
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION OF 1981 – 86

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 14, 1985

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. on Tuesday, May 14, 1985.

PRESENT

His Honour C. L. Bolden, LL.B., (Speaker)
His Honour R. E. Brathwaite, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. E. W. Barrow, Q.C., B.Sc., LL.D., (Leader of the Opposition)
Hon. L. S. Craig, (Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House)
Hon. H. deB. Forde, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Mr. L. E. Sandiford, M.A., (Econ.)
Hon. B. A. Miller, (Minister of Education)
Hon. L. B. Brathwaite, (Minister of Housing and Lands and Minister of Trade and Industry)
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. L. R. Tull, Q.C., M.A., (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs)
Hon. DeL. O. Bradshaw, (Minister of Labour, Social Security, Sport and Community Services)
Mr. L. L. Sisnett, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of International Transport)
Hon. Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, M.A., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs)
Mr. P. M. Greaves, B.A.
Mr. L. A. Weekes
Mr. M. A. King, Q.C., LL.B.
Mr. W. O. Franklin, A.I.A.S., J.P.
Mr. H. A. Blackman
Hon. A. Truss, (Minister of Tourism and the Environment)
Mr. O. S. Arthur, M.Sc., (Econ.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

Prayers were read by Rev. I. Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, May 7, 1985.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that the Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, May 7, 1985, be taken as read.

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

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

A Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Clapham, Christ Church.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I propose to suspend the Standing Orders in the light of having to go to Queen's Park for lunch. Since it will not be within the ambit of the present Standing Orders, I have to use additional time.

I beg to move that Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43, and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

WIDOWS AND CHILDREN PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1985

Order No. 5 was called – To move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Widows and Children Pensions Act, Cap. 37.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG (St. James North): Mr. Speaker, this Bill sets out to amend the Widows and Children Pension Act. It comes about because in 1978 Government decided that the Widows and Children Pension Scheme continue for civil servants who were contributors at that time, and that their beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries should be closed to new entrances as of April 1, 1978. However, at the same time it was agreed that the pensions payable under the scheme should be increased from one-third to one-half each in respect of a widow's pension and children's pensions, so that the maximum benefits payable would equal an officer's eligibility for pension at the date of death or retirement.

Section 18 1(a) of the Widows and Children Pension Act, Cap. 37 provides: *inter alia* that when a person who has made contributions under this Act ceases to be a public officer, it would appear that he has had no wife throughout the period beginning with the date of the first appointment as a public officer in the service of the Crown, and so ending with the date when he ceases to be a public officer.

Section 18(6) says:

"Where a person leaves the public service before attaining the age of fifty-five years, any contributions which are returnable to that person under this section shall be suspended until –

- (a) he has attained the age of fifty-five years or sooner dies; or
- (b) he has satisfied the Governor-General that he is incapacitated and his condition is likely to be permanent."

The Bill, therefore, under consideration is to amend the Widows and Children Pensions Act so that the payments to such beneficiaries should be based on pension which would have been payable to the officer at the date of his resignation, for example, when he ceases to contribute.

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

Mr. L. L. SISNETT: I second that, Sir.

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

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that the Bill be now read a third time.

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

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

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that the Bill do now pass and be cited as the Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1985.

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

The question that the Bill be passed and so cited was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Sir, I must apologise. I was pre-occupied with another matter and I gave the wrong citation.

It is Order No. 5 I am dealing with and it should be, 'I beg to move that this Bill do now pass and be cited as the Widows and Children (Amendment) Act, 1985.' 12.25 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you had better recommit the Bill.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: Yes, Sir. I beg to move that this Bill be recommitted.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no objections, the Bill will be recommitted. The Bill is now recommitted.

Hon. L. S. CRAIG: I beg to move that the Bill do now pass and be cited as the Widows and Children Pensions (Amendment) Act, 1985.

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

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

AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION NO. 49/1969

Order No. 2 was called – to move the passing of the Resolution to approve the amendment to Resolution No. 49/1969.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks to have parliamentary approval for the change of the purpose for which this acquisition was made in 1969. At the time when this land was acquired, it was for recreational purposes, but since that time the Government has been experiencing a very great demand for sites and services in that area, and the pressure was so great that we considered it necessary to develop the area for housing. Therefore, the Resolution is here to seek parliamentary approval for the change of the purpose for which the 1969 approval was given.

It is a simple and straightforward matter and I do not think that any great debate will flow from this change of use.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): I believe the parcel of land which this Resolution deals with originally constituted a playing field in the Gall Hill area, Christ Church, for the residents of Gall Hill, Christ Church and the surrounding areas. This Resolution, as I understand it, seeks to change the use of that parcel of land from recreational purposes to residential purposes. As a matter of fact, the use of the land has already been changed and roads have been cut in the playing field. There certainly has been no consultation with the residents of the area. The young men who use the playing field for recreational purposes, particularly for the playing of football – I mean they have a very good football team up there, the Pride of Gall Hill, which has just done very well in recent local football competitions and now has the privilege of playing First Division football next year – those young men have been deprived of the use of their playing field without any consultation, even without any representation being made to them as to what was going on in the area. Suddenly they turned up one morning and saw the bulldozers moving through the playing field and the parcel of land being subdivided into lots for residential purposes. What is all the more appalling is that that activity should have taken place at a time before parliamentary approval was given to that matter, and parliamentary approval is coming now some several months after the change has in fact taken place.

I think that in situations of this kind, when parliamentary approval is needed to change the use of

lands like that, the proper parliamentary approval should be sought and obtained first before the actual change has taken place, so that the matter can be debated and the issue can be fully ventilated. It shows, I suggest, a complete disregard for the people who live in the area, for the people who use the facilities, and in my view this is not in the best interests of the development of a good social climate in the area.

I know there is a feeling, which I have heard expressed by the honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, the Prime Minister (Hon. H. B. St. John), that there should not be a whole lot of facilities in one area, that the Wotton playing field is nearby and that the residents of Gall Hill, who live close to Wotton, should use Wotton as the facility for their activities. But it is a little hard when young people have been accustomed to a playing field in an area all their lives suddenly to be uprooted from that and to be asked to move into another area, even though it is not all that far away.

Bearing in mind that the Wotton playing field, as large as it is, cannot effectively accommodate cricket and football at the same time, you find that, for instance, when cricket is being played on the Wotton pasture the residents of Gall Hill would have been able to play their out of season football on their little local pasture right there in their backyard. They now have a problem of keeping themselves in tune in the out of season and have to go left, right and centre to find somewhere to vent their activities.

This is now a dead story, because the matter has, in fact, been accomplished, and as critical as we are of Government's action in this matter, it is a situation in which we are now in no position to reverse it. But I would certainly urge Government that in the future, when they are dealing with matters of this kind where the approval of Parliament is necessary before any governmental action is taken, that that approval should properly be sought and that the proper procedures and the proper measures be taken before embarking on matters of Government policy. The one sure thing you have achieved by doing it this way is pre-empting any discussion whatsoever, any parliamentary debate, and you have gone ahead and presented the people in the area with a *fait accompli*.

