to those persons who live on estates and lands owned by the National Housing Corporation — were experiencing difficulty in changing their houses from timber to concrete structures. We realised that the Town Planning Department was reluctant to grant planning permission, and even at times the tenants were unable to obtain a certificate from the National Housing Corporation to assist them in getting the Town Planner to approve their plans for house building. This Government set about a programme by employing more surveyors so that the housing estates owned by Government could be surveyed and the lots made available to those tenants. That is what the Democratic Labour Party did not do.

I am aware that during the Democratic Labour Party's time in 1976, leading up to the General Election, they sent about letters to people living on housing estates indicating to them that the Government then was going to sell them the lots on which they lived, but they did not at the same time provide the back-up services of surveyors. I am aware, too, that the honourable Member for St. Philip North was employed to do some work in the Bay Estates, but they did not accelerate the programme sufficiently as to enable the vast majority of people who were waiting to get their plots of land in their hands. Several people had paid off for the plot of land, which was estimated to be X number of square feet, but they could not get the plot which was so necessary for them to go to the Town Planner and get a plan and have their houses built. But we have corrected this, and the Government ought to be congratulated, and the proposals in the White Paper must be commended.

I want to salute those officers from the Ministry of Housing and the officers at the National Housing Cor-

poration. All the officers who were connected with the White Paper, for doing such a fine job. It was not an easy task. What we could say is that at least the Government, unlike the former Government, has been bold enough to look at housing, setting out the difficulties and making recommendations to solve and to deal with these problems.

6.45 p.m.

This Government can be proud of its record. We can be proud to know that we have built West Terrace. We can be proud to know that we have completed Oxnards. We can be proud to know that we have built Wotton, the single units as well as the terraced units. The Government is also proud of the project at Haynesville. We are also proud of Rosemont, the Ivy and the Bonnetts project. One has only got to go to Kensington Lodge. If anyone wants to see what this Government has done in the area of housing, just look at those developments. I have referred to Wildey Gardens, a successful project by this Government, no hitches at all, a joint project. We can be proud of our record in the area of housing.

One has always contended that it is easy to identify problems. It is not easy to correct them at all times. It does not matter how much money is pumped into National Housing Corporation or in the Ministry of Housing, we will not be able to meet all of our housing needs in any one year. The White Paper says that 1 700 houses at least per year are needed to satisfy our needs. Families decide to go independent, young boys and girls decide to leave their parents' houses, there are break-downs in the homes or marriages — all of these problems have to be taken into consideration. All of this has caused the Ministry to decide on a figure of 1 700, but we have to watch that 1 700 figure, because it may fluctuate. Depending on the thrust that we put on housing, the sort of encouragement that we give to potential developers, this figure could increase or even decrease, and I sincerely hope that the Government's initiative over the next couple of years or months will see a reduction in the need for 1 700 houses a year.

We feel that the Government has gone in the right direction. We have mentioned self-help, like what I have seen in Puerto Rico, where persons are given houses without some of the trimmings and the family occupying the houses decide to complete the houses on their own and in that way cut down on major expenses.

On the question of system building, I have visited Puerto Rico and I have seen system building. I have seen Bartrin houses. I am satisfied that they are good for Barbados, and no one can deny that the system houses as built by Bartrin are very good, sound, architecturally designed and well-engineered. They ought to be encouraged. Everything should be done to see the factory set up here as quickly as possible. Bartrin

Construction has decided to have their factory set up in Barbados within the next couple of months, surely during this year. That would show Barbadians that the Government was not unwise in encouraging that particular system of building here.

The reason for Bartrin being called upon to provide the houses was because it was known by this Government that Bartrin was interested and would have set up the factory here. The Government was aware of that, so no one should feel that contractors or developers were treated unfairly because Bartrin was given the opportunity to build the houses. Those houses will be built here, and local cement and other local raw materials will be used in the construction of those houses. There was a deadline for the houses, and the construction process and the acquisition of land and the Government had to move swiftly in order to meet that particular deadline. I do hope that the honourable Member for St. Philip North, who ranted in here today on that question and was giving the impression to this Honourable Chamber that the Government has done something wrong, would understand that lots of people out there are well aware of what is going on. He should not have got up and made that contribution today, because he knew that he was also interested in that particular system.

