

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986-91

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, October 18, 1988

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18, 1988.

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. Weekes, J.P., (Speaker);
His Honour J. J. Payne, (Deputy Speaker);
Hon. H. deB. Forde, Q.C., M.A., LL.B., (Leader of the Opposition);
Hon. P. M. Greaves, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Transport, Telecommunications and Immigration and Leader of the House);
Hon. Dr. D. G. Blackman, B.A., M.A., (Minister of Transport and Works);
Hon. W. O. Franklin, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., J.P., (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries);
Hon. H. A. Blackman, B.Sc., (Econ.), (Minister of Housing and Lands);
Mr. D. A. C. Simmons, Q.C., LL.B.;
Mr. O. S. Arthur, M.Sc., (Econ.);
Mrs. M. Barker-Welch, (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Employment, Labour Relations and Community Development);
Hon. C. V. Walker, (Minister of Education and Culture);
Mr. L. L. Brathwaite, J.P.;
Mr. E. E. Bourne;
Dr. E. A. Simmons, M.D.;
Hon. W. W. Hall, (Minister of Tourism and Sports);
Mr. C. A. Neblett, B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office);
Mr. R. L. Morris, B.A., Cert. Ed.;
Mr. P. J. M. Miller;
Mr. R. P. Bycr, LL.B., L.E.C.;

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

Prayers were led by Fr. Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, 2nd August, 1988.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Minutes of the proceedings of this Honourable Chamber for the Meeting that took place on Tuesday, 2nd August, 1988 be taken as read and confirmed.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, let these Minutes stand confirmed.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER:

MESSAGE NO. 4/1988

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

TO THE HONOURABLE THE

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

His Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform The Honourable The House of Assembly that, accompanied by Her Excellency Lady Springer, he will be absent from the country during the period 22nd October to 23rd November, 1988, on a private visit to the United Kingdom.

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

HUGH W. SPRINGER
Governor-General.

PAPERS

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

The Training Report of the Ministry of the Civil Service for the years 1st April, 1980 to 31st March, 1985.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 4) Order, 1988.

The Mortgage Insurance (Amendment) Regulations, 1988.

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

1. American Contractors Insurance Co. Ltd.
2. Capital Casualty Co. Ltd.
3. Chandler Insurance (Barbados) Ltd.
4. Concordia Life Assurance Corporation.
5. Crescent Insurance Co. Ltd.
6. Enterprise Insurance Co. Ltd.
7. European International Reassurance Co. Ltd.
8. Peer Insurance Co. Ltd.
9. Specialty Underwriters Reinsurance Facility Ltd.

I am also, Sir, commanded to lay:

The Wireless Telegraphy (Land Mobile and Fixed Radio Telephone Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1988.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

The 13th and 14th Annual Reports of the National Housing Corporation for the years 1985-1986 and 1986-1987.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay:

The Law Revision (Rectification of Omissions) Order, 1988 and:

The 5th Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Transport Levy Board for the year 1986-1987.

Hon. C. A. NEBLETT: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

The Annual Reports of the Barbados National Standards Institution for the years 1984-1985 and 1985-1986.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the pleasure of the House, I am going to revert to Item No. (c).

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements for the months of June and July, 1988 prepared by the Accountant-General.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at the corner of the Garrison Road and Highway 7, St. Michael for the purpose of the preservation of the historic building known as the Savannah Club.

Resolution to grant the sum of \$2 628 259 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government, to supplement the Estimates 1988-89, Part I - Current, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1988-89, No. 1, which form the Schedule to the Resolution. 12.25 p.m.

Resolution, Sir, to grant the sum of \$12 million from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 1988/89 Part 2, Capital as shown in the Supplementary Estimates 1988/1989, No. 2.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. James North - Legal procedures for the purchase of land at Hoytes Village, St. James.

Mr. J. J. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister of Housing and Lands the following:

Will the Minister state whether Government has initiated legal procedures for the purchase of a parcel of land at Hoytes Village, St. James to the East of the St. John The Baptist Church for providing playing facilities for the residents of the area?

Mr. SPEAKER: The same honourable Member - Repairs to certain roads in St. James.

Mr. J. J. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister of Transport, Works and Telecommunications:

Is the Minister now in position to state when Government will begin repairs to Rock Dundo Road, St. James, and its Avenues, Weston Road (leading up Crick Hill to Highway 2), Yearwood Road and Storehouse Road in Mount Standfast, Greenwich Village Road, and Laynes Gap and Olive Road?

Mr. SPEAKER: And by the same honourable Member - Installation of lights in certain areas in St. James.

Mr. J. J. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister of Transport, Works and Telecommunications:

Will the Minister state whether and, if so, when Government propose to install street lights in the following areas:-

1. Bagatelle Development, St. Thomas/St. James,
2. Storehouse Road, Mount Standfast,
3. Prescod Road, Mount Standfast,
4. Rock Dundo (leading to Highway 1),
5. Greenwich Road (leading to Highway 1),
6. Lower Carlton (leading to Highway 2), all in St. James and
7. Bakers, St. Peter (leading to Highway 2)?

Mr. SPEAKER: End of Questions.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move, Sir, that the Bill to validate certain changes referring to Water and

Sewerage Rates levied under the Barbados Water Authority be read a first time. Notice has already been given of this. I move that it be read a first time.

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

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

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is with a great deal of regret that I rise to move a Resolution to this House expressing deepest condolences to the honourable Member for St. Peter on the untimely passing of his mother, Iretha, familiarly known as "Doll" Arthur.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it was with great surprise that most of us heard of her passing on the 5th of September this year, and if it was a great surprise for us, we can imagine how much more tragic the news would have been for the members of her family and particularly for the honourable Member who sits in this Chamber with us.

"Doll" Arthur was well respected in her district, and for many a person she was a mother figure for people in all walks of life, who spoke well of her, both of her relationship with and her contribution to the society in which she lived. In many ways, Mr. Speaker, Sir, she manifested the best of Barbadian womanhood. She was a very strong and devoted supporter of her husband and her immediate family. She dedicated her total life to them. She gave them support in everything they did, full support and encouragement.

In addition, Sir, she was also one of the best examples of the Barbadian woman who is dedicated to the wider concept of family. There are many persons in St. Peter and beyond whom she treated as though they were her very own. I was fortunate to be at her funeral and to hear one of those persons speak glowingly about her, Sir.

I first came into contact with her only recently at the time of the bye-election in St. Peter. There is one thing that struck me about her. She was always present at every meeting at which her son's candidacy was being promoted and not only to give encouragement to him but also to give support to those of us who were speaking on his behalf. This House will regret her passing for many reasons, not only because she is the mother of the honourable Member but she was a frequent visitor to this House whenever the House sat in debate. You could see her quietly speaking to those persons in the yard, at the office of the Leader of the Opposition, greeting politicians on both sides of the fence and sitting in the gallery, and taking a deep interest in public affairs as debated in this House, Sir. She provided

help and financial assistance and she always urged us on, particularly the young people, Sir, to aim for the highest whatever might be our calling in life. Hers was an unending quest to see that all those she touched in life would seek the highest goals of their endeavours with a pure heart and honest mind.

I, Sir, respectfully ask the House to join in passing the Resolution which is at the table of the Clerks.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I would like, Sir, to join the Leader of the Opposition in paying tribute to Mrs. Iretha Arthur whom I understand, Sir, was known to her friends and family as "Doll". Sir, it is not easy to pay tribute to someone one does not know and certainly cannot now know. Sir, it is true that her son is well known to us. But it would not, Sir, be right to assess, Sir, from our knowledge of her son. That may well be doing the good lady an injustice.

I was out of the country, Sir, when I heard the news of the passing of the mother of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I regret, Sir, that I was not here, but I understand that a letter had gone out, Sir, from this Chamber under your hand, Sir, or your direction, Sir, expressing the sympathies of this Honourable House. 12.35 p.m.

I do believe, Sir, that she was a caring mother. I am not sure how many children she had - I understand now that she was the mother of five children - but only one is known to myself and that is the honourable Member for St. Peter, but I believe that she was a caring mother. As one coming from the north myself, I believe that as a mother, she was also a very God-fearing woman and I believe that she did all she could do for her children in that regard.

I do not believe that her son would have attained the eminence he has attained in his chosen field - and I am not referring to politics - if she had not placed the greatest value on education, and I believe it is because of that that she has made her contribution to Barbados. We cannot all be perfect, Sir, and I regret in making her contribution, she did not give her son the proper political direction. Perhaps in this regard she may have failed.

But, Sir, life is something that is very valuable and I can understand the trauma that must have attended the family at the untimely and, I understand, unexpected passing of the good lady.

We regret her passing, and on behalf of the Government to the honourable Member for St. Peter, we express our regrets and also to her other relatives. May she rest in peace.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just wish to endorse the words of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and the Acting Prime Minister.

I was in Singapore when I heard the news of the passing of Mrs. Arthur and it came to me as a shock. I can well appreciate the sense of loss that has befallen my colleague, the honourable Member for St. Peter, because I had got to know Mrs. Arthur quite well since 1984, and the warmth and humanity that she was able to convey to whoever was in her company are qualities which I shall miss.

I said it came as a shock, Sir, because on the last occasion that we sat as a House, Mrs. Arthur was present and had lunch in the Opposition's Office with us. That was a frequent occurrence and we shall miss the camaraderie, her strong wit and sense of humour, and indeed, Sir, the fact that she was a repository of many gems from the Bible. If one was ever in need of a biblical quotation, you could turn to Mrs. Arthur and she would give you the appropriate reference and citation, so it is clear to me that she was very much a church person, a religious person, and I know that that quality has been passed on to her children, all of whom have a healthy respect for church.

But I think one got to appreciate the kind of human being Mrs. Arthur was, if one ever had occasion to stop in at Rose Hill at the business place run by Frank and Doll. You were greeted with open arms and you were not allowed to leave until you had tasted of the hospitality of the Arthur family, a hospitality which was expansive, and I shall miss that, Sir, because on a few occasions, I have stopped in at Rose Hill and Mrs. Arthur was in control of the business and gave a sense of direction to all who were there imbibing or participating, and you always had to be on your P's and Q's, because she appeared to be a very strict disciplinarian, even though she was blessed with a ready wit and sense of humour.

She was a warm person, Sir, and all of us who knew Mrs. Arthur, will miss what I can only say was an outstanding human being. I am told that the funeral was a massive occasion, and that in itself is testimony to the legacy which she has left and the respect in which she was held during her lifetime.

I wish once again, Sir, to tender my condolences to the family, and in particular my colleague, the honourable Member for St. Peter.

Hon. W. W. HALL: Mr. Speaker, I should like to join members on both sides of the House in offering my condolences to the honourable Member for St. Peter. It is true that I was not in the island when she died and I was

unable to attend the funeral services, but I, nonetheless, would like to pay respect to her on this occasion.