Changing the use of this land from one for recreational facilities to housing can create problems for an area like Gall Hill, which is already very heavily built up, because what you are in fact doing is seriously increasing the density of the housing population. You are piling people one on top the other. The Gall Hill Housing Area as it stands is pretty heavily populated at the moment. Going right into Silver Hill there are two housing areas which are quite close to each other, and apart from housing area developments there are other housing

developments right in between the two of them, and the density of the population is very high in that area.
12.35 p.m.

As much as housing is needed, what this proposal has done is to increase the density of population quite seriously in that area without making, I suggest, appropriate provision for areas of relief. The whole area has been taken up and converted to housing and no provision has been made, for instance, for the installation of, perhaps, a little hard court, which does not take up as much space as a football field, and the young people in the area would welcome and would have welcomed the use of a hard court facility in the area so that they can play basketball, tennis or something of that nature which does not require as much land area as a big sport like football and cricket.

Whilst I am on this matter, I may also mention the absence of any community centre for that area. There is a building which used to be used as a day care centre at one time owned . . .

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is well aware that we are not discussing community centres. We are discussing the change of a Resolution in respect of a piece of land. If the honourable Member can tell me how he gets to a community centre being in that area, I would be quite happy to listen to him.

Mr. M. A. KING: We are changing the facilities from recreational purposes to housing, and a community centre, certainly, is a recreational facility for young people.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not the subject matter of the Resolution.

Mr. M. A. KING: If Your Honour rules me out of order, I will have to abide by your ruling, but, it would seem to me that when you are talking about recreational facilities and housing in one breath, in the same Resolution . . .

Mr. SPEAKER: It seems to me that the Standing Orders say you must keep to the substance of the Resolution. If you can show me where I am incorrect, I am prepared to go with you, but as long as the Standing Orders are written in that way, I am going to follow the Standing Orders.

Mr. M. A. KING: I am only suggesting to Your Honour, with respect, that a community centre is part of recreational facilities.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not arguing. We are not debating recreational facilities. The main subject before Parliament is a Resolution to change the use of a piece of land.

Mr. M. A. KING: If you rule me out of order, I have to abide by your ruling, but I am saying it seems to me that if we are talking about changing the use of land from recreational facilities, I am dealing with land and property in the same area, the Gall Hill area.....

Mr. SPEAKER: I will draw honourable Members' attention to Standing Order 35(2): "The debate upon such a motion shall be confined to the matter of the motion." If you would look back at 34, the clause says that you must stick to the subject matter of the motion. The subject matter of the motion is a Resolution to approve the change of use. It is not a Resolution dealing with recreational facilities or community buildings. That is my ruling.

Mr. M. A. KING: If you wish to rule on a subject matter dealing with recreational facilities, that is Your Honour's business. I would, therefore, just conclude this short intervention by expressing the greatest regret that this Resolution should come to this House at a time when the subject matter of the Resolution has, in fact, been already accomplished and effected, and I would urge Government to see that in the future it complies with the right procedures in dealing with matters of this kind.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): In rising to support the comments of my colleague, I first wish to draw to Your Honour's attention that the Resolution we are purporting to be changing may not, in fact, have existed in the form which appears in this Resolution. I have searched the records to see if I can find Resolution 49/69, passed on the 18 August. I have seen no Resolution passed on the 18 August in the records of this House by that number or of that substance. It may very well be that we may be engaging, therefore, in a fruitless activity, and I think it would be in the interest of this Honourable Chamber if the Honourable Minister who introduced this, or some other Minister, would acquaint the House as to the specifics of this Resolution No. 49/69 passed on August 17, 1969. The dates on which the House may have met do not seem to admit of a August 18, but I cannot speak with any certainty. I am only going according to the records which I have been able to locate.

Secondly, I wish to agree most definitely with my colleague, the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central (Mr. M. A. King), in this regard. It seems that on August 6, 1969, there was a Resolution in this House to approve the compulsory acquisition of certain lands by the Crown at Gall Hill.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Before you quarrel with me, check to see if what I am saying is accurate, because the

House does not seem to have met on the 18th, according to the records I have, which I acquired from the Clerk.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is this according to Hansard?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: According to Hansard.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already asked the Clerk to check the other documents of the House which might clarify the matter.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It would be useful if the Minister would recognise I am not hereby seeking to do anything other than to help the House in the progress of its work. That is all I am seeking to do.

As I look at the description for August 6, the area, as described by the then Leader of the House, speaks of land at Gall Hill, a parcel of land comprising by admeasurement, five acres, one rood, 33.5 perches, which seems to coincide with the recitation in this Resolution, "or thereabouts abutting and bounding, on lands of the Barbados Housing Authority", which seem to agree with the recitation in the Resolution, "on lands of Susan Lovell", which seems to coincide with this Resolution, "on lands of one Norgrove", the same recitation, "on lands of C. T. Barrett deceased on lands of J. R. Peterkin and the public road or however else the same may abut and bound."

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That seems to me to be the identical piece of land, but if the Minister says there were seven pieces, I am sure he will get up and explain it.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the date of that?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This appears to be August 6. The Hansard says Wednesday, 6th August, 1969, and I do not see any evidence that the House was suspended. In any case, if the House was suspended, it would have to be the 6th August, since that is the date that the House met.
12.45 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House was suspended and concluded the following day.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There is no evidence of that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it not that it might have been signed on the day of conclusion?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: There is also that, Sir. Anyway, for what it is worth, I draw it to Your Honour's attention

so that we may not make an error and compound it with further error.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the Resolution number?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The one that is in this Resolution says No. 49/1969, but this Resolution, as it was passed, according to Hansard, would not have had a number at that time. It merely says "Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of certain lands by the Crown at Gall Hill." But that is a matter for the officials and the Government.

What I wish to draw to Your Honour's attention is that the debate which took place concerning this land suggests to me that, as a very careful and thoughtful process, it occurred before the House acquired the land for the purposes set out therein. I am very concerned about the Government doing things *ex post facto*. I have raised my voice in this Honourable Chamber before about the manner in which the Government goes about its business. This is not the first instance of land to be acquired, or land to be used by the Government, where the Government has gone ahead and utilised the land in a particular way which, until this House passes or pronounces on it, can only be described as illegal, where the Government has entered upon a process and then subsequently comes to this Honourable Chamber to have this Chamber ratify, illegal, activity retroactively.

I am fundamentally against that process, and, therefore, as a matter of principle, we will not support this Resolution. In fact, it is on two levels. First, we agree with the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central that recreational facilities that were acquired in 1969, which allowed people to get accustomed to a certain pattern of use, ought not now be changed in what, obviously, is a unilateral manner, and perhaps even a haphazard manner. I say "perhaps" because I want to give the Minister responsible for Housing the benefit of the doubt in this matter. I will give him the benefit of the doubt, but in the mad rush to satisfy certain predictions which were made by their political party concerning the number of house spots which will be made available, and notwithstanding the clear need for house spots — there is a need — we think that the Government can do it in a proper way, and this is our second point of departure. If they identify areas as part of the national planning, let the Government identify the number of areas where it proposes to establish house spots, let the community as a whole know, as is done with the general planning process.

