

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 - 91

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 12, 1988.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. Weekes, J.P., (Speaker)
His Honour J. J. Payne, (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. L. E. Sandiford, B.A., M.A. (Econ.), J.P.,
(Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Hon. H. deB. Forde, Q.C., M.A., LL.B., (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. B. M. Taitt, B.A., (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B., (Hons.), (Minister of Health)

Hon. P. M. Greaves, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Transport, Telecommunications and Immigration and Leader of the House)

Hon. E. E. Greaves, B.A., Ed.M., (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)

Dr. R. C. Haynes, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P., (Edin.)

Hon. M. A. King, Q.C., LL.B., (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

Hon. W. O. Franklin, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., J.P., (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)

Hon. N. K. Simmons, (Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development)

Hon. H. A. Blackman, B.Sc., (Econ.), (Minister of Housing and Lands)

Mr. D. A. C. Simmons, Q.C., LL.M.

Mr. O. S. Arthur, M.Sc., (Econ.)

Mrs. M. Barker-Welch, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development)

Hon. C. V. Walker, (Minister of Education and Culture)

Mr. L. L. Brathwaite, J.P.

Mr. E. Bourne

Dr. E. A. Simmons, M.D.
Mr. C. A. Neblett, B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

Mr. C. L. Trotman, M.A.

Mr. R. L. Morris, B.A., Cert. Ed.

Mr. P. J. M. Miller

Mr. R. P. Byer, LL.B., L.E.C.

Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, LL.B.

Prayers were led by Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, April 5, 1988.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of this Honourable Chamber for Tuesday, April 5, 1988 be taken as read and be so approved.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections, let those Minutes stand confirmed.

MESSAGES

Mr. SPEAKER: Message No. 2/1988 from His Excellency the Governor-General reads as follows:

MESSAGE NO. 2/1988

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
TO THE HONOURABLE
THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

His Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform The Honourable The House of Assembly that he will be absent from the country during

the period 17th to 28th April, 1988 on a private visit to the United Kingdom.

Under the provisions of section 29(1)(b) of the Constitution, the Chief Justice, The Honourable Sir Denys Williams GCM, will perform the functions of the office of Governor-General during His Excellency's absence.

Hugh W. Springer
Governor-General

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
BARBADOS.
'12th April, 1988.

PAPERS

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

The Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for the month ended 31st January, 1988.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

The Customs (Amendment) Regulations, 1988.

On behalf of the Attorney General, I am commanded to lay:

The Annual Reports of the Prisons Department for the years 1984-1986.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

A Bill to provide for the establishment of the office of Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On separate motions of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, the following Bills were read a first time:

A Bill to provide for the establishment of the office of Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property.

A Bill to amend the Public Entertainments Act, '• Cap. 85A.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the instant order of the day.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, before we go on to Government Business, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6,16,18, 20,42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of the day's sitting.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

The question that the named Standing Orders be suspended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

OMBUDSMAN (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1988

Order No. 2 was called — To move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Ombudsman Act, Cap. 8A.

Hon. M. A. KING (Christ Church West Central): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Bill before us is to provide for an enlarged scope in relation to the area of activity in respect of which the Ombudsman may investigate. Certainly the administrative conduct almost of all Government departments fall within the purview of the Ombudsman's area of investigation, and what the Bill essentially seeks to do is to enlarge the area beyond the departments of Government and to provide for the Ombudsman to investigate, in general terms, any maladministration in relation to statutory boards.

There is an exception which is being proposed. As the contracts of Government are excluded from the purview of the Ombudsman, so, too, are the contracts which are entered into by statutory boards.

The Act also provides for the salary of the Ombudsman to be fixed by an order made by the Governor-General rather than providing for the necessity to come to Parliament with a Bill to amend that particular section of the Act whenever it is desired to change the salary of the Ombudsman. So in section 2, the Governor-General may fix the salary which is payable to the Ombudsman by order, and that order made by the Governor-General may contain such provision which the Governor-General considers expedient for the purpose of any purpose ancillary to the order.

An opportunity has been taken in the course of this amendment to exclude a couple of other matters from the purview of the Ombudsman, matters essentially

containing a judicial function. For instance, to consider the grant of a liquor licence, there is a Licensing Authority 'set up presided over by a Licensing Justice, who is usually a magistrate, and two other Licensing Justices, and it is in the nature of a judicial function, so any matter relating to th'.¹ exercise of that function is not subject to review by the Ombudsman. That is also the case with matters relating to the regulation of public utilities, because the public utilities legislation sets up a framework in the nature of a judicial structure for the hearing of public utility matters and for the regulating of public utility enterprises. These areas where proceedings are to take place in regulatory arrangements which are in the nature of judicial proceedings are not subject to the review of the Ombudsman. 12.25 p.m.

In relation to any function of the Minister responsible for Immigration, it is well recognised that Immigration matters and the functions of the Minister in relation to Immigration matters are in pursuance of the exercise of prerogative right. So the functions of a Minister in relation to the exercise of that aspect of the prerogative should not be subject to review by the Ombudsman. Section 5(b) 15 covers any other judicial function which has not been expressly covered specifically by the Act.

Those, broadly speaking, Mr. Speaker, are the areas which this Bill is designed to deal with, and I move that the Bill be read a second time.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I second it and reserve my right to speak.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: (Christ Church West): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that, to the extent that the Bill extends the area which can come under the scrutiny of the Ombudsman, it will receive the support of this side of the House.

I had the honour and the privilege to have introduced the Ombudsman to Parliament, and during the debate on the Act at that time, an undertaking had been given to look at bringing statutory boards within the purview of the Act. I believe that was in 1980-81 and, obviously, this is a follow-up on that undertaking, although I did not remain there to be able to have looked at the matter myself. During the debate at that time there were other areas raised and suggestions as to how one could extend the power of the Ombudsman without, in any way, undermining administrative efficiency within the Civil Service and the quasi-governmental boards.

The Ombudsman Report was laid in the House not too long ago, and we have had an opportunity to see the

Ombudsman in operation for, at least, one year. I have had the opportunity to refer several matters that have come before me which I thought were appropriate to the Ombudsman, and I must say that he has dealt with the matters very promptly and, generally, to the satisfaction of those persons who have complained to him. There are areas in which he has, obviously, been unable to act, but in those areas he has made one or two recommendations. I would hope that as he matures into the office, one would find that the public is more aware of the functions which the Ombudsman has to perform, and will see in him another form of redress for administrative action which may not have been taken within the normal norms that one would expect of such action, and which may constitute maladministration in one form or another.

The Attorney-General stated that it is intended to extend the category of subjects which are removed from the scrutiny of the Ombudsman, and he referred specifically to matters relating to liquor licenses, regulation of public utilities and matters coming under the Immigration Act or the regulations made thereunder.

With respect to the last item, he stated that there are matters essentially within the prerogative of the Crown and, normally, the Crown's prerogative is not subject to this type of scrutiny. I want to say to him, however, that doctrine is developing extremely fast in this area, and within recent months, as recently, I would think, no more than in December, the House of Lords in England ruled that the prerogative of the Crown is open to review and, in fact, that the exercise of the Crown's prerogative is open to scrutiny and review on judicial review. It ruled on this subject in relation of the refusal of a passport.

In so ruling, it is really in keeping with developments in other countries of the democratic western world which subscribe to the type of judicial system which governs Barbados, and I believe that this will be an increasing area for constant judicial review. In fact, the honourable Member may be interested to know that Canadian courts, even ahead of the ruling coming out of English courts, have subjected to review and change the doctrine that the Government or the Crown can dismiss civil servants at pleasure and will. The interesting comments made are that those doctrines were applicable in a different time and age, that there has been a widening of the rights of the subject and the citizen, and that there will be very little left soon which is not open to constant scrutiny by the courts and, in some instances by, I hope, the Parliamentary Commissioners or Ombudsmen, as they are called.

I hope the Minister is not shutting out from his mind these developments and that he would look very carefully at the rationale, which, obviously, influenced him, as, in fact, it was influencing us as framers of that legislation at the time, to see if that rationale is any longer sound in this

day and age, and that if there is any reason for hiding from scrutiny, particularly, of the Ombudsman, this area of administration, it is possible to allow some scrutiny, but, at the same time, to observe the obvious confidentiality which must exist in certain of these cases.

We still have on the Statute Book of Barbados Acts dealing with the expulsion of the undesirables, and, sometimes, the Immigration Department will act on information received, the type of information that may not always be in the overall public interest, as distinct from the state interest, for full disclosures to be made other than under certain safeguards like, for instance, the judge ensuring that certain secrets are maintained although there is a limited amount of discovery being granted. I would hope, therefore, that in the light of these developments, we may not see a new item 14 in the particular form in which it now appears in this Bill remaining for much longer. 12.35 p.m.

Sir, there is also a growing tendency, as the honourable Member would know, in Administrative law to review even judicial decisions.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member said not by the Ombudsman at this stage. That is a fact. But we do have on the Statute Book an Administrative Justice Act, which also was a step forward in giving citizens greater protection. And if the honourable Member looks at the development of the powers of the Ombudsman in other jurisdictions outside of the English precedent, for instance, I believe, in Scandinavia, he would find that certain aspects of judicial functions are also open to review by the Ombudsman. So the tendency is not to restrict, but to expand the area of operation of review, whether it is judicial review or review of maladministration. That is why I said that to the extent that the Bill allows the Ombudsman to look at the affairs of statutory boards, it is obviously an improvement.

I have some reservations about shielding the regulation of public utilities, because there are only a limited number of public utilities here. That is why I am going to ask the Minister exactly what he is on, because of the public utilities operating in Barbados, the only utilities that are subjected to the scrutiny of a judicial enquiry are the Telephone Company and Light and Power. So when we talk about matters relating to the regulation of public utilities, if he is talking about that.....

(*Aside:* Hon. B. M. TAITT: He can only mean that.)

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: But I think we may need it.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I would have been happier with a form of words which is governed by the Public

Utilities Act, or that we spell it out a bit further, to make it absolutely clear in that Schedule. Because very few of the utilities which have monopolies here are subject to the board. For instance, the honourable Member will know that even in the area of telephonic communications, only the internal telephone is subject to utility regulation and not the others. So I should hope that we will get some clarification of this so that there would be no doubt about the legislation.

In relation to liquor licences, there is a Liquor Licensing regime, and I believe that there is a right of appeal. Perhaps the Liquor Licensing Board is also now subject to the Administrative Justice Act, so it comes into perhaps a much more favourable position *vis-a-vis* the citizen than does the regulation of the public utilities or functions under the Immigration Act.

I think the comments I have made should be borne in mind and we should look very carefully again at whether or not we should not be extending the functions, rather than be curtailing them at any time. Also, I trust that when the Minister replies he would also see whether there is enough clarity in the draft legislation to make quite sure that the utilities which are outside the purview are limited only to those two.

Hon. B. M. TAITT (St. Michael West): Mr. Speaker, this debate is relatively short and does not require long inputs. I merely wanted to add to what the Leader of the Opposition has said and to place on record, since these matters are researched extensively from time to time by reference to Hansard, that the decision made by the House of Lords in December, which was preceded by a decision in the Canadian courts earlier, in fact, followed Caribbean jurisprudential initiatives. I think it should be put on record that Dr. Alexis, merely ten years ago has been advocating the movement towards review by the Ombudsman of all matters relating to the exercise of a power by any agency, and in particular, he alluded to the immigration power which the House of Lords ruled on.

I think it is fair to say that one or two of the Caribbean judges, and certainly one or two of the Caribbean scholars, in the latter category led by Dr. Alexis who, had argued the matter quite extensively and well. He, of course, was a student of Wade when he did his dissertation. I know the honourable Member will be fast to indicate that he was an earlier student of Wade, so I might as well say it for him. The phrase he always uses is "sat at his feet". There are those who say that is all he did, Sir. The point is that Dr. Alexis did in fact suggest some of the areas and we are going in that direction now.

The real problem comes with the fact that the power is being given to a parliamentary commissioner as opposed to a judicial officer. Where the parliamentary

commissioner, for example, would be examining the discretionary power exercised by a Minister in the grant of a hearing for an immigration matter, it starts to come in to the area of security. It is a very difficult issue, because the natural inclination is to agree that immigration should fall into the same category as all the other decisions. When one examines the Administrative Justice Act, however, one finds the difficulty, because that Act correctly requires functionaries to give reasons in writing for any decisions they have made. If the two Acts are taken together, the result would be that a Minister or a functionary in this area of immigration, acting for security reasons, could be required to give reasons in writing for the decision which he made. These are the areas which create the question.