I must say, Sir, that although I have only known her for a short time, because when I was working at Banks Breweries, in doing the Ebony campaign, we had to go throughout the island and I met Mrs. Arthur on that occasion, and I was very impressed with her. Fortunately or unfortunately for her, she did not get an opportunity to see me too often in the subsequent years, but I will say this, that her son has said repeatedly not only in this august Chamber, but throughout Barbados, that the best thing I have ever done in my life, was to marry into his family. That is debatable, of course, but I will give him the benefit of the doubt and I will say that I would like to express my heartfelt sympathy, because even though I did not know her very well, I must confess that I have heard so much about her through my contacts with the family, that I feel as though I really knew her. That is why I should like to offer my sympathies to the honourable Member and to say that in the last few years, we have paid glowing tributes to members, even of the House of Assembly who have passed away, and we have all said on those occasions that in the midst of life there is death and things like that, but we also know that unless it really happens to our kith and kin, we tend to take it as if it is just one of the vicissitudes of life.

Sir, I should like to offer my great sympathy to the member, and indeed his family, at the loss of a lady who I am sure made her mark in this society, 12.45 p.m.

She would probably be one of the unsung heroes having worked many years tirelessly, and who, as far as I am aware, gave unstinting service not only to the community, but made sure that her children were given the type of education and the type of life that we in Barbados all strive for.

It is with those few words, Mr. Speaker, that I would join both sides of the House as we pay tribute to a great Barbadian.

Mr. SPEAKER: On my own behalf, I want to associate myself with the tributes paid here this morning to the mother of one of our members. Like some of the other Members, I do not have any close recollection or close association with her, but as we all have mothers, I am sure we all feel the pain and grief when that particular individual leaves us, and since I have already passed some correspondence to the Honourable Member expressing my own feelings and the House's feelings, I shall instruct the Clerk to pass on the contents of this Resolution to the family and in so doing, I am going to invite Honourable Members of the House to stand for two minutes in silence as a mark of having passed this Resolution.

Honourable Members stood in silence for two minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I also take this opportunity to inform the House of the passing of the late Speaker Hinds. I am sure we would feel very much happier to have an appropriate occasion set aside for tributes to be paid to that former Member. I am sure honourable Members will agree with that.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 69, asked by the honourable Member for St. James North, is ready.

Also I beg to give notice that Oral Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 83, asked by the honourable Member for St. Michael North East, is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, at this point, I shall move the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

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

THE BARBADOS WATER AUTHORITY (WATER AND SEWERAGE RATES) VALIDATION ACT, 1988

Order No. 1 was called - To move the second reading of a Bill to validate certain changes relating to water and sewerage rates levied under the Barbados Water Authority Act.

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, in 1982 in pursuance of an agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Government of Barbados enacted the Water and Sewerage Rates Regulations, 1982, which fixed rates for the years 1982, 1983 and 1984. However in 1984, in implementation of the budgetary proposals of that year, the 1982 regulations were amended to the effect that the proposals required that the rates fixed for 1983 would also apply to 1984.

New rates or existing rates were amended again in 1985 to accommodate hotels and subsequently in October 1986, when there was a general reduction in water rates.

The Barbados Water Authority Sewerage and Water Act, Cap. 274A does not make provision for regulations to be made with retroactive effect, and consequently the charges which have been made as a result of the amendments referred to earlier are sought to be validated by the enactment of the Bill before this House.

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

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

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

On the motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES seconded by Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. R. P. BYER in the Chair. 12.55 p.m.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On motion of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On separate motions of Hon. P. M. GREAVES, seconded by Hon. W. W. HALL, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 2.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY
ACQUISITION OF VARIOUS PARCELS OF
LAND AT RICES IN ST. PHILIP
FOR HOUSING PURPOSES

Order No. 2 was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of various parcels of land at Rices in the parish of Saint Philip for housing purposes.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks parliamentary approval for the acquisition of five parcels of land at Rices, St. Philip for housing purposes.

This land forms part of what, at times, is called the World Bank Low Income Project and at other times it is called the National Urban Low Income Project. "Urban" is

a misnomer really because it is not really urban. It is island-wide but the reason why World Bank features in the title at some time is that the World Bank, originally, was to fund part of the exercise of this project.

What has happened is that there were some strictures that were placed on us by the World Bank and the main bones of contention were that the World Bank, one of the conditions that they set was that rents in the Government estates were to be increased every year starting from 1986 because the project should have started in 1986 and one of the conditions was that rents in the Government estates should increase every year until 1991 when the National Housing Corporation was expected to break even.

Now, you could see, Mr. Speaker, that to increase rents in Government estates every year for a period of five years is ludicrous. We told the World Bank that and then it was suggested since the rents in the Government estates were not increased, I think, since 1983, and since they were due for increase in 1985 and were not, that the question of an increase in Government estates, although plausible, surely could not be done every year for a five year period.

The World Bank went back and studied what we said and then they came up with another proposal. They said that we would have to increase the rents on the Government estates by October this year and we told them that that was not on the cards, that even if rents on Government estates in Barbados are to be increased, the decision would have to be made by the Government of Barbados and not by an outside body telling us when to increase the rents. So the World Bank decided that since we did not concur with them in raising the rents in the Government estates by October this year, that they will no longer fund their part of the bargain.

That decision was taken in June and since the Barbados Government had put aside counterpart funds as our half of the project per year, we decided that we would go ahead with our half of the project, that the project would not die because the World Bank pulled out.

You see, Mr. Speaker, it was a matter of principle and it is time that people understand that no Government, any part of the world, should be told how much, or when, you should increase rents or you should increase any sort of taxation on persons, and no Government anywhere should be told by any of the lending institutions what and at what time, certain fundamental things should be done and we stuck by this and that is why we have continued the project on our own.

We have debated this low income project before in February this year and I think it was in November last year as well, but I thought that I would bring Parliament up-to-date on what is the situation with this project.

In the first year the sites - we debated this in here already as well - that have been selected to be done are, Thomas Gap in Westbury Road, Scarborough in Christ Church, Rices in St. Philip and Valerie in St. Michael. Those are the sites that will be done in the first phase of this low income housing project.

This Resolution today, Mr. Speaker, is seeking parliamentary approval to acquire lands at Rices owned by a Mr. John Marshall, a Mr. Horatio Greenidge, a Mr. Stephanus Clarke, a Mr. Gordon Hunte and a Mr. Lloyd Marie and the different areas of land are 1.8 hectares of John Marshall, 8 996 square metres from Horatio Greenidge, 8 875 square metres from Stephanus Clarke, 552.5 square metres from Gordon Hunte and 260.3 square metres from Lloyd Marie.

You will see from that, Mr. Speaker, that one is in hectares, and one is in square metres and one always asks why they keep putting some in hectares, some in square metres and some in square feet which is a bit confusing but that is how it is here. 1.05p.m.

With those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg that this Resolution to acquire those parcels of land at Rices, St. Philip do now pass.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The question....

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, thirteen years makes a difference to people's attitudes in dealing with international organizations. And I am not commenting on anything that the Minister has said in detail, because I do not know if I have all the details. But the Minister struck a cord for the sovereignty and independence of the Government of Barbados by refusing to be dictated to by the World Bank which is heartening. And I say it is thirteen years. It is a far cry from the time when the Inter-American Development Bank in 1975 compelled the present Prime Minister, as Minister of Health, to set water rates to go up incrementally every couple of years and be a burden to the people of this country. We note the change in attitude. I say thirteen years has been a significant time.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, we had a long debate in here on housing in March I think it was. But I am a little confused about what is going on at the Housing Corporation.

I saw, since I returned, that there is a problem with arrears. The Corporation apparently is not collecting arrears.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Nothing is wrong with the acquisition, Sir. I dealt with the acquisition. Nothing is wrong with the acquisition.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We support the acquisition.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Right. I dealt with the acquisition. But it has to do with housing.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And the National Housing Corporation is an instrument and a vehicle under the Ministry of Housing for administering some of these projects. I believe including this project ultimately. And the Minister can tell me if I am wrong.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: And as I understood it, Sir, the National Housing Corporation was doing well in collecting arrears, because as recently as the 12th April, the Minister said they were collecting arrears on a grand scale. I used his words precisely. And yet, from time to time since then, and most recently within the last ten days, there are comments appearing in the press suggestive of the fact that what we are hearing from the Minister, may not really be what is happening in the Housing Authority, and that the level of collections is not what they claim to be, Sir,

So I should like to know if the Minister could tell us, in broad terms, he would not have the specifics today, but in broad terms, what is the truth about the situation with arrears of rent? How well is the Housing Corporation doing, especially indeed since it has computerized its accounting system? We know that there are problems. There will always be problems. But what I think the Government was trying to do, and we did not criticize the Government for it, was to make an attack on the problem of arrears and reduce the level steadily over time. But there are other signals coming out, Sir. I would like the Minister to tell us what is the position.

Certainly, Sir, again we are getting confusing signals. In the area of housing generally, we know that the construction sector for the last five, six years has been playing a major role in the maintenance of economic

activity in the country and in some cases contributing significantly to the ultimate overall growth in the economy.

I was away for six weeks, so I was a little out of touch when I came back. But I understand on the one hand, it is being claimed that there is a shortage of artisans to work in the construction industry, carpenters and masons and associated tradesmen.

Now I see today that a gentleman who has formed his own construction company recently is saying that that is not true, that you can find artisans out there, that he has found no difficulty. Now this is a member of the Democratic Labour Party in a position of eminence in the quasi governmental field. He is saying that it is not true and in fact is suggesting that the National Training Board is turning out skilled artisans on a regular basis and there should not be a shortage. I do not know if the Ministry responsible for housing has carried out a survey and looked at the statistics about this or if it is just a rumour. Because it may be that I would want a carpenter urgently today and I try to find one and cannot get one and I assume that there is a shortage. But that assumption is not based on any scientific analysis. And I think it is in the breast of Government and it ought to reside in the breast of Government to attack the question of the supply of skilled labour on a scientific basis. And ultimately, presumably we will reach the stage where the Ministry of Labour or something, would be able to tell us how many masons we have in Barbados, how many carpenters, plumbers and so on and how they are employed and deployed at various times in the year.

But again, Sir, I am just asking the Minister if he has any solid evidence, I do not want a belief because that is what we have, I want something fairly solid as to what is the true position with the artisan class in Barbados? Are there shortages or not? And if there are shortages, well then tell us what plans Government has, over time, for alleviating the shortage, assuming of course that Government foresees a continuity of the construction activity that we have witnessed for the last few years?

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Rices is an area that is well known to me, Sir, having lived in St. Philip from age 8 to age 20. It is in the Minister's constituency. That is why he has been telling me, Sir, "Rices. Talk about Rices." He is breaking for himself....

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS:..... and making sure that in his constituency, at the end of the day and on the day of

reckoning of the votes, he would have delivered to St. Philip South the project at Six Cross Roads

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: - the project -..... and the project at Rices. I hope you have a couple more.

Laughter.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Since he has indicated year one, the sites for the Thomas Gap, Scarborough, Rices and Valerie, now year one is what, 1988-89?

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Alright, he will respond. I do not know exactly when these things will start, what we mean by year one. 1.15p.m.