I would like to see encouragement given to developers. I would like to see more joint projects and I would like to see more funds made available. The USAID funds that seem sometimes to be a little difficult to obtain, I would like to see a little flexibility. I would like to see a freeing-up of those stringent rules and regulations governing the USAID funds. I am sure that if that could be done, we would see a revitalisation of the building industry, particularly in house building. As I said, we cannot do it all. We know that money is important but at least the initiatives and the proposals in the White Paper have gone a long way to show us where we were, to identify the problems and to point to the new challenges that this or any succeeding Government will have to face up to in the area of housing.

We must take this housing debate out of the partisan arena but, at the same time, we cannot forget that the Opposition invited this Government to follow them, that they were on the right path. I submit that they were on the wrong path, a path that would have led to destruction and would have caused a lot of people to lose interest in the Administration of this day or in future years. I hope that the Ministry of Housing will continue to press on with the good work which it is doing. They have corrected a number of problems. There are still others, and I do hope that the officers and the Minister responsible for Housing will get on with the job and let us, in the not too distant future, say that the White Paper has been a fine job in facilitating Barbadians to own houses.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, I regret very much that the last honourable Member joined this debate, because he has diverted me from the contribution which I intended to make, at least in part, because I must spend a few minutes on that honourable Member. I would never have thought that in a housing debate he would dare to get up. I am amazed that a Minister, who has been described by his colleagues as the greatest disaster in the Ministry of Housing, could get up and say that this Democratic Labour Party was on the wrong path, and then as evidence of how he would like to demonstrate that we were on the wrong path, proceed to identify two instances and name two individuals. Does he believe that that constitutes corruption? Why does that honourable Member not tell the untold story of West Terrace housing?

The honourable Member for St. Michael North produced houses in Cave Hill and in Oxnards with three bedrooms, houses that are now worth over \$160 000. In those days they were sold for \$25 000, \$23 000 and, in some instances, \$31 000.

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW leaves the Chamber).

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You must not run from the debate. Where is the honourable Member going? Come back and take these lashes!

The honourable Member got up and told the people of Barbados that he was going to be supplying houses for them in West Terrace at reasonable prices. He identified the category of people in this country who would have been able to buy houses in West Terrace, and then, finally, after some considerable time, it was that same honourable Member who went on television and told the people in Barbados that those houses in West Terrace would cost them in the vicinity of \$116 000. In fact, as any honourable Member in here who knows anything about them can say, they cost in excess of \$120 000. How in the name of heaven can that honourable Member have the temerity to get up in here and talk about housing? When the honourable Member for St. Andrew (Hon. L. B. Brathwaite) became the Minister of Housing, he said that the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing were riddled with corruption. Now, Sir, the honourable member
6.55 p.m.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I must rise on a point of order: At no time can I recall either reading in the Press, local or out of New York, or hearing on the floor of the House or at a public meeting, that my colleague, the Minister for Housing and Member for St. Andrew, ever said that a Minister in this Government was riddled with corruption. I think it is an unfortunate remark to make, and I hope my colleague will withdraw it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I did not say that. I said 'the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation.' I am repeating what the honourable Member for St. Andrew is reported to have said, and it was reported widely in Barbados, that there was corruption in the Ministry. He said there was corruption in the National Housing Corporation, and today in the debate he started off by intimating that he had to say some things when he first took over, and that they were taken out of context. I am not in a position to say what the context is — he is in a better position — but I am suggesting that the honourable Member who just sat down, who was the Minister before the honourable member for St. Andrew, demonstrated that he was a disaster.

Let us look at the statistics again. The honourable Member for St. James North (Hon. L. S. Craig) was Minister of Housing, and during his year they built 365 houses. He, for whatever reason.....

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I feel it is but fair to the House and to you that I should draw attention to the fact that the honourable Member for St. Michael West mentioned that I had said something which I have not said.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister will have ample time to answer that.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I know, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: At this time it is too late for us to go back to the debate. You can deal with that in ample time.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. SPEAKER: The time is now 7 o'clock, and this sitting stands suspended until 8.00 p.m. tonight.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is now resumed.