One does not necessarily have an answer, Mr. Speaker. But one has to recognise that in the business of running a country, -there are areas which require, for want of a better word, secrecy. It is in the context of that secrecy that one will continue to err on the side of exclusion of immigration matters from the purview of the Ombudsman. But I think, Sir, that in the same way we saw the evolution of the English system to a point where the Ombudsman is now taken for granted, and we have seen the evolution in Barbados where, in fact, we now have perhaps the best administrative legislation in the Commonwealth - not the Commonwealth Caribbean, Sir, in the Commonwealth - it is fair to suggest that there will be evolution towards an even purer system in which the rights of the citizens can be protected and will be protected.

I think, Sir, that we are also singularly fortunate in the choice which has been made of our first Ombudsman. Without in any way seeking to be unnecessarily praising the Ombudsman, I think the fact that the first Ombudsman is someone who was so thoroughly siezed in the methodology in Government that he could understand and appreciate certain nuances which occur in the administrative system means that Barbados is singularly fortunate that our development of the Ombudsman system has taken, and will continue to take the form that it has taken.

' 12.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, one of the strong points of democracy in Barbados is that, despite the rhetoric about the politicians in our midst, when we have looked at the appointments of key personnel in the judiciary and now the Ombudsman system, what we have found is that the politicians have always, in each case, made decisions that would be in keeping with the highest quality of democracy and the highest quality of government that a society could ask for, especially a small developing society. We are singularly fortunate to have the quality people that is necessary for that particular methodology to be put in place, because you have to have good men and

women in order to appoint good men and women. And so long as the appointments that are made in this country take account more of merit than they do of any other characteristic, I think we are always going to have a strong democracy.

It is necessary to guard against the excesses, and we, for example, when we were sitting in the Opposition, lent full and complete support to the introduction of the Ombudsman into our governmental system. We made suggestions which were accepted then, and we are in a position now to put some of those suggestions, which have been accepted across both sides of the House, into practice. I believe that there are more and other things that can be done, and will be done, to make the post of Ombudsman an even more efficacious entry into preservation of democracy in the country, but we will evolve toward it.

Since this report is to Parliament, I do not know how my colleagues on both sides of the House feel, but reading the Ombudsman Report allows one to offer congratulations to the Ombudsman for having submitted a succinct, readable and important report in good time. One could only wish that all of the others reports which are required and called for in the various Acts of Parliament could be so swiftly provided, so that one could use them in the same way that one is able to use this report.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to support the amendments, and I would like to congratulate the Attorney-General, who spent a long time listening to colleagues from both sides and has come up with a form of amendment that is acceptable to all. I think that he showed a tremendous amount of wisdom and, if I might say so, scholarship in arriving at the point where we are now, Sir.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am being urged to admit that he also showed patience. But I believe, Sir, that that might be self-condemnatory.

Laughter.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I really wish to congratulate him, because this amendment came with much trial, and I think he has done extremely well. I should like to assure the Leader of the Opposition that the Attorney-General's abilities have been, well not stretched to the border, but taxed, and that he has come through with flying colours.

Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to support this Bill.

Hon. M. A. KING: Mr. Speaker, I do not quite understand the fervour of the last remarks at the end of the intervention of the honourable Member.

(Aside: Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Which honourable Member?)

Hon. M. A. KING: The Member for St. Michael West (Hon. B. M. Taitt).

He, perhaps, was trying to explain why this Bill has come to the House on a number of occasions, been withdrawn, been looked at again and has been revised. It shows, Mr. Speaker, that there was a lot of debate and dialogue within the Government party on this matter. Democracy was fully at work within the ranks of the Government over this Bill. A lot of the points which have been raised by the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) have been addressed and considered. We are concerned with improving the status of the Ombudsman in the country. This we see as part of the total process of development.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West raised some concern in relation to the area of public utilities, whether we were satisfied that the amending legislation was so drafted that it identified clearly enough the public utilities which we really intend to cover. The exclusion section reads:

"Matters relating to the regulation of public utilities."

The regulation of public utilities in Barbados is governed by the Public Utilities Act, which is Chapter 282 of the Laws of Barbados, and in that legislation, the term "public utilities" is clearly defined as follows:

"Any person or company (including the lessee, ...) who owns or operates equipment or facilities for

- (a) the production, generation, storage, transmission, sale, delivery, furnishing or supplying directly or indirectly to the public of electricity,
- (b) the conveyance or transmission of messages
^ or communications by telephone;
but shall not include any person or company not otherwise a public utility who furnishes the service or commodity onto himself, ..."

So the definition of "public utility" in the public utilities legislation of Barbados confines the reference of the term to electricity services, the Barbados Light and Power Company, and regulating of telephone services. So in our view, the confining of the exclusion to those particular utilities is satisfactorily accounted for.

In relation to the areas relating to the exercise of executive authority by the Minister responsible for migration, the honourable Member for Christ Church

West has made the point that the exercise of the prerogative power of the Crown may be subject to review. We have no great difficulty with that. As we say, it is a developing process. We have not closed our minds to the , developments in the law in this regard, but for the time being, we think that the present position is a workable one. We will certainly review this area of the law in the fulness of time, and as it develops, and if there is need to expand the area over which the Ombudsman is authorised to exercise the authority, it will be done.

Certainly in relation to regulation of public utilities ' and liquor licensing, there are judicial bodies which regulate these matters, and in both cases, where parties may ' be dissatisfied with the decisions of the regulatory authorities, there is provision in the laws themselves for appeals to the courts. So the courts do have a function to review as well the areas of operation of regulation of public utilities and of the licensing authorities. And apart from the regular areas of appeal which may be provided by legislation, there are, of course, the administrative justice procedures, to which reference has been made by the member for Christ Church West and by the Member for St. Michael West. 12.55 p.m.

All of these areas provide for further opportunity in a judicial way to review the work and the actions of officials in these areas. That is why we thought it not necessary to provide for the Ombudsman to function in these areas, bearing in mind that, in the context of how the Ombudsman operates in Barbados. He operates more or less like a parliamentary commissioner, and he is not a judicial officer as such, so it would be something a little anomalous, let us say, at the least, for the Ombudsman, as a parliamentary officer and as a non-judicial officer, to be reviewing the work which is of a judicial nature.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West made the point that there were certain aspects of the • judicial function which are reviewable by the Ombudsman. . That has to be carefully sorted out. The particular asp'ects i of function, certainly not the pure exercise of a judicial function itself, are not the area of review by the Ombudsman, because the whole concept of the judicial function and the structure of the courts, the appellate system which we have, is designed specifically to deal with providing an opportunity for reviewing the decisions of courts down the line.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I urge on honourable Members that the Bill should be seen as part of an ongoing process of reviewing the Ombudsman's function and activity. Where need arises to protect the work which the Ombudsman is required to do, that need will be addressed as appropriate.

Thank you, Sir.

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. M. A. KING, seconded by Hon. B. M. TATTT, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. R. P. BYER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 5 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. M. A. KING, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. M. A. KING, seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT, the Bill was read a third time and passed, and cited as the Ombudsman (Amendment) Act, 1988.

PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1988

Order No. 5 was called — To move the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Public Entertainments Tax Act.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD (St. Michael South): Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple amendment that is being proposed today, and it goes back to the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals delivered by the Minister of Finance on April 17, 1984. On that particular occasion - and I will get back to that date in a little while - the Minister of Finance imposed a 20 per cent tax. It was levied on membership and rental fees in respect of operators of video clubs and video rental business. I think this was an attempt to capture some revenue arising out of a relatively new form of entertainment in Barbados which has grown up, in which people would go and purchase cassettes and operate them in their home entertainment centres so that they could watch films according to their taste rather than waiting on the choice as determined by the television station.

The Public Entertainments Tax Act, Cap. 85 came into force to permit, or so it was thought, the collection of that particular tax. The authority to collect that tax on the business which I have referred to was set out in the Second Schedule. But the Second Schedule would become operative only under a particular section of the Act, and in that Act some doubt arose as to whether the collection of the tax could be covered by the phraseology in Section 10 of the Act. That Section 10 refers, I believe

to admission fees, and a doubt arose as to whether the payment of a rental fee and a fee for the rental of a tape by the operators of the businesses could be deemed as admission fees. The matter was referred to the legal officers and it was determined that an amendment to the Act would be desirable to make it abundantly clear that the fees could be collected under the Act itself. 1.05p.m.

The position is that, since 1984-85 to date, some \$1.6 million has been collected under this particular provision and there has been some queries as to whether the operators are, in fact, required to pay the fees as set out. We are therefore seeking in this amendment to validate and put it beyond doubt, so the action that has been taken and the fees that have been collected would, therefore, have been validly collected, and secondly, those who are called upon to pay the fees would be doing so within the appropriate legal regime. Some legal arguments may be raised, I am not sure, but the Minister of Health is present to deal with any such matters which may arise in respect of those matters.

Mr. Speaker, opportunity is also being taken to provide authority under which the Minister of Finance may waive the entertainment tax in as much as the Act itself does not provide that authority. From time to time, there are requests from teams, persons, charitable organisations or others seeking a waiver of the Entertainment Tax Act, and opportunity is being taken now to empower the Minister to waive the tax in circumstances or situations which may be deemed advisable. This is done through section 7(c).

Another amendment in the interest of safety is also being proposed, that is, it would be necessary to incorporate any repairs which may be deemed appropriate for improving the safety of the premises modifications when the licences are being renewed. I am referring to matters such as the provision of, for instance, adequate fire exits from places of entertainment so that the patrons who attend such functions can do so within the maximum safety conditions possible under the circumstances.

I indicated that some \$1.6 million had been collected to date. There are some 97 shops operating in this business according to the best information available to us at this time. The tax is chargeable at the rate of 20 per cent on rentals of video, membership and the tapes, and on live entertainment it is at the rate of 10 per cent.

I have said, Sir, that this matter arises out of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals delivered on April 17, 1984. We have not yet got to April 17, and already I am hearing comments about the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals being late. I think that in the interest of public enlightenment on this matter, it is necessary to give the dates for Financial Statements and Budgetary Proposals, lest we run away

with the kinds of comments which are not in keeping with the high level of public awareness that should operate in our circumstances.

The Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals in 1970 were delivered on May 12; in 1971, they were delivered on July 27; in 1972, it was June 6; in 1973, May 31. So it has varied from time to time. There were two statements in 1974, one on April 5 and one on November 21. But there seems to be something about "four", because ten years later, in 1984, there were also two. So in 1974 and 1984 there were two. In 1984, one was on April 17 and the other on October 23. 1.15 p.m.

In 1976, it was on July 30, on April 25 in 1979, in 1983, April 27.....

Asides.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Yes, March 31, and he wanted a reply on April 1, All Fool's Day. That was his sense of humour.

Sir, in 1985, May 7.

Asides.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am just talking about ; the date on which the Statement was delivered. I just mention these dates to indicate that this Government is not one that is operating at the beck and call of interests that are outside of the determination of the Government. One thing is sure — it will be coming.

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

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that, Sir, and reserve my right to speak.

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

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. E. E. GREAVES, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. R. P. BYER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 10 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, seconded by Hon. E. E. GREAVES, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the Speaker, the passing of one

Bill in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, seconded by Hon. E. E. GREAVES, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF A NOTIFICATION OF THE ACQUISITION OF LAND SITUATE AT SYNAGOGUE LANE, ST. MICHAEL.

Order No. 4 was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the publication in the Official Gazette of a notification of the abandonment of the acquisition of land situate at Synagogue Lane, St. Michael.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN (St. Philip South): Mr. Speaker, on March 29, 1979, Cabinet took a decision to acquire properties at Magazine Lane, Synagogue Lane and Roebuck Street, seven parcels of land, to facilitate the establishment of the new Supreme Court Complex. Five parcels of those seven were paid for, but we could not come to an agreement with the owner of the two parcels on Roebuck Street because of the difference in the price being put on the land by the Commissioner of Land Tax and the price being asked by the owner. In fact, in certain instances, the price being asked by the owner was four times the amount as stated by the Commissioner of Land Tax.

