

ABSTRACT

A History of the Sugar Industry  
Labour Welfare Committee

Dave Daryl Mohammed

This paper is a study of the role of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (S.I.L.W.C.). It is also to examine the success achieved by this Committee in providing housing for sugar workers in Trinidad in the form of lands, loans and technical guidance over the period 1949-1991. Part one is a description of the state of the sugar industry in the 1930's and 40's with particular reference to housing of its workers. The Olivier, Forster, Moyne, Soulsbury and other Commissions invariably concluded that the state of the houses and the barrack ranges, where the sugar workers were largely housed, were ruinous and decrepit. These Commissions generally recommended that a machinery be instituted to provide sugar workers with lands, loans and other forms of assistance at low rates, with Government collaboration. Also included are the Ordinances based on the recommendations of these Commissions established to initiate the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee in 1948.

Part two involves the early policies and working of the S.I.L.W.C., its role and total commitment to abolish the barrack system and provide housing settlements for sugar workers. Part three deals with the continuous and changing role of the S.I.L.W.C. in meeting

(ii)

the increased demands of sugar workers for housing and the problems encountered by the Committee in attempting to fulfil its objective. It also contains new and innovative policies of the S.I.L.W.C. as it relates to housing and other welfare activities of the Committee as they move into the 21st century.

The conclusion is that the S.I.L.W.C. has been a very successful agency designed to eliminate the barrack system and to provide housing settlements in 21 areas and housing loans for over 14,000 workers, building over 11,000 houses on 2,228 lots of land.

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