When the suspension was taken, the honourable Member for St. Michael West was speaking. He may now proceed.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, before my colleague resumes his speech, I have a supplementary Resolution which I would like to give notice of at this stage.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member may proceed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$4 509 822 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1984-85 Part I — Current as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1984-85, No. 39 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Michael West may proceed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: When we stopped, I was just about to make the point that, irrespective of what the honourable Member for St. Michael South East may say, when we come down to the final analysis, what is important from the point of view of a Government National Housing policy is the number of houses that are built, the number of houses that are created, I was making the further point that in 1978/79 some 365 houses were built, which would have been considered reasonable in the circumstances, and then between 1980/81 there were 153 houses, 1981/82 only 73, 1982/83 only 120; in 1983/84 only 66 and in 1984/85 only 68, and the point I will make is that these statistics do not allow that honourable Member who was presiding in the Ministry of Housing at that time to be in a position to discuss housing policy in comparative terms between his administration and the administration of the Democratic Labour Party.

As I said, in the context of some of the things he raised, there is an untold story about West Terrace which I do not propose to tell, but I think it would be useful if we could hear the full and final story concerning the development of West Terrace, and I think Kensington Lodge also can bear some detailed examination in terms of some of the things which have been reported arising out of that development. It is my understanding that the units in that development will cost x in the end \$132 000 per unit. I do not know that that is accurate, but I know that it cannot be so far wrong as to negate the point that I am making, that the value of that property, or the value of those units in relation to the rents which are being charged is a matter to which the Minister should address his mind.

I want to talk in broader terms about some aspects of our housing policy which require serious consideration. In the United States, as you know, there is a Federal Housing Administration, which arose soon after the depression of the Thirties, which has as its objective the guaranteeing of housing for a number of persons in the United States who may otherwise not have had the privilege of owning their homes. The way in which it

works suggests to me that in developing countries like ours, if we would identify with that kind of policy, we would go a long way towards satisfying some of the mortgage difficulties which exist in Barbados and in places like Barbados.

One of the basic factors in this country is that the criteria which are required for an average citizen from the lower socio-economic groupings to get a mortgage really are too elaborate and too far beyond their normal capability. It is not right that a person who otherwise shows a good character, who is gainfully employed and whose pattern of savings are reasonable should have the kind of difficulty acquiring a home which policies in our country have led these persons to experience. It seems to me that in the same way we offer incentives to the manufacturing industry and to agriculture, we ought to see individuals in their home, and recognize that among the most fundamental purchases that a man or woman might make in an entire lifetime is the acquisition of a house. It is unlikely that persons who acquire homes and who continue to have employment will default deliberately on their mortgage payments. I really think that we need to spend more money as a community in guaranteeing that more people can own their own homes. One of the things which we will have to do, of course, is to get the country moving again. We would have to get the economic development of this country into high gear and, concomitantly with that, we are going to have to reduce the cost of housing.

8.05 p.m.

I think it is fair to say that a substantial part of the cost of housing is Government-induced. Approximately 12 per cent to 15 per cent of the cost of a house can be found in required payments to Government either by way of taxes directly or taxes indirectly. I want to suggest that we in this community have a duty to make a concerted effort to reduce the cost of building and to increase the amount of funds which we make available for building. I think that what we need is a philosophy of housing which would move us away from the mere arithmetic of housing and see the same kind of attitude which prevailed in the country, which has been mentioned in the White Paper as having been successful in its housing programme, a country where 155 000 units were constructed — Singapore. One hundred and fifty-five thousand units were constructed in Singapore in a relatively short period, twelve years. I think the reason why they were successful, notwithstanding the mechanical steps which may be identified, and have been identified to some extent in the White Paper, is that there was a national philosophy about housing and the need to house people which was manifested in the collective efforts of the private and public sectors, but was spearheaded by the public sector.

