THE

SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 – 91

Wednesday, March 2, 1988.

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Public Buildings on Wednesday March 2, 1988, at 11.15 a.m. today.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator M. deL. Jordan, (Deputy President);

Senator the Hon. Sir James Tudor, K.C.M.G.,(Minister of Foreign Affairs) (Leader of the Senate);

Senator the Hon. L. V. H. Lewis, (Minister of State for the Civil Service);

Senator A. Morrison;

Senator N. W. Boxill;

Senator D. A. Comissiong;

Senator V. C. Fraser, B.S.S., J.P.;

Senator G. L. Eastmond;

Senator A. J. N. Phillips;

Senator T. A. Prescod;

Senator L. R. Tull, Q.C.;

Senator J. C. W. Wickham, M.B.E.;

Senator the Rev. Canon I. McK. Jones;

Senator L. A. Ward, G.C.M.;

Senator C. A. Blackman, Q.C.;

Senator P. Y. Forde;

Senator J. S. Goddard;

Senator Dr. L. L. Shorey

Senator the Hon. Dr. C. D. Clarke, (Minister of State for Finance).

Prayers were led by Dr. Rev. L. A. Crawford.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RE RECENT ILLNESS OF SENATORS GODDARD AND EASTMOND

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Your Honour, I believe that Senators would wish me to draw to their attention in a formal way that two Senators who have been absent from our proceedings for some time are present with us today in very much better restored health than we had heard they were enjoying recently. I refer, of course, to Senator Goddard and Senator Eastmond. Both of them have had unhappy experiences, which we not only regretted but deplored, and we, I think, are overjoyed at having them with us today, restored to as much health as they can enjoy, and by the look of them much more than that. We are pleased to see that, too.

We followed Senator Goddard's illness with some concern, as we did Senator Eastmond's misfortune. We are very, very glad to have them with us today, and I am sure that the Senate would agree that our pleasure is unbounded.

Applause.

SENATOR J. S. GODDARD: Mr. Deputy President, through you I should like to thank Senator Tudor and all the other Senators here for the very warm welcome, to say how very fortunate I am to be here today and to say how very happy I am to be back.

Thank you very much.

Applause.

SENATOR G. L. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy President, I wish to thank Senator Tudor and all other Senators for their good wishes. I wish to thank all those who sent me flowers, cards and who telephoned me, giving

me the courage and the determination to pull through, for, indeed, it is good to be alive and it is good to be here among you.

I wish to thank the staff of the two Houses, and I would also like to mention the Lower House, because it is these wishes that really have made me walk and are making me feel good. I am glad to be among the living.

I wish to thank all persons who are still praying for my recovery and my good health. I am not fully recovered, but I am sure I will be in the name of God.

I thank you.

Applause.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Nothing now remains but for me to echo the sentiments expressed by the Leader of the Senate. I am sure that they reflect the feeling of the entire membership present.

Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I am commanded to lay the following:

Guarantees granted under the Exempt Insurance Act, Cap. 308A, Section 32 to the following:

First Barbados Casualty Company Limited.

Westminster Assurance Limited.

Century Property & Casualty Insurance Corporation.

Select Lawyers Mutual Insurance Corporation.

Transport and General Insurance Company Limited.

Larchmont Insurance Company Ltd.

Flomerica Insurance Company Ltd.

European International Reinsurance Company Ltd.

Delta Reinsurance Corporation.

Chariots of Hire Indemnity (Barbados) Ltd.

American Physicians Assurance Society Ltd.

The Barbados Port Authority Tariff Book of Dues and Charges Regulations, 1987.

The Barbados Port Authority Tariff Book of Dues and Charges (Amendment) Regulations, 1987.

The Annual Report of the Barbados Export Promotion Corporation as at 31st March, 1987.

Report of the Probation Department for the years 1985 and 1986.

The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Police for the year 1986.

The Communique of the CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th January, 1988 to Discuss the Haitian situation along with Notes and a Comparative Analysis between that Communique on the one hand and the Barbados and Jamaica Position Papers on the other.

The Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 1988.

The Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 2) Order, 1988.

The Report of the Fire Service for the Calendar Year 1986.

The Estimates for 1988-89.

11.25 a.m.

The reply to Parliamentary Question No. 1, asked by Senator L. L. Shorey. The reply to Parliamentary Question No. 5, asked by the same Senator.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Question re cost to Government of each student pursuing N1 course.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Question No. 1.

To ask the Leader of the Senate: Would the Minister please state: 1. The annual cost to the Government of Barbados of each student pursuing the N1 Course at the UWI Cave Hill Campus, and 2. The annual cost to the Government of each student pursuing the N1 Course at the Barbados Community College?

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR; Mr. Deputy President, the reply is as follows:

1. The annual costs to the Government of Barbados for each student pursuing the N1 Course at University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus over the period 1983-84 to 1985-86 were as follows:-

   1983-84 – $8 746 per student
   1984-85 – 8 854 " "
   1985-86 – 7 990 " "

2. Approximately $4 007 for each student pursuing a similar programme at the Barbados Community College.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Mr. Deputy President, may I in response ask a supplementary question?

Will the Minister indicate what steps, if any, Government is planning to take to ensure that the N1 course now being taught at the Cave Hill Campus is transferred entirely to the Barbados Community College, bearing in mind that a recent commission recommended such a step?

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: I cannot tell you now what steps will be taken. An evaluation is at the moment going on and I would not want to pre-empt the findings of that evaluation. When that is finished, I believe it will be in a few weeks time, its findings and conclusions will be made known.

Question re standardization of exam marks.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Question No. 5.

To ask the Leader of the Senate: 1. Is the Minister aware that students' examination marks can be legitimately combined only if such marks are first standardized? 2. Is the Minister also aware that normal standardization of marks requires that all sets of marks be converted to scales with the same Mean and the same Standard Deviation? 3. Will the Minister state whether these generally recognized procedures were used with marks resulting from the 1987 Secondary Schools Entrance Examination? 4. If such procedures were not used, will the Minister please state what procedures were used to permit legitimate combination of candidates' marks in this year's examination?

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr Deputy President, the reply is as follows:

"1. The Minister is not aware that there is only one method of legitimately combining marks.

2. The Minister is aware that in standardizing marks, all scores should be converted by using the same mean and standard deviation.

3. The procedures outlined in paragraph 2 were not used with marks resulting from the 1987 Barbados Secondary Schools Entrance Examination.

4. The following procedures were used in the marking and scoring exercise in the 1987 Barbados Secondary Schools Entrance Examination:

   1. Each candidate's English score was marked out of 100.

   2. Each candidate's Mathematics score was marked out of 80 and then converted to a score out of 100.

   3. The Essay was graded A B C D E or F.

   4. The English and Mathematics marks were then added together and then divided by two to arrive at an average mark, in percentage, for each candidate.

   5. The marks (average scores) were then ranked using the average and Essay Grades."

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Mr. Deputy President, may I ask a supplementary question?

The reply stated, with respect to item 2 of that question, that the Minister was aware that the normal standardization of marks requires that all sets of marks be treated in the manner specified as indicated in the question.

The response to item 3 was that these procedures, which the Minister acknowledges are the appropriate ones, were not carried out, and it is clear, Sir, from the response to section 4 of the question that what was asked to be done ignored completely the recognised procedures.

My supplementary question, therefore, to the Minister is in two parts.

(1) Why were the accepted procedures not used?

(2) Does the Minister propose to use the accepted procedures with respect to the 1987 examination?

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Well, that is gone.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Pardon me, Mr. Deputy President. May I repeat the last part of my question?

Will the Minister please indicate why the appropriate procedures were not used with respect to last year's examination, and will the Minister also please indicate whether it is proposed to use the correct procedures with respect to the examinations due to be held in May of this year?

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I must confess, quite frankly, that I cannot answer the second part of the question, because I am not advised as to what will happen in this year's Common Entrance. But I would like to draw the honourable Member's attention to some points which I believe will assist him.

It appears that, for some years now, students sitting the Secondary Schools Common Entrance Examination were allocated to schools on the basis of standardized scores in English and Mathematics. The score for each paper, according to custom, was standardized in a scale of 70 to 140, that is with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 50 on either side. When the scores were combined, they would, in the case of two subjects, range from 140 to 200.

It appears that some parents had considerable difficulty in interpreting these scores and could not therefore have a clear understanding of the achievements of their children. Repeatedly, they would approach the Ministry requesting placements in the secondary schools for their sons or daughters who obtained a score of 140 or thereabout, because they did not realise that such a score meant that the child had failed to get a mark in either of the two papers.
11.35 a.m.

This regrettable confusion exercised the minds of the people in the Ministry to a large extent, and because they were conscious of the confusion which the converted scores were causing for these parents, they simplified the matter by expressing the raw marks which each child received as a percentage, combined the percentage and then found the average score. It is this score that was used to allocate students to schools in the 1987 Barbados Secondary Schools Entrance Examination, and it should be noted that the procedure for simplifying the marking and scoring exercise was a decision of the Minister of Education, since the scores could more readily be understood by the general public.

I do not know if that has assisted the member.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Mr. Deputy President, I recognised that I have no right to make a comment, but I wish to ask whether Your Honour would permit me to make a comment.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Go right ahead, Senator Shorey. Make a brief comment.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Sir, I must express my very deep concern at the response by the Leader of the Senate on behalf of the Minister of Education, because what, in fact, has been said is that knowing a procedure to be correct, the Minister chose deliberately to use a different procedure on the grounds that parents did not understand the correct one. I find this, Sir, with due respect, an unacceptable and undesirable approach, and I trust that the Minister will be prepared to give consideration to using what he acknowledges to be the correct procedure. There are other means of helping the public to understand what should be done.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Sir, I have to answer now by relying on my own experience as a former Minister.

First of all, I do not think what the Minister has done can in any sense – except perhaps in the technical sense, and that is not the sense that really matters – be deemed unacceptable. Now that I am standing on my feet I remember – I am sorry I did not arm myself with that document – I am sure that there is a document, a report or a survey published in the early Seventies – I had ceased to be Minister of Education, but I still had some interest in these matters – the Senator was chairman of a committee, I think – which had been set up by the then Minister to look into this whole matter of the Common Entrance and how it was to be run.

Although he was chairman of it, he put in a minority report. He will correct me if I am wrong, because I am relying now on my memory. I believe that his point then was that selection should be on what he called - "randomisation," picking results not out of a hat, he did not quite say this, but it would be just as *al fresco* and as informal as what he is now criticising; indeed, more so, because by that process of randomisation, as I recall it, it would have meant, if you did it that way, that it was possible that some people who ought to have got into Harrison College would not have got in there, because you were not going by results.

If I am misleading the Senate or misinterpreting what I judged to be the Senator's view in a report which I read, I

must confess, more than 13 years ago, I must ask him now to be consistent. So on the basis of his inconsistency, or what appears to be inconsistency, I cannot give an undertaking that the Minister should change his policy, because I do not find the Minister's policy to be unacceptable.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Will Senator Blackman please give notice of a motion which I understand he has?

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy President, my question to ask of the Leader of the Senate:

Will the Minister please state –

(1) The number of parcels of land compulsorily acquired by Government under the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228 from the 1st July, 1984 to the 30th June, 1987 for which compensation has been paid by Government? and

(2) The number of unsatisfied claims for compensation for land compulsorily acquired during the period stated in (1) above?

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that Senator Wickham be appointed Acting Deputy President of the Senate for the remainder of today's sitting

SENATOR A. MORRISON: I beg to second that.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, we are happy to welcome Senator Wickham as our Acting Deputy President for the remainder of today's session.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, there has been circulated three items which were done in the Other Place yesterday, copies of which, I believe, Senators will have received or will have been made aware of. They are being circulated now, it looks like. They are:

A Resolution to approve the borrowing of 30 million Renmibi Yuan (Bds. $16.5 million) from the Government of the People's Republic of China for the construction of a Gymnasium with a seating capacity of 3 905 persons.
11.45 a.m.

A Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance of the payment of the principal sum of $10 000 000 to be borrowed by the Barbados National Bank on the issue of Housing Development Bonds and of interest thereon at the rate of 7% per annum.

A Bill to amend the Central Bank of Barbados Act, Cap. 323C.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: In order to facilitate the handling of these matters on today's agenda, I shall move that Standing Order No. 45 (1) and (2) be suspended for the remainder of today's sitting.

The question that those Standing Orders so cited be suspended for the remainder of the day's sitting was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that Order No. 1, a Bill to amend the Central Bank of Barbados Act, be taken, and that the Honourable Minister of State for the Civil Service take charge of that.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: I am sorry, Sir, if I have been misleading the Senate temporarily. I thought that Bill was being circulated when I so informed the Senate.

We will do the $10 000 000 on the issue of Housing Development Bonds.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GUARANTEE OF $10 000 000 BORROWED BY THE BARBADOS NATIONAL BANK RE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT BONDS

Order No. 4 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Guarantee by the Minister of Finance of the payment of the principal sum of $10 000 000 to be borrowed by the Barbados National Bank on the issue of Housing Development Bonds and of interest thereon at the rate of 7% per annum.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, the Minister of Finance, in his 1987 Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, indicated that the

Barbados National Bank would place on the market a special issue of National Housing Development Bonds amounting to $10 million.

Government now proposes to launch this issue of Housing Development Bonds around March 15. The bond issue will be managed by the Trust Division of the Barbados National Bank, which will also be the transfer agent for the bonds.

These bonds will be denominated in units of $100 and 100 000 of such bonds will be available. They will have a life of 10 years, a maturity date, therefore, of March 15, 1998.

The rate of interest will be 7 per cent per annum, and the rate of holdings will be up to $50 000. They will be free of tax. Holdings in excess of $50 000 will, naturally, attract tax.

In order to redeem the issue of these bonds in 1998, it is proposed to establish a sinking fund of $120 000 per annum. This will be done through yearly appropriations of the retired earnings by the Barbados Mortgage Finance Co. Ltd.

The proceeds of these bonds raised by the National Bank will be passed on to the Barbados Mortgage Finance Co. Ltd. so that they may be available to meet the needs of lower income groups for mortgage funding.

As you are aware, Mr. Deputy President, the Barbados Mortgage Finance Co. Ltd. is a subsidiary of the Barbados National Bank. That company presently provides loans for the purchase, construction and the improvement of dwelling houses, including chattel houses, and their current loan limit is Bds. $100 000.

The company has been significantly involved in providing mortgages for such housing developments as Eden Lodge, Friendship, Wotton and, more recently, West Terrace, Mangrove, Hopefield and Golden Mile in St. Peter.

Last year, the company received 166 applications for the financing of mortgages totalling some $9.85 million. The company approved 189 loans valued at $11.2 million, and during the year the advances made by the company to borrowers amounted to just over $12 million.

This company continues to be a profitable operation and is well suited to handle this issue of mortgage monies.

The Resolution, Mr. Deputy President, therefore, seeks to allow the Minister of Finance, with the approval of Parliament, to guarantee this issue of Housing Development Bonds.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR L. R. TULL: One of the most pressing social needs in Barbados, if not the most pressing need, is that of housing. We have made very significant advances in areas of education and health, and even in transportation, despite the fact that we have some difficulties in that area, but the housing stock of Barbados has; certainly, not developed with the pace of development in this country.

In 1976, the per capita income for Barbados was US $1 300, give or take a few dollars, and by 1986 the per capita income was in the region of US $4 800, a significant increase over a period of ten years. It is my submission, Mr. Deputy President, that our housing stock has not kept pace, there has not been a *pari passu* development of housing along with other developments in this country, and, therefore a recognition of this as the most pressing and urgent social priority should be given due consideration by all of us who are concerned with the overall development of this country.

What we need in respect of housing, however, is not an *ad hoc* approach to this urgent need. What we want is a well-prepared and clearly articulated housing policy, and I am calling on the Government to come up with one very urgently.

I have not heard of any in the past two years. I hear statements from time to time by the Minister of Housing, statements, at times, that conflict one with the other, but as to the articulation of a comprehensive housing policy, we are still waiting, Sir.

I would even recommend that we get a White Paper on housing and let us sit down in both Chambers and have a long and detailed debate and discussion. I cannot promise you a non-partisan one, but a frank and open discussion so that we can deal with what I consider a matter of the greatest priority.
11.55 a.m.

I want also, Mr. Deputy President, to focus somewhat on the need for house spots for the owners of chattel houses in Barbados. This keeps recurring. It is a fact that the National Housing Corporation has hundreds of house spots, but they are not available to tenants. There are some in Parish Land in Christ Church which, I believe, must be in excess of 500, and there are other areas in Barbados where the Government has land vested in the National Housing Corporation, which should be available for persons in this country who want house spots for chattel houses. But anyone who is remotely familiar with these things will know that it is virtually impossible at the moment to get house spots through the National Housing Corporation.

There are several reasons for this, but the main one is the absence of appropriate sites and services programmes because you cannot rent house spots unless you first go in and prepare the land. You have to put in the services, the roads, the light, water and gas and so on, and even though there is all this land, the factor that is preventing the Government from having these spots available is because, as I said, there is the absence of these services.