Well, I do not know if it has started or when it will start, Sir. But I do trust that

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not begging for nothing. I have already said in here that as far as the provision of housing in St. Thomas is concerned and I will repeat it, Sir, I think I wrote the Minister through his Permanent Secretary the last time I spoke on housing. There is land in the Cane Garden area and I will repeat it, Sir, which had been identified in 1986, late 1985 early 1986, and I wrote the then Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now Rices to Cane Garden.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Who, Sir? *Asides.*

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am talking about the acquisition of land.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, but the Resolution....

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: What do you call it, Sir? The National Urban Low-Income Project.

Mr. SPEAKER: But it did not specifically state the area you mentioned. I give you the latitude of extending your point but not the area.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, the Minister said that in year 1 he is doing Thomas Gap, Scarborough, Rices, Valerie. I am asking him in year 2 under the same project, to acquire the lands at Cane Garden and include them for the provision of rental units, units for sale, and house spots and the erection of a fire station at the bottom there at Cane Garden and Sharon, Sir. Have an integrated development and the land is available. There is plenty of it east of the present Cane Garden Development between the quarry at Cane Garden and the Cane Garden Road, Sir.

I just want to make that clear, Sir, that one is looking at the development of these programmes on a national basis. It may not suit his political priorities to do the Cane Garden thing in year 2 because he has the St. John Development plan to do.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to...

Laughter.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member seems not to understand where Rices is and I myself now will probably be lost where Rices is if you continue like that. What I want to say is that there is ample provision in the procedure of the House. If you need to ask a question, we provide Question Time for that and I would sort of ask the honourable Member to confine as closely as he can to the substance of the Resolution rather than to broaden it in to other areas which this Resolution does not provide for.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, specifically to do with Rices, I would wish the Minister to explain since we have not got the plan and you are very concerned yourself, Sir, about Rices exactly what part of Rices is this development going to take place. Would it be south of where Mrs. Skeene's school was, near where Bolden's house used to be, or where Sir? I do not know exactly where in Rices but you want me to get down to the details of Rices, Sir. I want to know what is the size main that will carry water into Rices, whether they have 6 inches, 8 inches, or 12 inches main already there to provide the water services for Rices? You want to deal with those kinds of details. So let us deal with them, Sir. Do they have proper electricity where you are going to site these houses in Rices? How much is it going to cost to develop this land at Rices? Those are the questions I am asking you. Yes, Sir, let us go through the questions, Sir. How much is it going to cost Government to develop this land at Rices? What was the original amount of money that the World Bank was to put in the project? What was the original amount? He talked about how it was to be funded. Now Government has to fund it itself. I want to know how much is it going to cost and if all the money budgeted and voted for this year, Sir. I do not want a general debate. I want specifics. So I am asking specific questions.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we also wish to know with respect since Government is acquiring this land at Rices for housing development, one cannot discuss it in the absence of a national policy on housing. I am not going to stretch this too far. But I want to know, Sir, if Government has abandoned the policy of the National Housing Corporation doing house construction for rent, or if it is gradually dwindling down those operations. Because there is a large proportion of persons out there who will never be able to own their own homes. As much as we wish to promote home ownership in this country if you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, as much as it is a desirable goal of both parties, we have to recognise the inescapable fact that for a proportion of persons there still has to be the provision of facilities for rent. I would like to suggest that in framing its housing policy Government must perhaps not build the units attached in the future. Build them in such a way that they can come within the scope of the Condominium Act so that over time people can purchase the former rented units and apply some of the rents - oh, that is a policy decision - they have paid towards the purchase of that unit.

The problem bedevilled home ownership in Barbados for many years because in the older housing estates - down in your constituency, Sir, down in the Farm - it was not easy to sell Block 1A such and such a road to the person because it was joined to whatever road to another one. But now we have Condominium legislation in place. If we bear it in the future bearing in mind the flexibility of the Condominium legislation those Government rented units can be ultimately sold as some in Bayville.

I remember when I was at the Housing Authority, we started to sell and we sold some in St. Barnabas. I think it is called St. Barnabas Heights, in that area. But people in the housing areas may wish to buy their properties and we have to simplify the law to give them that opportunity to own their own unit.

Much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not call on the honourable Member. I did not call on the honourable Member to sit down. I think he has

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh, you have.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this measure but at the same time to voice some concerns I have in relation to the lack of housing facilities in the St. Michael North East constituency. I have spoken to

the honourable Minister of areas which I consider myself should be obliged for such purposes and it is primarily because of the demand that has come my way by people within my constituency for housing accommodation which at the moment National Housing Corporation is unable to provide. 1.25p.m.

I am appreciative of the situation that is faced by the National Housing Corporation in so far as provision of rental units is concerned, but in making this contribution I should like to make a couple of suggestions, and that is that in the system of acquisition of land, contrary to what the honourable Member for St. Thomas was thinking of, the provision of rental units, that the existing stock of rental units be handled in such a way that persons who should have been graduated from rental of such units because of their improvement in status, that such persons be encouraged to get into the ownership of their homes, with the assistance of National Housing Corporation, as is presently done with the contractual arrangements with private contractors.

I fail to see why Government should be expected to provide rental units for persons who in many instances have reached the status in life that they can be providing their own housing units with minimal effort, and there are persons who are not in a position to provide themselves with this kind of accommodation, but Government is unable to increase the number of rental units for many reasons.

So I am suggesting that a system be worked out where persons who can be seen to have acquired a position in life where they can now move out of the Government rental unit system be encouraged to own their own homes and make these units available for persons who cannot readily afford.

By the same token, Sir, I should like to suggest that when these acquisitions are made, some consideration be given to the purchase and provision of spots, initially on a rental basis but subsequently persons given the option to own these spots so that they can continue to develop their housing stock as they go on. I readily agree that this is within the concept of the starter unit enterprise, but certainly the number of persons who require house spots who cannot buy the house spots are finding it extremely difficult to get house spots to rent, and I believe that Government's policy on land acquisition for the improvement of the housing stock of the country can embrace this particular concept of provision for people in such a need.

As I said, I am appreciative of the situation that is faced by the National Housing Corporation, but that appreciation does not in any regard solve the problems that

come before us from day to day of persons who require housing accommodation but can find no scope for it.

We have, very obviously, a situation where as you go on you need to improve. I know it will be said that we have been providing some house spots already in St. Michael North East, but I have made the point that the demand is so great that even what is provided is not filling the demand. I am saying, however, that while I am grateful for what has been done I am however imploring the Minister to look at making greater provision in St. Michael North East, because the demand in this constituency is very great.

Asides.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: I am talking about the acquisition of land, Mr. Speaker, and I would like in the thinking of subsequent acquisitions that something be done to embrace the solution to the needs I have in St. Michael North East.

I do not intend to be very long on this, Sir, but just to make sure that the needs of St. Michael North East are given to the Minister very clearly that we can expect his usual prompt attention to matters of this nature.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. R. P. BYER: Sir, when the honourable Member for St. Thomas tried to broaden the scope of debate, he was reminded about the rules and so on and told to confine his comments to the specifics of the Resolution. I rise to support that Resolution, but at the same time I would ask for a little latitude. I will not stray too far from Rices, I will border very close to St. Philip. As you know, Sir, St. George South borders on St. Philip and I will just make a few general comments about the situation in my constituency in so far as housing is concerned, and so on.

There are two districts in my constituency which are in need of some kind of development, they need some attention. I have written the Minister of Housing about this before and he has responded to me. Those districts are Dash Valley and South District. They are two districts that are situated or located, one of them - Dash Valley - on a Zone 1 water area, and the second one - South District - on two parcels of land on either side of the road belonging to two plantations in St. George, one Hanson and the other Staple Grove.

Let me deal first with the Dash Valley district, Sir. Because it is located on a Zone 1 water area, it is very difficult for persons there to get any kind of permission to build to any great extent, there are certain rules that they must conform to and comply with. I have tabled a Question in this House, to which the Honourable Minister has responded, dealing with this problem.

What I am asking here is that the concerns of this district, Dash Valley, be attended to. I know for a fact that some unplanned development is taking place in the district, and that is a very dangerous thing. I am not suggesting for one moment that the planning authorities should go in with bulldozers and bulldoze everything in sight, but it is important that the district and its needs and concerns be addressed.

Apart from housing there is also need for road development and so on, but these problems are compounded by the fact that it is not only a plantation tenantry, but also that this district is also a private tenantry, and there is some difficulty in finding out and determining who owns the land, for example, in Monroe Road. As recently as Sunday the residents of that district have complained about the difficulties that they are living under in so far as housing and road needs are concerned. 1.35p.m.

So I just raise it, Sir, to bring to the attention of this Chamber the difficult conditions that are existing in that district. South District, Sir, is also another problem. The development there is very jumbled. It reminds you, for example, of a district in the City where the houses are very close and not one in the country side where, as we know, houses are not very closely contiguous, but they are more or less given a lot of space. This is another district I brought to the attention of the Minister of Housing, and he has promised to look into the concerns of the district with a view to helping alleviate the situation. I know that he has a lot of matters to attend to, but at the same moment these matters concerning St. George South have been on the back burner for a long time, and I believe, Sir, that some attention should be given to these problems before they get out of hand.

Now another problem I have in my constituency has to do with house fires.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now.

Mr. R. P. BYER: I will make the connection, Sir. Just give me a little latitude.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe this latitude is presenting a problem.

Mr. R. P. BYER: Not at all, Sir. Sir, it all has to do with housing and the lack of it or the provision of it or whatever. I believe, Sir, that the time has come in Barbados that the law should mandate compulsory house insurance. It would not be the same thing as compulsory vehicle insurance because the reasons would be different, but because of the extent of the problems with house fires in

Barbados, I believe that some thought ought to be given to it.

I know, for example, one of my constituents had his house burnt, he had borrowed money from the National Housing Corporation to build his house and the house was not insured, but he has this difficulty now of repaying the National Housing Corporation what he owes them. I agree it is their fault; they ought to insure and they ought to remember the dictum of Sir Winston Churchill, that if he had his own way he would write the word "insure" on every household; but at the same time, Sir, I think that the regularity with which house fires occur has given cause for concern.

I think that the Government should look at the problem not so much as if a house burns then the problem is to provide one tomorrow, but to provide some mechanism where the person who suffers as a result of that disaster, would not have to rely upon Government to provide housing in the long run for them. There ought to be some fund that they can borrow from. I believe, Sir, that if the person is not able to compulsorily insure a house that he should be given some assistance in this area. Home Owners Insurance, given the size of the house and what is contained in it, is not a very difficult thing to maintain over the period of a year, maybe paying by instalments or something like that. I have not thought out the difficulties involved in such a scheme, Sir, but at the same time I believe that it is worthy of some thought, so that we would know that houses in Barbados are insured against disaster, and that apart from the immediate trauma of not knowing where one would go, that you would be assured in the long run, if you were so unfortunate as to suffer, that your house would be rebuilt because of the insurance funds.

Lastly, Sir, I would join with the honourable Member for St. Thomas in so far as his comments relative to condominium legislation are concerned. I myself have spoken on this before in relation to the National Housing Corporation houses, that the condominium legislation should be used as far as possible to pass ownership of those units to the people who occupy them or who are the tenants of them. I said so before and I am glad that the honourable Member for St. Thomas has raised it again, and I hope that some thought will also be given to this.