I am suggesting that it is not outside the pale of possibility for the Minister of Finance to identify specifically those indirect taxes which are applied to housing and housing material and, for a period of time, remove them altogether. Concomitant with that would be the recognition that a substantial part, about 75 per cent of the value added to the kind of houses we should construct can be found right here in Barbados. I think it is fair to say that, in any house, rough figures would be that 55 per cent of the building would be in the material cost and about 45 per cent in the labour cost. I think that if you removed the 12 per cent to 15 per cent Government cost, which are attached to most of the raw material going into buildings, we would see two things. We would see an increase in the amount of house starts we have in the country and we would also see a change in the attitude of people towards home owning once again.

There was a time when most Barbadians could look forward, and did look forward, to owning their own homes. The cost of building and other related factors have now reduced that expectancy to a point where it is entirely possible that more than half the population under the age of twenty-five now hold out no hope, no anticipation, of owning their own home. It would be impossible for housing development to occur in any serious way in a society where those facts were true, and I have every reason to believe that those facts are true in Barbados.

I am suggesting that where, for example, in October the Minister of Finance indicated that he, as part of his corrective measures, would be allowing the Central Bank to have a \$10 million bond issue for housing, that ought to have been a \$30 million bond issue. It seems to me that if we look at the allocation of our resources, even now, if we look, for example, at the plan to construct the Industrial Access Road, as it is called, without prejudice to my view as to whether we should have the road or not, if we look at the sums of money we are going to be spending on that road and if we look at the multiplier effect which that investment will have on the economy as a whole and we compare that with a relative spending of a lesser amount of money in the field of housing, I think that a comparison of the multiplier effect will show that a \$30 million investment in housing, which is an investment that is going to be returned — because once it is made available by way of mortgage, not only is the principal sum going to be returned, but it is going to earn interest in its path — will start a whole new spiral of economic activity in this country. And when you realize that we have, as part of our infrastructural development created a cement plant, which is not an inconsequential plant — I think it is going to be producing 280 000 bags of cements per annum — when you recognize that the basic raw material is going to be coming out of Barbados, it seems to me that

the country can withstand a spurt of housing activity, and that, in fact, part of the malaise which we have in the economy would have been relieved by that kind of bold initiative.

I think that housing has to be approached not on a sectoral basis, but as one of the massive areas of investment which the country is going to undertake. In the same way that Government has embarked on highway building as a massive infrastructural development process, I think that they have to approach housing like that. The dichotomy between private sector and public sector is merely academic, to a large extent, because, in sum, it really does not matter which sector is spending the money or which sector is generating the activity. If the funds are made available in a concerted way, then the activity is bound to follow.

I have always found it difficult to understand why the planners in developing countries like ours always allow themselves to become entrapped in the same criteria that are exercised in the larger countries. I would invite the Government to examine the attitude which could be found to housing in those countries, which are now developed, fifty years ago, when those countries were still in their developing stage.

8.15 p.m.

The phenomenon of Singapore is not so much the statistics — it is the will which was demonstrated by that government at that time. It was a philosophy which worked on the concept of making housing itself a national anticipation, a national goal. If I may put it in these terms, in the same way that Government has been able to identify the erecting of statues in Barbados as something that is required for the national goodwill, I think that, instead of saying that we need 1700 houses and lamenting that the National Housing Corporation can only produce 200 per annum, which by its very nature would suggest that this country, a hundred years from now, would be no better off than it is now in terms of providing housing stock, we have to come to the conclusion that, in order for this country to become a better place, we have to build 500 houses a year in the National Housing Corporation and 1000 a year in the private sector, then we have to look and see what is required for that, and then we have to provide the resources, even if only a medium term basis, and we should try that kind of policy for five to seven years. Then, I would make bold to say that the results would be so startling that the questions which have been raised, and continue to be raised, and which led my colleague to say that there will always be a housing debate, would have disappeared.

Mr. Speaker, if you examine what the Government has said that it is going to be putting forward as its infrastructural development projects, if you look at the

projects such as the Bridgetown Fishing Harbour and the Speightstown Harbour, the Central Bank and, as I said before, the roads, you will see that we are discussing a massive amount of money. Yet, when we come to housing, we find the figure is considerably reduced. I submit that that is as a result of a certain philosophical approach, and I am submitting that what we need is a complete change, a complete movement away from that philosophy.

