

BARBADOS

Flood

October 2-5, 1970

... resulting from 23 inches of rain in ten hours kills 3, injures 10 and leaves 200 homeless. 1,240 homes were destroyed or damaged. Estimated dollar damage \$500,000.

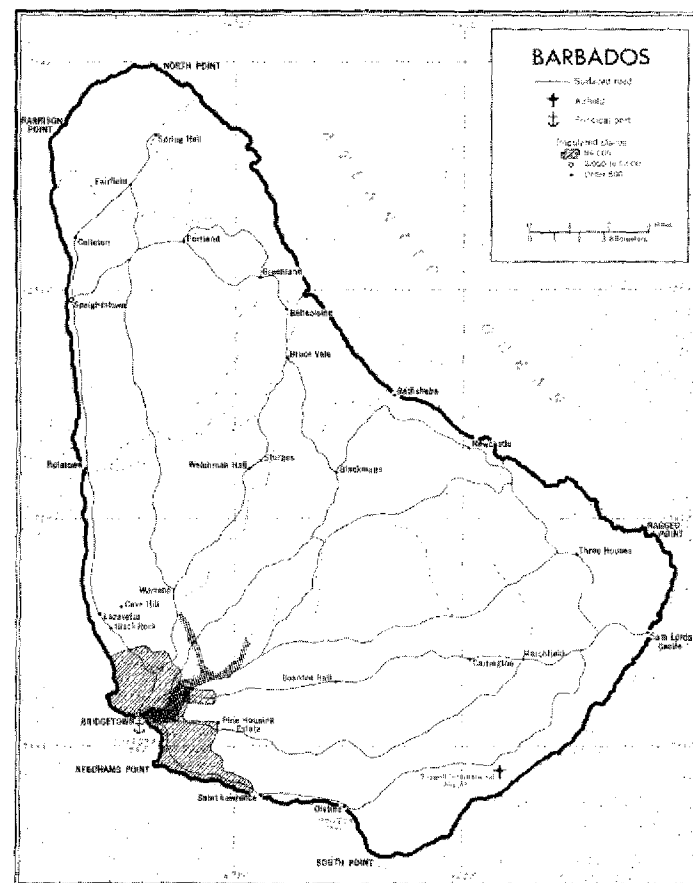
Value of U.S. Assistance	\$ 5,000
Value of Assistance by Other Nations	19,665
	<u>\$24,665</u>

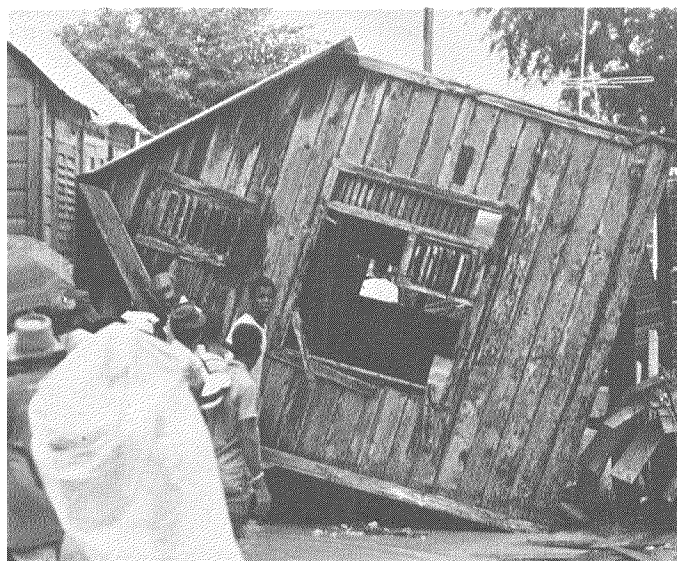
DETAILS:

The deluge was twice as great as in Barbados' 1949 flood and seven times greater than the 1964 hurricane. By comparison, the average annual rainfall is 60-65 inches. The effects of the flood were felt throughout the Island but were most severe in the hill parishes of St. Andrew and St. Joseph and low-lying areas in Bridgetown and parishes of St. Michael and Christ Church. In addition to destruction of homes, many fishing boats were lost and considerable damage was done to roads, bridges, piping systems and communications.

