

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 - 91

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 23rd May, 1989.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12.15 p.m. o'clock on Tuesday, May 23, 1989.

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. WEEKES, G.C.M., J.P., (Speaker)
His Honour J. J. PAYNE, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., (Econ.), J.P.,
(Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Hon. B. M. TAITT, B.A.(Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.
(Hons.), (Minister of Health)
Hon. P.M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Deputy Prime Minister, 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. N. K. SIMMONS, (Minister of Employment, Labour Relations, and Community Development)
Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M.
Hon. C. V. WALKER, (Minister of Education and Culture)
Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, J.P., (Chairman of Committees)
Mr. E. BOURNE
Hon. W. W. HALL, G.C.M., H.B.M. (Minister of Tourism and Sports)
Mr. C. A. NEBLETT, B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the Civil Service)
Mr. C. LeR. TROTMAN, M.A.
Mr. R. L. MORRIS, B.A., Cert. Ed.
Mr. P. J. M. MILLER
Mr. R. P. BYER, LL.B., L.E.C.
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B.

Prayers were led by Rev. Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, 26th April, 1989.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Minutes of the proceedings of this Honourable Chamber for the Meeting that was held on Wednesday, 26th April, 1989 be taken as read and confirmed.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Legal Affairs and by the command of the Cabinet, I lay the following Papers:

The Annual Reports of the Community Legal Services Commission for the years 1984 - 1987.

and:

The Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the death of Michael Agard, 1986.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay:

The Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer for the year 1986.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce, I am commanded to lay:

The Annual Report of the Barbados Export Promotion Corporation at the 31st March, 1988.

Hon. N. K. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay:

The Instruments adopted at the 75th Session of the International Labour Conference held in Geneva in June of 1988.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before we move on to Government Business, I want to move, Sir, and I do so move the suspension of Standing Orders numbers 6, 16, 18, 20, 42 (5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of this day's sitting, Sir.

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

The question that those Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of the day's sitting was put and was resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the instant Order of the Day. Order No. 1.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND BY THE CROWN OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT FARMERS, ST. THOMAS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, the whole question of school construction, rehabilitation and expansion involved in the rationalization of primary school education, accommodation and improving accommodation at Government secondary schools, this whole question has been discussed in here on many occasions.

This project is co-financed by the Government of Barbados, the World Bank and the IADB. This is just one other in the number of acquisitions that the Ministry of Housing and Lands will need to get approval from Parliament in order to construct these new schools.

Mr. Speaker, this new school will facilitate the amalgamation I think of Hillaby and Turners Hall. The land was acquired from Farmers Plantation in St. Thomas and it is approximately 9 200 square metres.

As I said the whole question of these new schools, rehabilitation and so forth have been discussed on many occasions before.

I beg to move that this Resolution to acquire this parcel of land at Farmers, St. Thomas for the construction of this new school do now pass.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to second that. But in so doing, I should just like to be brief.

This as the Minister stated is a continuation of the acquisition of land for the construction of these schools. But I should like to make a special comment about this particular school at Farmers because it involves the movements of students from Hillaby, as well as Turners Hall. I should like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the students, teachers and parents of the Hillaby School.

About a year ago, I visited that school and held meetings with the parents and the teachers. We discovered at that time that the parents, although they were totally in favour of the movement recognizing the small number of students in the thirties to be exact, that it was not economical to run a school with those numbers. They also realized that being one of the older buildings about three feet from the highway and I think adjacent on one side to a house about another four feet, and on the other side about five feet, we literally were looking at a one room situation where the parents were concerned about the condition of the building. They recognized that it was not economical for the Government to spend money to repair that school.

We placed an Acting Headteacher there. We found that parents who were aware of the pending amalgamation, some of them had already moved their students and had sent them down to Sharon and other places and the numbers were in fact low. They however agreed, as part of their community spirit and I should like to commend them for this, Mr. Speaker, to assist in the renovation of the building until such time as the new school is built. Indeed, they took on a community effort. And that community effort involved the formation, for the first time at that school on its way out, of a PTA.