The point here, Mr. Speaker, is that the Supreme Court Complex is no longer being put where it was intended to be put, according to this Resolution, and because of the high price of the land, it has been decided to abandon the acquisition of these two parcels of land at Roebuck Street 6 and 7 and Roebuck Street 8 and 9.

I beg that this Resolution do now pass.
1.25p.m.

Ho'n. W. O. FRANKLIN: I beg to second that, Sir, and reserve my right to speak.

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

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION IN ST. JOSEPH RE TENT BAY FISH LANDING SITE

Order No. 3 was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to approve of the compulsory acquisition of five parcels of land in the parish of St. Joseph for the purpose of improving the Tent Bay Fish Landing Site.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN (St. Philip South): Mr. Speaker, the decision to acquire these five parcels of land was made on January 30, 1985. That was the first decision by the Planning and Priorities Committee at that time, and the purpose of the acquisition was to allow improvements to be made to the Tent Bay fish landing site in St. Joseph. That decision was finally approved on June 12, 1985.

Four of the owners have been satisfied, but there is an ongoing discussion between the fifth owner and the Government. The peculiar thing about this owner's property was that his property was not used as a full-time residence and therefore could not have been handled in the same way as you could deal with persons who were occupying the other houses.

The last correspondence that the Ministry of Housing had with this owner was in January this year. An offer was made to him then, and we are now awaiting a response from this gentleman. In the meantime, we have to go ahead and acquire, and that is what this Resolution seeks approval of Parliament to do.

Mr. Speaker, as soon as this matter is cleared up, the last part of the Tent Bay fishing project, which is the boat park, will be embarked on.

With those words, Sir, I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: I beg to second that, Sir.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE (Christ Church West): Mr. Speaker, the Minister was a little bit guarded in explaining the problem with the fifth owner of this land relating to the issue of compensation. What I can gather from his statement is that the house in which the owner lived was not used as a full-time residence. But if it has acquired a character of a residence, I humbly submit to this House that he must be compensated on the basis of the residential nature of his property. There is no characterisation, as far as I know, as to whether or not it is a part-time or full time residence. It is only if the claim for compensation is based on income earned from the property that there could be any argument about it. Otherwise, one has to impute a certain value to the income or to the value of the monthly rental occupation of the premises.

I do not know what is the particular problem, the Minister having not indicated, I am using assumptions here, I trust that the interest of the person, whichever of the five persons it happens to be, will be protected and as soon as possible compensated.

Sir, you will recall that the Tent Bay expansion project started some time ago. Perhaps the Minister would

take the opportunity to let us know whether it has been concluded.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: He says that the Minister of Agriculture would be the person to do that, but the Minister of Agriculture is not now in his place, although he is in the precincts of the House somewhere. I do not particularly want to pursue that too much.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: He is coming back.

I wish to know whether the problem of Tent Bay has been solved and fishermen can look forward to having adequate facilities not only to bring in their fish, but adequate storage and other kinds of facilities that are needed at that landing site.

I wonder if the Minister would care to make some statement of clarification, certainly for my part, on the fishing arrangements between ourselves and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Some persons are under the impression that a fishing agreement has been entered into and that now it is in order for us to fish within the waters of Trinidad and Tobago without much more.

As I understand it, negotiations are still going on and there has been no conclusive negotiations on this issue between the two respective Governments. I am not sure, I have not heard any recent statement as to whether there is any interim arrangement by which we are legally permitted at the moment, on an interim basis, to fish within those waters. But as the House would be aware, fishing within those waters can at some stage be necessary for us, having regard to the fact that there is a movement, particularly of the flying fish, depending on the movement of the tides. One would want to hear something from the Minister about that.

A few days ago, the Minister made a statement in relation to fishing in the Caribbean.

Aside.

Laughter.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Tent Bay, Sir! The Minister of Health wants to know how I am speaking on the fishing subject, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not want to know.

Laughter.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The House approved the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of parcels of land

for the purpose of improving the Tent Bay fish landing site. Very easy, Sir. Well, there is no point in having a landing site improved if there are no fishing grounds.

Laughter.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: So, Sir, I am interested in the fishing grounds, not only the landing site. And I really wish th? Minister would tell us something as to whether the Tent Bay fishermen will be able to use the fishing grounds off Trinidad and Tobag...

He also spoke about the exclusive zones. I want him to give the House some indication as to what negotiations, if any, have really started within CARICOM for use of each other's exclusive economic zones, which are beyond the territorial boundaries, for the purpose of fishing, or whether this is merely at this stage a sentiment being expressed. Are they positive negotiations going on?

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to stray too much outside of the bounds of this Resolution, but part of the problem, as the Minister is aware, is that very few of the Caribbean countries, if any at all, have really demarcated their territorial boundaries or their exclusive zones. The price of doing this is an extremely expensive one and, therefore, it is an area for co-operative effort, because you have to get the right type of ships in order to have the correct demarcation. It i;j within the context of providing landing sites that I hope that regard is being played as well to fishing boundaries. 1.35p.m.

Laughter.

Asides.

Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH (St. Joseph): Mr. Speaker, seeing that this beautiful Tent Bay is in my constituency, I have a few words to say about the project. That project was started, as several other projects, in a hurry shortly before the General Election. I was actually living down there for two months or so, and I was able to see what was going on. I spoke with the fishermen almost every day.

I was also present when the great expert from over and away came and decided what was to be done in Tent Bay. In spite of the fact that fishermen, some of whom had been fishing for 50 years, were saying that you should not do it so, no one listened to them. And so a great monstrosity of a slipway was built at great cost to the taxpayers of this island. Since that slipway was built, several boats have been damaged, as one of my colleagues here will attest, because he had to do the survey on the boats. As the fishermen explained to me, years ago, when the boats ran adrift, as they do in Bathsheba - anyone who knows Bathsheba will know boats sometimes float away - they were able to be

rescued. Now, when they float away they hit up against - you know what - the slipway. So they are damaged to a great extent This has caused great distress to some of these fishermen, who have had to take their boats to Bridgetown. Only this morning I was speaking with one of those fishermen whose boat has been in Bridgetown from December. He only brought it up a few weeks ago to have it repaired, to go back to Bridgetown in order to earn his living.

This happens when people do not listen. We have nothing against experts. You go to the university and you learn about certain things. We have no quarrel with that. But there is a lot to be said for experience, and people who actually work for their living in a certain area certainly know a lot about it, and their interest is in having it improved so that they can even make a better living.

I am hoping that this Tent Bay fish landing site will soon be finished, because for several months now there have been great complaints about what has been going on. As I said before, this comes when something is rushed on without enough consultation. With this compulsory acquisition of the five parcels of land, I am hoping that the last parcel will soon come to a conclusion, and when that conies to its conclusion, I am looking forward very sincerely to the conclusion of that fishing site where the fishermen in Bathsheba can continue to fish in Bathsheba. Let me tell the honourable Members of this House that Bathsheba's fish taste better than fish anywhere else.

(Aside: That is true.)

Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH: It is a fact

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. E. E. BOURNE (Christ Church East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution. First, I want to read from our Manifesto of 1976. It states:

"We will increase income levels and better the social conditions for those who derive their living from the sea by reducing the amount of money spent on importation of fish. We have secured a grant from the European Development Fund for major developments at Oistins and these include a new market, wharf and jetty. The Party also plans to improve, construct, and equip fishing boats capable of staying at sea and fishing for long periods."

There is no number on the page.

I will deal with some of the statements made by the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde). The Tent Bay fishing project started on June 12,

1985 in a haste to make political mileage, and I am saying this now

(Aside: This was in 1986.)

Mr. E. BOURNE: Well, this is a year ahead.

I am saying this now to honourable Members of this Honourable Chamber do not waste taxpayers' money when there is an election in sight, because this election hurry is causing me now to install six wells at Inch Marlow. Back to Tent Bay.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not get the last indication. At where?

Mr. E. BOURNE: At Inch Marlow.

Mr. SPEAKER: Inch Marlow.

Mr. E. BOURNE: Inch Marlow, Christ Church.

Mr. SPEAKER: How far is that from Tent Bay?

Laughter.

Mr. E. BOURNE: About 12 miles, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: We had better stay near the Tent Bay.

Mr. E. BOURNE: I will get back to Tent Bay now.

Laughter.

Mr. E. BOURNE: For years, Sir, the fishermen at Tent Bay wanted a safe anchorage, like the fishermen at all the other bays in Barbados. These poor guys over the years had to swim out to their boat on mornings and swim back in on afternoons with a catch in bags, and one would have thought that when the Barbados Labour Party embarked on the Tent Bay project that it would have had such facilities in mind. This they never did. Half of the money that was wasted in this slipway could very well have provided a safe anchorage for these people.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West is asking the Minister of Agriculture whether the fishermen at Tent Bay will be able to use the fishing grounds of Trinidad and Tobago. Under such conditions, I will answer for the Minister of Agriculture. No! To go down to Trinidad and Tobago calls for a large boat, a boat about 42 feet in length, a boat which we call an ice boat. Tent Bay cannot facilitate ice boats, it has been a wastage of taxpayers' money from June 12, 1985.

All that was needed for the Tent Bay project was to put some rubbers out to form a breakwater, widen the channel and dredge the bay. Having a breakwater out there, the bay inside would be calm like Carlisle Bay, and then these guys will be able to use a moses like the people at Oistins do. But the Barbados Labour Party has always been farsighted. They believe in bringing people who have all kinds of funny skins and colours to this country without checking whether they are familiar with our conditions or not, putting large sums of money in their pockets, and then letting them take us for a ride, because any man with any kind of common sense at all would know that that would have been a waste of time and money. When I queried it, the excuse given me by a person high up in the Barbados Labour Party was that on the eastern side you can never get a harbour. I wanted to know at that time from this man if he had ever studied geography, because in all geography classes that I knew when I attended Foundation, we had to study North America, and all the harbours in North America on the Atlantic are on the eastern side, stretching from Maine in the north to Florida in the south. The trade winds blow into them, and if these people had any interest in the fishermen at Bathsheba, and they cared about our taxes, they would not have wasted them in that way. 1.45 p.m.

Since the Member for Christ Church West inquired about fishing, I will say a little about my beloved Oistins. We got some money to develop Oistins and, lo and behold, the Barbados Labour Party did whatever they liked with it, except what was the right thing. They undertook to build a jetty that is ten feet too tall. Instead of providing a wharf - and I know that the members of the Barbados Labour Party would know what a wharf is -

Mr. SPEAKER: I would have preferred you to have made reference to Oistins in relation to the problem at Tent Bay, rather than to have a detailed sort of thing of Oistins at this point. Make your point in relation to the problems.

Mr. E. BOURNE: Mr. Speaker, I am dealing with development of Oistins and jetties in relation to the development at Tent Bay.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, once you can get it done.

Mr. E. BOURNE: At Oistins, instead of building a wharf, they just left it bare with a jetty, and we are having similar problems as the people in Tent Bay. Every year when it is hurricane time, at least six boats are broken up at Oistins, just like at Tent Bay.

The honourable Member for Christ Church West has been talking about the movement of flying fish due to tides. It is a known fact that the flying fish is a tide fish, but if the Government of Trinidad and Tobago refuses to allow us to

fish in their waters, it is not the fault of the Minister of Agriculture. He cannot force them to allow us to fish in their waters. But if Tent Bay was done the way it should have been done, there would be no damage to the boats and the fishermen from Bathsheba would be able to go ten or 12 miles out and still provide the people on the eastern seaboard with an adequate supply of fish.

We propose to make Tent Bay the harbour that the fishermen in Bathsheba always longed for. That is why we are trying to purchase these five additional lots of land. We have seen the wastage by the Barbados Labour Party and we are going to try to correct it. All I am wondering now is what are we going to do with the monstrosity for a slipway. That is a hindrance.

When I was sent down to Bathsheba to carry out the survey on these boats, it was appalling to see the damage that was done and the hardships that these poor fishermen were put to. Only a couple of weeks ago, I was in Belleplaine trying to acquire some wood to build a boat, and one of the fishermen from Bathsheba was lamenting that they have now to fish in Bridgetown because of the lack of facilities which they were expecting to get from the last Administration.

I fully support this Resolution. I hope that when we are finished, the fishermen and people in Barbados will be fully satisfied.