The people in Guyana have timber, but they do not have financial resources. The people in Barbados, by comparison, have cement and the financial resources. The point that was made by the Leader of the Opposition in another place, that we can raise money on the market in Barbados to do some of these projects, is a valid point. I am suggesting that a bond issue of \$10 million will be over-subscribed in a short time, and a similar bond issue of \$30 million will also be over-subscribed. I am submitting that a bond issue of \$30 million or more for housing can be seen in even clearer terms for deficit financing, because the people for whom the houses are being built are indeed those who are coming behind.

I want to touch briefly on a matter which engaged the debate for the whole day, and that is the tenancies and the development of the tenancies. Again, I find myself on a different philosophical plane than some of my brethren on these matters, and here I am talking about both political parties. If you say in Barbados that the Tenancies Act does not advance the people of Barbados too much, it is going to be said that you are not interested in land re-distribution. But the truth is, if you examine what we are actually doing on the plantations, and if you examine it dispassionately, without reference to political position, you will see that we may in fact be creating slums on the plantations. The reason is that the size of the lots which we are identifying, when they are owned eventually by all of the people who are now to own them, you will find that they are going to admit of a substantially smaller house, a substantially inferior dwelling place, to the ones the National Housing Corporation has been putting up, and which have been identified by the National Housing Corporation, and both Governments, as the minimum standard of housing which we ought to be aspiring to in this country.

(Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Wrong!)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member says that I am wrong, and I have no doubt that I could be. The honourable Member will point out in due course where I am wrong. But I submit to him that to indicate that a housing lot of 500 sq. ft. at \$1.00 sq. ft. — that is what the policy has done, that they will be able to buy at 500 sq. ft. — I am not without some ability to understand the English language, and I know what I am saying — 500 sq. ft. is the basic lot in the tenantry developments, and that is what you can get at ten cents a square foot. All over that is purchased at a higher price.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: The honourable Member for St. Michael West is either deliberately or inadvertently misleading the House. The basic lot in plantation tenancies is upwards.....

Mr. SPEAKER: Even if the honourable Member is attempting to mislead the Honourable House, that is not a point of order.....

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: There are 1500 sq. ft., in many cases, and up to 3 000 sq. ft.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, in the same way that that side has been perpetrating the myth that the Democratic Labour Party voted against the constitutional amendment, in the same way that the honourable Member of St. Andrew said in his speech that we voted against it clause by clause, there is a point that needs to be taken. If you examine what I am saying, you will see that there are lots — you may even read the debates — not less than 500 square feet for what the house is on. The lots themselves, because of Town Planning, will have to be not less than 2 500.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Let me go with them and agree that it is whatever he says — 3 500. The point I am making is still valid. You have taken a number of persons in this country who were living in tenancies, who were paying five cents and six cents a week and who had security of tenure, who could never be moved, and you have said to them that they are now going to become land owners — my colleague has already pointed out the onerous nature for many of them of moving from paying five cents a week to paying for the land — but that is not the point.....

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, can I be heard in silence, Sir?

(Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: They are passing cash!)

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have no doubt that there are some who are paying cash. But they keep missing the point. It is not whether they can pay now. The point I want to make is this. Most of the people who are tenants in the tenancies now are people who are 50 and 60 years and over. Their children and their grandchildren are people who are either outside of the country or who have moved out of the tenantry, and they would wish to live in areas such as the ones which both Governments have been creating, the Terraces, in Eden Lodge, and in those places.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Man I listened to you. Can you not listen?

Most of those people would not wish to go back into the tenantry, even though it is a piece of land that would have been left for them.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish that you conclude your speech. Time has run against you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Very well, Mr. Speaker.

The point I am making is that while it is desirable to re-distribute the land, the re-distribution of the land ought to be done within and again I have to use the words — a philosophical, forward-looking, social concept, which will allow those areas to be developed along the lines that the other areas developed by the Government itself have developed. I want to suggest, therefore, that the concomitant arrangement where two persons now constitute a tenantry is moribund and is detrimental to the very development which the policy was designed to foster.