I read in a newspaper, Sir – I do not know if it is today or yesterday – I get a little bit confused at times, but it may be today because the House met yesterday – that the Minister of Housing is saying that he is calling on the National Housing Corporation to do a survey of all the existing house spots in Barbados. I am surprised at that, because I would believe that if the National Housing Corporation is carrying out the role that it has been given by statute, they would have the details of a proper land bank that they can tell at any given time where the land is, what is available, what is not and why it is not available. I am a little bit surprised that the National Housing Corporation is now in 1988 to start, on the directions of the Minister, to put together the details of a land bank.

Mr. Deputy President, I nevertheless, join with the call of the Minister, because it is terribly important that we do that kind of work so that some of the difficulties being experienced by a number of owners of chattel houses and would-be owners of chattel houses can get a little bit of relief. In this context, Sir, I am going to anticipate what would be a very interesting debate later this year, and this relates to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act.

Since this Act was introduced it has been very bitterly criticised by the members on the other side, but I would just like to mention something from my own experience and observation. Before the passing of this Act, it was a common sight in Barbados to drive around and see chattel houses dismantled and lying at the side of the road, and people's furniture, fridges and stoves lying in the road, and after a few weeks and a few showers of rain, the owners of those houses, lost both the chattel house, because they rotted, and the furniture and so on, destroyed by the elements.

The reason for this, Sir, was that landlords in those days could, on the slightest whim and fancy, serve what was called an Eight Day Notice to quit on tenants, and after that a three day notice of intention to recover possession. After that they went to the magistrate's court, and the magistrate having made an order for the house to be removed by a certain date, the poor tenant went all over Barbados seeking in every district to find a spot to put his house on, and because of the acute shortage of available house spots did not find one and the house was taken down by the marshals, or whoever they are, and put at the side of the road. This used to work tremendous hardship on the people of Barbados who most needed help, the owners of small chattel houses. The Act was passed in 1981, Sir, and I am perfectly honest when I say to Your Honour that I have not seen a chattel house dismantled and furniture placed beside the road in Barbados ever since then.

Aside

SENATOR L. R. TULL: Senator Boxill can speak for himself. If he has seen them, good for him. I have not seen any.

The point I am making, however, heckling or no heckling, because this is an important point and it bears some consideration whatever side of the House you are on, is that tenants, owners of small chattel houses, must have some measure of security. What used to happen is that a landlord, through some, as I said, whim or fancy, because the tenant's child and theirs were not getting on at school in primary school, or some jealousy, because the tenant brought in a new fridge or whatever, decided to give them notice to leave, for no good reason, and the law allowed them to do that. A lot of petty jealousies and so on could cause a landlord to ask people to move their houses, and often have them put at the side of the road. Whatever may be the criticisms of the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, and I am waiting to hear later on what they are, there can be no gainsaying that the clear intention of the Government of the time was to provide some measure of security for the owners of chattel houses.

It is very easy for those of us who are fortunate to live in our permanent homes to sit back and make a lot of idle statements affecting tens of thousands of people in this country without a proper appreciation of what they have to go through. A house is not like a car or a bicycle that you can take up and move it from one place to the other. When people are living in a district on house spots for a number of years, the most traumatic experience they could have is to suddenly one day find a blue paper stuck on their houses or pushed through their window saying they have to leave. The children have to go to another school in another district many times many miles away. They have to cut all their local roots. They have to go in a different, quite often, hostile, environment, because we can be very cruel in this country. People who come in with a chattel house and stick it down in a new district are quite often met by hostility because they are outsiders, and that was the basis for the Act which was so reviled by the members on the other side.

The 1965 Tenantries Act, which was drafted very hastily during the time of the Democratic Labour Party, decided that five house spots constituted a tenantry. That caused a lot of problems, Sir.

12.05 p.m.

I well recall being on the other side when the Democratic Labour Party was the Government and members of my side and I pointing out certain little difficulties in the law and asking that they be rectified. But at no time did we seek to impugn the integrity or the good judgement of the then Government by saying that by creating a tenantry out of five house spots, you were working hardship on landlords. We did not do that because we believe that the tenants also must have a right in the patrimony of Barbados, and you must not be penalised because you do not have any money or resources and you are poor. We took an entirely different line, that there were certain difficulties in the law which we thought should be amended and so on.

I go back to the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, because one of the things you constantly hear from those who are inclined to be critical of what, in my view, is progressive legislation, is that some person has a piece of land, he rents it out, but has a daughter who lives in Canada, or a son who lives in England, and wants to keep the land so that when he or she comes home there is a house spot to build a new bungalow on and that kind of thing. To me that is a very weak and specious argument, because when the daughter comes home she does not want to live in New Orleans, nor Carrington's Village nor Bush Hall. She wants to live in the Parks, Gardens, Heights, Terraces and so on. And the law requires the tenant to pay the economic price, the market price for the land, but the way you hear the argument at times, one would believe that the persons were required to sell the land for less than the regular market value.

The land is sold for the market value to the tenant, so the tenant has not got to lift up a house, put it on his back and move from district to district as if he is an itinerant salesman – you try to stop that, and the landlord is getting the full market value of the land, $3.00 a square foot or whatever is the going price – and if that landlord is serious, he would take that money and he would go in to all these Gardens and buy a spot for his daughter who is coming from Canada and who, in most cases, does not ever come home. So when we hear the argument that you are depriving a landlord from having this spot available for their child, that is a whole lot of foolishness. I cannot rate it any higher than that, Sir, because all these children who we are talking about are moving on and do not want to live on the piece of land next to their parents down in certain districts in Barbados.

I want also to mention, Sir, very briefly, the chattel mortgages. The Barbados Labour Party Government introduced a programme for chattel mortgages in Barbados. Do not let us forget that. That did not exist before the Barbados Labour Party was the Government, in its last two years. Mr. Deputy President, in a country where most people were born in chattel houses and where maybe the majority still live in chattel houses – I do not know if it is the majority any more, Sir, but a large number still live in chattel houses – how we could seriously not have made provision for chattel mortgages is something that I fail to comprehend. Because again you are saying that we are going to exclude the vast majority of the people of not considerable means from sharing in this patrimony. We introduced chattel mortgages to meet that pressing and critical need.

What troubles me, however, is that there is great difficulty in the processing of those chattel mortgages. You make the point every time you are dealing with small people – if a man wants to get money from the Development Bank and start a wayside canteen, he goes in the bank and they tell him a lot of things about feasibility study and pre-feasibility study, as if a man who wants to borrow $5 000 to start a canteen even begins to comprehend what you mean by feasibility and pre-feasibility studies. It is a similar thing with chattel house mortgages, and I am speaking from personal experience, since I have submitted no less than 40 applications for chattel house mortgages for people who live in my area. And when they apply for the few thousand dollars to repair their houses or to add on a little bathroom or an extra bedroom because the children are getting big and so on, they are required to meet all kinds of conditions that, quite often, are too daunting for them. By the time they see the people the second and the third time, they are like the people who work in the sun, Sir, they get the swing head, they get confused with all these forms and this thing and the other thing and the next thing. They give up and say, "Well, I thought that we could just go and borrow the money and fix the house," and that is it.

What I am suggesting, Mr. Deputy President, is that the Government give some serious consideration to simplifying the process for these people around the country to be able to get these chattel mortgages. If you do not simplify it, we are wasting time, because a lot of people have voluntarily turned away because they have been put off by a lot of business, since I cannot find a better word, that is involved in contracting a small loan just to put down a few more floor boards, or whatever the case may be.

A lot of money has been borrowed by the Government already for housing, a lot of money. We have been borrowing money from F.I.V., the Venezuelan Investment Fund, and we have had USAID money. We have had housing bonds before. What I would like to know, and the Minister can probably give me the information for my own edification, is whether this money has already been committed and disbursed, because certainly as recently as eight months ago the USAID funds had not been exhausted. People were having difficulty in getting the money disbursed, so I would just like an answer on that from the

Minister. I am not being quarrelsome on this one, I just want the information. When I get the information I can use it in a different way at a different time for a different purpose.

Finally, the operations of the National Housing Corporation have been the butt of criticisms of the Democratic Labour Party when they were in Opposition. They were extremely critical of the Government at the time for telling people who were renting Government units that they must pay. There are no free rides in this country, we cannot afford it, and the people who were renting those units and who were working had a duty to pay their rent. We do not resile from that position.

The Government, however, seems to have resiled from their position. They were very critical of the previous Administration for coming down hard on those who were living in Government units and were refusing to pay, to pay their money or get out. Now the shoe is on the other foot, Sir, the Minister of Housing at some times he is importuning and when that is not working, he is bullying – that is not pejorative – tenants to pay up their money. And we have seen recently a number of notices that have gone out in government housing estates all across Barbados that have, in essence, represented a *volte face,* a full change about of the Government's position in respect of the tenants in the Government's properties and the payment of their rents.

Sir, I said the last point was going to be my final one, but while I am on this subject, I may as well mention this. There was provision during the last Administration, and the work had started, for tenants of Government housing estates who were there for a long time to become owners of those units, and that the rents they had already paid from nineteen forty something in the Pine Housing Area and so on would be taken into consideration in determining the purchase price.
12.15 p.m.

Asides

SENATOR L. R. TULL: Senator Prescod tells me that we had ten years to do that and now I am talking. You all had two years to do a lot of things you were going to do in the first week and we have not seen them yet. You are going to hear a lot more about them, because interesting times are coming and hard ears – that is the problem, you will not listen to other people – you won't hear, own way you will feel.

I am making the point, Sir, that there was a plan which was started, and conveyances were being given before the Government changed to a number of tenants of Government housing units moving them from renters to property holders. I will be glad if the Minister could give me some information on it. These things are not usually for ordinary mortals like myself, but if he feels like it, he can tell us. What has happened with that programme? I heard that it has decelerated since the new Government. If I am wrong, tell me but I heard so, and that people who are waiting to get the papers to these units in the housing areas have now begun to get frustrated.

Mr. Deputy President, the Democratic Labour Party Government last year promised that they will build 2 500 houses a year. I can still see the face of the late Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Barrow on television saying 2 500 a year, and "check with me next year", he said. Have those been delivered? I understand the figure is more like 500. If there has not been the delivery of that promise, again could the Minister be so good as to tell this Senate what has stalled that particular development.

I know that the National Housing Corporation, or the Ministry of Housing, or the two of them together, are now sending out letters to private developers asking them a number of questions and in a way pleading with them to help the Government. I guess there is nothing wrong with that. If you cannot do it yourself, you might, as well ask somebody who can do it to help you. But it seems to me rather late, that you make the promise first and a year later you are asking people to help you to deliver on the promise that you made. I am genuinely interested in knowing how much they have achieved so far in delivering that promise.

I want very quickly, Sir, to mention one or two other things. I might as well talk while I have the time. I am a bit worried when I hear Government representatives, Members of Parliament, Ministers or whatever they are making appeals for a housing area in their constituency. I feel very strongly that if Barbados is going to have a professional land use policy and are going to stick to it seriously, housing areas should not be springing up all over the country like a bunch of mushrooms. I feel that we have to provide housing stock for the people of Barbados, But I do not believe that it is something that can be dished out on a constituency basis.

There are some places where according to our land use policy, houses naturally fit, where a housing area would be all right. There are other places where they would not. I do not believe anybody could be so reckless as to put a housing development, for instance, in the St. George Valley. You want to build houses for the people, but at the same time you do not want to ruin the environment and the beauty of certain parts of Barbados. So when I hear this constant fretting and quarrelling about "give me a housing area too," I wonder how serious the Government is about integrated planning.

I have seen some things develop. I have seen a housing area up in the Ivy, Sir, built during the time of the Barbados Labour Party Administration. They have nothing else around it. You cannot build houses and give people and get on as if they are not part of a community. That was built in the period of the Barbados Labour Party Administration. Do you see how fair I am Trevor?

Laughter.

SENATOR L. R. TULL: Sir, if one was minded to build a housing area in that very constituency, there was available land in that very constituency where you could build the same number of housing units and at the same time have the other amenities, like play areas, that would enhance the development.

Asides.

SENATOR L. R. TULL: The question has been asked, 'Why did I not say that before?' Fortunately, I do not say much when Senator Boxill is around. But one must not believe, and he is a former Minister of Government, that you do not say these things.

Three Ministers are there. They know they say things, but decisions are taken and we live with them. We are not like the Democratic Labour Party where, if you do not get your way, you kick the traces and shake up everything.

Asides

SENATOR L. R. TULL: I do not know whose family. He was your family all the time. Suddenly, now he is my family. But I am waiting, because we will have a lot of talk. The Estimates are coming up and, of course, you cannot talk very long today. But we will have a lot of talk about these things.

I would like to know, Mr. Deputy President, how can a love so right go so wrong. There were not many months ago that we were hearing all sorts of statements being made from members of the other side. I see Senator Comissiong is coming over to Macedonia and joining us, because he has put some warm lashes in this policy of relying on or placing too much emphasis in the private sector to do this, that, and the other. Deal with the people out there instead of trying to say that the private sector is going to be.....

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: What has this to do with the housing?

SENATOR L. R. TULL: I thought that the private sector built the most houses in Barbados. But if that is wrong, tell me because the National Housing Corporation does not build any, Sir. I thought the private sector – Ideal Homes, the Nassars, Western Construction – was the one building the houses. I thought you would be glad to hear about the private builders since they are saving the Government from being too shame faced. Anyhow, Sir, I have taken your point and I will come home.

Thank you very much, Sir.

SENATOR T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Deputy President, one listens in dismay to Senator Tull pontificating on aspects of housing. When you look at his face, you get the impression that he is a man of conviction speaking on the behalf of working class people, probably because of his class origin. But clearly he has manifested here this afternoon that he has very little knowledge of what is happening within the working class areas. He is saying he has not seen over the last few years any working class house being dismantled and put at the side of the road. He would not be able to see this because his socialisation is usually among the middle and upper classes. If he had an opportunity to go into the area in which he was born, or even the Ivy recently, he would have seen some difficulties that people were encountering there.
12.25 p.m.

I am not surprised at Senator Tull taking this line this afternoon. He spoke with some conviction and has given credibility to the former regime of the Barbados Labour Party, talking about the per capita income in 1976 being US$1 300. He also compared it with an increase, which came to US$4 800 in 1986. He did not tell you that during that period of time construction costs escalated by over 100 per cent. In nominal terms the increase in the per capita income might appear to be just, but if the cost of living continues to rise in terms of the construction of houses, in terms of food, then to talk about per capita income is nonsense.

His party denounced the concept of per capita income when they went before the United States financial institution, the World Bank. The late Prime Minister, Tom Adams, said we have to find a new measurement to determine whether the per capita income is the right way to determine the growth of a country's economy.

(Aside: SENATOR L. R. TULL: He did not say that.)

SENATOR T. A. PRESCOD: I paraphrased it that way.

Per capita income is only meaningful if it relates to an equitable distribution within the economy. They have divided the economy into two sections, a very poor section and a very rich one. If you are going to argue the per capita income was US$4 800 in 1986, we must be able to look and see if it was distributed equitably, if the working class

people were able to enjoy some of the benefits that filtered down through the fiscal and monetary measures which the Barbados Labour Party Government carried out. So it is meaningless to tell us that.

A clear example is that, despite the talk about all this great performance, you offered the people at West Terrace middle income or lower income housing – I do not know what they are - because initially they started at $60 000 and when they were completed, they were $120 000 per unit. So do not talk about competence and try to give the impression that the Democratic Labour Party is not doing anything. We have a lot of problems to correct. We have inherited the legacy of Tom Adams and L. B. Brathwaite.

You know very well that you all delayed and spent large sums of money on what was once called St. Cecilia Barracks, which is now Kensington Lodge. Even the contractor wrote them letters asking them to speed up payments, and as a result of the pressures Reid died. That is the type of people you are talking about. They spent thousands of dollars in a swimming pool at St. Cecilia Barracks. Where is the swimming pool now? The infrastructure for that swimming pool was put in, all the piping and electrical work was done and then that party filled it in.

They were also instructed by the engineers at the National Housing Corporation, Mr. Redman and Mr. Pandor, not to build houses on a particular location at Lammings, that the escavation was too far down to make the houses reasonable in terms of production cost. But they went ahead and they had to abandon that section of the project. So I am surprised to hear Senator Tull coming in here now and telling us that the Barbados Labour Party did this, the Barbados Labour Party did that and the Democratic Labour Party is doing nothing.

At that same time when they were talking about lower income housing, they were increasing Property Tax, so I do not understand the argument. If you want to be reasonable and offer constructive contributions to this Legislature, then one of the main elements that must be taken into consideration is the ethics of the argument that you are going to advance. You cannot simply come here, when people are in possession of statistics and information that can denounce all that you are saying, and hope that we are so ignorant that we would not be able to decipher what is right and what is wrong.