Thank you very much for the latitude. I hope I did not stray too far, but I am grateful.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, it seems that we have on this side to remind Members on the other side, perhaps particularly the honourable Member for St. Thomas, that we over here do not need any lectures on sovereignty. We took Barbados into independence without any support from the other side. I don't want to get any

further into that because we are debating a different Resolution, but when he comes to mention the question of sovereignty, I want him to understand that we do not need any lectures from them on that side.

In 1968, Sir, when we were offered by the USAID funds for housing at an interest rate substantially in excess of the then going rates for housing mortgage in this country, we politely told the USAID "no thanks". We had no intention, Sir, of permitting USAID or any other institution to force down our throats something that we thought at the time unpallatable.

Sir, I would hope that the honourable Member for St. Thomas would have appreciated the difference between a sewage plant and a housing development, but he does not seem to be able to do this. We can say "no", Sir, to a housing development because we can perhaps try to do it on our own; we could not say "no" to a sewage plant because we could not do it on our own.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am not defending anybody; I am defending the Government. This is no Sandi. This is the Government of the country. If these things cannot be appreciated, then I prefer to tell them, not that it will sink in, but we will still try just the same. There was no way that we in this country not having enough resources at our command, would be able to put in place a sewage plant as we have today without the assistance that we got. And to stand up and say "no", Sir, to what the Inter-American Development Bank was imposing on us, it means that we would not today have the sewage plant. We could say "no" to USAID and we still have Wanstead and Cave Hill and Oxnards where the honourable Member for St. Peter has found a home. These are things that we could not do for the sewage plant. I hope, Sir, that this can be appreciated.

On the other question, the question of artisans, that has been much in the news of late. The question of workmen has been in the news of late, and I, Sir, do not want to get into that in relation to this Resolution. But I must say here, Sir, that the thing has been exploded out of all proportions. We are now in the position that perhaps we were in in 1970 or thereabouts. We, Sir, are in the position where construction in this country has reached the stage where perhaps we are at the limit of the skilled labour that we can provide. I am not saying, Sir, that we have exceeded that limit; perhaps we are reaching that limit.

I have driven along the roads and on Hastings you will see a sign advertising for workmen.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Sir, we will have to understand the psychology of the people in this country. There are times when work is available, the people with skills are available, but they are not willing to do anything. What must one do? Put the work to rest and wait until that worker is available? What in fact we would be doing is putting development to rest. 1.45p.m.

I would like those persons who have been critical of what they have read in the "Official Gazette" in terms of the issuing of work permits for artisans and in 98% of the cases where the reports have been made by the Chief Immigration Officer for the issuing of work permits for those people, those persons have been resident in this country for several years.

It is not new people coming into Barbados. It is that they have been tardy in putting in their applications for immigrant status, or work permits, or what have you. Some may file for immigrant status and for some reason or another it might be recommended that they be given work permits and then work permits are approved but not that persons have been brought into this country as artisans to work.

Very few persons have come into this country to work as artisans and only one instance that I can think of since I have been the Minister, or since we have been the Government, and that is work on a property in Christ Church where the owners of the property were putting up a greenheart roofing system and it was not easy to find the Barbadians who could do the work because Barbadians, traditionally, have not liked to work with greenheart.

In that case, Sir, the owner of the property was allowed to bring in the workers and he was told as a condition for bringing in those workers he must employ Barbadians working along with those other workers from abroad so that they see the techniques and acquire the skills of working with that kind of hard wood.

Aside.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am asked about the Venezuelan Project. The honourable Member, I believe, will be speaking about the Venezuelan Project. The Venezuelan Project is a Venezuelan Project. It is put there by Venezuelan funds and monies and I believe that in the early stages of the development that they brought in workers to work on the Venezuelan Project which was a system new to Barbados so, therefore, it was necessary to have workers who understood the system and some workers came into Barbados at that time in order that Barbadians could acquire that skill in putting in place that system which we now have.

I will leave it, Sir, to the Honourable Minister of Sir, I believe that we are at the stage where we will have to look for persons who are interested in the various artisan disciplines that they are, carpentry, masonry, steelbending and tiling. All of these things, Sir, are not in any great supply.

We may think that because unemployment in Barbados is at 15 - 17% or less, one may think so.

Aside.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Do not mind what a Forbes says. Let us look at the statistics. That will tell us what the answer is. One may think that because unemployment is high that, in fact, unemployment among that artisan class is also high but that may not necessarily be the case.

However that may be, I will join with the same a Mr. Forbes of whom they speak, members on the other side, and I am sure members on this side, can make sure that those persons who are Barbadians and are artisans and are willing to work, I will join with them in making sure that we employ them first, and only if it is necessary to employ other persons, well, then, Sir, we cannot hold the country up to ransom. We cannot put the country to sit when, in fact, we can acquire the skills from other places.

In fact, this is done all over the world. Wherever there is a shortage of skills in a country, well, then nationals from other countries migrate to that country in order to fill that void and that will also be the case here in Barbados but, first, we will have to look for the Barbadians, train Barbadians. Those that are already trained, use them and those who are not trained, train them and put them to work where the demand is; and there is a great demand in construction today; and so long as we follow that principle then, Sir, I do not believe that there can be any reasonable quarrel with having to bring persons in from outside if and when it becomes absolutely necessary.

One further point. I will agree with the honourable Member for St. Thomas partly on the question of the condominiums. I believe, Sir, that we should try, wherever we can, to the extent that we can, and divest ourselves of the properties that we have because in doing so we are divesting ourselves from some of the problems that we have.

There will always be need to build houses for persons who cannot acquire a property or house of his own. There will always be need for that. As a matter of fact, Sir, it may be possible now to offer those who are already in the housing areas houses outside the housing areas and free up some of that space available in those housing areas for persons who cannot afford to build or buy a house of his own.

These, Sir, are all very possible but, Sir, I do not believe that even the units that we have today which do not satisfy our condominium legislation cannot now be sold off to other persons who want to buy them.

What I am trying to say, Sir, is that the absence of satisfying the Condominium Act in terms of the units that we have today is not a bar for the sale of those houses, in my opinion, because what we do have now is what we consider party walls.

If we look down this street, Palmetto Street, we will see buildings down there which have party walls and they have separate owners. That is no different from the houses that we have in the housing areas. They can be sold off, not as condominiums, but as units in themselves with a party wall separating one unit from the other and I believe, Sir, that this is possible.

The only set back here might well be that the persons who are not occupying those houses might be unable to purchase them and it is possible that if we look into this matter more carefully and go back to what we, as a Government, the Democratic Labour Party, did in 1963 and credited some of the persons occupying those units with a percentage of the rents already paid then. That might be some assistance to persons occupying those houses and units to be able to purchase those units that they are occupying.

It may also, at the same time, be an encouragement to those persons to pay up their rents because in paying up their rents they know that they are paying up to something that they know at some point in time they will own and that they can call their own.

These, Sir, are some of the points that I thought I should respond to and raised by the honourable Member for St. Thomas. I believe I have not covered all the points raised. I have done so purposely because I believe, Sir, that the Honourable Minister himself would want to respond to some of the matters, or even expand on some of the things that I have said.

I thank you, Sir.
1.55p.m.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Sir, it is close to 2.00 o'clock and I move, Sir, that the House be now suspended for lunch until 3.00 o'clock today, Sir.

Hon. W. W. HALL: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that this sitting be now suspended until 3.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly at 1.59 p.m.

ON RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. The honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. R. L. MORRIS: Mr. Speaker, in rising to support this Resolution, I would like to make some comments first of all. I am pleased to see that the Minister responsible for Housing and Lands is going ahead with purchases of lots to make provision for houses in the South East of the country. And I believe it is a sensible move always to expand our housing provisions in areas where they already exist in communities; and such would be the case in Rices which is an old established community because it means that in terms of providing services we would not have to introduce new services to the area. In many cases we are extending existing services, and this means that the provision of housing and the necessary prerequisites that go with them would be made cheaper from those people who would benefit from these provisions.

So I believe that it makes sense, wherever possible that we are providing housing, that we look at areas that are already developed and see if there are any useful ancillary spots of land that could be taken into the particular programme. I recognize that the Minister said that part of his activities in this area relates to Scarborough which would resemble Rices to the extent that there are already existing areas where people live.

I just want to discuss the Scarborough area a little before I move on to other points. Shortly after our Administration came to office, there was a bit of a furore in the area of Scarborough because a plan that had been developed before we came to office was to be implemented and the Ministry of Housing and Lands had started to send out their officials to look at the area and ran into certain problems because the area is one that is peculiar in some ways, in that although the name given generally to the area is Scarborough, really you are talking about areas like Pegwell running into Scarborough, Pegwell being the area on the road which would be adjacent to Basix and so on, and that largely is an area owned by persons who have held ownership of the land for a long time as against Scarborough which is more interior. And Scarborough would be more the renters, the people who rent from the persons who live along the main road. As a matter of fact, the Pegwell people would not particularly like to hear that they live in Scarborough. They do not like to hear anybody say that they are people who live in Scarborough, because you know what names mean in some of these communities.

But the idea at the time was to restructure Scarborough because there were certain alignments that were problematic and the attempt was to carry out a survey, restructure lots, and in some instances persons would have been moved from where they were at the particular time, but this was all in the interest of future development. Because as one understands, in many of these communities the siting of houses could have been done in a rather *ad hoc* manner and leading to certain problems in terms of future rational development.

We have a conflict between private individual interests and the interests of the wider community, persons who were very satisfied where they were and who had plans about passing on lands to their descendants and so on were not very happy with a Government plan that would have made certain changes. And I know that we had several meetings, a number of meetings at Foundation School with the residents and certain decisions were taken that would not have led to a radical restructuring of Scarborough but certainly to alignments that would have made it easier for the persons who have lived there for a long time to relate to each other.

I am not sure, Sir, where the Ministry of Housing and Lands intends to pursue the development as it relates to low income housing, because as I said I am not sure that there is a great deal of land in Scarborough available for this. The land that is between ESSO Gas Station and the area that is adjacent to the Foundation School, there used to be an open expanse of land there which was used for a playing area by the people who lived in Scarborough, particularly cricketers came from that area, that had been encroached on by some building sites. And I think the land is owned largely by a family, I think the Chases, I know Darnley Chase certainly is related to that family, and they had every intention of subdividing that land for their own personal family interest. I am not sure if they have been persuaded to give up any rights they had in that land for the purpose of providing housing for the wider community. As I said, when I looked at the matter there was this sharp conflict between personal interests and the interests of the community. I am not sure to what extent that will be resolved. But I am sure that the Ministry will be very careful in determining that they will provide any low income housing in Scarborough to balance these particular views that might be held by the private land owners and to respect the views where the land owners feel very strongly. But I know that the Ministry had carefully developed plans for that area in terms of low income housing and they even wanted to provide something like a community centre and a number of things. But certainly the land owners did not give way to the Ministry's request to purchase their lands and to make certain realignments. Because I believe that some of them felt - I know in one case a man did not want to give up his orchard and rose garden where that land would have been made available for

a community centre. But he felt that he wanted to enjoy these things as a private individual. The Ministry did not want to go over his views. 3.05 p.m.