As you are aware, Sir, when there is a plan for the use of land in the country, there is a whole elaborate procedure which has to be gone through. The reason for that is that it is not haphazard; it is to allow the

community at large to participate in the planning of the total environment in which the community must exist. The Government can and ought to establish very clearly the areas where it intends to set out as house spots so that persons can examine the competing uses to which the particular land may be put.

I know of a parcel of land which, until very recently, was a rich agricultural piece of land. To my certain knowledge the Government is in the process of trying to acquire that land. The Government has been in negotiation with the owner of that land. To my surprise and absolute horror, I have discovered that the Government moved in its equipment and machinery and the Government has proceeded to cut roads in the land, and the Government has announced that this land is going to be used to provide house spots. Since the land is exactly next door to the place where I was born, had I been aware that that land was going to be acquired for that purpose, as a citizen who had benefited from the fruits of at least seven mango trees, banana trees and a host of other fruit trees including, perhaps, the only sapodilla tree in an area of five square miles.... had I known that this particular piece of land was going to be decimated in the way it is being decimated, I would have objected to it if for no other reasons than traditional reasons.

It is even worse when you realise that the Government has gone ahead and may very well be coming to this Honourable Chamber, as it does today, to get the stamp of approval for an action that they have already concluded. That is not the way this system of Government is supposed to work. One error in that regard is excusable, a few errors in that regard should attract censure, but when it becomes a habit, when it starts to reach proportions of a method, then we have to cry halt. Only the technicians should be playing with the air-conditioning. Some honourable Members do not have the ability to interfere with the air-conditioning. When the Government starts making it a practice that if they see a piece of land and they decide they want to acquire it, they are going to move their machinery on it and start cutting roads in it before it comes to this House to be acquired, that is a dangerous precedent which is being set.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) seems to be offering the House guidance. I would give way.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wonder why the honourable Member does not continue with his debate?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Because, Sir, I do not wish to mislead the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member cannot hear asides made by honourable Members sitting in their seats. You are addressing the Chair.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, I only use my mouth when I am addressing the Chair. Nothing is wrong with my hearing.

The point I am making is that if we get into this very unacceptable and undemocratic habit of the Government taking action, especially in regard to land, and then coming to seek approval from this House *ex post facto*, that is very dangerous. In this case, we acquired land in 1969 for recreational purposes, a playing field to be specific. The Government has decided that it will put house spots there and it will drive the residents of that area to some other area — not far — or it may be far, I do not know. The honourable Member for Christ Church West Central indicates that the young citizens of that area have been deprived of recreational facilities. I would not normally wish to agree with a Resolution that did that.

12.55 p.m.

I will end, as I began. In principle, we will have to vote against this Resolution, because it seeks to impose Government on the people in a manner which the system we have did not envisage, and every time the Government attempts to do that, I, for one, would be standing up and saying, "no", as I propose to do on this Resolution. And as a result of the vote which we take on this Resolution, we will have to vote the same way on the concomitant Resolution, when that comes before this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member must not anticipate the House.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I am not anticipating, I am merely making an observation.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, the view has always been expressed that when you come to justice, you must come with clean hands. While listening with some interest to the two honourable Members who have been the only two people to speak from the other side on this matter, I cannot say that I can respect what they say about matters coming to Parliament in this way. Too often have they occupied people's lands. We have got cases, cases in St. James, cases in Christ Church and in many other parts of this country, where they went into occupancy of the lands and never had any Resolution introduced in Parliament or ever even paid for those lands. Therefore, let us get that out of the way.

Let us deal with other issues. I, to some extent, share a number of news as expressed by the honourable Member

for Christ Church West Central. There is always trauma with children, or big people, for that matter, if they are accustomed to living somewhere and they suddenly move, or if children are accustomed playing cricket and they suddenly see that the playing fields are taken up for some other purpose. But I must ask one or two questions here. One is, which do you, in the Opposition, prefer, if people are pressed for places to put their homes — places for homes or playing fields? While playing fields are useful and while it is necessary for children to have fun and frolic, is it as important to be playing games as having a roof over your head and somewhere to go when the night comes?

I am not surprised that you want to vote against this and will vote against it. I wish you luck in voting against it. We will vote for it. We are accustomed to this approach from you. You are trying to justify that you did not do it in other places in this country, at this point in time. But we knew what your attitude was in connection with the plantation Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, and the people who are looking for house spots in this country, and the people who are concerned about somewhere to put their homes or to construct one, if they do not have one yet, must feel some concern over the fact that whenever an effort is made for people to get land, the Opposition is critical of the position which the Government takes.

The honourable Member for St. Michael West raised a question about the date. It is not the date. The Resolution is quite specific in itself. We can actually move the date. The date is not important. It is No. 49/1969, and that is what is important.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the honourable Member would give way.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I will give way.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of elucidation, Sir: I do not think it is necessary for the Minister to castigate me for pointing out to the House an error in a Resolution. I never said that the date was important. What I said is that we have a Resolution which says that that Resolution No. 49/1969 was passed on the 18th August and our Records do not show that the House sat on that date, and if the Resolution that is in the records was passed, it was passed on August 6. There is no need for the honourable Member to be antagonistic about that.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: I assure my honourable friend opposite that I am not antagonistic.

What I am trying to get at, and would wish to pierce his skull in getting this in, is that what is important is the substance of matters and not the shadow of matters. The mere fact that this spells out very clearly what happened is the important point. We have had a number of occasions

where there are differences in what is recorded one place and what is recorded somewhere else. You have these problems from time to time. These things will happen.

With respect to Government moving in to develop lands for some purpose or another, Government has the right to do that and all Governments have done it right through the ages, not only the Governments in this country but Governments throughout the world. What is clear is that land is owned by the Crown, but that the Crown at the time, when it sought to purchase this land compulsorily, did it for recreational purposes and not for housing. The fact that the Government has now sought to use the area for housing, the Government is in duty bound to come with a new Resolution. Some of the Governments might well consider that since it is owned by the Crown, they could go ahead without coming back for a change of the use of the land, and I suppose that if you have something in the Crown for the length of time that the Crown was in possession, there could hardly be much argument as to the ownership, and that you may not consider much worry about the question of principle.

After the matter came before me and I saw it, I was a bit concerned about the change and the fact that the area was used as a playing area. I asked for a report on the areas in the surrounding district that we utilized for the purpose of recreation, and an undertaking was given by the present Prime Minister to the people in that area, when it was thought that the area should be used for housing, that they would be given a playing field in the Wotton area. In addition to that, there are areas of lands at the Foundation School and at Christ Church High School where limited recreational facilities can be had for the people in that area. It is not to say that you are throwing the people on the road to play cricket or football or any other game. You have already made provisional arrangements for the people who play games there.