(Aside: Senator L. R. TULL: Talk about the Ivy, man.)

SENATOR T. A. PRESCOD: The Ivy project? I know about it, because at that time I was actively involved in politics on his side, but I learnt about them at a later date and discovered that they were not trustworthy. They had made a million promises to the people of Barbados, and when you hear the language coming from their lips and you get to believe that they are paragons of virtue, you discover that there is very little difference between people like Senator Tull and Swaggart.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Please, please.

SENATOR T. A. PRESCOD: I have not said anything disparaging about Senator Tull or Swaggart. Swaggart is supposed to be an Evangelist, a man of God, who was forgiven instantly by man without anybody even knowing the facts of what the man did.

I am not surprised at what Senator Tull is saying today, because I understand what is happening to him. He is a bit rusty. We have been out of this Upper House for quite a long time, he is a bit rusty and he wants to have his name placed in the newspaper. He has not seen it there for quite a long time.

The Democratic Labour Party is taking a different direction altogether. We are not only concerned with erections as they are usually concerned with those things. We have to do something productive, we do not just keep putting buildings up in the air as simple as that. We have to redress the difficulties that we inherited from the Barbados Labour Party.

It was necessary for the Minister, after looking at many problems in the area of housing, to deal with Bayville, for example. For over ten years the Barbados Labour Party was wrestling with the allocation of the land at Bayville. They wrote to the Town Planning Office asking them to exempt them from the principles that relate to town planning, so that they could get ahead with aligning the land and the spots over there for the residents. That was not completed for ten years.

Apart from all these things, we inherited the difficulty even in finding the conveyances for some of the purchasers of the properties from the National Housing Corporation, because it was not the type of system that you could easily determine who paid the corporation for some of the units. Up to now the Minister is still trying to get that information in order to allow people to develop their lands. There are lots of difficulties in that area.

It was necessary for this party to redress those difficulties and set up the kind of financial mechanism that would help the Democratic Labour Party and the people of Barbados to go forward. The bonds are only the beginning of what will happen in the future. We had to get money in

some way, because they had the economy wrecked, so the bonds is one way of doing so. When the proper mechanisms are set up, then we have to look and see that the persons who are responsible for executing these orientations which come out of the Democratic Labour Party are that committed and recognise what we are trying to achieve, because the money can be badly spent if the right administrative staff is not handling it. We have had examples of that in 1981 and 1982.

There was a time when Mortgage Finance had no money, when National Housing had to approach the Barbados National Bank for a $1 million loan. They could not even pay some of the lumber yards in Barbados to supply them with material. Some of the same housing estates he speaks about and tries to give credit to his party for putting there, they could not buy even one window at one time to put in those, and it took a very long time to be rectified. As a result, they had to cut down a number of the areas where they were supposed to put the infrastructure. Shops, basketball courts and all of that were supposed to be put in. They had no money, because the Minister of Labour then, who initiated that plan, who was Minister Craig, spent the money without even looking at what the Estimates were, or the state of the revenue of the Government at the time. He had no control over the financial management of the National Housing Corporation, so everything went down the drain.
12.35 p.m.

All of that we have to redress now. It is not a matter of the Democratic Labour Party not doing anything. We have to redress the difficulties. I believe we have to re-emphasize this point over and over, because these distortions are likely to get out in the public domain and impress upon people that we have not done anything.

I believe that certain changes can be made. The Democratic Labour Party can look at the chances of waiving duties on material, in general, as it relates to chattel houses to assist the contractors and pass on that concession to the purchasers. We can probably look at things like insurance and see if insurance can be built into the purchasing price of these chattel houses, because the insurance companies very seldom would cover them. If we could build in a three or four year term of guarantee insurance for the purchasers, we would be going a long way in assisting the ordinary working class people.

We have had lots of difficulties as black people over the years. We were denied the opportunities by the plantocracy, and this is still a plantation economy. It might be a neo-plantation economy, but it still has some of the tenets of the colonial system.

We had Acts like the Merchants and Servants Act which served as an encumbrance to black people. You had the Estates Act. You had the Labour Locations Act. All of these Acts stood as encumbrances to the success of black people owning land, and we struggled initially from the first free village in St. Thomas, and I believe that it is the policy of this party.

We have become as black people members of the Legislature of both Houses. There are some people in here who cannot endure my qualifying people as "black", but we are black people and we have to move forward. That is why the masses of this country has granted us enough seats and a decisive rejection of the directions of the Barbados Labour Party, and we have to move forward to see that that type of economic and social transformation is made now that the Democratic Labour Party is in power.

I believe that it is clearly manifested in the direction of the Minister of Housing who is a man of strong conviction to his own, unlike some other members on the other side. I believe it is a clear indication of a man who has a social conscience and is moving in the right direction to assist with the difficulties that ordinary people in Barbados face in having houses, and I want to commend him for his efforts, and I am looking forward to seeing him performing in this comprehensive way in the future.

Mr. Deputy President, I want to support this $10 million bond. I am looking forward to other members of this Chamber not only recognizing the principle of it, but the importance of it, in the sense that it is used for ordinary working class people who do not have the opportunity through their disposable income to provide houses for themselves.

I want to thank you for listening so patiently.

SENATOR D. A. COMISSIONG: Mr. Deputy President, I shall not be long in my contribution this afternoon. I just want to follow up on some of the very good points made by my brother, Senator Prescod.

The Democratic Labour Party, Sir, has always declared itself to be a party that espouses democratic socialism, and I take that declaration very seriously. I think that its policies should reflect a socialist orientation, and I believe that at the end of this five year term one of the proudest achievements of this Democratic Labour Party Government will be its achievement in the area of housing. I can see it heading in that direction and I think that this Resolution here is further testimony to that.

As Senator Tull so rightly said, housing is easily one of our most pressing social needs. Housing for the poor and deprived of this country is such a crucial matter that I

would go along with Senator Tull in saying that we really need to pay maximum attention to it and come up with a comprehensive plan for dealing with the housing needs of the people of Barbados. Having said that, Sir, I believe that we are on the right tracks, and, as I said, I believe that at the end of this term one of our greatest achievements will be in this said area of housing.

I want to touch briefly on the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act and some of the comments that emanated from Senator Tull. He protested that when his party brought that Act in force it had good intentions. I do not think that we have any doubt that they did have good intentions, but by the same token he must also realize that when we on this side criticize certain aspects of that Act, we have good intentions as well.

It is not that we want, in any way, to deprive working class Barbadians of the benefits to be derived under that Act. However, since the passage of the Act, many people have commented that the Act has resulted, perhaps, unintentionally, in there being a dearth of people willing to rent their lands as house spot. What we are really concerned about is how, perhaps, an unintended effect of the Act may be depriving the said people, the poor, working class people, that the Act was intended to help, in the first instance, by causing landowners not to rent their house spots.

But, Sir, I think that this Act and any proposed amendment to the Act has to be looked at very seriously and examined very closely. I think there are a lot of misconceptions about the whole Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act and the surrounding area.

Senator Tull today gave vent to one of those misconceptions. He was making the point that, in the past, people who rented house spots could be removed with a mere Eight Days Notice. I do not think that that is strictly correct. I have before me the Security of Tenure of Small Holdings Act, Cap. 237 of the Laws of Barbados. This is an Act that dates back to 1955, and in this Act the renter of a house spot has to be given at least six months' notice. I do concede that the Act does provide that if the person is in breach of his covenant under the tenancy he only has to be given three months' notice, but it certainly was a much longer period than the eight days.
12.45 p.m.

I think Senator Tull wants to make a point.

SENATOR L. R. TULL: Mr. Deputy President, Senator Comissiong is perfectly correct. As Alexander Haig would say, I misspoke myself. The provision in respect of eight days' notice is in respect of rental of chattel houses.

SENATOR D. A. COMISSIONG: Sir, the basic point is I think, that if we are looking at amending that legislation, we need to examine it very closely, because I would concede that it was a piece of legislation that has done a lot of social good for the people of Barbados. We need, in particular, to look at the statistical evidence. There is the allegation that many people have taken house spots out of the market, they are refusing to rent house spots. We need to examine that closely to see to what extent it is correct and how great a problem it is. We hear comments about problems that people have with children returning back home and that kind of thing. The point I am making is that this is a very important subject area for the working class people of Barbados, and we need to examine it very closely before we deal with it. Let us have hard statistical evidence.

The only other point I would like to make on housing again touches on a comment made by Senator Tull which relates to the National Housing Corporation. I do not think it is fair to say, Sir, that we in any way encourage people or supported tenants in not paying their rent. I think there was one specific act of the Barbados Labour Party regime which we took strong objection to, and it is where the Minister of Housing took television cameras down to a particular housing estate and showed tenants being ejected. We took particular exception to the Administration of the day humiliating citizens of Barbados in that way.

I think, Sir, that we need to take a humane approach in all the areas. This business of ejecting people from houses is one that leaves me with a lot of distaste. In fact, as a lawyer, I have often gone so far as to take a policy decision that I would not be acting for people who want to eject small people from chattel houses. I pass on that business; not that there is anything wrong with it, but it is something that fills me with so much distaste, because I know the hardship that small people go through when they are homeless, and it is a matter that I personally do not like to deal with.

We must deal with these matters with a degree of humaneness, and certainly I would not expect ever to see a Minister of Housing in the Democratic Labour Party sinking to the level of bringing in the Press to advertise the humiliation of the citizens of this country. A humane approach must always be exercised.

SENATOR L. R. TULL: On a point of order: I think that the Senator is in breach of the Standing Orders by imputing improper motives to any Minister, present or past. It is not true that the Minister encouraged any media to come in. People at CBC heard what was happening and they went along. They were not invited. But the Leader of the Senate said, "We would blame you for it anyway," so I understand.

SENATOR D. A. COMISSIONG: Regardless of where the ultimate responsibility lies for CBC being there, I hope that when this Democratic Labour Party is in office citizens of Barbados being ejected will never be shown on our television screen. I am not saying that we have to censure anything, but I would hope that we have enough humaneness within our Administration that we would not subject our citizens to that type of public humiliation. I think that the law is already in place. For example, there are provisions in our 1979 Property Act, which I know a lot of us are not aware of – even lawyers are not aware of it – that protect the rights of tenants from that type of whimsical and arbitrary ejectment from their rented homes.

I support this Resolution and I look forward to this Government continuing to pay this type of attention to what may well be our number one social need in Barbados, housing for poor people. I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Resolution and to commend the Minister of Housing for having initiated this kind of service to the lower income group of this country, and I hope that when we say "lower income group" now, we really mean the lower income group. I am thinking about the people at the lowest end of the socio-economic ladder in this country, because very often we heard about the lower income group during the past ten years, but when we examined the results of this lower income movement, we discovered that the people who are poor are still homeless and all the institutions that give credit to people to build houses do not ever seem to meet the requirements for the poor people of this country. I hope that Government will be able in this exercise to lay down certain guidelines which would make it imperative that, whatever money the poor man has, they see him for what he has and build up a certain amount of confidence that would give every poor man the zeal to own his own house without being turned away by these different institutions.

We have housing areas like Kensington Lodge and Brittons Hill. No poor man can qualify to rent one of those lots, and they end up with having people like policemen and nurses in those buildings. It never ever gets to the level of the real poor man. So we might be distributing housing loans to people in this country, but they will not be reaching the people which they are intended to reach, and I would hope that in this particular instance, we guard and guide it very carefully, so that people in the very lowest income bracket would be able to be assisted by some means, probably by making the down payment as low as possible so that you can entertain applications from those same people to own their own homes.

I know that the poor people in Barbados are the most honest. We hear of people getting loans from banks, over $200 000, without collateral and then walk away. I have never heard of a poor man who was able to acquire a loan and did not have to pay it back. Poor people go out of their way to pay back their money, because they know that they have borrowed money, and if they have to do without eating or drinking, they would make sure that they pay back what they borrowed. For that reason, I feel they should be given a chance to get any loan they want at any concessionary terms that they would be able to pay back in their own time, because, to my mind, they are the most honest people in this country, but they have never been given the chance to live in a kind of environment that would make them feel happy.

Sir on that Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, a poor man in this country is not a speculator in any land. Any poor man who is able, with the help of his children overseas, whether in America, Canada or England, to buy some of this soil in Barbados has it there permanently, he is not buying land to sell again, and if by chance the land was vacant, and he put two houses on it to get some rent in the meantime, I do not see how any Government or any law of this land could compel him to sell that lot to who was on the land. That is the most ridiculous thing I have heard in my whole life, because when poor people buy land, they do not buy land to sell again; it is not an estate. We have had instances in this country where people have been crying their belly out, having put two houses on land, because they discover that they were forced to give up the land which they had spent so many years to acquire, and that was their only thing in life that they wanted to own, to feel happy like anybody else and to be secure from anybody terminating their tenancy of their land. We have to watch that. That Act was very wicked as far as I am concerned, and it has put a lot of hardship on the people who cannot bear it.
12.55 p.m.

Under our Administration we had a provision that five houses or more constitute a tenantry. Under that there was security of tenure, because if you had five houses on land, you could not give people notice.

Aside.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: I do not know how you get that done, except that they do not pay their rent.

This new Act did not make any thing about your tenancy more secure, and I believe that we should revert to the old time system where if you had five or more houses on the land, that could be called a tenantry. But to make land with two houses a tenantry is, to my mind, real ridiculous, and it has worked real hardship on the people of this country.

I hope that the Minister of Housing would be true to what this Resolution says, to cater to the needs of the lower income groups, and that he would put mechanisms in place to accommodate those people who are at the lowest end of our society to gain a house for the first time.

Mr. Deputy President, I wish to compliment the Government on these Housing Bonds. I hope that we can get a new thrust into the housing problems of this country, and in this respect I should like to compliment the work of the Barbados Workers Union which in the last couple of years has been pursuing a housing policy and making housing available to their members. There is a new plan afoot where they are joining with private enterprise to make more house spots available. I think this is a very commendable achievement by the Barbados Workers Union, and I should like to see other organizations helping to provide housing for our poor people. I think it is high time that Barbadians could feel proud of having assisted their fellow men in their housing requirements. If we are able to do that, if we could adjust the bottom, the top would take care of itself, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I do not want to be long. I am in agreement with the observations of Senator Morrison. While I do not share his general condemnation of the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, I think the iniquity of that Act was that it sought to widen a tenantry by saying two or more instead of five or more. In fact, a view that I have long held is that with respect to the mechanics when that law was passed, the subsequent change by the reduction of five to two may well be unconstitutional, because the law in place at the time was five and then the processes by which it was reduced to two was not done with the same regard as how that Act was enacted.

Mr. Deputy President, as someone who sits on this side as an independent Senator, it occurs to me that every now and again the impression is created that, depending upon the perspective you take, life either began in 1976 or 1986, but whatever happened before that did not happen. The position in relation to chattel houses was something that, contrary to what Senator Tull would have us believe, was on the Statute Book for many, many years before that.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: By, the Barbados Labour Party – in 1954.

National Housing was making chattel mortgages available well into the Sixties and Seventies. The private sector in the 1960s and Seventies was building chattel houses for sale. I remember a programme when Mannings was offering houses for sale, financed by Barclays Bank. Barbados Lumber Company was doing the same thing. Miss Rock was doing it. So there has been a programme in place. The legislation was put in the Book, Mr. Deputy President, by way of an amendment to the Income Tax Act to create incentives for people to build houses for construction where there is a special tax regime of 20 per cent on companies that are going to be engaged in the business of house construction. So there has been ongoing concern across the political divide for house construction. I appreciate that if you are a partisan operator, you are going to try to seek plaudits, but I think regard must be paid to the facts.

I recognize that there is a social concern for housing. I take Senator Morrison's advancement that you need to help the poorest. I am concerned that the mechanics are put in place that they do not acquire debt more than they can adequately look after, because there is a moving scale in Barbados as to how you can best afford to service a debt.

I should like to think, too – this was one of the things that was said by Senator Tull and Senator Comissiong – that the issue of public housing on a national scale is one that should be treated in a serious way so that there should be some, as I said before, a comprehensive public document or White Paper proposals so that we would know where we are going, because a lot of new vistas are going to be opened up for land development as a result of the road construction, all of which are not going to be suitable for housing. But I think that this should be looked at in a broad way and not just to claim credit when, in fact, all have done things that are worthy of credit.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: I just want to make two comments, Mr. Deputy President, the first being that the note just struck, suggesting that housing ought not to be a partisan issue, is something that I have concerned myself about for a long time. But every time we have a debate in here dealing with money for housing, we get an almost admission by Senator Tull about the inadequacies of the Government that he served for so long in responding to the needs of the people of Barbados to develop their housing stock. You mark my word, next time he will repeat it again.

The Democratic Labour Party is extremely concerned about the tenantries legislation and a Committee is currently working on a thorough examination of the Act to try to ensure that there are remedies to the concerns which were just expressed by Senator Blackman and by other persons, and which have been expressed over time.