8.25 p.m.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I had not really intended to get into this discussion at all. I believe it would be unfortunate to leave unchallenged the contribution which the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) has just made.

I believe that too many times we discuss matters from our own personal perspectives. The only tenancies with which the honourable Member for St. Michael West is familiar is possibly Hanschell Land and Bosvigo Tenantry, in which case some of those houses may well be on 500 square feet, but those are tenancies from a darker day, and the Barbados Labour Party's policy with respect to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act clearly sets out the criteria that should surround and guide the demarcation of the plantation tenancies. It is noteworthy that the Democratic Labour Party voted against that legislation when it came to the House, and so they can be excused if they are unfamiliar with the terms.

The plantation tenancies are set out according to certain criteria. The tenants on the land point out to the plantation owner the area of land which they have been occupying over a period of five consecutive years, and when they have identified the land that they have been occupying the law stipulates that that land has to be surveyed, and it is that portion of land that is then subdivided and sold at ten cents a square foot. In many cases, some persons have been occupying as much as 15 000 square feet, and in the plantation tenancies I cannot think of a single case where the area of land has

been less than 3 500 square feet, because there is usually a portion of working land attached to it.

What we are discussing is substantial parcels of land that would otherwise sell for \$2.00 a square foot, and which people are purchasing for \$300. A facility has been made available where they can go and borrow money from the National Bank to purchase the lots, but I believe if you were to check with the National Bank, you will be surprised to discover that in hardly any case at all did the bank have to advance funds for the purchase of the land. Tenants were able to purchase the land out of their own resources.

Furthermore, the policy of the Government in respect of these plantation tenancies is that proper accesses have to be provided. The Ministry of Housing send down their social surveyors as well as the physical surveyors, and once a social survey has been carried out then the physical surveying is undertaken and an access road has by law to be provided.

Asides.

Hon. V. L. JOHNSON: By the Government. That is why you will discover that in places like Henley in St. John, \$600 000 was spent by the Ministry of Transport and Works for the purpose of providing a proper access to those tenancies. The same thing happens in other plantation tenancies as well, and it will be the continuing policy of the Government to provide the right of way so that what used to be inaccessible, and perhaps in some cases backward, are now becoming properly laid out subdivisions, with proper access, waterborne facilities and lighting. All of this is part and parcel of the entire package.

I believe that when we approach the matter of housing, most of us in here, being urban dwellers, tend to look in terms of housing from an urban perspective, but the fact of the matter is that the housing needs of Barbados are as divergent as the various parishes and localities. There are a number of people who will not live any place except St. Philip, and I do not care how generous the provisions are made for the acquisition of property in St. Michael, many people will choose to remain in that parish of St. Philip. The same thing goes for St. Lucy and St. Andrew, and to suggest that the parishes are dying, that persons who live in plantation tenancies are not interested in purchasing their plots, does not in any way at all accord with the reality. The reality is that most rural districts, including plantation tenancies, are on the growth pattern and indeed are growing very rapidly indeed, as the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) will be able to attest. I was hoping that the honourable Member for St. Michael West would just lean over to his right and get some guidance from his colleague, who is infinitely more

qualified to discuss these matters than he has proved himself to be able to do here today.

When we talk about housing, we have to talk in terms of housing for rural dwellers and housing for urban dwellers. Our point has always been that, far from providing terraced units in the rural areas, the need is for serviced lots where people are able to provide their own houses, provided they have land with water and light on it. If you were to go in the country and build terraced units, you will discover that they do not accord with the living habits of the people in the rural parishes, because people in the country want to have chickens, pigs, animals generally, in the yard, which is a fillip to the salaries which they earn, perhaps in town or somewhere in one of the industrial estates. Therefore, when we are thinking of housing we have a duty to recognise that housing is not as simple as it may sound. What may be a solution in the Ivy will certainly not prove to be a solution in a place like St. Lucy or St. Andrew.

I believe that I was duty bound to put that little bit on the Record in order to correct the misapprehensions of the honourable Member for St. Michael West, and at the same time to commend the Minister of Housing for this noteworthy document which he has brought before the House today.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, further consideration of this item was postponed.