There is something I want to issue a warning about. Barbados is a small country with a very small land area, an area that must be used for a number of things, industries, housing, road construction, schools and recreational facilities. We cannot go on behaving like a country with vast areas of lands such that we can afford to take up eight and ten acres of land ever so often and put at the disposal of people for recreational purposes. We have got to rationalize, and people have got to use the buses in order to get to the playing areas.

There was a time when a large number of people in St. Michael had to go to Queen's Park in order to play games. Today, nobody wants to walk anywhere. They do not want to ride a bicycle anywhere, nor do they want to take the bus anywhere. Every person feels that they must walk or run from their house to a very huge playing area, which the country can ill-afford.

1.05 p.m.

The Government has recognized the situation in housing and the problems which exist within housing and, therefore, they have to maximize the use of all available lands in order to bring housing to all the people in the country who deserve to be housed. I feel that, while we do not expect a consensus from the Opposition on all things, the time has come when they should look dispassionately on the question of housing and approach the subject of housing and the availability of land in a spirit of compromise and understanding.

This Government, from the time it came back into office in 1976, we have done all that is humanly possible to create a climate for housing and the opportunities for people to do their own construction, by providing sites and services and making lands available to people wherever lands are available. I consider that this Resolution is necessary and important at this time, and while I deplore the fact that the two spokesmen from the Opposition said that they would not be voting for this matter, I still want at this very late moment to commend the Resolution to them and to ask them to close ranks with the Government on this very vital matter.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:

Ayes: Hon. A. TRUSS, Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, Hon. B. A. MILLER, Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE, Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Mr. R. E. BRATHWAITE, Hon. L. R. TULL, Mr. L. L. SISNETT, Mr. J. G. ODLE and Hon. V. L. JOHNSON — 13.

Noes: Rt. Hon. E. W. BARROW, Mr. M. A. KING, Mr. B. M. TAITT, Mr. W. O. FRANKLIN, Mr. P. M. GREAVES and Mr. L. A. WEEKES — 6.

VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION, OF LAND AT GALL HILL, CHRIST CHURCH

Order No. 3 was called — To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the vesting of land in the National Housing Corporation, land at Gall Hill, Christ Church.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE (St. Andrew): This Resolution is one which has relevance to the preceding Resolution, except that it deals with the vesting of the land in National Housing Corporation. The National Housing Corporation as is well known, is the business arm of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. They carry out the day-to-day functions of the Ministry and, therefore, in order that things can be expedited and people can have the lands quickly dealt with and there will be no hold up, it is important that National Housing Corporation have the power in order to vest the land in people

by our vesting the lands in the National Housing Corporation.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Speaker, this property is clearly being vested in the National Housing Corporation for the purpose of house building on the lots being required. The area of land which is now being vested in the National Housing Corporation is an area which I know very well. When the bulldozers were moving through the area for the purpose of putting the roads in, it was clear that the lands in the area are very deep. It is going to be extremely difficult and expensive to get foundations in that area for the building of stone buildings. It seems to me, then, that the use to which the land is going to be largely put is for the purpose of chattel buildings.

It also seems to me that the price at which the land is being sold — I understand it is being advertised at \$2.75 per sq. foot — for chattel buildings is expensive land, because if people want to put stone buildings on that property they are going to be put to tremendous expense. People who are going to purchase the lands in question are going to be confined forever to having chattel houses on that land or will have to go to tremendous expense to put the proper foundations for stone buildings.

I wonder if the Government, in deciding on the change in the use of this land, has had the proper surveys done to determine the use, or whether the land could be effectively used for all kinds of buildings. . . .

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: We have passed the change of use of the land. We are now vesting it in the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. M. A. KING: For the purpose of building, yes.

I wonder whether the National Housing Corporation is doing, or has done, the necessary surveys to ensure that the land which is being vested in them is appropriate for building houses of all kinds or whether they are only concerned that they should have land available only for chattel buildings. These are some considerations which I would like to hear some comments on in dealing with the transfer of this land to National Housing Corporation for the purpose of housing.

1.15 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): I wonder if the National Housing Corporation, now that the land is

going to be used for housing, will assist in fulfilling the policy which was outlined in 1969 when this land was acquired for other purposes. One of the purposes for which it was acquired was the construction and development of a community centre. I wonder if the Minister is in a position to tell us whether as part of the plan the National Housing Corporation has for the use of this land, will include the construction of the community centre which was supposed to be built at that time.

He must be aware that at the time of the acquisition the House was told – and I am quoting from page 384 of the Hansard of Wednesday, 6th August, 1969 – Honourable C. E. Talma was speaking:

“I want to say that it is not only to establish a playing field there, but also a community centre, and that will be done since funds are forthcoming.”

He went on to say that as soon as the Rural Amenities Fund was built up and as soon as the money was available, they would have not only a playing field which they had been fighting for. I had better quote it, Sir:

“... which you have been fighting for for the last two years at Gall Hill, Christ Church, but we will have a community centre as well.”

It appears that there were a number of issues raised concerning that land at that time, and it would be instructive to read what the then honourable Member for St. Thomas, J. M. G. M. Adams, had to say. One has to wonder at the efficacy of the National Housing Corporation being vested with this land in light of the attitude and the comments which were made by the Barbados Labour Party at that time.

This concept of the National Housing Corporation placing large numbers of persons, or to put it the other way, the Barbados Labour Party objecting at that time to the question as they then put it, the placing of persons in a particular area of the particular constituency.

“.....a large number of people perhaps more quietly for the subject matter of this Resolution” – I am quoting J. M. G. M. Adams on page 385 of the same debate –

“.....which is the compulsory acquisition Order to obtain certain land in Gall Hill. What I am saying is that we in the Opposition join completely..... in deploring the irresponsible conduct.....”

– and he named someone – “..... because that is whom the Minister meant in connection with this Gall Hill Social Centre.”

And he went on to talk about the number of persons who were being placed in a particular area of Gall Hill for the purposes of voting and the like. I do not wish to

quote the whole debate, but I am hoping that the Minister.....

Mr. SPEAKER: It is unfair to the House to quote part of the debate and leave out part. We are not getting a full report of what you are reading. If you read part and leave out a name here, you read a little part and leave out a little there, not only are you creating difficulties for the Hansard Reporter, but you are also creating difficulties for the Press at large. The honourable Member is aware of reporting of Parliament.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Press, Sir? The Press does not report me when I speak, so it does not matter. I do not speak for the Press, I speak only for Your Honour. So far as the quotations are concerned, I am really doing it as a matter of personal choice, but having given the Hansard Reporter the page of the debate, the Hansard Reporter is in a position to follow most accurately those areas which I quote.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the method of reporting. They are not supposed to go and search for the quotes to fill in what should be filled in. They just have to report as you have said.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Which is all I would ask of them, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The point I am making is that the Barbados Labour Party clearly had a political bias concerning this particular area of Gall Hill, which can be found in the comments that were made when the land was acquired. I do not know if the National Housing Corporation will now seek to redress the balance. It begins to make sense why this land will be vested in the National Housing Corporation, and perhaps an attempt will be made to redress the numbers, but I am told by my honourable colleague, the Member for Christ Church West Central, that it really will not matter how many persons are imported, or if any persons are imported, into the area.