(*Aside:* SENATOR L. R. TULL: I asked some questions. You did not answer me.)

The question that this Resolution do now pass was put to the Senate and agreed to.
1.05 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Sir, I am proposing, the Bill to amend the Central Bank Act, which is a simple one, will be taken next, and then we will go out for lunch.

CENTRAL BANK OF BARBADOS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1988

Order No. 5 was called – To move the second reading of a Bill to amend the Central Bank of Barbados Act, Cap. 323C.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, the Central Bank Act provides that there shall be a Board of Directors responsible for the administration of the bank. The present membership of the Board includes a Governor and five other Directors.

You will be aware, Mr. Deputy President, that one of the persons who was a member of the Board of Directors of the bank from its inception was a gentleman holding the position of Director of Finance and Planning and who has recently retired from the Public Service. When the last Board of Governors was being appointed, it was considered desirable to have the lengthy experience of that gentleman as a member of the board continue with him as a Director. But when this was done, it was done to the exclusion of the acting incumbent in the position of Director of Finance and Planning.

The Central Bank has made a point that the position of Director of Finance and Planning is an important conduit for backwards and forwards transmission of information and policy initiatives between the bank and the Ministry of Finance or the Prime Minister, as the case may be. Hence, the Government considers it desirable that the Director of Finance and Planning should become *ex officio*, a member of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Barbados, in the same way as the Governor of the Board and indeed its Chairman.

The Bill, as presented, seeks to amend Section 10 of the Central Bank Act to permit the appointment of the Director of Finance and Planning as an *ex officio* member of the board of Directors.

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

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. L. V. H. LEWIS, Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Senator J. C. W. WICKHAM in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. L. V. H. LEWIS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Senator the Hon. L. V. H. LEWIS, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for one hour.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This sitting is now suspended for one hour.
1.15 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, the next Order of business stands in my name. I am asking leave for the Minister of State for Finance to take charge of it.

GUARANTEE OF SUGAR INDUSTRY BOND ISSUE OF $21 700 00

Order No. 1 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Guarantee by the Minister of Finance of the payment of the principal and of the interest necessary for the Redemption of the Sugar Industry Bond Issue in the sum of $21 700 00.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President approval is being sought for the Government to guarantee a new issue of sugar industry bonds in the sum of $21.7 million, to be floated by Barbados Sugar Industries Limited. The purpose of the issue is to make support payments and loans to cane growers for the 1986 crop.

To give some background on this proposal, the Sugar Industry Support Act Cap. 268A, provides for the establishment of a sugar support price bond, its financing and management amongst other things. The issue of sugar bonds is affected under the provisions of Section 4 of the same Act for purposes of financing a sugar support price

fund. Section 5 of the Act further provides the Minister of Finance, with the approval of Parliament, to guarantee payment of the principal and interest necessary for the redemption of any bond issue on such terms and conditions as he sees fit.

This scheme was introduced in 1982 as part of the Government's strategy to assist the sugar industry in coping with the sugar crisis caused by low prices in 1981 and 1982, and it was based on the following principles:

(1) the disbursement of the support element in the form of loans, convertible into grants, depending on future performance; and

(2) a support of the banking system, particularly the Barbados National Bank, which at that time was faced with amounting volume of defaults on the non-payment of cultivation loans by crediting support payments to growers' bank accounts where there are outstanding debts.

Between 1982 and 1985, the total loans guaranteed by the Government so far stood at $52 million. It is my understanding that in 1986 the sum of $17 million has been repaid so far.

Although it is proposed that Government should guarantee the new bond issue, there are some compelling reasons why the present system of funding must be reviewed. It is not Government's intention to go on and on supporting this. We need to take a good hard look at the whole programme. There must be a new approach to financing agriculture, and secondly, there must be some change in support financing. We cannot continue giving these guarantees with the indebtedness of the industry continuing to deteriorate as it has been. We are cognizant, however, of the contribution which the sugar industry has made, and still continues to make, to the economy of Barbados in terms of foreign exchange earnings and employment generation, but we must ensure that there is greater efficiency in the industry.

With those few words, Mr. Deputy President, I move that the Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: I beg to second that.

SENATOR L. R. TULL: Mr. Deputy President, I was minded on this occasion to allow the presentation by the Minister in respect of this issue of sugar bonds to go free without debate. I would have liked to hear other honourable Members speak on it. I have some views that, perhaps, are not new, but many bear repetition.

I am not qualified to speak with any authority on the sugar industry, except at certain levels in relation to things like personnel and conditions of work, but I was part of a Government which initiated this system of price support for the sugar industry. It happened six years ago, and it came at a time when sugar was in its most critical state since the beginning of sugar cultivation in this country over 300 years ago, and decisions had to be taken by the Government at the time about whether we would allow the sugar industry to collapse, with all the consequential difficulties in the community. We either had to let the industry collapse or we had to see the importance, not only in economic terms, but indeed in social and cultural terms, to determine what we should do at that particular time, and we took the option, which is being supported by the present administration.

They, quite rightly, say that they should review it, because it cannot be a permanent answer to the sugar industry. But we were concerned, Sir, about thousands of jobs. If the sugar industry was destroyed, there would be a large number of jobs lost by people, principally in the rural areas of Barbados. We were also concerned, as the Minister has said, about the extent to which we could suffer the loss of foreign earnings that we gained from sugar. The price of sugar at one point had dropped to about four cents per pound on the world market, and that was way below the cost of production of sugar in Barbados. In other words, Sir, we started out each crop knowing that we would lose money on sugar, but its importance in terms of jobs and foreign exchange were paramount. We took a decision, therefore, to provide Government guarantee to loans to the sugar industry, and indeed to make outright grants to the sugar industry to carry it through that crisis.

There is a lot of talk about non-partisan discussion. I do not even understand what that means. What I do understand is that when we took that decision, we were wrongly criticized by the then Opposition, and the main spokesman on anything at that time for the Opposition would say some of the most lurid and alarming things about the people in the sugar industry, and wrongly criticized the Government for making any money available to them. Indeed, "not one red cent" has become a phrase in the political jargon these days, because that was what was recommended by the Democratic Labour Party in Opposition – do not give them one red cent, because they use the money for all kinds of extra-curricular activities rather than for the promotion of the industry.

We took the decision to support the industry, looking forward to better times. Better times have not returned, although there has been some improvement since the dark, dismal days of 1981 and 1982. I think there has been some more consolidation. The building of the new factory in St.

James and the closing down of a number of unproductive factories in Barbados was also part of that strategy.

We also sought to impress on the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited and the sugar producers that they had to cut out a lot of the fat in the industry. You would know, Mr. Deputy President, that the plantation system has been overburdened with a top-heavy administration. The various levels of managers and attorneys and so on, in our view, were working some of the hardship on the industry, because they were spending a lot of money, in our view, in unnecessary stipends. I believe that there has been some consolidation and improvement in that area.

But difficulties still remain. I do not want to go into a long discussion this afternoon on the state of the sugar industry in the world. Cane sugar has been beleaguered for a very long time, and is getting more so. The introduction of artificial sweeteners in North America and Europe, the strength of the sugar beet industry in Western Europe in particular, and the surplus of cane production in many countries of the world - in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and indeed a number of the southern States of the United States - have caused for a while a glut of sugar on the world market, and by the law of supply and demand, there was a depression in the price on the world market. These things are fluid, and we are at the mercy of the European Economic Community, which would grant us certain price concessions and quotas, and we are at the mercies of the United States of America which, from time to time, make concessions in respect of quotas and then take them away.
2.25 p.m.

One of the truisms that you hear about business is that people in business cannot properly manage and plan for their business unless they have a certain measure of certainty. It is like the law in that respect. Therefore, people in the sugar industry must feel sure that they will be granted a certain quota for an extended period of time at a certain price, otherwise they cannot plant.

I saw recently that there has been an intensification of the efforts of Caribbean Basin countries to prevail on the United States to extend the period for the Caribbean Basin Initiative 12 years and beyond, and one of the arguments used was that businessmen are not prepared to make serious investments in anything if they know that in a few short years it will be ended and they do not know what will happen beyond that.

By parallel reasoning, the sugar industry in Barbados found itself in such a position. They did not know from year to year what exactly would be their position, both in terms of quota and price, quota for the United States and the European Economic Community and the price, and that has been a burden on them.

Although there have been several studies in the sugar industry, we will have to have a serious study, taking into consideration the new realities, to determine where we go from here. And it cannot be unilateral, it has to be an effort on the part of Government on the one hand, the sugar industry on the other, and the Workers Union on the third hand.

I think it is important at this stage that this be done, and it is a very good time to do it, Sir, because the Barbados Workers Union, which represents the sugar workers, has now found a cosy bed on which to lie. Although some may see that they are strange bedfellows of the Government, I see it differently, I see them as being very natural bedfellows, and, therefore, the Government can count on a relatively easy ride in these days, because the Barbados Workers Union seems to have a conflict between representation of the Democratic Labour Party *vis-a-vis* representation of the union members. So this is a good time for this tripartite discussion to try to come up with some answers and conclusions that will guide the industry for the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not getting into the technical aspects of the sugar cane and what is the suitability for the local climate and the various usages it can be put to. Let us say it is old hat. I could, perhaps, talk about it if the need arises, because I know that studies have shown that the soil in Barbados is suited for sugar cane more than a number of root crops, vegetables, and that sort of thing, and I know, Sir, that a lot of thought and study has been put into finding alternative use for sugar cane.

At one time we looked at the feasibility of converting it into gasohol, I think that is what you call it. We looked at the possibility of setting up a plant next to the flour mill to deal with that kind of thing. It was determined that the cost would be prohibitive.

But I do not want to get into these technical aspects. I believe that there are persons in this Chamber who are far more capable than I am to get into that kind of discussion. What I would like to deal with is the position of the sugar workers.

I live in St. George, Sir, and I have said for many years that St. George is the bread basket of the nation, that it produces more food that any other parish in Barbados, and all around me are people who work in agriculture, principally, in the sugar industry, and my daily dealings require me to know something of the problems that

confront these people. They are uncertain as to what is going to happen with them.

Barbados is becoming more and more urbanised, or derurified, whichever one is the better term, so that people who live seven miles out of Bridgetown are less and less thinking about themselves as agricultural communities. I remember, Sir, that when I was a boy, Kingston, just above Welches Road, used to be canes, that whole area where there is the gas station and those houses. I remember many areas just on the outskirts of Bridgetown where you used to plant a lot of sugar canes. But that has changed. The people who live seven and eight miles out of town feel that they are as much part of the urban community as people who live in My Lord's Hill, in the metropolitan area. That is their perception, and it is born out of certain historical realities that Senator Prescod is far more competent to articulate than I am. I do not know where he is, Sir, but he would tell you about that, I am sure.

Every time I say this I get chastise, but people are more affluent. They are better off and they do not look at agriculture in the way they used to. One of the things that we have to look at, therefore, is the entry into agriculture by young people. I can tell you about St. George, but I believe that is typical of the whole country. If you go through St. George, you will find that the average age of people who work in the plantations is probably over 50. Young people are not going into agriculture. They prefer to sit on the shop steps at the corner than to go and work in agriculture.

In a way, one can understand that kind of attitude. For one reason, the wages in agriculture are not such as would make anybody feel inclined to rush to it. On the other hand, the kind of social and cultural development in this country has moved people away from agriculture, because it is seen as dehumanizing, back-breaking hard work. Something has to be done, therefore, to meet and address this particular problem.

Sugar workers, for instance, are working the fields in the brutal sun and have no facilities for respite from their labours. When I say that, some people say that I am a dreamer, I am an idealist. How do I expect the people working in the fields not to have certain facilities, and, particularly, the women? They work hard out there, and despite all of the humane talk I hear from Senator Prescod, I think a little bit more humanity needs to be brought into these things. There should be provisions and facilities made for the people who work in the sugar industry.

I remember some years ago when the burning of sugar cane was invoked, even encouraged. There were cane fires all across Barbados, and there were people who were working cutting and loading burnt canes and went home on evenings to their chattel residences in the tenantries, and they had no running water.

2.35 p.m.

I know that is past, the Barbados Labour Party has made sure that everybody has running water and water in their houses. I will get criticised for that, but the figure in 1976 was 62 per cent or 63 per cent, and in 1986 it was more like 97 per cent, and the only people who did not have running water in their homes were those who expressed no interest in having it in.

People used to go home in the tenantries black with the burnt cane and did not even have running water in their homes to wash the soot off their bodies, even though we know that they could not wash it out of their lungs. That has changed, but that is the kind of consideration that must be given in all this spending and guaranteeing of loans to make the industry more attractive from the point of view of having younger people taking the plunge into it. Otherwise, the industry will die on its feet.

You see advertisements for cane cutters and other helpers on some plantations. Despite all the ads in the newspapers and in the whole media saying that they still have not got enough people to reap the sugar cane, despite the fact that there has been greater use of the mechanical harvester now than there has ever been – if I am wrong, correct me, but that is what I have heard – there is a shortage in the sugar industry. One has to look at that particular area. I think we get between $60 million and $70 million in foreign exchange from the sugar industry every year – I think the latest figures I heard was in the region of $70 million – and it is absolutely critical that we have that money, and until such time as we have managed to establish and put in place a proper diversification programme, we will have to have that.

I cannot help saying that I used to hear about diversification programmes when I was 12 or 13 years old. In other words, I have heard that all my life; one Government or the other has had a lot of talk about diversification. The fact that Barbados has not had its agriculture diversified to the extent to which some of the experts would like has to do less with the administration of the Government than with the realities of what is economic to grow and what is not. For instance, we see that cotton is coming back. It grieves me in a way to see some of the development in that area, but cotton is coming back and that is to be one aspect of the diversification. In the Scotland District there are many many areas of fruit trees and that kind of thing, all of which go towards meeting the need to diversify away from sugar.

I am not however, Sir, and I hope nobody says it after I am finished, calling for the abolition of the sugar industry. I am not so stupid as to recommend that you knock down a structure before you have something adequate to put in its place, so I am not making that suggestion. I get misrepresented often when I sit down, they distort what I say, but all of that is in it.

Asides.

SENATOR L. R. TULL: I am protecting my flank, Sir; I know what is likely to come.

The point I am making in relation to diversification is that an effective programme of diversification, and God knows what that will be in the light of the realities of Barbados, will go some way towards reducing the burden on the taxpayers in relation to these support payments that are made to the sugar industry at the moment.

I know that the present Administration dilly-dallied over the payment by support after they got into Government, and I believe, Sir, that it was only in 1987 that the money was approved for 1986. The result of that was that the farmers could not plan ahead – they did not know if they were going to get the money, so they could not go out there planting – and at that time the President of the Barbados National Bank made a statement that was provocative in the extreme, no less insensitive and a massive usurpation of the powers of the Executive, the Government. When heads of these statutory boards can make statements of that kind, it means either that the Government has given them extraordinary powers, or that they need cutting down to size, because what happened when the President of the National Bank made a statement in relation to the support payment and the payment to farmers is that a lot of farmers did not plant because they did not know what was happening. One told me that he was quite prepared to allow his plantation to run into grass, because he did not know what was going on.

Mr. Deputy President, let me make it absolutely clear that I do not hold any brief for any plantation manager or boss from his personal perspective. I am concerned about the integrity of the industry, the way it affects Barbadians, the saving of jobs and the earning of foreign exchange, and, as I mentioned without going into it, the preservation of a certain type of culture. When we talk about culture in agriculture – in the canes we talk about mono-culture – we are talking about planting of the soil. I am not talking about that culture today, I am talking about the kind of community life that has grown up around sugar, and if it is disrupted, it is going to cause tremendous trauma. It manifests itself, Mr. Deputy President, in many small things. You have to live in the agricultural belt among the people to understand the subtleties of these things that I am talking about, so we have to look after them.

I do not want, Mr. Deputy President, to go on any longer, but I must ask some questions, although I do not get any answers from Government Ministers when I ask questions in debate. I do not know what they have to hide. You ask questions and sit down; they get up and make a few caustic remarks at you across the table and sit down arrogantly, and that is the end of it. I know a little bit about being caustic and about being arrogant, too, Sir, and in due course I guess I will have to adopt the same attitude, but I am asking again. Is it possible that the Minister who introduced this, or any other Minister, could give us some peep at the kind of answer that they are looking for when they are talking about reviewing the funding of the industry?

We know what is happening now. Every year you come out with $10 million or $15 million or whatever, some grant, some loan to keep the industry going, and it is not the first time I have heard – I have heard it from the Minister today for the first time, but I have heard the Minister of Agriculture intimate it – that this system cannot continue and will not continue. I think this is so important to the well-being of this community that we cannot play it lose to the chest, we have to get it out. Everybody has to get involved in it, and I would like to get some idea as to what they see as a reasonable alternative to the existing policy.

Let us say they review it and they stop giving this $10 million or $15 million each year to the industry or guarantee those sums. What next? What are they going to do in its place? I am anxious to know, and people all across this country are anxious to know.