I am fully in support of anything that can be done in that area of Scarborough to provide low income housing. But as I said I would want the particular interest of persons to be respected, because clearly in the south east of the island as in St. Michael there is a crying need for housing. I believe I share the experience of all of the representatives in this august Chamber of persons coming to us. I always say that when I go in my office on Saturdays that if two persons come to me one wants a job and the other one wants either a house spot or a house to rent. I believe that all of us service these demands. They are the major demands that are coming to us as representatives. The need for housing is really very fundamental, either housing or a house spot. All of us have that common experience. It is something that can be taken lightly because I believe that shelter - not I believe - shelter is a basic need. That is where you start from. If you do not have that shelter you are almost not in the class of human beings. Even the lesser animals want good shelter. So I do not believe this is something that a country can take very lightly. It is a very fundamental thing and the people who come to me are earnest people. They are genuine people. They give you what they are experiencing, the problems they are having and these problems are manifold. One of the major problems facing low income earners in Barbados is that rent is way above their capacity to pay. That is a major problem. If you want to rent housing in Barbados you have to be working for money. A lot of the board bungalows, three-bedroom are now over \$350 a month. So that is not an easy proposition for a poor working-class Barbadian to meet.

So housing is a need, a very basic need, and many of the people who come to us are people who were renting before. I think the landlords are becoming quite serious about trying to exploit the situation as much as possible and they are taking people to court and getting orders of eviction if possible because they understand the kind of position they have in the market today and they are looking to get as much as they can for themselves. This leaves certain people in a position where they have to move out. Again, you have domestic situations where people, young ladies might be getting children and they cannot remain at home with their parents and they are looking for housing. They are looking for somewhere to rent and sometimes they are looking for somewhere to purchase. So I believe the situation is a rather serious one. I do not think we are at a crisis situation, but certainly it is one where as long as the Ministry of Housing and Lands can provide either rental units and go ahead and build houses for persons to purchase, I think that once that programme is articulated and spelled out it will go some way in terms of satisfying

the particular problems that we have. And I agree with those who have spoken earlier who have addressed the whole question of the need for rental units. I think that is very, very important in this country. I do not think we can ever get out the situation where we do not have to provide rental units for people in this country. Because I will make the position clear also in joining those who have spoken that there will always be a cadre of persons in Barbados who will not be able to purchase their homes and we have to develop the social conscience of providing those rental units for these persons.

I think it is very important in the community. Right now most of the rental units would be already occupied. Let us understand that most of them are already occupied. So when persons come asking for space you really are talking about accommodating them only if somebody moves out. And we are in a situation where we have to be building additional units. We need to be building additional units because those that are already there are occupied. You know there is a habit when somebody wants to get one of the units they will go and search through all of the areas and they come and tell you about Block C No. 10 in such a place is vacant. They can tell you each one that is vacant and they believe now that it is your duty to go and tell somebody - well, put them in there; not recognising that there is a long list of persons' needs before them to be satisfied. But if you are in a particular situation, a crisis situation yourself, you are not necessarily prepared to look at human logic and if the person cannot deliver for you you feel that that person is incapable or not competent to do the job that you have put that person there to do. But the point is that there is a great demand and the supply is not there and I believe that we should try to provide that housing.

But I want to make the point that our community has always decided that Government must do everything. Our community has taken this position that Government must supply everything. Now I can speak from the background of experience that the Barbados Workers Union as a non-Governmental organisation has a good record in terms of providing low income housing for workers in this country. We have done that successfully at Mangrove and at this particular time we have another 65 acres and we are hoping to go into joint venture relationship again with Ideal Homes to try and provide housing in that particular area for persons who wish to own their homes. We have always taken a position that we would build wall buildings because we believe that that is the particular model that is suitable for our low and middle income workers. But I would also like to suggest that the model of housing that is at Wotton of those new buildings that were built in order to relieve the persons who had been flooded out, I would like to certainly inform this honourable Chamber that it would seem that the Wotton problems have to some extent come true because for the last 2 years we have had fairly heavy rainfall but we

have not had that kind of flooding that was experienced in Wotton before. I think it tells us what we need to do is to provide adequate drainage. But having done that, we also have all the time to maintain whatever provisions we make. It is also very important that when you dig the wells that you go back and clean them all the time and continue a maintenance programme around the year. I believe that the old problem at Wotton is at an end and I would like to say that the new community is developing quite well and those wooden houses with the wallbacks can be used as a model for low income workers in addition to wall houses. Because when you look at the cost of providing housing it is really growing at an extremely rapid rate. If you look at the 10 year difference between when we first put up houses, that is the Barbados Workers Union in Mangrove, the first houses that we put up were at \$15,000 and that was in I think 1974/1975. The same model of house in terms of space and so on when we put them up between last year and this year was something at \$55,000. So there is such a rapid escalation in building costs. It is a natural thing. We recognise that in order to keep pace with the kind of quality of service that you have to deliver to the Barbadian house owner one always has to be planning. Don't put by for tomorrow what you can do today. If we can build houses now, don't say we are going to build it two years or 3 years, 4 years, or 5 years from now because one thing you can be sure about is that the cost of providing that housing is going to go up very, very rapidly. I believe we are at the stage where we have to look very seriously at providing housing in mass for Barbadians. As I said,¹ we are talking both in terms of rental units and in terms of ownership units and we have to look at that very, very carefully.

I am happy that the Minister responsible is taking this matter seriously. I know that he has approached most parliamentarians and asked them to indicate if there are areas of land within the various constituencies which are owned by Government first of all and if not owned by Government which perhaps could be purchased in order to provide either sites and services or units. I am sure that most of us here have had the experience of being asked about that. So I am sure the awareness is there of the need for these sites and services and for these lots. I would hope that Government will continue to put this as a matter of priority and that there will be some easing of the situation. I am not optimistic that we will be able to deal with this problem at one fell swoop and knock it off, because I believe it is going to be a problem for sometime. Let us still recognising that, make sure we understand it to be a priority and we try to utilize our resources effectively in addressing this major social problem. 3.15p.m.

We are just out of the United Nations declared Year of Shelter, but I believe that matters like shelter should not be given one year, but there should be a ten year period for

shelter or something like that, so that we can concentrate our efforts. It is just like the Year for Women and so on. I think the Leader of the Opposition probably knows better about that than I do. I think there was a decade for women but a year for housing. I believe that a decade or even more was adequate for women, but I do not believe a year was adequate for housing. Perhaps you need a decade for looking at housing also.

I think that this is an indication that the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands is addressing the problem. The honourable Member for St. Thomas wants to know if there is a Government policy or whether he will be seeing *ad hoc* approaches. I do not think really that this Resolution might really give the opportunity to debate it in its wider terms, although we have been making points to address it, but there is no question that there is a Government policy on that and it is one that is enlightened by the tenets of socialism, one that will address the needs of the masses of people in this country, but this is an example of the kinds of things that this administration will be doing and I am sure that the Minister will come back from time to time and address that policy.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very brief because I do not want to repeat what honourable Members have spoken about already.

If there is one point that unites the House it is the need to make adequate provision for housing, particularly at the lower economic rung of the ladder. Let me begin by saying that I do not believe that Barbados as a country has coped with this problem adequately at all.

The statistics will show that there have been over 40 000 applications to the National Housing Corporation since the inception of that body and it has only been able to deal with 9 000 of those applications. The statistics will also show that of those applications some 28 000 have been in St. Michael, and of those about four to five thousand have been dealt with in the St. Michael area. The next biggest area of need has been in Christ Church where there have been something like only 4 500 applications in respect of Christ Church, and again only about 30%, if as high as that, have had their applications satisfied.

The statistics show that there have not been as many applications from our rural areas, and there is probably an explanation for this. I think a reasonable explanation is that the people who have lived in the rural parts of Barbados have always shown a preference for home ownership rather than for home rental. They have always believed that they should own a bit of the land of Barbados and a bit of the real estate, or even chattel estate, if you want to talk about

chattel housing, and it is a very good sign. They have been acquiring their own properties, sometimes without the assistance of Government, usually from reaping their crops, keeping animals and having deductions made on a weekly basis from their earnings, whether they worked in agriculture, in services or were artisans.

It is something to be commended, something about which the sociologists should write and research, if they are really doing a proper job, but in a way they have set an example to the balance of the community. In addition, in the rural areas regard has been paid to a large extent to preserving the proper features of development even ahead of the time when we had town and country planning in this country. I regret very much that some of the lessons to be learnt from them have not been put into practice by the planners, or by Governments in a way, and that we are in danger in our anxiety to satisfy what is obviously a need, of creating in the future some of the biggest problems for ourselves in future slum areas.

I regret that some private developers, as well as Government developers, do not see the need to provide adequate parks, adequate recreational facilities, more scope for services and also take into account the other amenities that are necessary for development. I would hope that as we set out on the job of housing the nation we will bear in mind the necessity as well to provide for the other needs of the nation.

Sir, if I may come to a couple of specifics in the St. Philip area, since the Minister wishes us to talk about Rices, I would hope that in laying out the development in Rices regard will be had to the present need for adequate planning. I am disappointed at the development at Six Cross Roads. I think the houses that are now being constructed in this low income project are too near to the road. They have not taken into account the fact that the people who are going to live there will have children. I know the Minister has tried, because of need, to put in as many lots as possible, but in my view some of the lots again are too close to each other if you take into account the need for future development.

One of the outstanding traits of the Barbadian in his sense of self-reliance and self-advancement is that he can start on a chattel house, as happened with most of our parents and relatives, and build from the back and come forward and establish a solid and substantial house in the future, so that he has always taken into account the need for space to expand and improve himself.

I have cited the one at Six Cross Roads, but I have seen also in other areas that in our anxiety to provide as much as possible in as short a space as possible we are not leaving that necessary room which there must be for future

development. At Rices I hope, therefore, the Minister will avoid those difficulties.

If one looks at the Government housing areas, whether the older housing areas or even some of the newer housing areas, with perhaps the exception of Fernihurst and the exception of Passage Gardens, one will find again that in cutting our cloth to suit our pockets at that time, we have probably been penny wise and in the long run pound foolish in that again we did not adequately provide - I am not here talking about any particular administration, I am talking about the whole planning of housing in Barbados - we did not adequately provide for these long term interests and needs. ~"

3.25 p.m.

We may well find that before the lifespan of what would be a normal housing development expires that we may have to replace units and change them to conform with proper upgraded standards.

If I may speak of my own constituency in this context, two Government housing areas in my own constituency, Pleasant Hall built in the early Seventies and Bonnetts still under construction, Pleasant Hall is another example of where we tried to pack a lot into a small area to accommodate as many people as possible and we have been creating problems. The Minister will see from his report that every year the maintenance at Pleasant Hall on keeping the sewage going is phenomenal, and if you go into St. Matthias Road you have tremendous problems of the stench and other health problems occurring from very bad development. It is not that the intention of the planners or of the politicians was not correct. It is that we were short-sighted in how we attacked that problem.