This seems to be a policy of the Government now, to find pockets. It is a systematic policy which can be observed if one does a careful study, that certain little pockets in certain areas are being acquired with a view to making them housing developments. The only thing I have against that policy is that when the time comes for the allocation of the house spots, it does appear as if only certain kinds of persons are lucky enough to acquire one of these house spots.

I should very much like to invite the Minister responsible for the National Housing Corporation to

insist on a broad policy of 'first come first served', and let those persons who need housing to acquire these house spots if and when they are created in these small pockets in the areas of the various constituencies. I believe that the country, certainly this Honourable House, has a right to expect a level of impartiality in the dispensation of these very scarce resources such as house spots. The policy which obtains in the National Housing Corporation today does not give one much hope that all of the demands will be met, so it will be very important in the allocation of these house spots that not only must the policy be impartial, but it must manifestly appear to be impartial.

One of the things which I resent is the concept of someone going cap in hand, knocking on a Minister's door, asking the Minister for a play, seeking the Minister's largesse. I do not believe that that is a policy which any Minister ought to follow. I am not now prepared to say that the honourable Member for St. Andrew follows that policy, but what I will say is that when one looks at the allocation of certain houses by National Housing Corporation, one cannot help getting the feeling that a certain amount of partiality is displayed. In fact, in the case of the latest land which is vested in the National Housing Corporation and on which has been built, I think it is Kensington Lodge, in the acquisition of one of those apartments or houses, one has had to go through a person who has no connection whatsoever....

1.25 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thought we were vesting.....

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am dealing with vesting land, it is to be utilised. That is the point I am making, how the land that is vested in the National Housing Corporation should be utilised. I am saying how I would like to see this land utilised, and I am using examples of past experience to demonstrate that that is not the way I wish to see it done.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are dealing with the acquisition of land.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir. It is vesting.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are dealing with the acquisition of some apartment in some place called Kensington Lodge. I am saying that I thought we were dealing with a Resolution about the vesting of land.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That acquisition was a small area. That was an acquisition by the tenant.

Mr. SPEAKER: That was a stray point.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Let me put it more simply, Sir. In order for a tenant to get into Kensington Lodge, they have to go and see somebody in some place.

Asides

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Did you hear her? Did you hear what she said? Well, if you did not hear her, I cannot repeat it!

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the honourable Member addressing the Chair?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am suffering from shock.

Mr. SPEAKER: Shock?

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, then, let us get the doctor at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: No. It is not that kind of shock, Sir. It is moral shock. If Your Honour had heard what the honourable Member for the City had said, you would suffer from shock, too.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am listening to you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am saying that I hope that, when the National Housing Corporation has this land vested in it, this land would be used in such a manner that all Barbadians can feel that it was a good thing that the land was vested in the National Housing Corporation and that it does not follow the pattern which has been emerging, whether the Minister is aware of it or not, where persons who are not Members of Parliament, persons who do not hold office in the National Housing Corporation, persons who have absolutely nothing to do. . . .

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: A point of order.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, all the people at Kensington Lodge in my constituency are all Barbadians.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. That is information volunteered to this Chamber.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am saying that in order to get a place in that particular place, you have to see somebody who has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with

that administration, and the Minister should be aware of this.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member must stick to the Resolution. We are dealing with the vesting of land in Christ Church. I cannot understand how we have got into the delivering of apartments. Let us stick to the Resolution now. Come on!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Your Honour is a strict constructionist in these matters.

Mr. SPEAKER: If I am not, I find that we will be sitting here all day talking about matters which do not concern us.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I will merely say I think I have made the point that I wanted to make. I agree with my colleague and I hope that the vesting of this land in the National Housing Corporation would not redound to the disadvantages of the citizens of this country. Let me leave it at that, Sir.

Hon. A. TRUSS (St. Michael Central): I rise in support of this Resolution and to congratulate the Minister for the policies which he has initiated in the area of housing. It is a known fact that a study was done last year and that it was determined that 1 700 houses would have to be built on an annual basis in order to satisfy the Barbadian demand for housing, and, of the 1 700, only 1 100 could afford to buy any type of house of any type of construction or consideration at all. This left a problem for the Government, the problem of trying to build houses for the remaining 600 people who could not afford to buy any type of house at all. Whether the Government is made up of members of this side or members on that side, the problem has existed in the past, it exists now and it will continue to exist. We are a small island with small resources, and whatever money we can find towards house mortgages will be utilised in that area, and whatever money the Government can use to build houses for those persons who cannot afford to build their own houses, the Government will continue to do so.

The point raised by the honourable Member for St. Michael West (Mr. B. M. Taitt) in relation to partiality is a very ticklish subject. It is very difficult to preach total impartiality on either side. The Shadow Minister of Housing on that side on one day in the near future, in the far future or whenever the people of Barbados find it necessary to put that side on this side, may be Minister of Housing and he will discover the pressures that will be brought to bear on him by members and supporters of his own party who would have supported them through thick and thin for the 20 years or 25 years when they served in Opposition and would want a Government house. It would be very difficult for the Minister of

Housing of the Democratic Labour Party to be totally impartial in those circumstances. Let us be realistic.

We, on this side, have the very same problem. The Government is the Government of all of the people of Barbados, and I believe the Barbados Labour Party Government tries to conduct itself in such a way, a way in which we do not draw partisan lines in making policy decisions, and it is just not fair when the Member for St. Michael West could claim that the Government is utilising bits and pieces of land here and there in order to gain votes or to weaken members of the Opposition. In my view, that is a move towards a more efficient use of Government land. When a Government, with very scarce land resources, can look throughout the country and pick out an acre here and half an acre there, or three-quarters of an acre here and 20 000 square feet there, and apply this land for the construction of housing, I think that shows a very efficient Minister of Housing on the one hand and, a very efficient policy in terms of housing on the other.

These infills, as we prefer to call them, bits and pieces of land that can be found throughout the length and breadth of Barbados that are owned by people outside of Barbados, you have a great deal of problems with them, they need debushing. We find vermin, rats, all different types of things that are unhealthy to Barbadians living in the immediate areas around them. We have to serve notice of these pieces of land. There is no clear title in many instances, and the Government has to look at these areas of land, these pockets, these infills, as we call them, and put them to constructive use as far as the construction of houses is concerned.

As far as the partiality is concerned, I would like the honourable Members for Christ Church West and St. Michael West to know that two weeks ago I had five house fires in my constituency. The Ministry of Housing has not as yet been able to provide one house. Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that they do not want me to win my seat? No. It simply means that there is not a house available at this particular time and, therefore, through the Welfare Department and the National Assistance other arrangements will have to be made until such time as the Minister of Housing and Lands finds a house, or two, or five. If this had happened to another honourable Member on the other side, they would be talking about impartiality or lack of impartiality, but it has happened to a Member on this side, and it is not the first time. The problem of housing is a major national problem, and it affects Members on both sides of the House, and I think that we should be big enough, when we have a problem of this magnitude, not to reduce it to cheap politics by simply saying that because Members on that side cannot get certain things, it is because of the intent and wishes of Members on this side.