That there were only three deaths compared to 41 in 1949 was attributed to the fact that the heaviest downpour occurred during the day. Further loss of life would have resulted if this "tropical depression" had been accompanied by the usual high winds of a hurricane. Actual winds were in gusts of 40 to 45 miles per hour.

Accumulated rainfall flowed down to the sea through gullies, culverts, roads, cliffs and backyards, carrying along homes or parts of homes from which the inhabitants had escaped.





"Housing damage from the flood."

Total damage amounted to approximately \$500,000 and was divided fairly evenly between the private and the public sectors. The most costly damage to government property was to roads, bridges and the piping systems. Around St. Andrew Parish all bridges were down and the area was isolated for more than 24 hours. Damage to the private sector included the loss of fishing boats which was estimated at \$39,000. Some power and telephone circuits were interrupted for several days. Crop damage was not serious although extensive soil erosion and some leaching occurred.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS.

The Government of Barbados maintains a disaster plan and has a Disaster Relief Coordinator. Inevitably there were problems

in coordination and some confusion because of communications difficulties, but this did not interfere significantly with the promptness or effectiveness of relief operations.

A Disaster Control Center was set up—initially at Central Police Headquarters and later shifted to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is responsible for disaster relief. A number of relief centers were established to provide shelter for the flood victims. Also schools and buildings of the Barbados Regiment were opened for this purpose. A central depot for collecting needed material, such as food, clothing, medicine and cooking equipment was also established. Meals were provided to about 200 displaced persons for two days.

Needs were identified and a request for help was made directly by the Prime Minister to resident foreign diplomatic and consular representatives. No request for disaster aid was made to foreign governments until the nature and extent of the flood damage had been thoroughly investigated and a survey completed.

Actual relief operations were carried out by Barbadians themselves without outside assistance. The Barbados Red Cross contributed blankets and food. Other local voluntary agencies rendering assistance included the Salvation Army, the Boy Scouts, and the St. John's Ambulance Brigade.

Two special funds were set up to receive donations—the Barbados Flood Relief Fund, which was organized by the Chamber of Commerce and which collected approximately \$79,000; and the Central Emergency Relief Fund, which was organized by the government and which received about \$15,000, most of which came from foreign governments.

As of April 7, 1971, only half of the \$79,000 collected by the Barbados Flood Relief Fund had been spent, primarily on bedding, stoves, and repairs and replacements for the fishing fleet. These two new funding organizations ceased to exist once the emergency was over.



"Raging flood waters take out bridge."

The American Embassy commented that the Government of Barbados Disaster Relief Coordinator, Mr. Goeffrey Edwards, of the Ministry of Home Affairs, had attended the 1970 A.I.D.-sponsored disaster relief training course subsequent to the disaster and had submitted recommendations on how to improve the Barbados country disaster plan.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT:

The American Ambassador exercised her disaster relief authority and made a cash contribution from the A.I.D. contingency fund to the Barbados Government's Central Emergency Relief Fund in the amount of \$5,000. Also a U.S. Navy helicopter was placed on standby in Puerto Rico in case it might be needed for evacuation purposes. It was not called forward, however.

The following is quoted from a disaster summary report by the American Embassy:

THE GREATEST ASSISTANCE THAT THE U.S. CAN RENDER IN DISASTER SITUATIONS IN BARBADOS OR THE OTHER ISLANDS IS PROBABLY IN SUPPLEMENTING COMMUNICATIONS AND BY PROVIDING SUPPLIES. GIVEN THE HILLY AND EVEN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN IN MOST ISLANDS, HELICOPTER SERVICES COULD PROVE TO BE EXTREMELY USEFUL. BECAUSE OF THE INSULAR ISOLATION OF THESE ISLANDS, SUPPLIES COULD BE NEEDED ON AN URGENT BASIS.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES:

American Red Cross—cash \$ 300

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Canada —cash	\$ 1,000
Republic of China —cash	5,000
West Germany —cash	1,365
contributed 500 tons of fertilizer	*
Israel —contributed 5,000 tons of fertilizer	*
United Kingdom —offered technical assistance in the form of engineers and surveyors needed in the reconstruction phase	*
Venezuela —mattresses, sheets, hammocks	*
contributed 500 tons of fertilizer	*
* Value not reported	
Organization of American States —provided disaster supplies valued at	12,300
Total Assistance Other Nations	\$19,665