It is not only a question of price support each year, it is a question of the massive loans that, in my view, the sugar industry can never repay. I do not know how they will repay them. Some of the loans made to some of the estates are, in my view, greater than the value of the estates themselves. I want to know if the Government has any plans for, what do you call it, writing off these loans. What are they going to do to replace this, bearing in mind that the sugar industry has got the difficulties that I have just spoken of.

2.45 p.m.

I am more concerned about the effect on the people who work in the industry. Fortunately or unfortunately, most of them are older people who will be retiring in a short period of time. But if we are to attract younger people into this industry, which must go on for some time – do not let anybody fool us that this industry will come to an end in any short period of time – what kind of plan has the

Government got to make the industry at the workers' level sufficiently attractive that it can keep at least a partially viable industry?

SENATOR V. C. FRASER: Mr. Deputy President, I am very pleased to hear some words from Senator Tull. I am happy to hear him make the call for better facilities for the workers in the agricultural sector, but I do not think Senator Tull should be allowed to steal NOW's thunder nor mine, because I had been out there calling for latrine facilities for the people in the industry for years maybe not when I was 12, as he said he heard something when he was 12 but surely I was calling for this now for some time. I have called for it inside and outside of my party, and anybody will tell you I am a stickler for this.

My reason is very clear. I have worked with the agricultural workers, talking to them every day at 11.00 o'clock about nutrition when they came off on their lunch break. I have actually sat down with those people and worked with them, so I am not a stranger to anybody in agriculture. My family comes from a rural area, St. Andrew, and everybody knows what St. Andrew does. All of my relatives grew canes and, to some extent, did a lot of the practising of diversification of agriculture. Senator Tull has heard the word since he was 12, I have been hearing the word from the time I was a baby, growing up in it and actually doing it, and still doing it, because he can pass by my house, I invite him to come and see it.

I support the Resolution but I like to look at the future. It is all right for people to talk about we have been talking about diversification for a long time. Perhaps we have got to talk about it a little longer. A lot of our people in Barbados do not seem to understand the meaning of the word marketing. Indeed, when you go abroad to market a product, people think that you are going abroad on a jolly ride. We talk about agricultural diversification, but you have to go abroad and get a market even before a seed is planted. You do not go abroad when you have grown the thing. If you look at the way that sugar has been marketed, sugar has been properly marketed, from the time it was started in this country and throughout the Caribbean region, by experts who understood that this area was an area that suited a grass, and the grass was sugar.

It is unfortunate that at this stage other plants produce sugar. I recently returned from a sort of a large fresh produce show, and now they are using fruit and vegetable sugars to sweeten candies. They are no longer using colourings with cochineal. They are using fruit colourings. In Texas if you offer anybody anything with a preservative they do not want it, because they are eating everything that is fresh, and the sugar must be a fruit sugar. That is another line of competition that we have got to face, other than the beets and the maple and all these other things. We have to look at this very, very seriously and look at whether in the future we are going to be able to continue. Remember, like Senator Tull, I am not saying that we should get rid of sugar, but we have to look at this very seriously.

Senator Tull said he did not bother about the usage, but you have to bother about the usage. If you look at some of our industries here, like the falernum industry, why do we have to import sugar for the falernum industry? Why could we not grow more sugar so as to have it refined, and if not look at a Barbados refinery, look at a Caribbean refinery? I think we have got to do things the Caribbean way now and stop every little person having this little thing here and that little thing there.

There is a great demand for icing sugar in the region. I met a gentleman from Tate and Lyle recently who told me that they are no longer exporting even a quarter of the amount of icing sugar that they exported to us in Barbados before, because Trinidad is making a very good icing sugar. Why can we not do this on a regional level? This will utilize a lot of our sugar and it might be an incentive not to abandon some of the sugar lands that you plan to abandon for growing other crops that are high risk crops. Sugar does not have the high risk like the other crops. You plan on yams and you get anthrax nose. You plan on cabbage and you get black rot. These are things that happen naturally. You plan on paw paws and you get bunchy top. Therefore, your markets are swept away, whereas sugar, except for one time when we had a disease, has been one of the very profitable crops.

We are looking at the markets of the other crops which we can grow sensibly and suitably in Barbados. It has been proven that there are a number of crops that can be grown, but we as Barbadians must change our attitudes, we must change our attitudes very seriously. We must never think that anything can be done overnight. Sugar has been with us for years and years, generations. If Drax Hall could be handed down like that, you must know how many generations sugar was here with us. It is going to take time before we are able to export other crops in large quantities. We have got to give that time, too, and we have got to give the young people the assurance that these things can happen.

It seems clear to me that when we are talking about agriculture, we seem only to be thinking of people out there working in the field. In encouraging young people in agriculture, there are several areas of agriculture – the laboratory, research, marketing – that we can encourage young people in. But our whole attitude is that agriculture is something dirty. Some parents do not even want the children to go in the school gardens. Some parents would like the National Conservation Commission to clean the school gardens. Where are the children? What kind of

society are we raising when we who used to do these things before, and we used to pride ourselves in getting prizes for these fruits and vegetables which we produced at the schools, do not want our children to get involved. The call, therefore, must go out to every single level-headed Barbadian to eat what you grow and grow what you eat.
2.55 p.m.

Everyday you hear somebody talking about prices going up. It is ridiculous. Why should we be importing herbs when we can use a little can and grow them for ourselves? But no! The attitude is we have a lot of money to spend so we go in the supermarket and push the trolley and take up anything at all we find. We are buying on impulse. Let us change our attitude from degrading the agricultural worker. Let both the business sector and the private sector provide facilities for them to put the tools in because it is hurtful to see a woman or a man travelling with a hoe over his or her back. When they go to get in the bus, the children start to scoff at them. But they are parents of some of the children going to Queen's College and to all the secondary schools in this country because we have free secondary education.

If we change these kinds of attitudes, we can provide those chemical toilets, as I see are being provided for the Parks and Beaches workers. I do not know what has happened to the agricultural workers who are so important. If agriculture is the backbone of our economy, the private sector and the public sector which have plantations must provide these as a means of urgency for the people who work in this industry to show them that we care. They are human being, and if we care about human beings, we have got to provide the things that are necessary for all human beings. The whole element of transportation to and from the plantation is something that must be looked at.

These are some of the reasons why somebody always says you cannot get young people attracted to agriculture. Let us not degrade agriculture by saying that agriculture means working in a field with a hoe. Let us look at the other aspects in which we have trained our young people at universities to do, entomology pathology, and all the "ologies" you can think about.

Asides.

SENATOR V. C. FRASER: That is right. You name it and they had done it.

An area which we do not seem to understand that is very important is promotion, promotion of what we have available. We must spend money to make money. We do not use the television as a very strong medium to promote what we have available and what can be marketed even on the local market, because Barbadians do not eat enough vegetables. We have to get our people eating enough vegetables first, that is very, very important, and then when we go to other people we could tell them our people are big eaters of vegetables and things like this. All that is involved in the marketing area.

I sincerely hope, Mr. Deputy President, that we will hear the priest in the pulpit, rather than talking about some of the things that will not in any way edify or highlight the image of Barbadian people, talk about the importance of agriculture to the development of Barbados and talk truly about how young people can get involved. Let them understand there are other areas of agriculture other than going in a cane ground, and make appeals to the private sector that they, too, have plantations and that they can be involved in providing some of these toilets that we are talking about for their workers, and bath facilities.

I was thought of as a madman. Do you know somebody asked me why a worker coming out a hot ground would want to change for. Well, why cannot these people change their clothes just as people in industry change their clothes, and they look fresh and good and go on the bus? What is wrong with somebody doing that? When I work in my ground at home, am I to come in the Senate looking the same way as I work in my ground? That is saying that. That is foolishness!

We must understand that people have pride. They have their children and we as Barbadians must be proud of every single one of our people. And the people in agriculture are feeding us, they are supporting us and they are helping pay our bills. If the civil servants are not paid, they would not be able to pay their bills, and the people in agriculture are doing all these things and yet some of us are still looking down at them. Let us change our attitudes towards this.

Again I support the Resolution, but with those recommendations.

Thank you.

Applause.

SENATOR THE REV. CANON I. McK. JONES: Mr. Deputy President, I was very heartened to hear Senator Carmeta Fraser say that she would like some parsons to preach in the pulpit about this. I can tell her I have already done that, and I have said time and time again that I cannot understand why people are saying young people are so reluctant to go into the fields and work when, for all the years that I have known cane cutting here, the owners of plantations have not done one thing to make it easier for the people who have to cut the canes. I mean, as she says, there is not even a toilet anywhere nearby, there is not a bath,

there is not a place where they can have their lunch. I feel that if you treat people that way, you cannot expect them to be very eager to look for work under those conditions, and I think that they can be improved.

I support this Resolution. I can quite well understand why the Government is saying they have to try and review the situation, because they cannot go on doing this year by year. But I think it is also important to understand that what the Government is doing, as I understand it, is being the guarantor for this $21 million, but the industry itself has to service both the interest and the principal.

I heard some other agency say that the same thing that the Government does for agriculture should be done for the Barbados manufacturers and so on. I wonder if they realize that the Government is not giving this money, as it were, in cash to the industry, but that the industry has got to find this money. If the manufacturers understand that, they must go ahead and do the same kind of thing. As far as I can recall, only once did the Government give $10 million in cash to agriculture. I cannot remember what year that was, but it was not so very long ago. All the other times they have been guarantors for this thing.

It is all right to talk about we have to try and diversify and do this and do that. As Senator Tull says, he heard this from the time he was about 12 years-old. I am plenty years older than he and I heard it when I was about 12, too, and I can say that from what I have read by agronomists time and time again, they have said that the sugar cane is the finest thing we can have in Barbados. And when I hear this talk about getting rid of sugar cane, because some people believe it has to do with slavery, and some people are treated like animals, I would like to suggest to them that if we got rid of sugar cane altogether we would be getting rid of ourselves, too. Sugar cane has to be kept in this country. As a fact, in the last war, when we had much more of the acreage given to other crops than we have today, and to vegetables – those of us who are old enough would remember Dr. Saint's pills – sugar cane was still doing fairly well.

Diversification needs a lot of looking into. As Senator Fraser said already, if you talk about planting onions, you had onion blast; if you talk about cotton, you are having trouble with cotton as well, and yams had its own disease. There are diseases that trouble all these things.

On the other hand, in many Caribbean islands they have taken many acres out of cane production and put them into bananas or into citrus. But we are living in an area where we get storms and hurricanes. We do not get them too often, thank God, but none of those crops is resistant to hurricanes – not bananas, nor coconuts. But the wind could be 120 miles an hour and the cane will fall down on the ground and grow from down there and come up again.

We need sugar cane, so do not let us get this idea that we can do away with sugar cane. I agree we can diversify, but we also have to get very, very expert knowledge in handling our diversification. I think Mr. Colin Hudson has said all that needs to be said about that already.
3.05 p.m.

Another thing is that people say we cannot depend on sugar. Let me tell you this, sugar has kept Barbados where it is today, whatever else you may want to say against it, and many times sugar has done a lot more than is expected of it. Do you remember that some time ago, about 1975, we had that tremendous upsurge in the price of sugar, the prices soared and we did extremely well, and the then Government put a levy on the sugar, which came up to about $30 million, and put half of that into the Consolidated Fund and the rest of it went into housing and so forth? It was not put back into sugar. You know very well, that when business people make a good profit they like to turn a lot of it back into the business. It was not done that way with sugar at that time, so what we are finding is that sugar has done a lot for public financing in this country. People seem to forget this. If sugar has come on bad days, it is for the Government to help to sustain it, to help to boost it. We cannot just say that because sugar is in a bad state now, because of the competition that we have from other sweeteners in the world and so on, the Government should give it up. I do not agree with that.

A lot also depends on the fluctuation of the market as far as money is concerned. The strength or weakness of the American dollar as against the currency in Europe, has a lot to do with what happens to our sugar, and I feel that whenever it is proven that the cost of production is higher than the amount of money we do get back from our sugar, that is a time when the Government needs to give some subsidy to our sugar. I would like them to bear that in mind. In other words, sugar has done tremendous work for us in Barbados, and now because it is on hard times, I do not think that we should just jettison it or throw it overboard.

The Government should help to provide a subsidy when the average price is below the cost of production, mainly through, as I said already, currency fluctuations. Secondly, I think the Government could well use its influence to have the interest rates on accumulated debts reduced to more reasonable rates, say the rate charged perhaps by the Central Bank under its special rediscount scheme for sugar, instead of depending on commercial banks. I think if the Government would bear those two things in mind that we might be able to save our sugar industry.

SENATOR D. A. COMISSIONG: Mr. Deputy President, I am not going to oppose this Resolution before us. It is the policy of my party, it has come up from the Lower House and I therefore will not oppose it, but I must say that I, and indeed, I believe, a number of Barbadians, must have some skepticism about the whole sugar support scheme, and it is for this simple sociological and historical reason. The people who presently run the sugar industry, sugar plantation owners, have historically played a very reactionary and even exploitative role in Barbadian society, and largely because of that the average Barbadian must have a certain amount of skepticism.

Mr. Deputy President, I believe that a lot of the problems that the sugar industry now finds itself in can be traced to the reactionary role played by sugar producers in this country historically. I agree that there are a number of things that have happened to them in the recent past that they have no control over. The bad prices that we have been getting internationally, I agree they have no control over that, nor slashes in our sugar quotas, the strength of our currency *vis-a-vis* the European currencies, the high prices of imports in the sugar industry – machinery, fertilisers, what have you. But in addition to all that, they have played a reactionary role, and I think the reactionary role they have played has led, inevitably, to a lot of the weakness that we now see in this sector.

A number of the points that have been touched on today by Senator Tull, Senator Fraser, and indeed even by Senator Jones, point to what I am saying, the whole policy towards labour, the shocking conditions under which sugar workers have had to work, the failure of wages in the sugar industry to keep pace with productivity of workers in the sugar industry. I am not even saying that the wages should have kept pace with wages in other sectors of the economy, but I am saying that, even worse than that, they failed to keep the wages abreast even of increasing productivity of workers in the sugar industry itself. And today we lament the fact that the vast majority of workers in the sugar industry are senior citizens and we cannot attract young people!

Another example of the reactionary labour policies is the whole attitude that the sugar industry displayed towards the guaranteed work week. When the legislation was brought down in the late Sixties/ early seventies, for a three-day and then a five-day guaranteed work week, I believe it is true to say that attempts were made to get around the legislation, and as a result, inevitably so, the sugar industry found itself unable to compete with the emerging sectors of manufacturing, tourism and what have you in terms of securing young workers. So I think they have to take a lot of the blame.

I made the point about wages not even keeping pace with increased productivity among sugar workers. This was so much so that in the late Seventies they found themselves having to make drastic wage increases in order to attract Barbadian labourers to the sugar industry. That should never have been the case. There should have been a policy of gradual wage increases throughout the years as the productivity of the average worker in the industry increased.

On the last occasion that the late Prime Minister addressed the Barbados Workers Union at their May Day celebrations, he lamented the fact that after all these years there has been absolutely no attempt to create any degree of worker participation in the sugar industry.
3.15 p.m.

We have seen a failure over the years to modernize and mechanize the industry. They have been seemingly content to rely on the old methods of cheap, back-breaking physical labour. During the boom years of the 1950s and the 1960s, when the industry was getting fairly good prices on the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, when profits were being made, I do not believe there was enough attention paid to mechanizing and modernizing the whole industry. So I lay a lot of the blame squarely at the feet of sugar producers in this country.

I would concede that the sugar industry is a valuable one. There is no getting away from that. But there is a lot of public scepticism about the whole scheme, for the reasons that I have outlined already. In fact, some people even go so far as to question whether the loans are actually ploughed into the sugar industry and not diverted into other areas. This is an allegation that you hear constantly in Barbados. So there is this public suspicion and scepticism, and the point I would like to made is this that we recognize the importance of the industry, and we are going to go along the path of supporting it, but let us be very open about the whole policy.

I think the average Barbadian would like to know that at the end of the day, if, with the Government support, the industry is able to survive and go on, we will not still be plagued with these age-old problems of how labour is treated, lack of worker participation or any worker's interest in the sugar undertaking and a relatively backward state of the industry in terms of modernization and mechanization. I think that if you can convince the average Barbadian that this support scheme is part and parcel of a whole programme that is designed to rectify these deficiencies in the industry, people like myself would breathe easier and support the whole scheme with an easier conscience, let me put it that way.

The final point that I would like to make, Sir, and it is not a novel point, is that really and truly we need to take agricultural policy and agricultural diversification much much more seriously than we have done in the past. I really am not convinced that we have exhibited the type of political will that we should be exhibiting in turning around agriculture in Barbados. For example, there is the relationship of the tourist industry to food production in Barbados. I fail to see why our food import bill should be $160 million and why, with a massive tourist industry like we have here, bringing in 400 000 tourists a year, that market is not better utilized to get local food production going. I fail to see why we cannot sit down in Barbados and work out a proper marketing system for ground provisions and vegetables and really get going.