In Bonnetts we have managed to avoid some of the problems, but once again the plans have been altered, we have packed more units into Bonnetts than we need have done, and in the process we find ourselves there without adequate playing facilities, even a hard court for the young people. Then we complain that young people do not know what they are doing with their time, that they are getting themselves involved in drugs and that sort of thing, but we are not as planners providing the amenities to keep them occupied in their leisure time and to create the sense of community among them. I am not attributing any bad motive here. I am saying the motive is probably a very good motive to have as much as possible. You can go into Gall Hill, you can go into Sayers Court, whatever building estate you have, I see the problems being repeated.

I think what we have to say to ourselves and to lending agencies is that we are building for a Barbados that will continue beyond our lifespan and we wish to have the best if possible particularly at the lower socio-economic

rungs. The people at the upper middle-class and middle-class areas will provide it for themselves in housing and as their incomes go up they will move from one to the other, and they are not going to be lacking in facilities. They can go out and have their recreation and what not, but we have to take these carefully into account, Sir, and integrate the whole over-all planning that we do.

I want as well to say to the Minister that in any integrated planning he has to look at, he must also look at, and the honourable Member for St. Peter has heard me on this so often, inter-village communication. One of the things about Barbados that I think will lead to our long term stability particularly in the rural districts is when it is easy to travel from one place to another. I can cite for instance the area in which I live that is now crying out for reconstitution and redevelopment of the Coach Hill area. For people to get from the Coach Hill housing area over to the church by Society is for them a great inconvenience because of lack of long term planning there. All you needed was a straight road across Haynes Hill estate in Society to join the area and proper electricity for them. But we have not in the past done it and we have not seen villages as inter-connected and interlocking, and I believe that in planning our electrification process, in planning our water development we have to take into account that we must knit the country villages to each other without each losing their identity, and then you would not hear the constant complaint that we all as MPs have, and the complaints which come to us, that every village wants its own playing field, which is not possible. And somehow the civil servants who advise us and other institutions must get this into the planning stream in Barbados, otherwise the total cost will continue to mount for us.

On house spots, Sir - there is nothing better for people's self-reliance than to encourage them to own a piece of land and to develop that piece of land. That has been my experience. I come from a family in Silver Hill and Water Street, as the honourable Member for Christ Church East knows, who believe in a little piece of land. My father who is still alive at 92 still believe that he ought to go and work the housespot opposite the house in Silver Hill because the land is fundamental to them. But it has helped them to develop a peasantry and a sort of belief in themselves as people and particularly as poor black people.

I would like to make a strong request for speeding the sites and services programme in Barbados. There are too many people asking and begging for house spots who still cannot get house spots, but I believe that if the land bank is expanded - I think we have acquired 150 acres I was told - one of the primary aims of the Government should be to make house spots available.

Now, Sir, in my own constituency in Simmons Road I understand there were going to be 64 lots. You will notice from the recent report that area has had request from 64 people who wanted to purchase house lots and another 69 or so who want to buy houses. A lot of them are young people. They come to me, and I had to write letters for most of those 64: I can give you my file on it; they can't get because it is not available. Valerie, for instance, which is part of this referred to by the Minister in this Resolution, has reached stage one. We had acquired Valerie now for five or six years. Once again in that very thickly populated area of Brittons Hill, Clapham and Flagstaff going back down to the Bay Land in Beckles Road, if a study is done of the need, the Minister will see that there is a tremendous need among young people who contrary to what my friend the honourable Member for St. Michael North East thinks, do not want to remain in the Government housing areas; they would prefer to move out and own their own home; but given their income they can only start if they can get some assistance and they look for house lots, and I believe that the Government should have a proper scheme of providing enough house lots to enable them to purchase a lot.

Having been given the lots, I feel, Sir, that the loan now made available under the general housing loan fund are too low; \$3 000 with a maximum of \$15 000, it is at present. I believe that we should increase the \$15 000, and I am also concerned about the rate of interest as well. It is the general housing loan fund that has been used down through the years from its inception to assist the people in the rural areas. I don't mind who says what, Sir, We set the limit, I am saying that with inflation and all other matters the limit must go up. The limit was once before \$5 000 it was raised under us to \$15 000, but it must go further now.

Whilst I am on it, Sir, I want to draw to the Minister my experience in dealing with people in Barbados, not only in my own constituency, but the others who come to me. I have had the case of a lady who worked in the service industry, at one of the south coast hotels. She had wanted to borrow money. She had the downpayment but on her income, although she is prepared to sign on the dotted line to get the amount deducted, and her income would take the deduction, she is told that then what she has left in her hand would not be sufficient for her to maintain herself, so she can't get it. She must go and get a boyfriend or somebody to sign with her, but when she does that she is told that the combined incomes are too high for them to come within the scheme. Now what alternatives is she thrown to? So that can't be a reasonable and sensible rational attitude in my view in which to approach the problem. I can understand the need for standards of living, but a person who is administering a loan portfolio, regardless to whether it is a loan portfolio of your national housing corporation, of a bank or whatever must bring a bit of Bajan commonsense.

something that you don't get from the University, to bear on the problem of people, particularly people in the lower socio-economic position. Some of us who know would know a way of beating them and getting around the problem, and sometimes some of them will tell you how to beat it, but this lady had nobody to help her as to how to deal with that particular problem, and I have no doubt in my mind that she would have repaid that loan better than some of the other persons. 3.35p.m.

I think that we have in the institutions which the Government owns or participates in to set the standards in relation to these types of problems in order to make it easy for persons who really are interested in improving their lots and themselves to do so.

I am not satisfied that sometimes at the Barbados Mortgage Finance that that type of approach is taken to the problems which come before us.

Finally, the Minister talks about the allocation. Both political parties, the other side and ourselves, from time to time have gone on on the allocation of units in the National Housing Corporation.

Now, I can cite myself cases of people who have waited for 13, 14 and 15 years in my own constituency who have been in need of being allocated a rental unit and there is still, as shown from the statistics here - I have spoken generally on them - but there is still this tremendous backlog and I have read very carefully the Minister's statement when the honourable Member for St. Thomas who shadows Housing and himself made a major speech on housing policy.

I have read very carefully his statement that you could never take politics fully out of housing. It will always be in housing and that there are people with this long period of time who have been waiting and he went on to say that it would not be fair, and he cited Bonnetts rather than Wellington Street or Pondside, to give all the houses in Bonnetts to people in Bennetts.

I am not going to argue about that as a principle. We are all Barbadians but what I want to say to the Minister that when in Bonnetts you have a person who meets his or her criteria, been on the waiting list for 13 or 14 years, sleeping in turns in their house on nights because the family has to allocate sleeping time, that that person understandably feels very concerned if in the allocation of housing in Bonnetts that person ...

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member does not believe it. I will give the honourable Member the

names. If he wants it, he is acting Prime Minister. It is a fact, Sir. If in the allocation of housing those persons ...

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: ... But they allocate sleeping time ... are overlooked for whatever reason it is and I feel that in that area certainly, there is a case for giving housing to some of the persons who qualify from the area and who have waited very patiently and now see that right next to their nose that persons who have not been on the waiting list for as long a period of time or whose need is no greater or sometimes lesser than theirs are now being preferred over themselves.

Also, the Minister could probably explain to me why the 25 housing units at Bonnetts have been available since the beginning of the year for allocation, and, unfortunately, they have only been allocated when I was on holiday, Sir. I want to know if there was any significance in that but they have been there for a little while remaining unallocated.

The other thing I would want to say is about Simmons Land. I said before that heavy application is shown by these for people to buy or purchase Simmons Land but we are a little bit slow in following up with various services.

I have written to the Ministry of Housing giving them the list of areas calling for electrification in housing and I have no doubt, in Rices, Sir, that this example will be followed.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: The honourable Member for St. Peter is saying *sotto voce* as to whether or not - where is Rices. I am giving the experience that I think is relevant to Rices.

I feel that electrification must come very soon after as one of the basic services that is going in and that it should really be unnecessary for honourable members to have to get up and ask questions on matters such as this.

I am aware that the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works and the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands visited Simmons Road only, I think it was last week or week before. I do not know. I was told that he was there for a while but if he has not, I would invite him to come and visit in order to see the need up there for the electricity service to follow the water service and the road service if we are providing a genuine sites and services programme.

The honourable members have spoken on other aspects of housing and the acquisition of land. Let me just speak on a point that is pure form, Sir.

I believe that we must develop in Parliament - this is form now. It has nothing to do with the matter, but it bothers me that every time we want to acquire a bit of land that most of the parliamentary time is taken up with the procedure to acquire that land.

Take Rices now, Sir. If Rices is going to be vested subsequently in the National Housing Corporation, parliamentary time is again going to be taken up with debating that Resolution to vest it in the National Housing Corporation and it seems to me that the Government when it is acquiring the area, if it is intended to give the responsibility or the freehold ownership of it finally to the National Housing Corporation whether it is for resale or to continue in the National Housing Corporation, that it should be possible to have a proper legal form and resolution to deal with both matters at one time.

Part of the difficulty about conveying and getting the process over is that we have not looked at the legal forms that we are using and there is no point complaining about the lawyers outside in private practice.

We have to develop within this House the forms that will make housing ownership, housing leasing, house selling much, much easier and I believe, for instance, the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Acting Prime Minister, spoke on the issue of the difficulty confronting both administrations, both ourselves when we were there in the last two years and now the incoming administration about selling the units in the Pine Housing Area or Pleasant Hall because we do not seem to have developed a simple conveyancing form which could be put at the back of an Act to deal with this problem.

We dealt with it in the Freehold Tenancies legislation and it has simplified conveyancing. It is possible for us to modify the legislation sufficiently to simplify the sale of units by providing for party walls, for providing for repairs, for having implied covenants, for having all of the rights of way and what not protected and I hope that any future development in this area will also be one of the matters that should not escape the notice of the Minister.

Thank you very much.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, after that very brief address on this matter by the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, I should like to contribute my two cents worth in this particular debate.

I think it is most pleasing - I do not wish to be accused in any way of flattering the Chair but I should like to say that it is a great opportunity for us to have the chance to go into some of the wider aspects of housing. I am very grateful for your indulgence on this occasion.

To start, Sir, I would like to say that I think that, perhaps, residing in St. John has done a lot for the honourable member who just finished speaking. I think he has been able to, at least in the earlier part of his address, point out some of the problems that, I think, are peculiar to the rural areas and the point that he made particularly about the area in which he resides where there is a Government estate, Colleton Estate, which has about 19 rental units. 3.45 p.m.

But it is considered to be, I suppose, a low income housing area and part of that area, in fact across the road was considered by this Government for the provision of house spots under I believe a similar scheme, if not the same scheme to the one which we are debating here which relates to Rices in St. Philip, and the contact between villages and the kind of infrastructure and planning that goes into the establishment of these housing estates or schemes for the provision of this low income housing. The particular point, Sir, that struck a note, Sir, was the point he made about the call made by several communities in Barbados for the provision of playing fields and pavilions and so on. I think that it really has reached, to some extent, the point sometimes of being ludicrous. There are some areas in communities which people have been playing on for years which belong to them anyway, I suppose if they wanted to enforce their rights over those areas. And it is true that Government could assist perhaps in upgrading those particular areas. But I think Government in planning for housing and planning for siting people in housing areas should also consider that integrated approach between the various villages.