I thank you.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN (St. Philip North): Mr. Speaker, I heard in the ante room some questions put by the Leader of the Opposition. The position with regard to Trinidad is that at the moment there is no agreement between Barbados and Trinidad about fishing. Secondly, I have repeatedly asked the fishermen of Barbados, through the Fisheries Department, to keep out of Trinidad waters until such time as we have had time to negotiate an agreement with Trinidad and Tobago. Thirdly, my understanding is that Trinidad is agreeable to dates early in May for the beginning of negotiations of such an agreement, and the Ministry is getting ready to put certain proposals to Cabinet as counter proposals to those sent from Trinidad for those negotiations. I repeat again, in the interim the fishermen of Barbados should keep out of Trinidad waters.

As you know, as a result of a paper and the discussions between the Prime Minister of Trinidad and the late Prime Minister Errol Barrow in Tobago, the Heads of Government had put the proposal to CARICOM, and

CARICOM has selected a team that is doing the necessary background work dealing with the use of the economic zone. I cannot say more at the moment, because it is now being finalised. It will be put to the Ministers of Agriculture and then back to the Heads of Government.

Aside.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: At the moment there is no technical assistance going on in the delineation of boundaries.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde) raised a matter about compensation for the fifth person, because he got the impression that we were dealing with him differently from the other persons.

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I should have declared an interest in this matter before I spoke. I would like to declare an interest in this matter, since I acted for one of the owners of this land when I was in private enterprise.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: The only difference, Mr. Speaker, between this fifth person and any other person was that one of the other persons who was living in the house would have to be relocated. Because the fifth person was not living in the house, we did not have to relocate him. That was the only difference I was speaking about. He will be paid as though it was a residential contract.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, it is now a convenient time for us to have the luncheon interval, and I move that the sitting be now suspended until 3.00 p.m. today.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that

The question that the sitting be suspended until 3 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 1.55p.m.

ON RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (CONT'D)

RESOLUTION RE POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND
PROJECTS DETAILED BY THE ESTIMATES
1988-89

Order No. 1 was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to take note of the policies, programmes and projects detailed by the Estimates of Expenditure for 1988-89.

Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I crave your permission and the permission of the House for the Minister of Housing and Lands, the honourable Member for St. Philip South (Hon. H. A. Blackman), to move the passing of this Resolution.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on this Resolution, I welcome the opportunity to say a few words about Housing. Housing is a Ministry which does not lack advice coming from all quarters. The advice sometimes depends on which side of the political fence it is coming from. Ninety per cent of the advice, Mr. Speaker, is advice you would have heard before, a part of the advice is deliberately mischievous and misleading and, Mr. Speaker, although there are statements made with respect to the Ministries, not in particular or especially Housing, there are times when the criticisms and the statements coming from certain members in the community will have to be answered.

Mr. Speaker, within the past six weeks or so we have heard a lot of statements made about housing. We have heard statements coming from the Other Place by the former Member for St. George South, we have heard statements coming from the Other Place as well from the former Member for the City, and we have heard statements in here from the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O.S. Arthur) and the honourable Member for Christ Church West (Hon. H. deB. Forde). There are times when certain statements can be ignored, but, as I said, there are times when statements coming from persons who should know better, and who do know better, but for reasons best known to themselves still make misleading statements, have to be answered, and, therefore, one has to respond to them.

Before I respond to the statements by those honourable gentlemen and the lady, Mr. Speaker, I should like just to say for the record that up to December 1987 some 2 336 units were completed in the year 1987. Sixty per cent of them were masonry units, 31 per cent wooden units and 9 per cent mixed units, wood and masonry. In 1986 the total was 1 950, so 1987 has shown an increase of 20 per cent or 386 more units than in 1986.

There was also an increase in new mortgages extended in 1987, in the range of 9 per cent or \$56 million. Applications approved for new residential construction in 1987 grew, and there were 1 141 more applications approved in 1987 than the 1 281 totalled in 1986. All data indicate that house completions in 1988 should again exceed 2 000. Approvals for renovation of houses in 1987 also rose, by 82 per cent, an increase of 537 approvals overall.

In case it is needed, there were fewer house fires recorded in 1987 than in 1986, a 10 per cent drop or 17 less. The total of 174 units damaged in 1987 compared with 191 damaged in 1986, less as well. A more comprehensive and detailed analysis will be given to this Honourable House at a later date.

Mr. Speaker, I will now deal with some of the statements coming from the persons whom I have named earlier. The former Member for St. George South stated that the Government has a lot of land all over the place and he could not see why there was a shortage of house spots, and he went on to indicate that principally among this lot of land that the Government has was a place called Parish Land in Christ Church. The former Member for St. George South should know, or should have taken time to find out, that 13 1/2 acres of land at Parish Land cannot be built on because it is in the NEF 30 zone, the zone that is out of limits for house building because of the way the aircrafts descend. He was a Minister in the former Government and would have known this. That is why I am saying that there are persons who speak deliberately, knowing that they are misleading people for reasons best known to themselves. 3.10p.m.

The former Member for the City has gone on record on many occasions asking for Government's policy on housing. That statement to the Press sounds very nice, but, to me, it sounds like asking the Prime Minister for his economic or financial policy. To answer a question like that would take pages and pages and pages. You have to have a financial policy on interest rates. You have a financial policy on money supply. It has to be related to something. You cannot ask somebody what is his economic policy, so to ask me what is my housing policy is only trying to make a statement to catch headlines in the newspaper.

What is my housing policy in relation to what? What is my housing policy in relation to low income people? What is my housing policy in relation to the private sector? What is my housing policy in relation to middle income people? It has to be related to something.

What I find very interesting in the statements coming from these people is that they sat in a Cabinet for ten years and were silent on many areas for the ten years, and now, suddenly, their tongues have been loose. When I hear

members of the Barbados Labour Party speaking at this time, since they have lost the Government, one wonders where they were prior to 1986. I am not going to spend any further time on the two persons in the Other Place, I will turn to the members in this Honourable House.

When we were debating the raising of \$10 million in Housing Development Bonds, the honourable Member for St. Peter, in order, I believe, to make the past Administration look, in the eyes of who were listening, progressive as a party with ideas, stated that they started a land bank and gave the impression that the Barbados Labour Party started identifying land around Barbados on which to build houses. In fact, he went further; he asked what became of that committee that was set up setting out land where you should build houses.

I have investigated this matter and there is nowhere that I can find in the Ministry of Housing that any committee was set up specifically to look at spots or house building. I found one committee being set up, and the committee was set up at the time when the plantations in Barbados owed the Barbados National Bank a lot of money, specifically to look at those plantations which were mostly indebted to the Barbados National Bank. In fact, the Cabinet discussed agricultural land with particular reference to lands indebted to the Barbados National Bank and concluded that a task force should be set up to enquire into the amount of unused agricultural land and its ownership.

That is what was set up. It was nothing to do with house spots anywhere. So when I am saying that persons make statements depending on which side of the political fence they are on, and they make statements which they know are mischievous and misleading, I know what I am saying. The impression should not be given to this House, nor to the people of Barbados, that any committee was set up to look at lands for house spots for people to rent or to buy. That was never the case.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition stated in here that the Government should look into the matter of property management. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should know that his Administration set up a Property Management Unit which.....

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I wish the honourable Member would quote the whole speech. I went on to tell him that there was only one person qualified as a chartered surveyor.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker.....

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: The honourable Member has very seriously misled the House when he said that in a speech dealing with a Housing Development Bond I referred to a committee set up to deal

with a land bank. The records of this House will show that I made no such reference to any such committee, and I will ask that the remarks of the honourable Member be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member, continue your speech.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I started by saying that honourable Members in here will have to speak the truth at all times, because this is an Honourable House, and persons should not get up and try to give impressions to people over this side, or to people outside via the media, that the Barbados Labour Party was holier than thou and more progressive than anybody else, and that everything that you started we abandoned. It is not true. That is all I am saying.

You said that you wanted to know if we had abandoned the idea that you all started with the committee. But I am finished with you for the time being.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is addressing the Chair. The honourable Member is permitted to make his speech under the Rules of the House, and I do not think I need to remind Members again that there are only few interruptions that I allow in debate. I will just ask the honourable Member to continue his speech.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, by means of the newspaper, stated that there is a necessity for an efficient Property Management Unit. The honourable member of the Opposition should know that his Administration started the Property Management Unit and only had two people working in it. He must understand that any sector of Government which is in charge of over \$400 million in Government property should have been properly staffed. Many of the complaints that are being made now would not be made if the Property Management Unit was properly staffed.

One of the difficulties which the unit faced after being set up by the past Administration was that there was no estate terrier in existence. 3.20 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Terrier.

Aside.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: I will explain it for you.

Asides.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Because there is no estate terrier in existence - the unit was set up without one - it meant that there was, and still is, no proper, reliable inventory of Government lands to be found, with information documented, anywhere.

Asides.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: The point I am making is that if you are setting up a unit like this that controls that amount of Government property, the unit should have been properly staffed. That is what we have said, and it does not augur well to get up in here and give the impression that there is something suddenly gone wrong since this Administration took office. We are trying to right what was wrong. We are trying to staff the unit properly.

There were great difficulties with property management. This should not be so, because property management is the one area of Government that can make a lot of money and actually pay for itself. And no unit which controls that amount of resource, over \$400 million in Government property, should be left in the sort of condition that it was in when we took over this Administration. There is no way to determine the total revenue collectible from Government land or property anywhere.

(Aside: Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Fox Terrier.)

Laughter.

Mr. SPEAKER: I can clearly see that the interruptions are distracting the honourable Member from making his speech. I again ask Members to allow the Member to speak in peace.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member for St. Peter knows that I get him bowled out here fairly often, so leave him to me.

Mr. Speaker, a property management unit, in addition to managing its portfolio, should be capable of providing in-house, professional advice and guidance in most property matters, including acquisition. Together with the services offered by the Commissioner of Land Tax, it should provide Government with capable and sound expertise in property matters.

Asides.

Laughter.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would wish if you would address the Speaker and not the Member.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Fair enough.

We have decided to make some changes in the Property Management Unit, and the first change you have to make is to get properly qualified staff and to have the right amount of staff. The first thing we have to do is to do what you all did not do. We have to correct the mistakes that you all made. We have carefully examined and established the nature and extent of the duties and services that this unit should be dealing with. We are still restructuring the unit accordingly, and we will very shortly appoint trained officers who are competent, able and willing to deal with the various staffs that need to be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of talk has been going on recently on the television and on the airwaves about the land registry system. I do not believe that there is very much more I could add to what is being said on the radio and television. With the new land registry system, the time spent with searches, where you had to wait for months sometimes to get conveyances, will be minimised. With the system fully operational, you will be able to get the type of information you need in a matter of minutes. As I said, Mr. Speaker, there are at the moment programmes on the radio and the television advising Barbadians about the land registry system which is now coming into being.

The Housing Credit Fund, which was capitalised with a US\$10 million loan for low income persons, has been playing a very important part in the housing programmes in Barbados. You would say that you all started it, I admit it. The fund has been doing well. Two-thirds of the funds lent have been used to finance home improvements and the remaining 34 per cent has been for the purchase of new houses.

But there are some lessons that should be learnt from this initial working of the Housing Credit Fund. Mr. Speaker, it became clear very early that simply making funds available for housing does not necessarily motivate builders to start building for low income groups. One of the things we have learnt that the programme has to be actively promoted and marketed. The Housing Credit Fund has been successful to a large extent because the Ministry of Housing realizes the need to sell the programme to the contractors, builders and private borrowers. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Housing Credit Fund has now acquired a sort of expertise in the area of low income lending, and I believe that the Housing Credit Fund should be used as a vehicle for lending money to low income persons, although the money is lent via the banking system.

We have also learnt by the operation of the Housing Credit Fund that private lenders will not be interested in participating unless the lending programmes and procedures are simply designed and funds are available on a timely basis. The Housing Credit Fund, to its credit, has done a lot of work in the area of bridging finance, and, in fact, most of the work it is doing now, and proposes to do, is in that area. As you know, Mr. Speaker, people find a lot of difficulty between the expiration of one set of funds and receiving another set. It is in that interim that the Housing Credit Fund proposes to play its major part in the future. 3.30p.m.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the Housing Credit Fund has been successful in expanding the availability of financing for a large number of low income families. It has also resulted in Government and the private sector supplying appropriate products that meet the housing needs of the low income person.