1.35 p.m.

In relation to the Resolution, there are 41 lots that have been allocated for Gall Hill, Christ Church, and there is no rhyme, rhythm or reason behind the actions of the Ministry of Housing and Lands as I will attempt to prove, because the Ministry of Housing and Lands will build houses wherever land is available. The plan for Haggatt Hall is eight lots; in Husbands in St. Michael they plan to have 108 lots; in Walkers in St. George, 14 lots; in Spooners Hill, 20 lots; in Parkinson Road, 22 lots; in Oxnards Heights, 120 lots; in Oxnards Crescent, 43 lots; in Lammings in St. Joseph, Sir, your constituency, 50 lots; in West Terrace II, 409 lots, and in in-fills around Cave Hill Area, Wanstead/Husbands Heights/Cave Hill, 38 lots. Then there is Simmons Road and Harmony Hall. That, Sir, gives you a fairly broad idea of where the Ministry of Housing and Lands proposes to implement its sites and services programme. Now you cannot tell me.....

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is way outside of the Resolution.

Hon. A. TRUSS: I am dealing with the Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: No. The honourable Member is going on to sites and services. We are dealing with a Resolution for vesting of land in the National Housing Corporation.

Hon. A. TRUSS: I understand and I abide by your ruling, but the vesting of the land at Gall Hill in the name of the National Housing Corporation is for sites and services, so I was making an extension of that point. But if you want me not to mention it, I will not. I will abide by your ruling. That is normally what the Resolution is for, to acquire a piece of land at Gall Hill so that the National Housing Corporation can put in 41 lots for sites and services. In any event.....

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not in the Resolution, is it?

Hon. A. TRUSS: No, Sir, that is why I said I would abide by your ruling.

The real point is that Government policy for the last three years has been a simple one, and that is to develop every piece of land that is available throughout the length and breadth of Barbados, regardless of where the land is. It is just not fair to simply make a wild statement to the effect that the Government can be charged for trying to build houses in areas where it will be to their political advantage. I cannot accept that. It is not true. It is not true of this Government, it is not true of the present Minister, and it was not true of the previous Ministers of this Government. I do not know if it was true when the Democratic Labour Party was in power. They would have to enunciate what their policy was during the period 1961 to 1976. We do know that when they had the opportunity to sell good

agricultural land for housing spots to their friends, they did that. That was never part of their expressed policy in their manifesto, but it was a part of the policy which they actually enunciated and implemented. That is not our policy.

Land is an extremely scarce resource in this country and the Minister of Housing and Lands has a very difficult job, and that is to find land that is neither deemed to be commercial nor agricultural land but that is residential, and is not in an A1 or A2 water zone, which would provide problems in terms of pollution to the water resources of Barbados. When you reduce all these factors, you have a very confined area in which to work in Barbados. Then you must also realise that 56 per cent of the population of this country lives in two parishes, Christ Church and St. Michael. If this is where the people are living, obviously the pressures to build houses in Christ Church and St. Michael would be greater than the pressures to build houses, say, for example, in St. Philip, or indeed St. John. People are moving out of St. John, people are moving out of St. Philip into the Christ Church and St. Michael areas. This is a fact of life, so what is the Government supposed to do? Tell the people to go back to St. John or go back to where they came from in Penny Hole in St. Philip? It is not an easy problem, and while I am on my feet I will appeal to the Minister not to forget my five constituents who suffered fires two weeks ago.

Hon. L. B. BRATHWAITE: What the Opposition did seek to do in connection with this Resolution was to reprobate and approbate at one and the same time, and I want to tell them that I admire the way in which they sought to do it. Not being in favour of the use of the land for housing, if it is to be used for housing it is the foundation, the type of house you should have there, who you give the lots to and what have you.

I want to give this assurance. I have tried during my time in the Ministry of Housing and Lands — of course, I have some very critical judges in St. Andrew, and the most critical of all is the one that I worship, and I have him to please in the final analysis, and my conscience — I have tried very hard to be very even-handed in my dealings. It is not very easy to do, but when I came into this Ministry, what I tried to do was to remove myself from a number of areas to do with house-letting, house spots and what have you. I only involve myself when I realise that there are instances of hardship, people who might have been out there very long and no consideration had been given to them, but outside of that I consider housing to be vital to people, like water, like transportation, roads and what have you, and I always thought that one must see the total country and not the political in terms of distribution of the resources of the country. That has always been my style.

With respect to the depth of the land, I am not in a position to help the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central. I would hope that the technical people who are in the Ministry would have addressed this problem, but what I can say is that under the Democratic Labour Party regime, Wotton was used, which is not far away, and in some instances, they went to ten and twelve feet to find foundation and they did not find foundation.

To deal with the question asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael West about a community centre, a previous Resolution dealt with recreational facilities, and the change of use of the land, therefore any form of recreation is out or does not apply. But as I said earlier on, there is the Christ Church schools. You have the boys' and girls' schools. I do not know if they have combined them yet, if they are composite. A lot of these schools have playing areas that are not used. The schools themselves are not occupied during the holidays, and after a certain hour during the week and on weekends. I can see no harm in the children in the district there actually adjoining the schools using the schools. There should be no problem for the children to have reasonable recreational facilities.

1.45 p.m.

I have said it before and I will repeat, when this matter came before me, I visited the file to find out what alternatives there would be for recreational purposes and these alternatives were given to me. If they were not given to me, despite the fact that roads and water were put in, I would have found it extremely difficult to agree, and I still will agree with some of the strictures handed out by the honourable Members on the other side. These matters are sometimes not properly researched. The technical people go in and they start work before they properly examine and have a look at the history of these purchases and what have you. Ministers cannot say that they do not know, they cannot refuse to accept blame.

Even the legal people do not always give you the interpretation that you might be looking for or expecting them to give you, and at times you have to grope in the dark and use your own judgement, even though you are a layman, to arrive at a conclusion which sometimes turns out to be better than the other thing that is tendered to you. These are the problems which you face from time to time.

I want to assure all honourable Members that I appreciate the comments which have been made and will take into consideration all the views expressed, not only for this Resolution but for all Resolutions which would come before me in the fullness of time.

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

OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1985

Order No. 4 was called — To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Occupational Training Act, 1979–28.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW (St. Michael South East): Mr. Speaker, in 1979 the Occupational Training Act was passed. It provided for the setting up of a Board consisting of thirteen members drawn from workers' as well as employer organizations. Since the setting up of this Board, a number of changes and developments have occurred, and it has now become necessary to make certain amendments with a view to improving the efficiency and the work of the Training Board.

The Board has done remarkably well over the past couple of years. The staff of the National Training Board must be complimented for the work which it has done in providing programmes in the area of skills for the young people of this country. As a result of the work done by the National Training Board, there has been a great demand for the training programmes. But, like all institutions, the question of finance became a headache, and although the National Training Board receives its finances from the Training Levy, this sum of money, which is received yearly, proved inadequate to meet the demands made on the Training Board for training.