So, for example, I am not sure that my energy should be spent as a Member of Parliament pushing for Government to establish a pavilion and playing field on the small lot of land in Foster Hall that was given to the Government some years ago by the owners of that plantation when as I drive along the east coast of St. John and see that big lovely area Broadleigh which easily could provide at the northern end, a wonderful little national park overlooking the old railway line and also overlooking the cliffs of St. John, Glenburnie and so on and at one point you could look right down to the East Coast, and also provides enough land perhaps for two good sized not twos and fours but sixes and fours playing fields for cricket and also additional land for football and other kinds of facilities.

If Government, in establishing these housing areas, and also with its concern for the environment and beautifying this country and making life for us a lot more pleasant had regard to that area of land as an area which could be used for those kinds of facilities, we would not be under this kind of pressure in small areas to provide playing fields. We could say look, we are going to put down a proper area in whatever area it is. And in this day and age,

there is nothing wrong with the boys from Coach Hill getting on a bicycle and riding down to Broadleigh or the fellows running from Foster Hall or from Newcastle. None of those areas have those kinds of facilities. And as Government was looking, for example, at putting in a low cost housing development in the area of Haynes Hill, there really is not much room for manoeuvre in terms of providing the other facilities that are necessary.

Now I want to make that point because I suppose, and rightly so, there are a number of my constituents and others including I suppose the honourable Member for Christ Church West Central now residing in St. John who may think that the pace of development of housing in St. John is too slow. I want to speak frankly today on this issue because it relates substantially to the matter that is here. In other words, whatever Government has by way of housing in St. John essentially is going to be similar to the scheme as I understand it that is taking place at Rices. I believe I am correct in saying so.

Therefore, Small Hope for example is an area that was looked at. The first point is that most of it is in Zone 1. It could provide probably about eight to ten houses. Waste of time. It does not make sense to cut it up and to put in the kind of project that I think would provide for the needs of the people of St. John, bearing in mind that in rural areas you are not only cutting up land for housing but you have to give people the opportunity of having a little extra land to carry out whatever small farming that they may wish to do. If you live in a constituency like St. John or even in St. Philip, this is why I suppose the Honourable Member has raised the concerns he has raised, you do not want 3 000 square feet of land. There is no elbow room. I mean it is difficult for us to conceive of developments in rural areas in housing without also considering the aptitude, the interest and the way of life of the people in those areas. And this really is one of the things that has concerned me most in analyzing the housing needs in my constituency in conjunction with the Ministry of Housing.

We looked at Haynes Hill. We have spoken about it before in here in the St. John Development Plan. It falls into Zone 2. The Government very well intentioned was thinking of putting in septic tanks. I think that is too costly. It is a waste of time. So we looked for an alternative area that is accessible and has the facilities around it and I think we have come up with a reasonable area, and hopefully the Ministry of Housing will not sit back now as was done for ten years with respect to the provision of facilities in St. John but will move very swiftly to get something by way of the provision of house spots, adequate house spots in that particular constituency.

While it is true that we need proper planning and I take the point, I think that the planning has been fairly

exhausted in my constituency in the sense of determining what areas are available. And we should not now fall back on the question of planning as an excuse not to forge ahead. And I am quite certain that the Ministry of Housing will be making whatever efforts are necessary to have that housing project in place.

There are also persons, the owners of plantations for example who have other areas, other than those where the tenantry is presently located who have land that is also suitable for housing, who have, as I understand it, made applications to the Town Planning and the Ministry of Housing to make this land available for some kind of housing project. In one case I know it is not in Zone 1 but I believe that the reason why they are doing it is to bring themselves out of the financial position the plantations find themselves in anyway. And I suppose there must be hundreds of applications of a similar nature. But I still believe that along with Government's programme with respect to the sites and services that it may also be appropriate for Government to consider these applications and look at them very carefully and perhaps even give them favourable consideration.

So that the problem we have in a constituency like St. John which is perhaps not just unique to St. John, but it is an especial problem in St. John is the problem of water zones. There are no large areas that you can put down a housing estate. There are no large areas or tracts of land where people can subdivide them and make them available for housing. I understand that and I think the Government understands that and this is why we have been so careful in the planning. We have to have adequate sized house spots. I am not one of those persons who believe that housing is for housing sake. It must also have some element of planning that also looks, not only at the provision of those sites and services, but in terms of the size of the lots and how best persons can utilize that land not only for their personal benefit but also to the benefit of the economy of the country as a whole, and having close regard for whatever environmental problems exist.

The other point is that persons in rural areas prefer, as has been said, the ownership of land. That is not in dispute, and it probably demonstrates why when you look through the records of the National Housing Corporation, you will see the substantial variance between the applications and provision of housing lots for persons in rural areas, as against those in urban areas differ so substantially. And that really is one of the problems again that representatives like myself and the honourable Member for St. Joseph, the honourable Member for St. Andrew experience. There are no middle class developments in St. John. There is no place in St. John that I can pass and say looks like West Terrace or Kingsland. There is nothing like that. St. Thomas has changed substantially over the years, St. Philip has changed

substantially, all through West Terrace. Those kinds of developments (a) are not taking place in constituencies like St. John because of the availability of land but (b) I suppose there is also the question of whether they would be attractive in those areas anyway. So I suppose that people who want that kind of development would have to go into the urban areas to enjoy that kind of development.

I am certain the honourable Member who just finished speaking would not like to look behind him and see a development like West Terrace or Kingsland or something as he looks out of his bedroom window on a morning. It is a nice area to live, and I think people in St. John like St. John as it is, in that sense. But the provision of land for housing still remains a tremendously important consideration in all of those areas, notwithstanding the limitations in respect of that kind of housing. 3.55p.m.

Those really are the major points that I wanted to make. I am certain that the Minister probably would be able to tell me more one of these days, hopefully very soon, about the areas that we recently looked at in St. John and I hope soon we can expect to see a Resolution of a similar nature coming to this House in respect of the area that we have recently identified.

In the interim however I should like to congratulate the Government and the Minister for whatever activity that has been taking place in the area of housing. It is probably because the performance has not been substandard, but has in my view been excellent, by this Government, and it is also because of the growing need to provide houses and the pressures and burdens placed on us as members of Parliament that makes housing such an interesting topic in this House of Assembly and that we have had so many opportunities both this year and probably during the rest of the current term to discuss housing, out of which perhaps the best evidence will be available for whatever comprehensive plan of housing the Ministry of Housing may wish to come up with to carry us into the year 2000 and beyond.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I just want to first of all commend the Government on bringing this Resolution before the House and I think it would be remiss of me if we are speaking about housing not to have something to say about housing because I represent the constituency of St. Michael South East and a look at the number of Government housing units owned would show you that in the Pine there are 995 and in Wildcy 461 which is approximately a little over 1400 housing units - more

than all or the rest of the housing units put together in Barbados.

So that I think that if there is one member of Parliament who has to daily come up with the problems that the people of housing units face, I would be the person qualified to speak on those issues because that is the kind of area I represent. But I want to commend the Government as I said, but I also want to say and I want to inform the Minister that there are some people working in the Ministry of Housing who do not do justice to that institution and to the Government. Because I am constantly faced with situations because the honourable Member for St. Thomas **** mentioned the problem of rent collections, etcetera which is a very important aspect of this Government's policy and I know that the Minister of Housing has reiterated time and time again the philosophy of this party in terms of people living in housing units, rental units, etc. We have a situation where despite the fact that the Government has said that for people who are unemployed, the elderly who cannot pay * rents will be waived. We have people working in the Ministry of Housing who will constantly harass people who are unemployed and the elderly people and actually scare them and I want to bring that situation to the attention of this House. Because if we are going to provide the housing service for people, people should be able to live in comfortable conditions and they should be made aware of the fact that when Government makes a policy that it is a * firm policy and they should not be waivering back and forth and unable to sleep at night because they think that tomorrow morning somebody is going to come and put them out of their house.

I have spoken at length already in this august Chamber about the philosophy of ownership. Pinclands is *• one of the oldest housing areas in this country and I have said before and I will reiterate that I think it is the kind of area that should be used as an experiment for house ownership for people who have lived in those houses for a long time for several reasons. Number 1 - I think that units owned by Government are becoming cumbersome and they are becoming unmanageable because it is too big. Number 2 - Because I think that if you say to an individual you are " going to own this property the person will take care of it and they will pay their rent because it is towards the ownership of the house, and Barbadians love ownership. But the part that interests me most was the comment made by the honourable Leader of the Opposition when he mentioned the fact that throughout the years in successive Governments when housing units were being planned they "" forgot the lack of playing facilities, etcetera.

Now since 1986 in the Pine we have moved into a bold experiment where we have introduced a modern park into the area and this park caused so much furore. For months it was the topic of discussion on every call-in radio programme. The Opposition and the newspapers made it a .«*.

daily issue in the newspapers as though it was some criminal act to provide facilities for people of a lower economic strata. Now I find the comment of the Leader of the Opposition to be very amusing, because what he is stating is that precisely what we have done in the Pine without too much Government support and support from other institutions, a lot of it community support. I feel a lot can be done in areas mustering community support and then asking Government for back-up. I do not feel that everything at all times must come from a Government level and if there is enough initiative within the community we can get the things that we want. Fortunately for me I represent an area where there is good infrastructure not only in terms of football and cricket but in terms of the theatre, etcetera, etcetera.

So that in the Pine and this is why I think that the Pinclands area should be used as a model for development. It is an old area. The people in the area have always been ostracized and they have had to build their own institutions, and we will be models. We will be models for what can happen in this country and therefore I am very heartened to hear the Leader of the Opposition give support to the kind of ideas that we have created in one of the oldest developments in this country. I would like to see more of them springing up and I want to support this Government on the acquisition of land because as a representative for the kind of area I represent daily I am faced with people who are not only looking for houses to rent but are also looking for house spots. And I find too that people can grow into the psyche of thinking that they cannot own their own properties and at times we have to sit and counsel people that you really do not want a house spot. Looking at your income, you do not need to look at a house spot. What you need to do is to look at a Government starter unit and for the first time the idea hits that individual that the kind of income range they are dealing with is the income range where they can go into house ownership.

We must not be so bogged down in our own thoughts that we put people into categories feeling that if they come from certain areas they cannot aspire to ownership. I think that part of our role is to point out and at times a lot of people who come looking for houses to rent or land to acquire can at times find out with a little urging and a little advice that these people can be in a position to own their own house units. I think this is fundamental. Because people who live in a city environment - and the Leader of the Opposition was quite right in saying that the mentality of the country people and the mentality of the town people seem to be different - town people seem to want to rent more so, without even looking at the possibility of ownership; and I think that we have to look at urging some of the young people, especially the young people, that they can go into ownership. But I think that if we in Government start by allowing people to own their own units we will sow

the seed of ownership and bring that concept of ownership into the young generation. So I want to applaud the Government for the land acquisition and I hope we will see more of the land acquisition, and I know that we will go a long way to providing the housing needs of this country.