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT SPOONERS HILL, ST. MICHAEL

Order No. 4 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to compulsorily acquire land at Spooners Hill, St. Michael.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Speaker, this acquisition, like most acquisitions that come before this Honourable House, is comparatively simple and straightforward. We have heard a lot today about the Government's thrust in sites and services. There are a lot of pieces of land jutting out here and there all over St. Michael and Christ Church, and St. James to some extent, and we considered that it might be useful, since the pressure is on for sites and services, to make them available to people who are looking for lots to put their houses on.

8.35 p.m.

I do not think that a Resolution of this nature would evoke a tremendous amount of discussion. The plans are here. The matters are quite straightforward, but if any further information is required, I would be quite willing, as is my wont, to give that information.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Speaker, you have a situation where there are areas which are natural settling points and run-off points for water, and the Town Planning Department is now prohibiting any building, naturally, on the old service catchment areas. I think that since these catchment areas are now by the Town Planning regulations becoming useless to the individuals, the Ministry should consider compulsory acquisitions of these catchment areas. This would do two things: it would guarantee that they would remain open as natural catchment areas to alleviate any flooding, and it would remove the problem, which I think is a disadvantage to the present owners who own them, because they are not being allowed to make any use of them whatsoever. Also, you might have the possibility of some of the owners filling them in for developmental purposes and therefore causing a problem with run-offs.

Mr. P. M. GREAVES (St. Michael North): Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the acquisition of land at Spooner's Hill, it would seem to me as though the Minister is contemplating putting in sites and services. I am wondering if the Minister will tell us exactly what kind of services are being offered. Is it a bare development of the land with road, water and lights, or do we intend to put in more than just this? Do you intend to put in a wall section for a bathroom? What do you mean by sites and services in this regard?

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Arising out of the questions which have been asked of me by some constituents and other related persons, I have to ask the Minister once again whether the Government will make a statement on this whole question of the length of time it is taking for people who have had their lands acquired to receive the money. There are people who have been going back and forth, people who have been waiting.

I know of one case where the individual is the trustee for a person who is *non compos mentis* — that person is being kept in some private institution and the trustee has to be paying large quantities of money to maintain the person. It was understood that arising out of the acquisition of a property not far from this one that is being acquired, funds would have been made available to help maintain the individual concerned. I have had other representations made to me, and I did promise that on the first acquisition which came up in the House I would seek from the Minister some indication as to what the position is. There are some persons who claim that they have been waiting in excess of three years.

I would like the Minister not so much to deal with the individual cases, but to give some idea of what the problems are and to indicate what persons have to do in order to get their money. It seems as if there is a lot of communication back and forth between those who are waiting for their money and the Ministry. But there is no controversy, it is just a question of waiting for their money. I would like to hear from the Minister on this.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I take it that the first points made by the honourable Member for St. Philip North (Mr. W. O. Franklin) could easily be handled by the Town Planning Office. If by the points raised he is thinking in terms of the hardship that can be created for the owners, it is unfortunate that the owners would have found themselves in that situation. In my own constituency there are people who have lands that they cannot do anything with, but I imagine they pay taxes on the lands. They cannot put a house on the lands, they cannot grow anything on them, but they still have them.

I believe that if the proper representation is made that Government should acquire a piece of land for a particular purpose, if the property can be useful as a playing field or something like that, the Ministry responsible for Sports might well consider the purchase of that land for that purpose. It is true that when an order is put on a piece of land prohibiting the building of anything on it, it creates some hardships, to some extent, for the owners. When representation is made to us that some use can be made of the land, we always look with sympathy at such a recommendation.

With respect to the question asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael North (Mr. P. M. Greaves) I remember that the honourable Member for St. Philip North had put forward the suggestion of putting in wells at some stage. I will answer this in my reply on the White Paper, but I can do it now as well. He said that a well might only cost \$2 000 to put in, but the \$2 000 will have to come from somewhere, and somebody will have to pay for it. I do not know if it is considered that this should be a form of subsidization for the person who will get it in, or if it would be passed on. If it would be passed on, it can be done.