There are some two thousand-odd persons, applicants, who are awaiting training opportunities with the Training Board, and it is very clear that there will be a number of other young people who will be seeking to take advantage of the training programmes offered by the Board. It means, therefore, that it is necessary to equip the Training Board, the Executive and the Board itself, with tools to do the job.

I am aware that the work will be accelerated and that it would be necessary to even have additional staff to deal with the programme. As announced in the Budgetary Proposals, Government has already identified some eight new training areas in which the Skills Training Programme will take shape within the next couple of weeks. There are additional centres that are on the drawing board, and I wish to say that among them is one at Providence, as well as the one at Murphy Pasture, a facility, which is now owned by the National Sports Council. We feel that by the meaningful use of these centres and the introduction of new skills in the centres, we will be able to arrest the question of unskilled manpower in this country.

Mr. Speaker, our lasting resource is the skill and the adaptability of our people to the new technology. Let us not forget that if we are to move forward at a pace like our developed neighbours, we then must put in place the

mechanism to take full advantage of the new technological age. No longer can anyone in Barbados be led to believe that Barbados can continue to develop, compete and take full advantage of the economic recovery, if the young people or our young people are not trained and re-tooled. That has got to be made abundantly clear. It would be a mistake for any Government planning its programmes, having thrust in areas in housing, in trade, tourism and in other related areas and forgetting the question of re-tooling our young people.

Over the past five years, we have seen the Board doing a fine job, but it is now necessary, with the programmes that I have outlined, to make some changes to the composition of the Board. It is the intention of Government to maintain the presence of the workers', as well as the employers' organizations on this Board. It is not meant to deny the inputs of those two important sectors in our community, but it is felt, after having some two years or so experience with the Board, that the work of the Board and of Government will be well served if there was a reduction in the numbers on this Board.

1.55 p.m.

It is now recommended in this amendment to the Act that the 13, which presently constitute the Board, should be reduced to nine. The nine members will now be appointed by the Minister after consultation with organizations which have a role to play in the training and retooling of our young people, and as a result of the reduction in membership, it will be necessary to amend the quorum, so this amendment will automatically follow.

I have already spoken about the expansion of the Skills Training Programme. With this expansion it is necessary to have on the staff of the Training Board an inspectorate system so that we could now improve even the work of the Board. It is hoped that the Board will in the future be able to certify apprentices so that they will not be turned out without having any form of certification or identification to show that they have undergone specific training and are qualified. We feel that they should be given certification, and in that direction the Board has engaged the services of an officer who was trained to work on the certification of students.

The work of the Skills Training Programme and the National Training Board has been widely accepted and well received by all and sundry. Not only has it been complimented and commended by professionals abroad but here at home. I am quite sure that Barbadians have now begun to accept the work done and the importance of the National Training Board. The changes that are now contemplated are changes which are made with a view to improving the operations of the National Training Board, with a view to further expanding the training of our young people.

A number of students have graduated from this Skills Training Programme who have found jobs. Well over 70 per cent of those children who have gone through the Skills Training Programme have got jobs. But we have noted that the programme, which was in the first instance of three months' duration, needs to be expanded to give the students an opportunity to widen their grasp of a particular skill, and we have already instituted that amendment. Some courses will go for six months and others will go as long as nine months, as we equip the young men and women of this country with a skill so that they could be employed.

Sometimes when I hear criticisms of the programme, it makes me wonder why people criticise without closely examining what they are saying about a particular scheme. It is Government's intention to equip the young people of this country with skills. It is our view that when you equip the young people of this country with skills, we make them employable. Failing to do so is to make them unemployable, and I think that situation should be avoided. The Government cannot guarantee full employment after graduating from any programme. It is not so in the schools; not all students who graduate from university, college or other institutions find jobs. But we are hearten by the fact that those people who were trained, the graduates, have been equipped with education, skills and knowledge to go out there and make a living. We anticipate the economic recovery, with the building or construction industry, tourism and agriculture to be on the revival track, and so we intend to lay more and more emphasis on training.

I hope that those few facts will help to highlight a number of areas which were not known in the past, and I commend these amendments to this Chamber.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: (St. Michael West): The Honourable Minister has spoken at some length on this matter and I do not propose to question the principle of what he said with regard to certain matters and certain necessities. He said, for example, that there must be continuous training and, in some cases, there must be re-training. He said that the Skills Training Programme will be expanded, but one of the things which has not been enunciated, either in the Budgetary Proposals or by the Minister today, is the detailed information for the public as to what we now have, and what we are expanding to, what we are changing from, and what is the long term effect of the changes.

The way the Government has been talking about the Skills Training Programme — and they have been importing the use of the word "technology" and talking about "technological advances" — would lead one to

believe that there is going to be a revolutionary change in the application and the concept of the Skills Training Programme. My understanding of the Skills Training Programme to date has been informed by the information given by the original Minister and subsequent Ministers, which suggests that this training is nothing more than the equipping of certain persons with elementary fundamental skills with regard to certain chosen vocations. For example, instead of a person becoming a mere labourer on the site of a construction enterprise, that person would be trained in the simple skill of steel bending. It is my understanding also that these programmes usually last no more than a mere matter of weeks. You will recall, Sir, that in another debate very early on this programme there was bitter hostility when one Minister suggested that after persons had done the plumbing course in the Skills Training Programme, they would become plumbers, and it was pointed out on that occasion that the skill of plumbing and becoming a qualified plumber was something that took much more time than the number of weeks allocated under the skills training programme. So what I am saying is that the people of Barbados ought to be given detailed and clear information so that the differentiation between the ability of a non-skilled person to find self-employment through an adaptation to the skills training provided under the Skills Training Programme and a fully qualified artisan, who would have done City and Guilds and other similar qualification, can be distinguished.

2.05 p.m.

Any criticism one makes in this regard clearly cannot be to the detriment of the Skills Training Programme, because I do not believe that anyone in Barbados could find fault with the concept of a Skills Training Programme, but I think the Minister has a responsibility to spell out the methodology by which we are going to be expanding and the levels which we are going to reach with the expansion. I think that the Minister responsible for Finance would have left an erroneous impression in the community that, with the stroke of a pen, a thousand new persons were going to become trained and skilled to such a degree that the technological position of Barbados would have shifted perceptibly. I do not think that is what will be the ultimate result. It is true overall that if a thousand new persons are admitted to a Skills Training Programme, we are, by definition, a more skilled nation. But we are here talking, as I understand it, about elemental skills, and I think that difference needs to be spelt out so that the propagandistic aspects of Government's policy are reduced and the realities of our situation are brought more clearly and more sharply into the focus of the citizens of the country. It would attract much less criticism, and indeed attention, if this were done, because then we all could join and put our hands to the plough and assist in making sure that the programme achieve most or all of its ends.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that anyone is going to begrudge the Minister the policy position that he wishes to deal with nine members of a Board as opposed to 13. I believe in another forum he indeed uttered some perhaps injudicious words to describe the difficulties he is having. I suspect he said that some of the persons, by virtue of the terms of the section of the Act establishing the Board, were not at the required level to grapple with some of the concepts necessary for carrying out the policy. I may have got the actual words incorrectly, but I suspect that I heard the Minister's voice on the radio very meticulously, very ponderously, very slowly and very articulately spelling out that particular policy position, and so I have no quarrel with him if he finds that, in the interest of efficiency, he wishes to reduce the Board from 12 or 13 to nine. That will have no difficulty, the substance of this amendment itself will find no difficulty on this side, but I think the Minister, and by definition the Government, must remove from the minds of the population this very clearly enunciated concept which suggests that we are going to move into the technological age as a result of this particular policy decision emanating first from the Minister of Finance's Budgetary Proposals.