Mr. Speaker, I turn to another branch of Housing, and this is where everyone seems to have the expertise and knowledge, and know everything about what should be done and what should not be done - the National Housing Corporation.

The National Housing Corporation, Mr. Speaker, was, and still is, to a large extent, a problem institution. The first problem that presents itself at the National Housing Corporation is the problem of records. Records are either in a very bad state or are non-existent, and because of the bad state, or the non-existence, of records, you would see from time to time that errors are made in sending out quit notices, or in the sending out of notices for that matter, and evictions, of course. Because once the records are non-existent or are in a bad state, a letter could very well go to someone who is no longer living in the particular house. We are correcting that, and I believe that we are about 90 per cent - 95 per cent on the way to having at least the house rental system totally corrected.

We are still in a problem area with land rent. I will admit that. The land rent is still a problem area because persons, I believe, feel that because land rents are paid quarterly, it will not be discovered that persons probably have not paid land rent for 15 - 20 years. We are also working on this, and I believe that, with a little time, we will have the problem of land rents sorted out. As I have said, Mr. Speaker, the problem with the house rentals is about 95 per cent up to date, and we believe that, very, very shortly, there will be no further problems as far as the records are concerned with the house rentals.

Mr. Speaker, if I concluded this speech without mentioning rents and arrears, it would be remiss of me. First, I would like to say in here that the National Housing

Corporation does not go about its business trying to put out senior citizens or indigent persons. That has never been the case. As I have stated before, there are times when mistakes will occur because of the bad state of the records, where notices and letters will go to persons, old people, who should have their rents paid by the Welfare Department, in some instances. That is what will happen as long as your records are not up to date.

The point is that I believe that, for the first time, there is a sort of oneness in Barbados behind the Ministry in trying to collect monies outstanding to the corporation. I do not agree with persons who think that people should not pay, because the money you collect in rents will go a long way in helping to build new units. It is unfair to anyone who is paying while the person who lives next door is not paying but, in many instances, has a better job and is getting more money than the person who is paying.

I can speak about England, because I lived there for three years. In England, the first call on your pay cheque is for the London County Council, if you are living in London in a rental unit, or you get put out in the cold. But the attitude has developed in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, where persons are convinced that once you are dealing with Government, you do not have to pay.

Asides.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that there are persons who tell others to go and get a Government unit because you do not have to pay. I know that is true.

What has happened in Barbados is that persons have understood over the years that a Minister would begin to speak and ask persons to come and pay, and in some instances even send out quit notices. But the tenants in the houses knew that it always stopped at that point. So all they had to do was relax for a while and everything would subside, and another year or two would pass until the shouting started again. Mr. Speaker, this is not happening with me.

Previously, the Government would send out a quit notice and stop. Because the process of acquiring a court eviction is a long process and takes sometimes, about three months, Government, wisely or unwisely, after they sent out the quit notices, forgot everything. But if you are going to make NHC an efficient organisation, as all the lending institutions have told us to do, you will have to collect the rents. So the three months court eviction notice was no problem with me and the Ministry, because if the corporation sent out a quit notice in November, it realised that if you went to the court for an eviction notice, you probably would not get the eviction notice until about

March, but March was bound to come, so all you had to do was to go and get the eviction notice the same time and wait.

We have warned, we have sent letters to people on numerous occasions, and Mr. Speaker, this is one of the points I want to drive home. An eviction notice is not the first resort. Sometimes people get six, eight or ten letters reminding them that they are in arrears with the National Housing Corporation, and asking them to come in and say something. That is all. Come in and make arrangements, say anything, say you know that you owe, but you are not working, something like that. Only about six or eight per cent of them ever come in and say anything.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, that just over a year ago, when I embarked on a programme of collecting the rents and trying to clean up what was happening at the National Housing Corporation

Aside.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Okay, the Ministry, I am sorry.

When we embarked on a policy of getting the corporation more efficient, the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Mr. D. A. C. Simmons), in here, from his place there, told me, "Boy, I wish you the best of luck." Do you remember telling me so?

(*Aside:* Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Is he talking to me, or to you?)

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Yes, the honourable Member said "boy, I wish you the best of luck," so I know he is in my corner. ∴ 3.40 p.m.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir: These matters of knowledge are personal to the person in whose repository they reside. He cannot presume to speak for me and say he knows anything. I did not want to speak in this debate at all, but if I speak, he will see that I do not agree with him.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: So you do not agree with making National Housing Corporation a more efficient organisation!

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the records will show that the Ministry of Housing is on the right roaa, because the rents that we have collected in the past four or five months have been at a level and a consistency never before seen in the history of the corporation. Very shortly, maybe in the

Budget Debate, I will bring the exact figures for the last five or six months. We are collecting arrears on a grand scale.

I believe that politics has to be taken out of housing. There has been too much politics in housing for years. I do not believe that in my lifetime all of the politics will come out of housing, but I believe that there was too much politics in it, because even at this very moment you a person, who should know better, going into Nelson .Street and telling the people in Nelson Street that they should be getting the Pondside houses.

Aside.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: It is the former member for the City; that is who it is! Since then, they have gone up there and they have told the people, "You all thought that you all would get the majority of the houses in the City, well I have information that people from all over the place are going to come and live in the City." I do not believe that any politician should operate at that level, should stoop that low. That is carrying politics too low, because that person, or any person, who is of that thinking should understand that there are persons who have applications at National Housing Corporation for house rentals for 15, 17, 19 years, and to tell anyone in the City that they should be getting the houses because they live in the City is being purely political and mischievous.

When will we ever get politics out of housing if that sort of thing continues? There is no way you can get politics out of housing. That is like telling me that if we build houses in Bennetts, only people from Bennetts should live in those houses, and that is crazy. But maybe that is how it was planned, because my information was that the houses you built in the Ivy were for people ... Do not let me get into that.

Asides.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Do you want me to say it? They were for people who you all were bringing in there to get rid of Don Blackman. You did not want me to say so, you did not know I would say that. I remember he was in here on the back bench quarrelling with you all for bringing, or attempting to bring, people to live in those units in the Ivy to vote against him. I heard him say that. You did not know I would tell you so, did you?

The point is you have to take politics out of housing. I am telling you that there are 13 units already allocated in Bennetts, and nine of the persons who got those houses had in applications over five years. How are you going to operate and get the National Housing Corporation to be an

efficient organisation if you keep putting politics in it all the time?

Aside.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: There is nothing wrong in any of my colleagues recommending some person for a house. But what is wrong - let me explain it to you, because if you recommend some person to me for a house - Mr. Speaker, if you recommended some person to me for a house - well not Mr. Speaker, you will never recommend any person for a house -....

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think what the honourable Member is saying is that you need to make a distinction when referring to the honourable Member for St. Peter and myself, that if you say "you", you could probably mean myself or the honourable Member for St. Peter. You know that is not correct, so I prefer when you are referring to the honourable member for St. Peter to call him by his name.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: If the honourable Member for St. Peter recommended some person to me for a house, this is how we operate, this is how you have to operate. Does the person have an application? How long did the person have an application? Those are the things you have to go through. How serious is the need? 3.50p.m.

You are not going to come to me and tell me, "Blackie, I have a campaign manager who walks around and I want a house for him." That cannot work with me. If the campaign manager had in an application for seven or eight years and was urgently in need of a house, it would be all right with me. You have to understand that what has caused the problems at the National Housing Corporation is forcibly demonstrated in Kensington Lodge. Anyhow I will not get into the Kensington Lodge thing.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have spent enough time on house and land rentals and rents and arrears. Just let me make another comment about statements coming from members of the other side, and I do not mean any Members in this Honourable Chamber.

The National Housing Corporation built some starter houses, 57 at Oxnards and 21 or 22 at Parkinson, and a former Member for St. Michael West Central, speaking at a branch meeting one night in the Bay Land, said that we are building houses at Oxnards and at Parkinson Road with one door, and he went on and poured scorn on these houses that were built. That is Vic Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, the concept for starter houses was developed by the Barbados Labour Party. When I became Minister of Housing, I was taken to Oxnards and shown a model house. It had one bedroom. If you saw it, Mr. Speaker, you would wonder what it was.

The board of the National Housing Corporation under this Administration decided that any person who wants a house nowadays would need at least two bedrooms, and the only thing we did with that model house was to put on a second bedroom for the applicant, and another door, and we built a three bedroom model house for the world to see what it would look like, and you can go at Parkinson Road and Oxnards and see them. The only thing we did was to put on another bedroom for the applicant. I stated from the beginning that when people speak, it depends on which side of the fence they are coming from and whether they want to be mischievous or misleading. We put on the second bedroom instead of waiting for the person to put it on.

Mr. Speaker, I go on to the role the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry is playing in facilitating the work done by the private contractors.

West Terrace, Phase I, is an example of what should not be allowed to happen in Barbados. I compliment the past Administration on trying to facilitate the private contractors in building, but the West Terrace Phase I project got out of hand. When that project was conceived, it was conceived as a low income project, and the contractors began to build for low income people. But, suddenly, they realised that they could make more profit by building more expensive houses, and they then proceeded to build houses for \$80 000, \$120 000, and \$140 000, completely beyond the range of the low income earner. That is where that project went wrong.

The point I am making is that if you are going to facilitate the private sector by providing the land and the infrastructure, the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing will have to retain some measure of control over the type and price of the house which is being built. That is my view, and because of the example of West Terrace, it has been decided that we are going to retain control over the price of the houses that you are building on the land that we sold to you or that we gave to you.

Mr. Speaker, we have developed land at lots of places in Barbados - Husbands, Simmons Road, Parkinson Road, as I said, and others. We are maintaining control that is needed so that the prices of the houses will not go too high beyond the limit of the low income earner.

There is something that I have to say here as well; I have said it before and I am going to say it again. This Administration will have to be innovative, it will have to be

revolutionary, and it will have to be almost radical if we are going to ensure that the poor person at the bottom owns his own house. We have to understand that there are lots of people in high places who would not wish the programmes of this party to succeed, and unless we are radical, we may end up building thousands of houses more than the past Administration, but still the people whom we want to get the houses will not be getting them. That would not be sense, because all we would be doing is continuing what the past Administration did.

This Administration, therefore, has to take the lead, because it has to understand that the lending institutions in Barbados are not accustomed to lending poor people. That is a fact and you know it. They do not have the expertise, they do not have the knowledge. Most of them do not know how to deal with poor people, that is the whole problem, and unless this Administration decides that it is going to be radical, it will not succeed. In many cases we will have to take the lead and show the banks how it can be done.

There is the General Workers Loan Fund at the National Housing Corporation and there is the Housing Credit Fund. These two entities have developed a sort of expertise in dealing with poor people, and if we are going to make funds available to the poor people, I believe those two institutions should be used. 4.00 p.m.

I am not criticising the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company, but I do not believe that the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company has developed any expertise in dealing with poor people.

Asides

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Does that prevent me from saying what I had to say? I say that I do not believe that it has developed the expertise to deal with poor people. What it will have to do now is to open a window, or some department, dealing exclusively with poor people. Then I will be convinced.

There are not only people in high places who would like to stop the sort of programmes that we would like to carry out for the poor people in Barbados, but there are contractors as well who have their own vested interest in preventing us from building certain low income houses for low income people. I will explain what I am saying.

My personal view, not speaking for the Cabinet nor the Government of Barbados, is that if you really wanted the poor person at the bottom to own his own house, you would build a timber house for him. You can probably put on the toilet and bath in wall, and after a number of years, you will see that that person will have his own wall house.

But that does not go down well with some of the contractors, and whenever I go out to openings or on visits, there are some of them who tell me that they do not like that. You know why they do not like it? When you give a poor person a timber house with toilet and bath in wall, and he continues then as his income allows to build the entire thing in wall, he does not employ any of those contractors. He goes around the corner and gets his uncle, his brother, a friend and says, "Come, I want some wall put on here", so they can see their interests going through the window.