We are, of course, trying to do as much as possible. The people whom we resited were given all the facilities. They are given groundsills and the foundation. They are given toilets and baths and all the facilities that you can imagine. All of those things will be put in for those persons who are affected by any improvements to existing roads, or any that may be built. Any person who is moved will get all of those infrastructural facilities.

With respect to the question of the money for land acquisitions, I am on record as saying in this House that it is traumatic to remove people from their homes and from the areas that they have been accustomed to over the years in the first place, let alone to remove them and not to pay them. To me, it seems inhuman and unchristian.

8.45 p.m.

The Government has a lot of power under the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act, but the Government has got to work through machinery. Sometimes you hear the Government being attacked for its failure to do things, but the Government can only do so much. I can only give instructions, and the Ministry officials at Housing can only pass on the information to the Attorney General's office. The Attorney General himself does not make out title deeds, nor does he have anything to do with the disbursement of funds for lands acquired. Officers in his Ministry and lawyers in there look after the title deeds and what-have-you.

As a result of the problems which we have been encountering from time to time in order to satisfy the needs of these people who have suffered by these serious delays, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has made very serious representations to the Government to have set up within the Ministry a unit to look after the new industrial access road. We felt that if this special unit was not put in the Ministry, we would find not only one, two or three years, but possibly ten years would go by and people would not receive their money. Therefore, a special legal unit has been put in the Ministry consisting of a principal legal officer, a second legal officer and two para-legals in order to expedite the matter of acquisitions.

The problem in acquisition is not money. It is the ability to get the title deeds in order, and everything put together. I may yet let the House know, and it is right that they should know, that there is a serious deficiency in terms of staff in the Attorney General's office, and the Minister of Housing and Lands is bound under the Crown Lands Vesting Act to be advised by the Attorney General as far as any matter which he must sign to do with the sale of lands or the purchase thereof. So, with these types of inhibitions, we have to wait until we can get the files and the papers coming out of the Attorney General's office.

I have made several requests. We cannot force legal people to go into the Attorney General's office. I cannot physically lift them up and put them there. I would like them to go in order to get the work done. I am very unhappy. There are constituents of mine, there are many people who call me on a daily basis and I am constantly in touch with my own staff asking them to contact the Attorney General's office with a view to having this matter settled. We may very well have to make very

radical decisions so that the Ministry could set up its own legal department and have complete control. The Crown Land Vesting Act would have to be so amended as to allow such a situation to exist.

I sincerely hope that from the answer, though not satisfying because the satisfaction would be to pay the people the money, you will understand that my hands are tied and there is nothing that I can do in the matter.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, earlier in the day I gave notice of three Resolutions, and I have since then held discussions with my colleague, the Acting Leader of the Opposition, by virtue of his years of office, and he has kindly agreed that they have no objection to having these Resolutions done. I think two of them have been circulated, and I have asked to have the other one circulated, and if it is the wish of the House, Mr. Speaker, I shall be ready to proceed with them in all their stages.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no objection and the Honourable Minister may now proceed.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House go into Committee of Supply.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. ODLE in the Chair.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1984-85 No. 39

Head 18 – Audit, was called and passed.

Head 19 – Ministry of Finance and Planning – was called and passed.

Head 20 – Revenue Collection – was called and passed.

Head 28 – Ministry of Legal Affairs – was called and passed.

Head 36 – Ministry of Health – was called and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1984-85 No. 38

Head 15 – Cabinet Office – was called and passed.

Head 28 – Ministry of Legal Affairs – was called and passed.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1984–85 No. 37

*Head 19 – Ministry of Finance and Planning – was called and passed.
8.55 p.m.*

Head 28 – Ministry of Legal Affairs -- was called and passed.

Head 30 – Police – was called and passed.

Head 31 – Prisons – was called and passed.

Head 42 – Ministry of Transport and Works – was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of three money Resolutions in Committee

and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. L. S. CRAIG, seconded by Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, the Resolutions were read a first time, a second time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today.

I wish to thank my colleagues on the other side for their co-operation, especially the Member for St. Michael West.

I beg to move that this House do now stand adjourned until March 5, 1985 at 12.00 o'clock noon.

*The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the Sitting accordingly.
9.00 p.m.*

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