I thank you.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is now the custom whenever we are debating housing no matter how specific the Resolution is on the Order Paper the debate ranges far and wide. 4.05 p.m.

On a Resolution for the acquisition of land at Rices, we heard about rent arrears, shortage of artisans, housing policy on rental units, house spots, work permits; the whole range. I do not intend to respond to all, I do not intend to respond to a lot of them, because I believe that the answers to some of the points raised here today can be given and will be given at the right time and in the right place, and I do not believe that some of the things raised here need to be answered now.

I have to start, however, with the honourable Member for Christ Church West. In this debate it was very interesting when he said that Governments tend to cut the cloth to suit their pockets and in so doing they put a larger capacity on the area than they should. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is amazing what a shift from this side to that side can do for you, because it was only in 1985 and 1986 that Pondside was slated by that administration for 74 houses and the Town Planner told them that that decision to put 74 houses there was wrong, that the maximum it can hold would be 55, and this administration, when this took office in 1986 brought the number of units at Pondside down to 35. So the point that he was making is a point that has been seen by this side. They were putting 74 at Pondside, we have put 35.

The debate has gone on in a very calm and nice manner, so I do not want to be seen to be attacking the policies of the party, but I believe that when you shift from one side to the next you still have to remember what you did when you were over this side, and I think the point has to be taken there.

The other point here, Mr. Speaker, he mentioned the houses at Six Roads, which seem to him to be a bit cramped for space, as he said. I can agree that the houses seem to be a bit near to the road, but in all developments. The Chief Housing Planner will not allow a development unless it conforms to the statutory 18 feet between the centre of the road and the beginning of the house, so the houses in Six Roads are actually legally done and fall within the statutory limits.

I should like to say this. Although when you are driving towards Foursquare - it is on the right hand side - they do appear to be near the road. I do not know if it is because of the topography, because they are fairly high in the air, the land is elevated, but you will be amazed if you go into them and see the amount of land that they have behind, and that is where the land is. The people can extend to the back. They cannot come forward any more, but there is a lot of land at the back. Obviously, as a country person it is not enough land to suit a country man, because we like to keep sheep and that sort of thing. You do not have that, but you do have a lot of land at the back to expand the houses if you want to expand them backward. You cannot come forward.

The question of arrears was mentioned. I should like to say that the arrears situation has greatly improved, but one has to understand that as far as the people who are in control at the National Housing Corporation are concerned, regardless of how the arrears situation is improving, as long as there are outstanding arrears, the General Manager and the other officers will still say that the arrears situation is bad. I cannot blame them, because the ideal situation would be to get all the arrears in that you can get in, and as long as that is not the case you will hear that the arrears situation is bad. I can safely say here that the arrears situation as far as the National Housing Corporation is concerned has greatly improved and is improving all the time. That is a fact.

The shortage of artisans has been answered very well by the Acting Prime Minister. There was only one firm, as far as I can recall, that said there is a shortage of artisans and that one firm, I think I saw in the newspapers, applied for persons to come in.

I will say, however, that at the moment the construction industry, it seems to me, is almost at its limits, and in fact, as was mentioned by the Deputy Prime Minister, there is a building going up by the Police Station in Hastings where I saw an advertisement for carpenters, masons and painters, and they have now rubbed out the painters and masons but they still want carpenters.

Aside.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: The point is, and it is a fact, that the construction industry is really almost at its limit. I had an example. I went into the constituency of one of my colleagues with him and I was speaking to one of the persons who lives in his constituency. I told him I could get a job for him at one of the firms. He said "I don't want a job at any firm, I want a job at National Housing Corporation." So you would understand the position is not easy.

There was also the question of housing policy on rental units. I believe that the Government of Barbados, like Governments throughout the world, has to move away from

the provision of rental units as such. You cannot eliminate them because, as was stated, as long as the world turns, there will always be people who cannot afford their own homes, but I believe that rental units should be built only for persons who are genuinely needy. I think what is needed ** in Barbados today is to get those persons who are now living in the rental units, who are able and can afford their own homes, to move out and therefore free those units for the persons who genuinely need them. It is a difficult situation. It is not easy, because once a person becomes a tenant, and he is paying, it is difficult to move him.

I mentioned about four or five weeks ago that there is * a particular gentleman, whom I know, who owns part of Courts Mall. He has a pharmacy and about three other things which I do not remember off hand. I mentioned it and he said he is going to put his attorneys on me. I want him to put his attorneys on me. I did not say that he owed anything, I said that people like that who can own their own homes should move out and allow the National Housing *" Corporation houses to be used by needy persons, and I will say it all the time.

Aside.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: He is not the exception, there are dozens of them living in these houses. I know of one person who has an estate of over \$1 million who lives in a Government estate. I think he lives in the constituency of the honourable Member for St. Michael South East. Those are the persons that should move out and allow the needy persons to get the houses. 4.15p.m.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to speak on * everything about housing. I should just like to briefly say that in relation to the provision of house spots, this Minister and this administration have decided that we would like ideally to provide about 35 house spots in every single constituency in Barbados between now and 1991. The honourable Member for St. Michael East is making a query, but he would notice that we have just received tenders for road works in Atwell Land. **

At the moment infrastructure is being put in in Long Gap which is St. Michael North East, Six Mns and Golden Mile which are in St. Peter, Apes Hill in St. James. Tender notices have gone out in the newspapers for the other side of Apes Hill, Atwell Land, St. Michael East, Rices in St. Philip South, Valerie in St. Michael South Central, Thomas *" Gap, St. Michael West, Scarborough in Christ Church West Central, Bourne's Land, Walls Tenantry and Parish Land in Christ Church East and other areas.

The land at Parish Land - there are 73 lots and there are funds in the Estimates for developing those lots, and those will be done, I believe, in this financial year. «

In the other areas, I have gone with the representatives from those areas and we have looked at available sites and we are at the moment evaluating the site that we considered best, and it would help a lot and I would like ideally for representatives to identify areas in their constituencies, especially land owned by Government that is good for housing. As I said before, we are aiming at providing 35 house spots in each constituency between now and 1991, and the sooner we get certain information as to where the land is so that we can go and look at it, the better.

St. George South poses a special problem, because we looked at three or four different areas of land and we have to go back again because neither one of the three lots of land really meets the sort of criteria that we are looking for.

I think I have answered most of the things that need answering.

St. John. We did go to St. John as well to look at Haynes Hill and the officers in the Ministry of Housing did go through all the research in order to acquire land at Haynes Hill, but it was discovered that at Haynes Hill, most of the land was in zone 2, which means that people would have to have septic tanks, and therefore the idea of building and providing infrastructure and giving house spots would be an expensive exercise if not to the Government, to the persons who would be putting houses there, because they would have to provide themselves with septic tanks.

We have looked at other areas and as the representative for St. John says, we believe that we have found an area in St. John that is ideally suited, and the officers in Housing will be working pretty quickly on that.

Someone has been asking about St. James North. The problem with St. James North is that we looked at about three areas, and the officers in the Ministry of Housing and the persons who carry out the soil tests and things like that, are of the view that the area that is best for housing is somewhere other than what the representative believes is the best place for housing, and that is where the ball game is at the moment. Until we can settle that problem, that is where the stalemate is. We have to get that problem solved. I think the two areas are Mount Standfast and Rock Dundo, and we have to sort out that problem as to where is the best place to put these sites and services and then we will move forward.

I think, Mr. Speaker, I have covered most of the things to be answered this afternoon.

There is one other thing and it is about work permits for the Venezuelans. The Venezuelan houses were to all intents and purposes a new concept in Barbados and therefore the Venezuelans had to bring in persons from

Venezuela who knew about that system in order to teach Barbadians how to operate the system. Some of them are still here, some of them have gone back, but there are not many. That is why the Venezuelans came, because it was a new concept in housing for Barbados.

As regards Rices which is in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, St. Philip generally has suffered for a long time, whether it is St. Philip North or St. Philip South. They have suffered for years and it is about time that something is done for St. Philip.

With those few remarks, Sir, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: It is now Question Time.

QUESTION RE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Mr. SPEAKER: Question No. 69 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. J. J. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, Question No. 69 reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of Transport, Works and Telecommunications: In view of the continual and exceptionally heavy traffic using Highway 1, will the Minister consider the introduction of a pedestrian crossing between the 2 bus stops on opposite sides of the main road in the vicinity of the District E - Holatown Magistrate's Court, so as to improve the safety of persons crossing the road in that area?

Hon. Dr. D. G. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 69 is as follows:-

The need for a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of the District "E" Holatown Magistrate's Court was recognised and the crossing has been provided.

QUESTION RE LAWRENCE T. GAY MEMORIAL SCHOOL

Mr. SPEAKER: Parliamentary Question No. 83 stands in the name of the honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, Parliamentary Question No. 83 reads as follows:

To ask the Minister of Education and Culture: 1. (i) Is the Minister aware that: (a) there are insufficient places at the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School for school beginners who live in the areas surrounding the school and that (b) the parents of some such children who live in areas around the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School are obliged to send their children to other primary schools because of a shortage of places at that School, thereby incurring additional costs of transportation for their children and for themselves in accompanying their children to school, and suffering consequential inconvenience in attending their employment? (ii) If the answers to the above are in the affirmative, will the Minister give the assurance that those matters will engage his immediate attention? 2. Will the Minister state whether there is an official catchment area or zone for children attending primary schools and, in particular, the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School, and if there is such a catchment area or zone, the number of children in the 4/5 years age group attending the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School and residing respectively within and outside the catchment area or zone of the school? 3. If there is no catchment area or zone, will the Minister consider initiating such a provision?

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 83 is as follows:

1.(a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. There is adequate accommodation at the L.T. Gay Memorial School for the children from the surrounding districts who wish to attend the school.

2. There is no official catchment area or zone for children attending the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School or any other primary school.

3. Heads of primary schools adhere closely to the practice of giving priority of admission

to pupils living in the districts immediately surrounding the primary schools.

The matter of catchment areas is under consideration.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, as a supplementary, can the Minister say therefore why children of the age of five years, have not been admitted to the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School from within the St. Michael North East constituency. 4.25 p.m.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, at the Lawrence T. Gay School, there are indeed 70 children between the ages of 4 and 5, 88 children between the ages of 5 and 6 and 116 between the ages of 6 and 7 and in the case of the Lawrence T. Gay, approximately 99% of the children enrolled at that school are from the surrounding areas of Spooner's Hill, Bush Hall, Tudor Bridge, Fairfield, Green Hill, Codrington Hill, Station Hill, Waterford and parts of Bank Hall.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE: Will the Minister investigate the matter brought to his attention for the non-admission of two children at the age of 5?

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the non-admission but that is not an educational problem, Mr. Speaker, that is a legal problem under the Laws of Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: End of Question Time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, that is the end of business for today and I move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 25, 1988 at 12 o'clock noon.

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

The question that the House do now stand adjourned until Tuesday, October 25, 1988 at 12 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 4.30 p.m.

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