But, as I said, this Government has to take the initiative. There is no way that I will be satisfied, regardless of how many more houses the Ministry of Housing builds, how many more than the past Administration built, unless I can stand up and say those are 2 000 houses owned by people at Parks and Beaches, at MTW, all the School Meals workers.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, I second the Resolution and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS (St. Thomas): Mr. Speaker, we had really anticipated the kind of speech made by the Minister of Housing and Lands. I have before me the Resolution which is the subject of this debate. Nobody has read it. I believe I have to read it:

"WHEREAS this Honourable House has, by its vote approved an Appropriation Bill containing, under appropriate heads for the several services required, the estimated aggregate sums which are proposed to be expended, other than by statutory expenditure, during the 1988/89 financial year.

"AND WHEREAS it is expedient that this House have the opportunity of further consideration of those Heads of Expenditure which were passed without debate, pursuant to Standing Order 66.9.

"BE IT RESOLVED, subject to the observance of Standing Order 28.11 in relation to the Heads of Expenditure which have already been debated, THAT this Honourable House take note of the policies, programmes and projects detailed by the Estimates of Expenditure."

We on this side are a little uncertain as to the parameters of the debate on this Resolution. We anticipated that it would have given all those Ministers who did not have a chance in the Estimates of debating their own particular heads the opportunity to tell the House about the programmes and policies of their departments. We are not sure if that is so.

The Honourable Prime Minister got up and handed over to the Minister of Housing, and we have had a full exposition from the Minister of Housing in relation to his Ministry. But the Resolution merely asks that this House take note of the policies and so on, and if I were taking the Resolution literally, according to its text, it would be the easiest possible thing in the world for me to say that the Opposition takes note of the policies, programmes, and sit down. But the Minister of Housing has provoked the debate, and I am not going to abdicate the responsibility of the Opposition, but I am not going to be long either, because, on this side, we are taking note. That is all the Resolution asks us to do.

I have not heard from the Minister in his hour and ten minutes presentation any new and substantial policies, programmes or projects detailed by the Estimates of Expenditure, as called for in the Resolution. What I have heard is he beginning with a kind of intolerance that has, obviously, rubbed off from the Prime Minister on to him, of persons who may be critical of the Democratic Labour Party.

(Aside: Which Prime Minister?)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Which Prime Minister? The one who is not in here now. There is only one Minister of Finance. He made that clear. And there is only one Prime Minister who, two Mondays ago, said that he will not tolerate any criticism of the Democratic Labour Party.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I know who that was meant for. That was not necessarily meant for who you think it was meant for, but, probably, someone on that side who may have the temerity to be critical of the Prime Minister.

On this Resolution, I can debate anything that we have not debated during the third week in March. Let that be clearly understood. I do not have to respond to the Minister of Housing necessarily, but I will. 4.10p.m.

We heard a criticism of what two Senators in the Other Place are alleged to have said. We heard a criticism about what the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) did not say, because he was on a point of order and made that very clear. Nobody on this side has ever talked anything about a committee for a land bank.

On the Housing Development Bonds debate, I explained how during my time as chairman of the NHC, the policy was to build up a land bank by the steady and planned acquisition of land so that there would be a continuity of housing projects and employment. Because in

those days, NHC had a large labour force which worked directly from NHC, and it was important to the workers to let them know that when project A had finished, they were going to project B and so on. I gave the example of going on a site at Wotton and explaining to the work force up there that after Wotton came Haynesville No. 2, Rosemont and FernihursL So they could look down the road for two years and see steady and constant employment. That is all we had in here on the land bank.

The Deputy Prime Minister pointed out in that debate that during his time as Minister of Housing, he had also developed a concept of land bank. But there was never any mention of any committee, Sir.

(Aside: For the Housing Credit Fund.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. There was a committee for the Housing Credit Fund. I am not dealing with the Housing Credit Fund in my speech, because the honourable Member for St. Peter will deal with that.

The Honourable Minister has confused himself because when he was talking about the committee, Sir, he was not reading from the file, and he is in dire trouble when he is not reading from the file.

Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Mr. D. A. C. Simmons) were ordered by Mr. SPEAKER to be expunged from the Record.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. You can speak on anything other than what we have debated already.

I will credit him with this, Sir. When he was responding to the call of the Leader of the Opposition for the establishment of a property management unit, we got some inclination as to what the Ministry is proposing in terms of the organisation and management of this property management unit, Sir. He told us that that is coming in the future and he is staffing it, Sir, and making sure he has properly qualified people and so on.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: A very professional department he is hoping to set up. But he was reading that from the brief that they prepared for him up there. He read it well.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It sounded like officialese, not anything coming from the Minister. It is put there and you are just trotting it out like a parrot.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What have we heard from the Minister of Housing about housing, Sir? That in the year 1987 the total number of housing units, I think he said completed - I was out of the Chamber at the time - was 2 397, 400 more than what had been built in 1986, when 1 950 had been constructed. We were almost on target in 1986 with the construction of 2 000 houses. Of those 2 397 that were built in 1987, we would have welcomed from the Minister a breakdown into categories. How many, for example, were under schemes which he and this Government found when they assumed Government? How many were in the private sector? How many were public sector housing units? He only gave the breakdown into wood and wall, and part wood and wall.

But I am not quarrelling about these numbers. Two thousand were built.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. And built 1 200 by 1979 in one year, ten years ago.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: This is private and public. I am not quarrelling with the Government. We are not saying that these were public sector housing. No, no.

What I want the Minister to appreciate is that whereas this Resolution asks us to take note of Government's programmes, projects and policies, he is only carrying on all the programmes, projects and policies that were left by the Barbados Labour Party. I have not heard one new one for the year 1988-89, other than the Property Management Unit.

(Aside: Which we left in place.)

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Wait, wait, ,

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let us just get it straight, Sir. We are to be debating what they are doing for the year coming, 1988-89. All he has given us is a history of the various programmes and policies that we left and that he

has merely continued. I have not even heard him say, "in the Ministry." He was talking about "we" all the time.

(Aside: Or "I".)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I never heard him say, we are planning next year, we have acquired land now here, there or otherwise, to move into starter homes, or project A, whatever. Nothing new has come from the Government on an analysis of the Minister's speech. I ask honourable Members, if I am misleading the House, to get up and object and rise on a point of order, if there is anything new, apart from the Property Management Unit, that he is planning, that we have heard today, in terms of new policy or programmes.

(Aside: Hon. H. deB. FORDE: He is expanding the Property Management Unit. It is not new.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Minister, I must say he could not help it, because he was provoked from out here, was most generous, Sir, in acknowledging the fine work of the Barbados Labour Party in establishing the Housing Credit Fund and getting it to function properly and efficiently. He did concede that, Sir.

The Minister complained, Sir, that he was being asked what is his housing policy, and that it was stupid to ask him what was his housing policy.

(Aside: Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Of course, it is!)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And he likened that to asking the Prime Minister what is his economic policy.

The Minister himself does not even understand that, within a broad framework of housing policy, there can be sectoral components or parts. What is your policy in respect of public housing.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Man, keep quiet. I listened to you.

Are you going to have the National Housing Corporation do the main contracting, or are you going to continue in the area of private contracting?

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All right. Wait, wait, wait.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Another Member must keep quiet

Mr. SPEAKER: I was coming to that

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of order, Sir: Mr. Speaker, what the honourable Member for St. Thomas is complaining of is precisely what I said. It is a sin to ask any person what is his policy on housing, or what is his policy on economics, because to say your policy on housing will take days and days and days, because it is not a simple answer. You can ask a person: What is your policy on interest rates? What is your policy on something?

What they have is a development plan. If they want us to come out and spell out the development plan as is already printed, it is okay. But to ask someone what is his housing policy - what simple statement do you give for a housing policy? In fact, the Leader of the Senate gave a very good answer - to make sure that every single person who wants a house gets one. Full stop.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would ask Members to acknowledge that only one Member should speak at a time, and be heard in silence as well.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that in a presentation of an hour and ten minutes by the Honourable Minister, if he had a housing policy, he had enough time to expound for general consumption the main aspects of that policy. I am not telling him what to say, but he could have said something - in respect of the provision of housing units by the public sector for low income persons, the policy of the Ministry is to accelerate what has been done to follow what has been done in respect of Simmons Road and so on, Sir.

He has told us that in terms of rent collection, he is going in there and will make them pay, and if they do not pay, he will deal with them. He said I told him that I wished him luck. There is always an area of delinquency in rent collection. I am very glad to hear - I am serious about this - that the Minister is finding favourable response to his effort, to the extent that arrears are coming in at a higher level than in the past. It is a very important point, because that money needs to revolve again and build more houses - and the people who are renting do not understand that - otherwise there is going to be a drain on the Ministry of Finance. You have to go to them every year and ask for \$4 million when people are owing \$8 million. But I am not getting into detail. It is a matter for the Minister.

We heard, Sir, about the Land Registry, as though it was - what does the lawyers call it? - a "novus actus interveniens." All of a sudden he starts to talk about the Land Registry. The Land Registry was set up in our time. I

even identified an officer who should go overseas - I cannot call his name - for specialised training. It caused a lot of bad feeling, because a shortsighted person, who is no longer in the Public Service of this country, for very strange reasons objected to the choice of the person. I think we had negotiated a year's experience overseas to see how the land registry works, and that person was, in our opinion, the best person for us, since he had something- to do with the drafting of the Property Act in 1979. So the Land Registry is nothing new.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That came out of the Property Act and all of the legislation of 1979 by the very bright, energetic then Attorney-General, who is now the Leader of the Opposition, Energetic and prolific, Sir, prolific in terms of the dissemination of legislation. He was never a cricketer. He could not score a lot of runs.

(Aside: Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I scored otherwise.)

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I did not hear the Minister tell us that, in terms of housing policy, he cannot at this stage explain any housing policy in final terms because he is waiting for the result of the work of Dr. Andrew Downes at the university.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes! Yes! Dr. Andrew Downes - I am sure that is his name. Dr. Andrew Downes has sent out circulars to people. I have seen one. How do you mean swiping?

(Aside: Hon. H. deB. FORDE: That is a fact.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, he has sent out requesting information and explaining that it is to help the Government of Barbados formulate a housing policy. I did not say anything is wrong with it But do not deny it?

When I said it, the Minister of - What is Keith? Employment? Unemployment? - the Minister of Unemployment was about to tell me that I was wide of the mark. Somebody over there was saying rumours again. Now I am hearing that I was right. I will never come in here and swipe. I will never come in here and make a statement without the facts, Sir.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You make a little sport and say that Government is going to have the Budget on April

26. Then they want to say, Sir, that that is a statement without the facts. I am distinguishing between making a little fun of that, Sir, being a clairvoyant, and making a positive statement of fact that the Government does not itself have the capacity to formulate a housing policy and has resorted to the services of the university to help them. I am not saying that there is anything wrong with it. You do not have the capacity within the Ministry or within the Cabinet, so go outside and buy the services. Nothing is wrong with that, Sir.

(*Aside:* You are attacking the senior officers in the Ministry.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is the function of the Minister, if I am attacking the senior civil servant, to defend him. It is the Minister's function to formulate policy. And I sat and listened to a speech bereft of any future policy because of the incapability of the Minister to formulate policy. He has to go and get help!

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Minister of Housing, the present one!

We heard about collection at source. During the period in office of the Barbados Labour Party, I believe I may have explained in here that there have always been systems at the National Housing Corporation for the collection of rents, arrears and other payments at source. But one of the problems has been, and I hope the Minister can get this straightened out, to get the Government department which deducts the rent contributions or the loans from general workers to send them to the Housing Corporation in a timely fashion. That has always been a problem. He has not started anything new. I do not speak without the facts, and I am grateful that you are saying that is true.

I always wondered, Sir, how Mr. Eric Sealy got his notice so quickly and so roughly delivered in Kensington Lodge. But the Minister today has explained in his speech and by his attitude to evictions and getting out people exactly how we could expect that that would have been done. He did not call his name. But now I understand how it was done from the Minister's attitude and speech here today. 4.30p.m..

The Minister has complained that there is too much politics in housing. He knows the pressure he had - I am going to just make this little one to the Minister - in the early days of this Government to discontinue the services of certain people who were working for houses.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Do you want me to call the names and tell the whole story? Including what you told me? Sir, I have always warned them not to challenge me. But I will not talk. I am not here to embarrass anybody. I am warning him, Sir.

I have not heard how the National Housing Corporation has been functioning, I have not heard at all. The Minister has given no explanation for the sudden resignation of the Deputy Chairman a couple of days after Mr. Barrow died, Mr. Louis Redman. Mr. Louis Redman is a man who had a tremendous....