I would like us to get really serious about this, because we all admit that agriculture is so central to the well-being of the nation, and we all agree that something needs to be done, and, yet, every year we merely seem to be standing in place and not making the forward thrust that we should be making. I cannot claim to have the answers to all the questions that can be raised, but my instinct tells me that, if we are to ever come to grips with the problem, it will call for significant Government intervention in the agricultural sector. I think that it is really about time that we sit down and work out an over-all policy for agriculture in Barbados, not only the sugar industry, and see how we can optimise the use of our funds.

Right now we are guaranteeing loans, loans that, as Senator Tull has quite rightly said, he doubts very much that the sugar industry will ultimately be able to pay back. If that is the case, obviously the taxpayers of Barbados will be called upon to pay a substantial amount of those loans. So we are dealing with taxpayers' money, and I think that we really need to come up with a comprehensive programme to ensure that we make maximum use of the money of the taxpayers of Barbados.

SENATOR G. L. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy President, I agree with all the speeches and speakers who have been speaking on this Resolution this afternoon. I am not going to go over most of what has been said, but I feel strongly that the time has come when the workers should have shares in the sugar industry, in the plantations and whatever be, because a lot of money is being spent in the sugar industry. Money is being borrowed all the time and every minute you hear they are not making any money. We cannot go on all the time not making money and the workers not being paid properly. Workers, if they work hard in the sugar industry, have a right to be paid proper salaries. This is often not the case in this sort of society. Persons who do the white collar jobs are the ones who are greatly recompensed, but not our people who have slaved.

Let us go back to the last war days. We were self-sufficient in food production. Today, what is happening? As Senator Comissiong just said, look at the import bill. Look at what we have to pay. We have tourists coming here, let the tourists eat what we provide. There are breadfruit trees. All over the place are stringed with breadfruits, and I am sure that instead of using the local crop in the hotel industry, people use something else.

As a child, I used to look at those people in the fields and I wondered how they managed, and the time has come where you are going to get this labour less. I feel you should mechanise.

Asides.

SENATOR G. L. EASTMOND: Women in St. Andrew? Oh yes, coming out of the hills with the canes on their backs and heads and sweating all over the place. These are our women that we are talking about. I am a woman and know what it is for women to go in the fields, especially when it comes to cutting and loading the canes, and when we talk about women in agriculture, it is time that the people who own the plantations provide a bus service for them, some minibus or some sort of service. Do not let those people be walking on the streets as we so often see them. Do not let them be travelling on the Government transport system; they should be provided with transportation.

3.25 p.m.

But what I am looking very seriously at is the profit margin. Every year we hear the plantations say they are not making money. If, they are not making money, why keep the plantations? Are we the taxpayers always going to be the ones supplementing this sort of thing? If sugar is this important, we will have to find some way whereby sugar factories and the plantations must be able to make a profit; if not, try something else. Plant more food. If sugar cane is the right thing for the Barbados soil, but in North America the beet root sugar is so cheap – and there are a lot of people who do not want sugar today – diversify. I am sure that some will ask, why diversify? I say, money does not grow on trees. I am a taxpayer, and a very heavy taxpayer, and I do not think that I could sit here this afternoon and look at something like this, and hear the many speeches around here and know that all that has been said is true, and not say something about it.

If we need sugar, let it pay. If we are going to plant canes, they must be reaped. I think the time has come when the loss situation must be reversed now to profit, because we the taxpayers are propping this up all the time. But there are so many plantations that are in the red that heaven help us and heaven help this country.

Why hold on to something that is not profitable? Bring in some of these people who break their backs and sweat as shareholders, give them shares, let them participate in the land and let them own some of the plantations, let them own some of what they sweat for. This is the way I see it. This is the only way we have to move in the future. We cannot go on with people like me being a capitalist saying okay we must have this and we must have that. The time has come now where, even in my own business, if I had died in hospital my one dream would not have been fulfilled, and that is that that supermarket must not only be owned by Gertz and her family, but by others. I think the time has come when the people in the sugar industry must do the same thing if we want to see this country move forward. We cannot go forward only thinking about ourselves and being selfish, we have to go forward thinking about the country. There are very few people today that think about Barbados and know what a beautiful country they have. They think too much about the clothes they have to wear, the houses they are building and the different things they have. They do not give a damn about the other person out there who is sweating, sweeping our streets, working in the crop and doing all sorts of things.

I now appeal to persons who are stealing other people's crops to stop it. It is time to discontinue that disgraceful thing. They must remember that if people plant crops in this country, they should be able to reap them in peace and get their gains out of them. We have therefore to talk in here so that others can hear and understand that they must stop stealing and that we must all work together as Barbadians. It is nothing to do with who is white or who is black. We are all Barbadians together and I want to see this country go forward.

It is all right to borrow money, but it is right to repay the money that you borrow, because wherever you borrow that money from, there are other people that want money from the same source, so if you can borrow and pay back, it is fine. But I know there is a lot of debt in this sugar industry and this country cannot carry much more debt. Everybody will start blaming the Government, but look at the people who make the Government, not us, because the people put us here, and if you want a Government you must do what is right to your country.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR L. A. WARD: Mr. Deputy President, I have listened to previous speakers with care. First, I support this Resolution, and I must declare an interest, because I am still concerned with things that produce sugar, not to say that I own anything.

Senator Comissiong said, Sir, that sugar has played an exploitative role in Barbados, or the planters and estate owners have done so. I think we all know that the development of Barbados before we began the tourist industry some time ago was done on a sugar economy. It was about the only thing we had.

Various people have spoken about the debt, and I presume that they are speaking about these particular support bonds that will be raised and how they will be repaid. There is a system in which the difference between what used to be the local price of sugar and what it was raised to was paid into a fund, and that fund services the bonds that we go to the public for. Therefore, if the sugar industry survives, this money will continue to be paid into the fund, and that fund will continue to service the bonds. There was also in the formation of the scheme a system whereby, I think every other year, the domestic price of sugar would go up and this money would be used to increase the size of the fund that would liquidate or service the money that we were borrowing.

Mention has been made about the $10 million that was given to the industry. This is true, but we seldom hear about the $30 million that was taken out of the industry. There is still $20 million knocking around somewhere, because they have given us back $10 million and they took over $30 million.

Worker participation in the industry. Perhaps, Mr. Deputy President, if this had been done in the 1970s, you may have got some people wanting to participate, but since the 1980s the industry has been losing money at a serious rate. Let us take Trade Confirmers. When that was going bankrupt and you had asked people working in Trade Confirmers to participate in the ownership of Trade Confirmers, they would have laughed at you. And workers today would laugh at the industry if you were to talk about worker participation.

3.35 p.m.

The guaranteed work week is another thing that was attacked, that the industry was the body to ignore the legislation for the guaranteed work week. Mr. Deputy President, I think that the only industry in the island that has a guaranteed work week by law placed on it is the sugar industry. Anybody else can employ somebody for three days or two days or whatever, but this was something that was placed on the sugar industry at that time.

And it was not the estate owners that were the ones to make up their minds that they were not going to give a full week's work. The Barbados National Bank which was financing the estate, said, you are only going to have so much money and no more, so if you want to spend it in 11 weeks and have nothing more for the balance of the time, that is your affair. The quantum of money to run the sugar estates is regulated by the Barbados National Bank.

I can understand the feeling, Sir, they are bankers and they would like to know that they are not lending out more money than necessary, because it is my opinion, and I hope it is their knowledge, that they are not going to get back the monies that are due to them by the sugar estates. But the Barbados National Bank is the one that controls the expenditure on the estates, not the estate owners. You apply for what money you think you need and the bank says no, we are going to lend you so much money and that is that. Every bill that you have to pay, anything you buy, you have to carry the documents in to the bank, and the bank is the body to verify them and to say you can pay them. You cannot go and contract debts without the bank's knowledge. If you want to buy equipment, you have to go to the bank and get the bank's approval, and the importer of that machinery will then let you have it.

They mentioned that the manufacturing sector, does not get support. I wonder what happened with the $120 million or thereabouts that Guyana owes Barbados for goods produced and delivered to them. Who is going to pay that $120 million in the Caribbean Multilateral Clearing Facility and the interest that accrues on it from year to year? Nobody is talking about that. But they talk about a sugar support thing that comes up every year.

Aside.

SENATOR L. A. WARD: They say that nothing has been done to modernise the sugar industry. When we went and built a modern sugar factory to replace three old ones that were uneconomic, the industry took severe criticism for doing this, spending this lot of money about it. And it was constructed at a very reasonable cost.

We brought in, I believe it must be over 100 cane loaders in this country, mechanical cane loaders to replace the people who were doing this back-breaking job of loading canes, and what are still in use are still there. But when cane cutting machines were brought into this country, again with a lot of criticism, it made obsolete some of the cane loaders that were in the island. These were combined harvesters that cut the canes and put them in billets in the cane wagon, so you did not need the mechanical cane loader any more.

Some Senator questioned what happens to the support loans when the bonds are issued, where this money goes? I can assure them that the money does not go in the hands of any sugar estate owner or the factory company, it goes directly to the Barbados National Bank. And the Bank keeps it.

Senator Eastmond talked about the industry must be made profitable. Mr. Deputy President, when you cultivate land and you plant a cane plant, you have absolutely no idea of what, when that comes to maturity after 18 months, you will get for the sugar that comes from that cane plant. You have the cost of cultivation first then the planting, the fertilizing, the caring, the harvesting and the production of sugar – and then you find out what you are going to get for it. All the costs have been incurred the whole way up, and it is only at the end of the day that you see if you have a lost or a profit. It is not like buying a commodity, putting a 25 per cent mark up on it and selling it. It is producing something that you do not know what you are going to sell it for down the line. You plant it, but you have done six months' cultivation before you plant it, and 18 months after that, so it is two years after you plant it, then you are going to find out what you are going to get for it.

Mr. Deputy President, I do not take the *Sunday Sun*, but a friend of mine photocopied an article in the *Sunday Sun*, "A Need to Revive Agriculture", it seems to me by David Comissiong. I take it, Sir, that he is our Senator David Comissiong. Am I right?

I would not go into this whole article, Sir, but there are one or two things in it that I feel that I should endeavour to answer. He said we should diversify and democratise agriculture. This is true. We are trying with diversification and I know that there is a certain amount of agrarian reform, which he mentions later on, that has been tried from time to time.

Sanford in St. Philip was cut into two acre lots. There are there for anybody to see. The only thing that has grown on them are houses and bush. Where a fellow has not planted a house and has a little bit of yard around it, it is bush. That is all of the diversification and the agrarian reform that has been done in Sanford.
3.45 p.m.

Ashford in St. John, Sir, the cream of Barbados, anybody can drive pass there and look at it. That was cut in lots and that has gone completely out of agriculture. It may only have a cow, sheep or something raising on it.

Frere Pilgrim was cut in four acre and two acre lots, Mr. Deputy President, and the only thing that has grown on them is some flowers around the people's palatial homes. The four acre area has even acquired the name of Beverly Hills. That is a high class housing lot. The two acre lots have more modest types of homes.

We know Neil's and Rouens were cut into eight acre lots. I believe there was a former Senator in here that lived on one. That turned into residences, flowers, race horses, and so on.

The Government has even tried the Spring Hall Project, Mr. Deputy President, which is a mixture of

different sizes of lots, some 21 acres, trying to find a size that would be suited to small farming.

Talking about this reform, Mr. Deputy President, let us go a little further afield to Jamaica. They took two large estates Frome and Moly Musk – I think Mr. Norman Manley was the then Prime Minister – and cut them into four or five acre lots and gave them to the workers on the place. Frome and Moly Musk went in such a pathetic condition that the Government of Jamaica has just entered into a contract – I think it is concluded – with a foreign firm, not Jamaican, with Tate and Lyle, to come back into Jamaica and try and resurrect Moly Musk and Frome and to bring them back into productive use.

Mr. Deputy President, if you look at the Scotland District area, that whole Scotland District area is gone. I went up driving through St. Philip last week and I was amazed to see the condition of Bushy Park, Congo Road, Vineyard. With those estates, Sir, we are now coming to the other side of the coin. The loans we are talking about today is one side of the coin. With those, we are talking about the other side, the money that is owed to the Barbados National Bank. Those estates must owe the bank the value of the estates and now those estates have gone out of production and I know, as an agriculturalist myself, that it will cost the value of the estate again to bring them out of that dilapidated condition back into proper production. So it is not the money they owe the bank. It is the money that would have to be spent on those lands to bring them back into productive use. The estates that owe the bank perhaps the value of the estates are still in good condition. The Government must make a decision about agriculture in this country. There is no way that agriculture will survive if it is allowed to go on as it is going on.

Senator Comissiong in his article talked about a one crop economy that was handed down to us from generations ago. He began from the days of slavery, but that was a little before my time, so I would not bother to get into that. But the one crop economy that he talked about is what brought Barbados from the time it was discovered, and the condition it was discovered in, to the point when we started to embark on tourism, which was not too long ago, maybe two decades if so long ago.

He spoke about the war. I do not think Senator Comissiong was born during the war, but he spoke about the sugar estates producing food to feed Barbados by putting 35 per cent to 40 per cent of the newly cultivated land into food crops, and this is so. We produced cassava, but the Government established a cassava factory, and that cassava factory turned cassava into cassava meal to replace the imported corn meal that we were getting for domestic use because we could not get it from abroad.

Asides.

SENATOR L. A. WARD: Sorry, not to replace corn meal but to replace flour.

We also had the corn mills developed about the island, and we grew corn and they put the corn into corn meal, because there was no chance in importing it. We grew yams, eddoes, breadfruit, and potatoes, and, Sir, we were so dependent on and ate so many potatoes that the population referred to them as "big grain rice" and "Dr. Saint's pills." Dr. Saint was the then gentleman who was controlling agriculture in the country.

The population was fed, Sir, and this we were proud to know. I was one who was producing at the time, and I feel that I did my portion of feeding the people of Barbados when we were in trouble in a war situation. There is nothing to be ashamed about.

But, Sir, we had a guaranteed market. Because there was nothing else, we grew we ate. But today, Sir, I think we are asking a lot of working wives who go to work on a morning with her husband, put their children at school, spend a day in town, struggle in the evening to get out of town to go home, then to peal yams and potatoes and cook them at that time. The working wife, I believe, stops at the supermarket, perhaps at Senator Eastmond's supermarket, and will buy something to take home that she can warm up in five to ten minutes, and she can sit with her husband and children and watch "Days Of Our Lives" on television. She is not going to cook potatoes and peal yams and everything at that time. It will be asking too much of the lady. Besides, Sir, when she is going to buy something to carry home for her family, she is not going home to cook potatoes for the dog either, she is going to buy a bag of dog chow, carry it home and put it in a bowl for the dog.
3.55 p.m.

The result of that is that today there are hundreds of acres of potatoes in this country and there are few people buying any at all. The whole pattern of living has changed. You cannot go back in the early 1940s and compare with 1986. The standard of living is completely different. What the people are going to demand and look for is something completely different from what they had to put up with in the 1940s under war conditions.

There is no shortage of potatoes. I know that potatoes have grown as big as pumpkins and have had to be ploughed up already, and there are more there they will plough up now, too. Some, strange to say, Sir, they will not be able to plough up, because they have young canes planted between, them, and they have to use scarce foreign exchange to import chemicals to kill the potatoes from

between the canes. That is the condition we are in, and they cost money to put them there in the first place.

When we talk about feeding the tourists on locally grown food, this is a worthwhile thought, but when you go a little bit deeper, you will find that on a Sunday you have a buffet luncheon in a hotel, the foreigners come and they ask the chef what is that, and they will sample a little bit of Bajan food. I understand that one of the hotels on the west coast is charging for a particular suite US$1 000 per day, and you could not expect people paying US$700 and $800 a day to come in Barbados and to eat yams and potatoes and breadfruit day after day.

Asides.

SENATOR L. A. WARD: Mr. Deputy President, they will eat some, they will try a Barbadian meal, but they are not going to be prepared to eat that day after day, paying US$1 000 a day for hotel accommodation. If you go out to a restaurant on a night and you get a menu, you are not going to order yams and potatoes and things of this nature. I have never been to lunch in our dining room here and was fed yams and eddoes and things of this nature. We eat some, but we have some peas and rice and so on, too, which are important.

Mr. Deputy President, diversification. I am told that the peanut crop is an absolute failure this year due to weather conditions; the onion crop is also an absolute failure due to weather conditions; there is a very poor yield of cotton, and the cotton now is being attacked by a new disease. I passed by a field of cotton that was a green one week and the next week I saw it was brown. I asked what was the problem and they said it is a new thing, white fly, so that is another problem that cotton will have to face. All the Lisbon yam crop is destroyed in a year with anthrax nose disease. In fact, we are fast running out of planting material to plant yams any more.