The Minister said that we have to retrain, and here I am taking the Minister's word. I am suggesting that he did not mean exactly what he said. He said we have to retool our young persons, but I think he was perhaps directing his remarks towards those persons who have been employed and who are now out of work, who will need to learn new skills or to be retrained in skills that would be more commensurate with the kind of employment which the Government envisages.

I would not wish to detain this Honourable House beyond what is considered a reasonable time at this part of the day, bearing in mind that lunch is imminent. I would have wished that the Leader of the House would have considered it desirable for us to break — I am only expressing my wish — since I would have preferred to be able to speak at length on this matter. However, taking into account all the circumstances, let me merely say that a training policy in which all of the interested parties can participate ought to form now a priority within the Ministry responsible for Training, so that the concomitant manpower survey, which is a *sine qua non*, be done. A manpower survey for Barbados was imminent 20 years ago, it was due ten years ago, it certainly must be right today.

It is impossible for us to continue to talk about our training and our technological needs unless we have a very serious and very well executed manpower survey that will tell the country what its needs are today and project for the country what the needs will be for the 21st century. Certainly when the Democratic Labour Party comes back to office, in the next few months, what we

will do is to improve on the survey which was done when the Democratic Labour Party was in office, which was able to project in fairly elemental terms what our needs were. We had, if you will pardon the expression, a crash manpower survey done when the gentleman from the OAS, who was attached to the Institute of Management and Productivity, assisted us in projecting the needs of Barbados, especially as they related to the hotel industry. We have, in fact, had a manpower survey as it relates to the hotel industry, but there is an in-depth manpower survey that is now due for the entire country projecting into the year 2025, so that all of us can have some idea, so that when we talk about training and retraining we can focus our attention on our real needs, and arising out of the Skills Training Programme we can start to fashion the fundamental training unit that will be necessary if Barbados is in fact, to take its place with the advanced countries of the world.

This is a subject in which I have a lot of interest, Mr. Speaker, but as I said earlier, for the sake of continuing the life of this House today I will stop at this point. I hope the Minister will take the recommendations I made to him in the spirit in which they are offered, because this is not a matter on which we wish to divide, this is not a matter on which there should be a divide, this is a matter which is of concern to all Barbadians, a matter which should see us going forward.

2.15 p.m.

I wish, in so far as the party is concerned, to ask the Government to be a little less careless in their use of language when they are describing the results of these skills training inputs in the Budget. I would prefer them to be clear so that the population is not misled either by itself or as a result of rhetoric from the Government.

Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I very much welcome the contribution by the honourable Member. I think he was rather sober in his analysis of the training programme of the Government.

Government has already set up the Manpower Unit in the Ministry of Labour and we have already had an expert here, a Dr. Med Chottepanda, who trained officers from the Ministry of Labour in this Manpower Survey Unit. The unit is there but one of the officers is presently in the United States of America furthering studies and, on her return, it is hoped that we will get the department moving a bit faster towards producing the sort of information which the honourable Member has, quite rightly, alluded to. I do agree with him, that without this sort of information, training would be of no use at all. We may very well find ourselves training in irrelevant areas. We must have this information to tell us where training is obsolete, and where we need to take new initiatives. This sort of manpower surveying would do exactly that, and not only for 20 or 25 years, but I think

beyond. It has to be an exercise revised from time to time, and a close analysis of it being done.

The honourable Member must not forget that we are already in a technological age. I think this is a point which he has failed to take. We are already in a technological age. It is nothing that we are inventing. Everybody knows that. The computer is here with us and we have seen where the computer has put a number of people out of the work which they used to do manually, so we have now to retrain, or retool — the honourable Member has copied the word — people so that they can cope now with the computer and go into new areas.

In the furniture industry, long ago they used the work bench for building everything, but with the recent orders which we all now are fully aware of coming out of the United States, it is going to be necessary, if the furniture industry is to meet the expectations or even fulfil those orders, to have a different type of operation altogether. The people in the furniture industry will have to become acquainted with the machinery which is new rather than being on the work bench, using the saw, the chisel and the hammer. The Training Board knows about these changes. We acknowledge that we have to adjust ourselves to the changes that are coming, and in order for us to remain competitive as in furniture, or in any other industry, such as the garment industry, where so many jobs have now become obsolete and are being lost, we need to train or retrain our young people so that they can take advantage of those new industries that are coming.

Time does not permit me to give a thorough explanation of the direction of where the Training Board is going, but sufficient to say that we are now beginning a new epoch in the history of the area of training, and it will be necessary, from time to time, to evaluate the programmes of the National Training Board. We have done our evaluation in a five-year period, the first since 1979, of the establishment of the Training Board, and this exercise must be continued from time to time if we are to grapple with the problems and the difficulties which confront us resulting from the technological age.

As I said, I welcome the contribution made by the honourable Member and I wish to give him the assurance that we do not see training as a partisan subject. It ought not to be. To do so would be disastrous for this country, and I welcome any inputs made from that honourable Member and any honourable Members from that side. I wish to give the assurance that with the support which I am well aware is being given to the training programme, we, together, can help to push Barbados further afield

and to sustain the economic recovery which we all anticipate.

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

On the motion of Hon. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, seconded by Hon. L. S. CRAIG, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. J. G. ODLE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 4 inclusive were called and passed.

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

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

2.25 p.m.

THE ADJOURNMENT

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

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 4, 1985, at 12 o'clock noon.

I would hope that my colleagues will come back in rather refreshed and I sincerely hope that whatever the outcome, it would not be a tribute to Mr. "Sleepy" Smith. Such characters should really be taken off the public platform. It is not fair for the Leader of the Opposition to be in that company now. Do not associate yourself with "Sleepy" Smith now. Do as I tell you: You can have a little integrity and international stature. Do not go on the same platform as him now. That is not your language.

Hon. L. R. TULL: I beg to second the motion for the adjournment.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 4, 1985, at 12 o'clock noon, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

2.28 p.m.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOLDEN, His Honour C. L. (Speaker) (St. Joseph)

BRATHWAITE, Hon. L. B. (St. Andrew)

BRADSHAW, Hon. DeL. O. (St. Michael South East)

CRAIG, Hon. L. S. (St. James North)

KING, M. A. (Christ Church West Central)

TAITT, B. M. (St. Michael West)

TRUSS, Hon. A. (St. Michael Central)