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The former Deputy Chairman of the National Housing Corporation.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: I have been listening, and I am reluctant to interrupt the honourable Member, but he has called at least two names, and I feel that, in deference to the high traditions of this Honourable Chamber, the honourable Member should not go down the road. He mentioned the name he just called twice and he is going on to describe. I think, Sir, that the honourable Member may have not paid attention to himself.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it that the honourable Member has recognised

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes. I am very grateful to you, Sir. In the Civil List they publish the appointees on all statutory boards, and persons are designated by name and by office,

So and So, A.B.	Chairman
C.D.	Deputy Chairman

There was a person who was appointed by this Minister in the early days of this Administration as Deputy Chairman of the National Housing Corporation Board. He is no longer Deputy Chairman, and he resigned suddenly after Mr. Barrow's death. It has nothing to do with the fact that he was an Executor of Mr. Barrow's will; nothing to do with that at all.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I always say that when we are in here, we have to be serious about the people's business.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would have thought that all the speeches would have been serious from the beginning. The second thing is, although there may be some scope for some

lightheartedness, I hope it would not go beyond the limits of what we expect of Members. There is too much cross talking and things of that sort, and I would hope that we can limit that to an acceptable level.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I am grateful to you for all those strictures which you now exert from up there, but I would hope, Sir, that you should not look at me. I have a right, given by you, to address you, Sir. You must look at them, in particular the Deputy Prime Minister, who just said in a loud aside that I was fired from CBC. That is a lie, Sir.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member is out of order saying that that is a lie when, in fact, it is the truth.

Mr. SPEAKER: But it is not permissible in parliamentary language to call someone a liar.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will also say this. I do not listen to asides, and if an aside is offensive, and I consider it so, I will ask to have it struck from the records so it will not be allowed to be written in Hansard. I exhort Members to stay within the limits.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Every year at this time they change their tune. They know well enough that every March, when we deal with the Estimates, CBC and me come up. They know that I resigned and I fired them and told them to keep the work. Are you mad or what? Somebody fired me? That is where the Deputy Prime Minister is not accurate, in his repetition of what he thinks is the truth, Sir.

All asides made at this stage were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. SPEAKER.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: To get back to Housing, because we dealt with CBC in March, the starter homes about which the Minister spoke is another concept of the Barbados Labour Party. He has told us he built on another bedroom. The ones in Grazettes? There are about 12 or 15 houses in the constituency of the Minister for Tourism and Sport, just off Grazettes Road. I passed there one night and saw them. They have some houses in Husbands, they have the houses under the Venezuelan project, they have the West Terrace project. All of these are Barbados Labour Party projects.

It is a pity that the Minister got confused on the West Terrace project. West Terrace began, I think, in 1980. The layout was done by Mr. Gill, the Town Planner. The roads, subject to correction, because I left Housing in 1979 September, had been awarded, I think, to C. O. Williams or

Rayside. It was in my time that the decision to have a competition for the design of the first houses was taken, and the in-house architects of the Housing Corporation - certainly Mr. Livy Jordan was one - came up with a number of designs, as well as other people, and the Housing Corporation, by the time I left, I believe had accepted about three different types of houses.

The intent then was to build these houses to sell in the vicinity of about \$60 000. But as the Minister appreciates, every year the cost of house building goes up. With the land, a house in the first set that was built at West Terrace would have sold in the vicinity of \$70 000 to \$75 000. If I am not mistaken, the house was about \$50 000 and the land would have been another \$10 000 or \$12 000. The persons who were targeted for the West Terrace houses were husbands and wives, both working, with one child or no child, and looking for a home. 4.40 p.m.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of elucidation: I think the honourable Member is mixing up West Terrace with West Terrace Gardens.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The honourable Member is right and I am obliged to him. The whole area I call West Terrace.

The Minister's complaint about his decision to retain control of the price of the house is also nothing new. It has always been the policy in respect of the National Housing houses for sale and land owned by NHC for sale, in what we call the commercial aspect of the National Housing Corporation, that the Housing Corporation would recommend a price to the Minister, whose responsibility it was, it might even be in the Housing Act itself, to make the final determination as to price. That was the way of Government holding down the price of land, because if you were selling commercially, the price would never be \$1.50, or whatever it was, for some of those lots in the Government housing estates. So the policy has always been that the board would recommend a price to the Minister, bearing in mind public considerations, the need to have housing available to the general consumer at a cheaper price. I am sure both Governments would never have sold land in these public developments where Government did all the work and paid for it, or sold property, at a price at which they could profiteer. Government would only be concerned about recovering the initial cost of putting in the services.

The Minister told us that his Administration would have to be revolutionary and radical if they are to make the kind of impact on the housing problems that exist, with a view to the provision of housing for as many people as he

can afford. I am still waiting to hear some of those radical and revolutionary programmes and policies.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He is asking if I want them, Sir. He had one hour and ten minutes to tell us what are these radical policies, but not one has he given. The Minister has been content just to rehash what he said three or four months ago, as I saw reported on the front page of a newspaper, about where he was building. A lot of information was given to the public then.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He said he was going to build some timber houses. The Minister has indicated that he was concerned about the reluctance of contractors to build timber houses. He certainly suggested that they were spiteful and malicious. Rapacious is a better word!

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I am sure the honourable Member knows that he has misquoted what I said. I said there are private contractors who always say that they do not agree with the Government building timber houses for people, and I went on to explain why they do not agree, because sooner or later, when the persons are advancing the construction of their homes, the contractors would not benefit from it.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I cannot tell you what the present-day costs work out to be in this area. But there was a time when I used to get information as chairman of the Housing Authority, and there was not a lot of difference in the construction of a timber unit and a concrete stone unit.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Minister is saying that I cannot use that argument. As I say, I have not got anybody to do for me a comparative cost, but one of the advantages, surely, of building a wall unit now is that there is a ready supply of cement from the Arawak plant, or there ought to be, and the cost of the cement ought to be cheaper than imported cement, which we used to use in the old days.

In addition, one has to look at the longevity of the house. I don't care how much the lumber yards will say that the lumber is treated, it will still be attacked by termites in due course, in a shorter space of time.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Guyanese hard wood? I have heard it said that the Minister would like to try a

timber house programme using a special type of wood, which we are sure would be resistant to termites over a ten-year period, and balance out the cost. I think a programme like that deserves Government support, because the Minister must be aware that there is still a sizable portion of persons in Barbados who just prefer a timber house. I had that experience several times at the Housing Authority, especially in the Wilkey area by the playing field. I do not remember what you call it, but when we built the wood and wall units there for sale, I remember a number of applicants insisting on wood units. One of them, whom, of course, I remember well, was the late Carlisle Jones, the jockey. He was one of about five or six people who said they did not want wall, they wanted timber houses. I hear that this is a similar experience with the Government in respect of other areas. So there is a market for timber houses, although not a big market, and if you built 100 timber houses, you would get them off just like that. But I would only caution the Minister to make the necessary cost benefit analysis as compared with concrete before he goes forward.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Minister to some extent that housing is an area where we should try, as far as possible, to take politics out of it, because it is the provision of a basic need to our people, and we have an obligation, as representatives of the people, to make sure that we are serious about housing the nation properly. But as much as I would concede that general principle, the Minister cannot expect to get the total support of the Opposition unless he settles certain basic questions which the Opposition asks. We are not asking him to do it now at all. I understand that it would take a little time for him to formulate a policy. Whether he is going to express it in terms of a development plan for housing, or just a housing policy with different components aimed at different groups - middle income, lower income, rented people, people buying freehold and so on - however he does it, Sir, that is a matter for the Minister. But it is such an important matter that the time must come soon, perhaps, after Dr. Downes has completed his survey. I believe Mr. Brathwaite just did something else on housing. 4.50 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Ministers who were out of the House when I spoke about Dr. Downes are now expressing some surprise. Does that mean the left hand of Government does not let the right hand know what is happening? You all have collective responsibility and you must talk. It is not easy for some of you to talk with each other, but try, on matters of policy.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Farley Brathwaite has published some things. Dr. Downes says he was commissioned by Government. Do not let us get into that. We went into that already.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You see, they cannot even make good sport, Sir. I was not in a Cabinet with anybody called Tom. I am talking about members of the present Cabinet. But do not let us go down that road now, we can do that later. Enough has been said about last Thursday. The Minister of Housing knows what happened in Cabinet last Thursday between himself and the Prime Minister. We do not have to go down that road.

(Aside: Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: What happened?)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I did not say that the Minister took the Prime Minister to task - I never said it at all! - about the perceived unpopularity of the Government. No, Sir, nothing like that! Do not let us get into that now. The next thing they will say is that I have the Cabinet Office bugged. But that one was at naro Court, when they rejected the Economic Report.

We are discussing in mid-April the policies, programmes and projects detailed by the Estimates of Expenditure. The Minister has given some information which ought to turn up in the Economic Report, and we cannot really debate other areas now in the absence of the Economic Report, which has given Government so much difficulty in being laid. The Economic Report should have been laid ever since, and we would have had some of these figures.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: So we were the model? Because we did it, you must do it? Bring the Economic Report, because you want to project economic growth of 2.5 per cent or something like that. You are struggling now to juggle the growth? I will tell you another figure later on!

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: The honourable Member just said that the Government is trying to juggle something about the growth. I am never going to sit on this front bench and have any honourable Member suggest that the Government of which I am a part would attempt, like Tom Adams did, to juggle the figures about any of the statistics in this country. I am stating categorically that that is an untruth and should be struck from the Record.

The last and only time I know of Government trying to fix the statistics was when Tom Adams, aided and

abetted by the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur), fixed the statistics on employment in this country.

(Aside: In what year?)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: In 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985!

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR rose.

Mr. SPEAKER: He did not make a speech so there is no point of order.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He should have risen on a point of privilege. He is imputing, Sir!

Mr. SPEAKER: He said on a point of order, and I ruled to what he said. I have made my ruling already.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not questioning your ruling. I just want to understand it now for the future. If a Member rises on a point of order, can he make a statement about an honourable Member which imputes the worst possible motive and accuses an honourable Member of fraud? Is that all right? Just let me know, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Standing Orders do not say so. What I am saying is that the honourable Member did not make a speech, and he was rising on a point of order on a point of order. How are you going to arrive at that?

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: If it was an imputation of bad motive, Sir, in my submission, you can ask that the Member withdraw that part of the point of order. Because you are on a point of order does not mean that you can say anything.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not say that. I said that the Rules of the House do not provide for anyone to impute improper motives to anybody. But I am not allowing a point of order out of a point of order.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I agree with that. You cannot allow a point of order on a point of order, Sir, but the point that we were making from this side, very seriously, is that when the Member rose on a point of privilege, it was to draw to your

Mr. SPEAKER: He did not rise on a point of privilege. He made the point and then tried to convert it. You cannot have two systems. I think I have made that ruling already.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The honourable Member will speak and he will deal with it, but I want to make it

clear that it is not true. He cannot allege that the honourable Member for St. Peter (Mr. O. S. Arthur) in 1981 and 1982 and so on had juggled figures for anybody called Tom Adams. No, Sir!

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You are making it worse now. He is a persistent delinquent!

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order.....

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Why do you not learn the Rules and sit down on a point of order?

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will sit down in my own time.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir! It seems that the honourable Member is concerned that I may have imputed bad motive to the honourable Member for St. Peter.

Mr. SPEAKER: But I have already ruled on that. That was not the issue.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: No, Sir, but I am saying that I unhesitatingly, notwithstanding your ruling, withdraw any imputation on the honourable Member for St. Peter. When I said in conjunction with the honourable Member for St. Peter, I mean that he was part of the Administration.

Tom Adams told me behind the Speaker's Chair that I was right. It is in the Record.

But the honourable Member is the one who imputed, because if he is saying that to suggest that juggling the figures is imputation, he imputed base motives of the entire Government, knowing it to be false. The honourable Member that was speaking has imputed the worst kind of motive, knowing it to be false, because he is now taking umbrage. The honourable Member should be embarrassed! 5.00p.m.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am very glad, Sir, that the honourable Minister has cooled down, the matter by withdrawing any imputation against the Honourable Member for St. Peter. He can accuse me of all kinds of things, Sir. Let him accuse me of all kinds of things.

Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS) were ordered by Mr. SPEAKER to be expunged from the Record.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We will see in due course, Sir, who is right and who is wrong.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What I said about a little quarrel last Thursday, I would not tell you who told me. They want me to tell you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not know how long this debate is expected to go on for.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir.

(Aside: You are only speaking once.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, Sir. I am in that happy position where I can talk as much as I like.

There are other heads that were not debated.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I mean in the Estimates. So if the Government is going to debate, we will make, our thing now and bow out of the debate after having taken note.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, they can debate among themselves!

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Because this is a debate which is going to cover the whole spectrum of debate not covered. There are Ministers out there who will have to make new statements and more statements. But having made statements on housing, I am now strutting out, and we are quite happy on that. The Government will be free to debate.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: They will continue now on housing, and that is the end of us.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I was responding to what the Minister of Housing said. So if the Government now wants.....

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, he is going to speak. They cannot choose for us.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, my friend had some information on the Housing Credit Fund.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But it is a pity that the parameters of this debate were not worked out.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Because there was a long speech on housing and we had....

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You would go to something else?

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, man. We cannot prolong it all the time.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Before I finish on housing, the Minister made no comment at all about land acquisition. Last year, and in the Accountant-General's monthly report, you will see that \$11 million or some such figure was voted and only \$1 million.....

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Minister is saying he spoke on it. No, Sir!

(Aside: You were not here.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I was not here? I have only missed one day in two years.

Only \$1 million was spent. Be that as it may, Sir, when this Government took office, the then Prime Minister

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I have spoken in this Honourable House on many occasions about acquisitions. The statement the honourable Member just made about \$11 million was made in the Other

Place by the former Member for the City as well, without explaining to people that \$6.6 million of that \$11 million was for the St. Joseph Hospital, \$1.8 million was for Belle View Estates, and you go down the line.

All of it was committed. But the impression being given by the former honourable Member for the City Senator Miller, and you now, is that we have \$11 million and only spent \$1 million, so where is the other \$10 million? The \$11 million has been committed for the St. Joseph Hospital, Belle View Estates, the Savannah Club, all of those places.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, he has me confused.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The implication of what he has just said is that as early as January 1987, when the Estimates went up to the Estimates Committee, before they were printed, Government had had an idea that St. Joseph would cost \$6 million, the ultimate figure that they paid for it.

(Aside: Hon. P. M. GREAVES: What is the problem with that.)

Asides.

Hon. B.M.TAITT rose.

Mr. SPEAKER: Two honourable Members are on their feet

Certain remarks made at this stage by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas (Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS) were ordered by Mr. SPEAKER to be expunged from the Record. 5.10p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member has risen on a point of order.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I did not hear him.

(Aside: Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: He has not said so yet. He has not spoken yet.)

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir: I think that the House is in danger of being misled. The honourable Member is aware that there was a Resolution which came to the House for the amount of money to purchase the hospital!

(Aside: When?)

before January. In a
Hon. B. M. TAITT:
supplementary.

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I am giving the honourable Member information, because the honourable Member just said something about our being aware. I am saying that the honourable Member must be aware that we came with a Resolution. Therefore, if the Minister made a comment, there is no need for you to mislead the House, because we did the hospital with a Supplementary Resolution. Do not tell the House misinformation.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, do you see why I tell you it had me confused, Sir? Let us look at it logically. The Minister of Health now says that St. Joseph was bought with a supplementary. A supplementary is something you add on to what you already have. The Minister of Housing said, when I said that \$11 million had been voted for land acquisition, that that included St. Joseph Hospital. That was since January, February, or March last year, and now he is talking about a supplementary!

Certain remarks made at this stage by the honourable Member for St. Thomas (Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS) were ordered by Mr. SPEAKER to be expunged from the Record.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am on a point of order, Sir: The language of the honourable Member is so offensive to this House that it is not enough to merely have that withdrawn. I am submitting, Sir, that it should be struck from the Record.

Mr. SPEAKER: I said it should be.

(*Aside:* Hon. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. I do not think they heard you, Sir.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let us get it clear, Sir! I said that the Government voted in Estimates 1987 - 88 \$11 million under the Head - Land Acquisition - and that as late as December, the Accountant General's report was showing \$1 million spent. The Minister then got up to explain that that \$11 million included a vote or an appropriation of \$6 million for the St. Joseph Hospital and something for something called Belle View Estates. That is a mad place, though. Belle View is a mad house in Trinidad.'

(*Aside:* St. Ann's.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Belle View is in Jamaica, St. Ann's is in Trinidad. That is right. There is a song about it - Madness - by David Rudder.

Sir, the Minister of Health, having heard the explanation of the Minister of Housing that \$6 million was up-fronted in March last year - but he said so, how could it not be? - then turned and said that we came in here with a supplementary, and I said it was in December, I think it was, 1987, for \$6 million, to buy St. Joseph. So how are you going to get a supplementary on top of \$11 million, of which you only spent \$1 million? Why do you want the supplementary? Both cannot be true, Sir.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Sir, on a point of order: The honourable Member who is speaking did admit to confusion. All I did, Sir, was to advise, as I have a duty to do, Your Honour, that the House was being misled.

I pointed out, Sir, that the money for St. Joseph had been voted by a supplementary vote. The honourable Member, therefore, cannot now be heard to be saying anything about what I said other than it is a fact. And the honourable Member cannot now be advising his colleague that the Minister is doing anything.

All I am drawing to your attention is that the Estimates for 1988 began on April 1. Therefore, the money for the hospital is either paid already in the last financial year....

Asides.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Wait! You cannot address Mr. Speaker from your chair. You are getting unruly. I have never seen him like this. Something must have happened to him, because he is now addressing the Speaker from his chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: I certainly would like honourable Members to make their points of order very short and concise. If we do that, I think we will get through a little better. They should also avoid some of the side remarks that we are getting. Make the point and I will accept it.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, it is just that I have to comment when I see anybody transgressing the Chair, Sir, as I saw the honourable Member from his seat attacking the Chair. If he pretends to address the Chair from his seat, it is a transgression not only of the Chair, but on all of us. I apologise for taking so long, but the honourable Member should know better.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All that attempt to sweeten up and butter up you, Your Honour — do not fall for it! That, in other language, is known as sheer flattery. I want to hear from that side in clear and unequivocal terms.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation for the honourable Member for St. Thomas: If

you look at the Estimates for this year, page 140, you would see under Property Acquisition, Approved Estimates 1987-88, \$2 million, then Supplementary Estimates for the same year, 1987-88, \$9 million, which includes the supplementary for the St. Joseph Hospital. The Accountant-General puts them down as \$11 million when you add the two of those together.

Asides.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: You do not understand it? Look at page 140. It covers \$2 million for acquisition, \$9 million for supplementary. That is the \$11 million, and in that \$9 million was the \$6.6 million for the St. Joseph Hospital, \$1 million for the Savannah Club and so on.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I really must tell the Government that we on this side remain far from convinced as to the accuracy of what the Minister of Housing has just offered by way of explanation or elucidation. I am not going to accept it. I am going to reserve my position on it, because I do not have last year's Estimates before me. I have this year's. I will check, Sir, because we have had two different explanations. I had to withdraw the word "juggle" today, so I am not accusing him of juggling anything now, because I am not withdrawing again. We will wait and see, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That is one point, Sir. We were not even concerned with that point so much. I was making the point that there was \$1 million spent, and despite the words of former Prime Minister Barrow that if acquisitions are not compensated within a month, you should sue the Attorney General, the situation is as it always has been. There are grave delays. Some amounts as small as \$35 000 are not being settled. Property owners whose properties have been acquired, despite the change in Government, are still finding difficulty in getting compensation in a speedy fashion. 5.20 p.m.

I do not even want to apportion blame, because to apportion blame would mean a criticism. You say I must not criticise public servants and I will not do it, but there are systems in place which have not helped to speed up the process for the payment of compensation. It is just chronic. I do not believe it is a shortage of money, but people are not getting their claims processed as quickly as possible, and comparatively small ones.

I tried when I was there to do a number of things with the Solicitor-General, and in that department we tried to set up a system. I do not know if it is in place. The Government then set up a separate unit within the Ministry of Housing to do all of these things, Sir, and it just shows the

irresponsibility of some people like the late Prime Minister, when he could say on the television - I saw it - that if you do not get your money within a month, four weeks, sue the Attorney-General. He did not know what he was talking, and we have a responsibility, since this has been a problem, to look at it.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not mind, I could write the Minister and give him some of my ideas about how it could be solved. We need to put our heads together on this one, because the Government is not out to rob anybody.

It was fashionable when that side was in Opposition to complain "that you take up people's land, trespass, and breach their constitutional rights - all of that you used to hear - and then would not pay the people." What is happening now?

(Aside: Hon. B. M. TAITT: We are trying.)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I know you are trying. We tried, too.

One of the problems up there, the Minister must have been told by now, is that you could not find people's title deeds.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The honourable Member, I think, may have forgotten what the argument was. The honourable Member has forgotten that we used to be arguing about the section 3 notice. We had a divide philosophy; we felt that you should negotiate, and if the negotiations fail, then you use the section 3 approach; whereas the then Deputy Prime Minister, who became Prime Minister, always argued that your position was you serve the section 3 notice and then negotiate. That is what the great divide was, and we have reverted to what we have always said. We used to say that it was improper to deprive the person of his property, because once you serve the section 3 notice, you have possession, and we said it was wrong when you could not pay them properly. That was the gravamen of the argument.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am still saying there is no real difference between what the Minister is saying and what I was saying. I was saying that once Government has acquired, either by section 3 or the later procedure, that there should be a reasonable time thereafter within which the property owner is paid. I am saying I do not think there is a problem with Government's finances, not having the money. The property owner is not being paid because there are a number of bottlenecks - the economists would call them variables - in the system which inhibit the more speedy disbursement of funds by way of compensation to

the land owner. What we have to do now is to see what are those problems, identify them and see how we can get around them by a system.

I found a system - I can only give of my experience - where title deeds were not put away in any proper order. The Gown would acquire my land, they would ask for my tide deeds, I send them, and my title deeds would be put in a file with the honourable Member's and Members' out there, and so on, and nothing indexed, so when you are looking for my title deeds, you have to go through a whole set of files where title deeds from tens of people are all mixed up. I tried to break up that system by a filing system with a card index cross reference system. I do not know if it continued.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I was not mashing it up, I was trying to put some order in it. The Permanent Secretary at the time and I went down and spent half a morning down there trying to understand the system and then trying to provide a solution for it - Mr. Parris and myself. This is an area that Government has to attack. I believe that by now the system of individual storage of title deeds and other relevant documents is in place.

It was a hangover from the old days when acquisitions were probably six and eight a year, and if you got six acquisitions, you put everybody's title deeds in a file and say "title deeds re acquisitions 1963." But that is not so now. When you are acquiring as many properties as we had to acquire for the Tom Adams Highway.....

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We in the Labour Party christened it for this year. The honourable Member for St. Joseph (Mrs. M. Barker-Welch) is showing disbelief at what I said. Her daddy would be very disappointed that she reacted like that.

All I am calling for is a concerted attack on this problem to find out what really is the heart and root of it so that, in future, people can get their compensation in a more timely and speedy fashion, Sir.

Before I finish, Sir, I want to ask the Minister if his Ministry has any intention of implementing the recommendations of Dr. Farley Brathwaite, who has recommended that all the plantation land which is indebted to the Barbados National Bank should be taken over and used for housing development.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Knowing how close he is to your party, I was just trying to enquire.

I am grateful, *Sir*, for the opportunity to have debated with the Minister of Housing the problems of housing. As I indicated at the very beginning, Sir, the Opposition takes note that the policies, programmes and projects spoken of by the Minister of Housing are all a legacy of the Barbados Labour Party in the area of housing. No wonder there is a call to take politics out of housing and adopt a bi-partisan attitude. There is nothing new that they can add to the sound policy formulated by the Barbados Labour Party. 5.20 p.m.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that further consideration of this Resolution be postponed.

Hon. B. M. TATTT: I beg to second that.

The question that further consideration of the Resolution be postponed was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

THE ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, that concludes for us the business of Government for the day.

I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 19, 1988, at 12 o'clock noon.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that.

The question that the House adjourn until Tuesday, April 19, at 12 noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 5.32 p.m.

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