The cost of all these failures in diversification has to be borne by sugar, but sugar is in a loss position already, so there is no profit, there is no money to bear the cost of this diversification. It either comes out of the equity of the owner of the sugar estate, or, if he has no more equity left, it is coming out of the Barbados National Bank.

Senator Comissiong also said that the capital requirements for tourism per unit are five times greater than they are in agriculture, and in manufacturing three times greater. That, Mr. Deputy President, is reason enough for the Government to sit down in – perhaps one of the things that Senator Tull has said – a tripartite situation – the Government, the industry (or the agriculturalists, I would say) and the trade unions – to save agriculture in this country, because if you look at the speed at which land is going to ruin in this country, it is frightening to think what will happen.

Do not let us fool ourselves. If we were to get a serious disease in Barbados, the tourists will be gone and Barbados will be in serious trouble. Tourism is okay, you can earn some foreign currency out of it, but if anything happens to tourism Barbados cannot go back on a weak or dying agricultural base. There will be no foreign currency to import the needs of the country, and nobody will be able to get something to put a 20 per cent or 30 per cent mark up on and sell it to anybody else. That is a fact of life, Sir.

Finally, Sir, the rich developed countries produce beet and beet sugar, and I cannot see any great reduction in the quantity of beet sugar that these people produce. They are subsidising their beet industries to the hilt to make sure that they survive. They say they cannot do without the jobs that are provided by their beet crops. America has said it cannot do without the jobs in cane sugar in the south, but when these people come to Barbados after making sure that their sugar industries are in good economic condition, they come to the poor Third World countries who are dependent on it for a living and tell you "get out of sugar as fast as you can." When this is so, you get out of sugar and the demand is greater than the production, the price of sugar will go up and then they will laugh again at the Third World countries. They would not have to subsidise their beet any more.

That is my small contribution to this sugar debate. I support the Resolution, Sir.

4.05 p.m.

SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS: Mr. President, it really was not my intention to make a contribution to the debate on this subject, but after hearing the last speaker, who is obviously, an experienced planter, and hearing a speech which is filled with all doom and gloom as far as all aspects of agriculture is concerned, I felt it necessary to make some response.

It does appear to me, and I have to be guided by his experience, because he has been in that field for many a year, that what he has said to us must be taken seriously. He is calling upon the Government to have a very critical look at agriculture generally, not only the sugar industry, and if we are to be guided by what he has told us, since he has the experience, he has indicated very clearly that there is little or no hope in the outstanding loans of the Barbados National Bank being repaid.

He has made considerable reference to the diversification plan which the Government has tried in various sectors. He mentioned peanuts. He mentioned, too, the cutting up of agricultural lands into smaller lots. Indeed, Sir, he has said nothing so far that could give an indication

that anything at all could succeed and I feel that if he is a planter of that experience, the Government has to take a very careful look at agriculture.

I cannot, however, feel that with the land resource that we have agriculture is of no use. What I feel is that part of the work of Government, the agricultural agencies attached to Government and private enterprise is obviously, to sit down and come up with some plan that can change this picture, because based on what the former speaker, Senator Ward, said, it does appear that we really must take a very critical look, otherwise we will be continuing to plough money into agriculture, not only Government, but persons connected to the estates, without any hope of recovering this money.

From that standpoint, I do not have the experience in agriculture, but it strikes me as though our import bills on various food produce, dairy products and things like beef and those sort of items are very high. Is it that the land we have is of such a nature that it cannot even bear grass to sustain those animals and to make such an exercise profitable? I would shudder to think that even having livestock cannot make money. I do not know, but certainly the situation is one which bothers me very much, because if the Senator who just sat was able to tell this Honourable Chamber of some alternatives that he could see where agriculture could become profitable at some stage or by some method, then there would be hope. But, Sir, from his discourse there appears no hope, and I believe that we would be lacking in our duty as a Government if we do not, at a very early stage, begin to have discussions among ourselves, with the planters, the Workers Union and whoever else to give the general public a chance to have an input. Certainly, we just cannot sit by and be satisfied that we are involved in an industry where our largest resource, land, can only be seen as a disadvantage.

I agree, Sir, that tourism may have its ills, but we cannot at this time underscore tourism, because it is the largest money earner for now. At the same time, we cannot underscore the value of the land, which forms the greatest part of this country. Agriculture land still makes up the greater portion of the land mass of Barbados, and there has to be without doubt, some way how this land could be utilised that it can make a profit.

One Senator did mention the fact that it is said that the industry is not making money, yet the owners continue to hold the plantations without making any effort to sell them. In my view, if you are in a business and you see the business sustaining a continuous loss and increasing on the loss, in my opinion, it would be better to sell the business and get out of it at a loss position and let somebody else try their hand. This is not the case, Sir.

I am from St. Lucy, and from the time I know myself, I know that the Wards owned Fairfield and Mt. Gay Ltd. To my knowledge, the only small area disposed of was Trents Plantation, to a former Minister of Government, but other than that, they have retained the several thousand acres of land in St. Lucy.

I am not in a position to say whether they are making money or not, but it strikes me quite strange that owners would continue to hold land, or, as a matter of fact, to hold any asset which is a liability if there was not some gain somewhere along the line. I am not casting any aspersion on anybody, but as a business person, I take the view that if my business was losing money in year 1, year 2 and year 3, and it continues that way for a decade, I cannot see why would I hold it. What would I have to gain by it, other than to continue to sink the other shareholders money?

Asides

SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS: That offer could be taken.

I seriously feel, Sir, that what Senator Ward said about bank loans being unpayable should be taken seriously, at a very early stage. I feel that we need to talk about them in the early, because, Sir, day after day businesses and persons are put before the law courts by the same Barbados National Bank for loans and their properties are being sold. Why are the plantations exempted from this sort of treatment? Obviously, persons who owe the banks small amounts of money cannot feel happy to know that the estate owners are telling you that there is no chance of recovering the money and the bank is doing nothing about it and at the same time they are losing their properties and whatever because they are unable to pay. Certainly, something very positive has to be done as far as this situation is concerned.

I support the Resolution, Sir, with the same reservation as my comrade, Senator Comissiong. I support the Resolution, Sir, with a question mark.

4.15 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I suppose, as the oldest person around this table, and certainly, I think, the one who has perhaps had the most contact with the public affairs of this island, I ought to have a point of view on this most important subject. I do not pretend to have any great, intimate and personal knowledge of the sugar industry, except what the average citizen who helps himself to be well-informed gathers from time to time when issues arise, but at one or two times in my life I have had close contact with certain aspects of the sugar industry, and been able to observe in some detail how it works and what it is made up of.

I, for instance, represented a constituency in the House of Assembly for nearly 18 years. This constituency was in a low rainfall area, and consequently I got to know at first hand the problems of agricultural labourers in what is called the out of crop season or the hard times.

One of the things that inclined me to implement, as soon as we got into Government in 1961, the School Meals Service, and within that service to set up an early pilot scheme in my constituency, was not the fact so much that it was my constituency, but because I had noticed that the educational system in that part of the island, and certainly in that parish, was literally going to pot simply because children were out of school as many as three days a week after the month of May and after school reopened in September, literally because their parents were not able to feed them more than once or twice a day with any substantial meals. It was therefore imperative to make some sort of social experiment, developmental in its nature, to meet that kind of situation, and I suppose that if I were to have to give a justification for the establishment of the School Meals Service, I would have to say that it was not ideology, but direct experience of an agricultural district in the north of the island.

After that, and long after that, I had another confrontation with the realities of the sugar industry in rather a different way. By the merest accident of where I happen to be at a certain time in the early Seventies working for the Government of Barbados in a diplomatic post, it fell to my lot to be engaged very closely in the preliminary discussions for the first LOME convention, and to follow through at a certain level a large part of the negotiations.

The economics of the sugar industry were borne home forcibly to me then, because – I could have known this before but I had never had to study it in such intimacy – I discovered for instance, the problems that the industry was confronted with, one such being that although we produced a marketable product, we had no control over much of the mechanics of marketing, and we certainly had no control over a simple matter like the transportation of the product. We were in this situation – and when I say "we," not only Barbados, but sugar producing countries generally, although specifically the Caribbean countries – exporting sugar in conveyances that were not our own, and therefore the cost of freighting the product, which was basically a cheap product, was made less and less attractive to us simply because of the freight cost.

There was another aspect of it, and I noticed this particularly in the harder parts of the negotiations at least with LOME I. I do not know what happened since then. I had to make myself aware of something that I probably vaguely had known, but had not known with any certainty before, of the fact that another inescapable difficulty of the sugar industry was, in fact, that no matter how efficiently we produced, no matter how cheaply, in a sense, we produce, the terms of trade were always against us, because we were discovering that year after year we were giving or selling more sugar for less of what we wanted to import. In other words, to use rough figures, if the price of a tractor, which you had to import for production, could be bought with the sale of ten tonnes of sugar, in less than two years' time it required 14 tonnes to buy the tractor.

So it was as if you were on a treadmill and you never caught up with the terms of trade because they were always going against you. You faced the difficulties of having a mono-crop economy against highly industrialised countries whose diversification in the industry was much more profitable than yours in agriculture. I have some idea of these problems at both levels, from the level on the ground, if you like to call it that, the effect of an industry with dwindling returns on the sugar worker, and then, of course, the effect on the productive capacity and the earnings of the industry from the other side.

I do not know that if we were talking on this debate for the next two days we could find a solution to these problems around this table. I do not think so, but I would like to say that it occurs to me that there is one inescapable fact that we have to face, and it is really ironic that it has come upon us in this way. If you were to ask everybody around this table, with the exception perhaps of one or two of us, if he or she genuinely believes in public ownership, some of us would say yes outright, some of us would say yes with great qualifications, and we would hedge our answers with a lot of ifs and buts and supposings. But, in fact, we are here discussing a situation in which, though we do not care to admit it, the sugar industry has already come into public ownership, for the moment you say that accumulated debts have no chance of being repaid and these debts are guaranteed by the citizens of the country in their special capacity as taxpayers, from that time onward you have taken over the sugar industry, although the refinement and the legal requirements for acquisition have not yet been thought about. I think that we have to face this as squarely as we face almost any other important aspect of our lives.

If you say that there is little chance of paying back this money – and I really do not know the figure, I have never taken the trouble to find out, but it could easily be more than $100 million, it could easily be $200 million – there is no way, in my judgment, that this is ever going to be paid, unless the people engaged in the sugar industry dig underneath and find that we have got plutonium or something that the two super powers want and are prepared, if they do not shoot and kill us for it, to buy it from us even at reasonable prices. It is at this point, I think, that the plea

for sitting down and talking over this matter at the highest levels, but involving all the persons, all the elements who have been involved in the sugar industry, will have to be sooner or later, because this time next year we will be here, and we will be talking the same things and the whole argument will be here. So I think that it ought to be said and faced squarely that the sugar industry of Barbados has passed into public ownership.

As a political sideline, I should just like to say this.

Aside.

4.25 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: I beg your pardon. No, it is not tomorrow's headlines. It is tomorrow's reality.

I think that this is what we have to do, and I do not know if there are any easy solutions. It could well be that we have to revolutionise our whole concept now of what the sugar industry is. It is now a national asset, in a sense in which it was not 50, 40, 30, 20 or even ten years ago, and when we are thinking of it from now on, we now will have to talk about it as if it had already passed into public ownership, which it already has.

There is an interesting political sideline, that a major industry like this should, with such ease, such disappointing ease, in a sense, pass into public ownership, something that other countries have had to have revolutions to achieve. We are not nationalising it in the sense in which people usually talk of nationalising an industry, but it has come about by sheer historical development and shifts in economic circumstances, by sheer, what else you call it, developments in the international sugar market, by certain actions taken in western European countries to strengthen their own economies and to set up what by 1992 would be a whole free trade system among them, a full common market. All of this is part of the world impact which the sugar industry in Barbados, and, I dare say, elsewhere, has had to face.

This debate has been a welcomed one and a very useful one, and it is interesting that it has drawn all conceivable points of view and, that the common thread running across the whole debate is that something has to be done because the industry is in crisis. But I should like to stress that whatever the cure is, and nobody can pretend that the cure is immediately to hand, it has to be established on the basis that the industry is now publicly owned, although it may not suit some people to admit this. So long as you say that there is no chance of this money being repaid because the sugar estates and plantations are in bankruptcy, you have said that it belongs to the people, because it is the people of the country whose money guarantees the recurrent expenditure every day, whose money is not going to be repaid to them in any form, and therefore the managers of the people's business, with all other interested parties, will have to sit down and work out what the future is likely to be. It will take, I think, a lot of challenging ideas into our minds to mull over these problems before we understand exactly what the solutions are.

Thank you.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: Mr. Deputy President, I should like, first to avert to a few remarks made by Senator Ward as regards our former policy of land sub-division. As far as I am concerned, that policy was not a bad policy in itself, because at the time people were very much in need of land to work in agriculture, and the Government of the day decided to sub-divide certain estates to make more land available to people for them to become farmers. Unfortunately, the people who bought those lots at the time resorted to other practices; they never worked the land in agriculture, but built big houses and established large lawns. That, more or less, put paid to the policy which was conceived at the time, on the idea that people were very much interested then. We had a lot of landless farmers at that time and we thought that by making land available in the two acre lots and four acre lots, we would have, more or less, broadened the whole aspect of agriculture. It was an attempt at agrarian reform.

At that time, we had a policy that we would grow sugar on the best lands of this country. We had reserved about 45 000 or 48 000 acres to be grown in sugar cane, and we had made a forecast that in any good year, rainfall being what it is, we could have reached a target of 160 000 tonnes of sugar. But from that time, other things came into consideration, and the sugar producers at that time reacted very violently against such a policy of sub-division, and I believe that was one of the reasons why Searles Factory was closed down around that time. Some remarks were made that the sea rocks were coming closer and closer in Christ Church, that they were not seeing any cane lands at all.

What is very remarkable is that despite the stated policy at the time, they went ahead and they closed Searles Factory, and that is how then they were able to keep Haymans in St. Peter, because all the machinery from Searles went down to make Haymans a factory for the first time. As far as I remember, at that time Searles was one of the most efficient factories we had in this country. Searles had never lost money in all its years of producing cane sugar, and it was a pity at that time to get rid of the factory. It meant the demise of the sugar cane crop by small peasant owners in the parish of Christ Church, because they found very great difficulty in getting the canes carried to Foursquare and Carrington. In those days you had to put down your name in the early, and sometimes you had to

away. All of those things went ahead to help to destroy the small farmers' confidence in growing sugar cane.

I should like to turn to the more pressing problem and I agree with the Leader of the Senate that it will take the combined efforts of all the people in Barbados involved in the sugar cane industry to sit down together to work out solutions for sugar in its present state of degradation. You have to face the facts. The sugar cane industry is now in debt of over $130 million. This is a very huge debt, and every year we continue to amass debts in the sugar cane industry.

It would be realistic for the Government at this stage to seek to restructure the whole idea of providing funds for the industry, and we cannot continue to provide funds in the way they are now being provided without some kind of co-operation from the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited. We are willing to talk and we are willing to go into partnership. We have tried already, in that we have insisted that we get two representatives of the Government on the Board of Barbados Sugar Industries Limited. But although we have two directors on that board, we have still not been able to get the kind of information that we would like in order to work towards helping them find solutions. I have learnt that at those board meetings there is no written agenda as such. People go to those meetings without ever knowing what is going to be discussed, and they arrive at discussions and decisions in a very verbal way. There is nothing written down, so even the directors who go for the Government cannot report to the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Finance in a way intelligible to the various bodies in order to help formulate policies.
4.35 p.m.

SENATOR L. A. WARD: On a point of order. It is not true to say that there is no agenda at Barbados Sugar Industries Limited meetings. The agendas are circulated, Sir, and the several items, maybe 12 sometimes, on it and supporting papers and everything else come out with it. I would like to put the record straight, Sir.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: Mr. Deputy President, as I was saying, the Government has not been able to get the kind of feedback from the attendance at those meetings to assist us to even make any meaningful contribution towards understanding what is going on in that body.

Under Section 17 of the Sugar Industries Act, the plantations are supposed to provide certain information. I believe that that information has not been very well forthcoming, and it leaves a lot to be desired. Plantations are nowadays engaged in non-sugar crops; we have not been able to get any accounts out of those plantations about their activity in the area of non-sugar production.

These figures are very necessary to us if we are going to be able to continue to give the industry money. We have to know how our monies are being spent whether we are just by ourselves supporting the continuation of the sugar industry. If we are not able to look into the figures or the accounts when they sell produce other than sugar – we know the sugar returns, but we do not know what returns they get from the other non-sugar activity when they plant vegetables and things like that – we will not know how the plantations are functioning.

The Government would like to base its policy on sugar support and to invite the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited to comply as far as possible in helping Government to achieve its diversification policy and to move into the area of agro-industrial operations. We believe that the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited has all the background information. They did their own research, and I think they have been in the sugar cane production and plantation management for a large number of years, and if we are going to make any kind of dent into getting our agricultural diversification policy off the ground, it would have to be with the assistance and the co-operation of the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited. If you look at the acreage that is available to us for production of both sugar cane and non-sugar crops, all of that acreage resides in the ownership of the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited, so it is a big thing if we can get them to co-operate.

They have to understand that we have got to look at everyone. We are now funding the sugar industry alone, but there are other people who are in the diversification programme who would also like to be so funded as we are doing for the sugar industry. If we can get all coming together, and if we can see the figures which they get when they sell non-sugar crops, we can form a policy which could then embrace not only sugar support, but other funding which will become relevant to the other people who are supposed to be engaged in the diversification programme. That is the only way we can see that we can go at this stage.

I think mechanisms are being put in place. We have under the World Bank loan a provision for an agricultural sector study in the sugar industry. I understand that guidelines have been sent to Barbados Sugar Industries Limited for their comments, to help to organise the study, whether it be done by local consultants or foreign consultants. I understand that they have not replied yet to those guidelines which have been submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture. It is a very serious problem, and I agree with the Leader of the Senate that it has got to engage the brains of not only the Government, but the farmers as well, and in particular the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited, which controls almost all of the arable land and has all the expertise.

There has to be some kind of concentrated effort for us to be able to continue putting the money we put in every year into this fund, because there is no way this money will be repaid. We know that. We also know the sugar cane industry is vital to the upkeep of the economy. But we need more co-operation by the Sugar Industries Limited with the Government to arrive at some kind of solution which would be more meaningful than the continuation of the money we now put into this.

The small farmers. We have tried to carry out diversification with the Spring Hall Land Lease Project. That has not been as successful as we thought it would have been. In this particular case, it was not the farmers who did not produce, the managers in charge of that project let down the farmers. We found that we had a large production of vegetables but there was no market, and the project as conceived at the time was that the farmers would just work the land and plant and the people in the offices would look after the marketing of those products. That fell down very terribly, and we have had to carry out a new study, which was done by Barbadian consultants a few months ago. They have come up with a lot of solutions which we hope to implement to revamp that area in St. Lucy and to try again at arriving at the optimum amount of acreage that you should give a man to carry on a successful agricultural business.

There have been a lot of diversionary methods towards livestock production. Again, we feel that the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited could help in this direction, because livestock production seems to be something that is desired. Even the farmers that were put at Spring Hall were able to move into livestock production with some kind of profitability, but they were discouraged in their efforts because the people who were supposed to superintend the project did not do a good marketing job, and as a result of that people lost money and gave it a very bad name. It is now being revamped, and in another six weeks we will be advertising for new farmers to go to St. Lucy and try to work out some model of the amount of acres which is normal for a man to occupy his mind and to make a profit.

4.45 p.m.

The Government is committed to providing funding in this area, but the Government has no elastic amount of funds year after year, and we have to sit down with Barbados Sugar Industries Limited, which has to make the books available that we can inspect the area where you have been growing crops that we do not see the returns for and we need to know your attitude towards the future of the industry. You will say you need to know what Government's policy is, but we are committed to growing sugar. I think the time is now when we must sit and put our heads together and try to produce what is best for Barbados in the area of sugar cane production, because there have been some very bad markets in the years gone by for sugar, and if we have now been targetted towards 90 000 tonnes a year, I think we can do that efficiently.

Another thing in producing sugar is that we need to be able to reduce the cost of production, because if there is one thing that has escalated in Barbados over the years, it is that the high cost of producing sugar. This is a very negligible factor in making us not being able to pay our way. The beet production is very highly mechanised and they are able to keep costs at a minimum, but our cost here in Barbados for sugar production continues to rise. Again, this is where the Sugar Industries Limited could be a lot of help, because there is nobody in Barbados with a bigger machinery pool than the Barbados Sugar Industries Limited. They have had machinery loans from out yonder with the old time Sugar Industry Agricultural Bank, where we heard about lock-ups and things like that. That money has been locked up for years.

In those days, every plantation used to have a large stock of machinery, which I believe could be used to help other farmers in the island of Barbados. I do not think they lack any kind of machinery, they have always had the amount of machinery they needed by way of loans and I think they have the biggest pool of machinery you could ever find anywhere in any one country. They have to use their resources to help the small farmers, and help us towards our diversification programme.

A lot of work has been done at Edgehill by way of providing answers to pesticides and certain things that affect different crops and cane production. They have been doing very good work, and I think that this needs to become available on an island-wide basis. Let us put the diversification along with sugar into one hat and let us see if we could work out the best solution to continue to provide this kind of funding for the whole agricultural sector.

Thank you.

SENATOR J. C. W. WICKHAM: Mr. Deputy President, I do not intend to be long. I think I have enjoyed this debate perhaps more than any other debate I have ever had in this House. It certainly demonstrates the value of debate and the value of democracy in a very real way.

Asides

SENATOR J. C. W. WICKHAM: And of the Senate, yes.

I am sure that this kind of debate did not take place in the Other Place. We heard all expressions of view, and I think we have arrived at a consensus.

The Leader of the Senate raised two interesting questions, first of all, the philosophical problem of the acquisition by the public of private enterprise. The lesson of this debate is that it is always possible for the public sector to acquire private enterprise, provided that private enterprise is unprofitable. The acquisition process is therefore then very painless.

It is a very easy lesson. If the sugar industry had been profitable, this debate would never have taken place, and we would never be able to invite other countries to look at the example of little Barbados acquiring private enterprise without paying.

The other lesson is that you must not mention the words "public acquisition." As long as you say that, you set up all kinds of hackles and all kinds of even bristles, because they cannot understand this. If you let the thing slide without calling it by its real name, then everybody is happy.

Those are the lessons I have learnt.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I did not think of getting engaged in this debate, but one or two things have been said on which Senator Morrison and a few others who have spoken have been labouring by way of misapprehension.

I have some knowledge of the sugar industry by virtue of my relationship with them as sometime legal adviser. The term "Barbados Sugar Industries Limited" is used as coterminus with ownership of all the sugar interests of the island. In reality, there are several interests. Barbados Sugar Industries Limited, which is the administrator of the bond funds which are being raised by this debate, is responsible for the administration of the six or seven sugar factories. The owners of sugar estates, which remain, for the large part, in private ownership, or in hock to the Barbados National Bank, are the persons who produce the sugar, who produce the other agro crops and who have the information that Senator Morrison and the Government will require.

Barbados Sugar Industries Limited has no compelling mechanism of its own to get that information which is required, it is as much dependent on the over 100 estates on the island to feed that information into the organisation as anything else. So in looking to the corporate end structure at the top which runs the sugar factories and making them responsible for all the sins and transgressions of the industry is to do them some injustice, because they do not have that information at their finger tips, they have to collate it from the people out there in the field who produce the sugar. I think this might have been overlooked by the Senator in terms of his admonitions.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, the debate has been wide-ranging and a very informative one. We have carried on much longer than we thought earlier. However, there was one question raised by Senator Tull earlier in the debate which I feel compelled to respond to.

He said he normally asks Ministers questions and they do not reply to him. The question was that he would like to get a peep at the policy. At this point we do not have the policy. It is being formulated now, but as soon as we do so, I shall assure you we will allow you to get a very early peep at it, Senator Tull.

Other Senators, thank you very much for your contributions to this debate. We have learnt quite a bit on this side and we shall endeavour to make sure that we come to some solution from which all of us in Barbados can benefit from it.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put to the Senate and agreed to.

4.55 p.m.

LOCAL LOANS ACT, 1988

Order No. 2 was called – To move the second reading of a Bill to amend and consolidate the law relating to the raising of local loans by the Government of Barbados.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, the purpose of the Bill is to consolidate the law relating to the raising of local loans, in this case, debentures, by the Government of Barbados.

The various Acts under which local loans were raised are the Local Loans 1953 Act, Cap. 98, the Local Loans 1955 Act, Cap. 99, the Public Loans Act, Cap. 100 and the Public Loans 1957 Act, Cap. 101. At present, local debentures are raised under the General Loans Act, Cap. 96, as amended by the Public Loans (Amendment) and Validation Act, 1986, Cap. 102.

The objects of the consolidation are:–

1. To have one Act under which to raise loans instead of a number of Acts;

2. To provide for a single Sinking Fund to support all local issues and to eliminate the proliferation of Sinking Funds which result from the present arrangement;

3. To establish one Sinking Fund which would improve the economic and efficient management of the Sinking Fund itself; and

4. To develop a wider range of financing instruments instead of being restricted to debentures.

The purposes for which these funds which will be procured under this Act will be primarily for capital expenditures and to retire any existing bills, if we have to roll over any, as the case may be.

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

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the separate motion of Senator the Hon. Dr. C. D. CLARKE, the Senate resolved itself into a Committee on the Bill, Senator J. C. W. WICKHAM in the Chair.

Clauses 1 – 20 were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. Sir JAMES TUDOR, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the DEPUTY PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Senator the Hon. Dr. C. D. CLARKE, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

BORROWING OF 30 MILLION RENMIBI YUAN FROM PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RE GYMNASIUM

Order No. 3 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the borrowing of 30 million Renmibi Yuan (Bds. $16.5 million) from the Government of the People's Republic of China for the construction of a Gymnasium with a seating capacity of 3 905 persons.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I am asking leave to take charge of this.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Leave is granted.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: I think that we are all familiar by now with the contents and purpose of this Resolution.

Briefly, in the middle of May, 1986, the Government of Barbados and the Government of the People's Republic of China entered an agreement which provided for the Government of the People's Republic of China to extend to the Government of Barbados a special interest free loan of 30 million Renmibi Yuan, commonly referred to as the Chinese yen, to assist in the construction of a gymnasium with a seating capacity, at that time as envisaged, of 2 500 people. Since then, of course, negotiations have further taken place, and the size of the stadium has been upgraded to a capacity for 3 905 persons to be exact, and it will be located at Wildey in St. Michael.

I think honourable Senators know the reason why we have not dealt with this more expeditiously before, since it was a non-contentious matter. It was that we had to amend one of the Loan Acts last year December simply because the laws as they then stood did not give Government the authority to contract loans with other Governments, only with agencies and banks.

I would like, very briefly, to correct what might have been an impression, I think, unfortunately given, and which appeared in a report of the proceedings of the Other Place in which an honourable Member of that House made reference to Barbados' relations with the People's Republic of China.
5.05 p.m.

I think it only fair to say that the reason why Barbados before the change of Government in 1976 had not established relations with the People's Republic of China was that when you go into an international organisation, you do not, and really should not, upset arrangements which you see there, because, if you join a club, you cannot say who should or should not be members, and the fact was that when Barbados joined the United Nations in 1967, the People's Republic of China was not then a member of the Assembly. In fact, the seat of China on the Security Council, one of the five mandatory seats, was held by what was then the Republic of China, situate in the island of Taiwan. In due course, international opinion turned the other way, and by the time we left the Government, it was appropriate that a new Government should have a new attitude towards the problem.

I would not like it to be thought that there is any unpleasantness or any insincerity in our relations with the People's Republic of China. They have been extremely good to us, and I really wish that this example of an arrangement between two Third World, developing countries could be followed in the relationship between the so-called developed world and the developing world. Nobody would suppose that the Chinese People's Republic can really afford to give interest free loans of this magnitude. The fact that they have done so does indicate the sort of relationships which ought to go on, not only between developing countries but between all countries.

We are immensely grateful, and I would like to express the gratitude of the Government and people of Barbados on this matter, and like to stress that our relations with the Government and the People's Republic are very cordial and at the highest possible level of co-operation.

I beg to move that this Resolution be concurred in.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to give notice of a Bill to amend the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Let it be recorded that this Bill has been read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I wish to thank honourable members for their attendance and for the very warm co-operation we on side have received. It is hardly Christmas, but it was more than a bonus.

Subject to the wishes of Senators, I would like us to come again next week on Wednesday. I would like to be able, first of all, to finish the long pending debate on the foreign policy of the country. There may conceivably be something coming to us of some urgency from the Other Place when they meet next Tuesday, because after that we would like to have two weeks to study the Appropriation Bill. I do not think that we will need to do it until the week of the 22nd, whatever that time is, because the Other Place is going to do it week after next, the week of the 15th, and we will do it on the week of the 22nd, and I would like us to come and clean up whatever outstanding matters we may have, in addition to what may come from them the day before we meet.

I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn until Wednesday next, March 9, 1988 at 11.00 a.m.

The question that the Senate adjourn until Wednesday, March 9, 1988 at 11.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. Deputy President adjourned the Senate accordingly.

5.12 p.m.

CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senator the Hon. Sir James TUDOR:. 622

Re recent illness of Senators Goddard and Eastmond.

Senator Goddard, 622; Senator Eastmond, 622.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Senator the Hon. Sir James TUDOR:. 623

Guarantees granted under the Exempt Insurance Act Cap. 308 Section 32 to the following:-

First Barbados Casualty Company Limited.

Westminster Assurance Limited.

Century Property and Casualty Insurance Corporation.

Select Lawyers Mutual Insurance Corporation.

Transport and General Insurance Company Limited.

Larchmont Insurance Company Ltd.

Flomerica Insurance Company Ltd.

European International Reinsurance Company Ltd.

Delta Reinsurance Corporation.

Chariots of Hire Indemnity (Barbados) Ltd.

American Physicians Assurance Society Ltd.

The Barbados Port Authority Tariff Book of Dues and Charges (Amendment) Regulations, 1987.

The Annual Report of the Barbados Export Promotion Corporation as at 31st March, 1987.

Report of the Probation Department for the years 1985 and 1986.

The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Police for the year 1986.

The Communique of the CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th January, 1988 to Discuss the Haitian situation along with Notes and a Comparative Analysis between that Communique on the one hand and the Barbados and Jamaica Position Papers on the other.

The Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 1988.

The Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 2) Order, 1988.

The Report of the Fire Service for the Calendar Year 1986.

The Estimates for 1988-89.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Senator Dr. L. L. SHOREY. 623,624

No. 1 of the Leader of the Senate re cost to Government of each student pursuing N1 course at Cave Hill, UWI, and Barbados Community College.

Senator Tudor, 623; Senator Shorey, 624.

No. 5 of the Leader of the Senate re standardization of exam marks.

Senator Tudor, 624; Senator Shorey, 624.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Senator C. A. BLACKMAN:. 626

Question of the Leader of the Senate re compulsory acquisition of land between July 1, 1984 and June 30, 1987 and the number of unsatisfied claims in the same period.

MOTIONS RELATING TO BUSINESS

Senator the Hon. Sir James TUDOR:. 626

Appointment of Senator J. C. W. Wickham as Chairman of Committee.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Senator the Hon. Sir James TUDOR:. 626

A Resolution to approve the borrowing of 30 million Renmibi Yuan (Bds. $16.5 million) from the Government of the People's Republic of China for the construction of a Gymnasium with a seating capacity of 3 905 persons.

A Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance of the payment of the principal sum of $10 000 000 to be borrowed by

the Barbados National Bank on the issue of Housing Development Bonds and of interest thereon at the rate of 7% per annum.

A Bill to amend the Central Bank of Barbados Act, Cap. 323C.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS. 626

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Guarantee of $10 000 000 borrowed by the Barbados National Bank re Housing Development Bonds.

Senator Lewis, 626, 636; Senator Tull, 627; Senator Prescod, 631; Senator Comissiong, 633; Senator Morrison, 635; Senator Blackman, 636.

CENTRAL BANK OF BARBADOS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1988. 637

Senator Lewis, 637.

GUARANTEE OF SUGAR INDUSTRY BOND ISSUE OF $21 700 000. 637

Senator Clarke, 637, 656; Senator Tull, 638; Senator Fraser, 642; Senator Jones, 643; Senator Comissiong, 645; Senator Eastmond, 646; Senator Ward, 647; Senator Phillips, 650; Senator Tudor, 651; Senator Morrison, 653; Senator Wickham, 655; Senator Blackman, 656.

LOCAL LOANS ACT, 1988. 656

Senator Clarke, 656.

BORROWING OF 30 MILLION RENMIBI YUAN FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RE GYMNASIUM 657

Senator Tudor, 657.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Senator C. A. BLACKMAN:. 658

Bill to amend the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228.

SUSPENSION. 637

ADJOURNMENT. 658

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BLACKMAN, C. A.
CLARKE, Hon. Dr. C. D.
COMISSIONG, D. A.
EASTMOND, G. L.
FRASER, V. C.
GODDARD, J. S.
JONES, Can. I. McK.
LEWIS, Hon. L. V. H.
MORRISON, A.
PRESCOD, T. A.
PHILLIPS, A. J. N.
SHOREY, Dr. L. L.
TUDOR, Hon. Sir James
TULL, L. R.
WARD, L. A.
WICKHAM, J. C. W.