Now what is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that last week, some students from that particular school had the opportunity to sit the Common Entrance Examination. I did a preliminary investigation on that school yesterday and I am happy to report that 75% of the students at that school gained over 66%, indeed the lowest mark at that particular school. Because of the community involvement that they were able to come together and perform despite the conditions. As I said, I would only like to compliment them in seconding this Resolution. Thank you, Sir. 12.40p.m.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I have to catch your eye, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister of Education for the compliments which he has paid to the staff, parents, and teachers at Hillaby Mixed. It is precisely because that school has been labouring under poor physical conditions for so many years that the decision was taken to amalgamate Turners Hall and Hillaby Mixed to provide more commodious and congenial surroundings for the students to study and to take account of the fact that the school population at Hillaby was declining, whereas at the other school the population seemed to have been increasing. There has been a rationalization of several of these schools and what has come before us today is only a continuation of the policy that started under the Barbados Labour Party and led to the negotiations of the external finance for the amalgamation of the school, Sir. The Prime Minister himself is looking at me. He will recall that he brought a Resolution in here previously when he was Minister of Education in regard to these same 2 schools and we had thought then that a site might have been in order because of the present location which is a little off the beaten track behind Farmers Plantation and perhaps there could have been a site nearer the main Hillaby Road. But I think on reflection that this site is perhaps a better site because the other road is winding, the ground is undulating and right next to this site there exists a playing field which has been developed by the National Sports Council which has

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, we have a playing field at Farmers. The Barbados Labour Party brought that playing field to Farmers. It has been well looked after by the National Sports Council and I will compliment the youngsters from Hillaby United for having won the Fourth Division Cup. It just shows what can happen when basic facilities are put into an area to give expression to the talents that may be latent within the community.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Something is happening in Passage Road too, Sir. The Minister of Health will be glad to hear. But even though, Sir, as we compliment the Government for the formalization -of this procedure which had started certainly when I was the Attorney General because I visited the site with the then Minister of Education, Miss Billie Miller, and approved and recommended it for acquisition, I think the Minister ought to be aware that Sharon School was a precursor to this type of project.

I think that is what they call a 425 school. Right. But the Minister is aware of the point I am going to make that Sharon School, a comparatively new school which was

opened in early 1986, already is bursting at the "seams because of the catchment area because it has a bigger catchment area than Hillaby. But the fact is that we need more space at Sharon. I think fortunately the type of construction lends itself to further expansion without doing violence to the original architecture. You can add on a building here and there which will blend and harmonize with what presently exists.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am told that it was bad BLP planning. It had nothing before that for 15 years under the Democratic Labour Party. It had to rely - you see I was not going to make this contention. They had to rely on the good offices of the Sharon Moravian Church to use their little school next door.

Well, the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister not being too familiar with St. Thomas is not aware that all of a sudden within the last 2 years there has been a great expansion in the housing stock in St. Thomas and more is going to come. I think the Government wanted to acquire some land or, in fact, has acquired some land at Cane Gardens. That is right for housing development and that will be a catchment area for the Sharon School. Those Honourable Members who go up Shop Hill will see before you start to make the steep climb into Shop Hill on the right-hand side what is called Edgehill Heights which has developed with some fantastic housing, lovely properties going up everyday. It is all well and good to say that planning has not been proper, but the Government and the World Bank had 2 premises on which they operated. There were some schools which were called 425 and there was another type of school the Minister of Education would know which allowed for a few more. But I mean I suppose that technically Sharon could easily accommodate 800, having regard to the kind of development that is going on in and around there and that is being planned for the future. So I do not blame the past Government or condemn them in any way on the score of poor planning, Sir.

I did have occasion, Mr. Speaker, to mention the fact that this project had been planned during the election of 1986 and I say that because an interesting comment was made last week Friday by a regular columnist in the Nation Newspaper to the effect that if a politician has special inside information about what his Party's plans are, to use that as a Member of Government is to somehow contribute to an election being unfair and unfree. I would not say it boggles the mind. 12.50 p.m.

I will not say it boggles the mind, it certainly is stretching logic, commonsense and rationality to breaking point for anyone to argue that in an election any of the Ministers of Government is not entitled to tell the

electorate that my Ministry is planning to do so and so in this constituency or that constituency. I have never heard that classification. I have never suffered the stricture from anyone in or outside of politics that because I knew, for example, when I was Chairman of the Sports Council, that we were changing the lights at the Stadium and we had hoped to recycle the old lights by using them at hard courts around the country, that to have said that, and to have said to the people in Holy Innocents that when the lights are taken down such as are reusable would be used to light hard courts, including Holy Innocents, that I had an unfair advantage and I ought not to have said it. Therefore, the bye-election in which I said that was unfair and unfree.

Laughter,

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We laugh, but that was written, you know, by someone to whom the Democratic Labour Party presented an honour for his scholarship and his writings in 1986 before the election.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, by Mr. Gladstone Holder. I want to make the point, Sir, that I really do not see that there is anything for a politician to be ashamed of if he has knowledge as to what his party is doing in his constituency to make use of it. There is absolutely nothing wrong with it. I am not saying to make up something like the St. John Development Plan, I am not saying to concoct anything, I am saying genuine information.

I want to come back to St. Thomas, Sir, and to assure the Minister of Housing, who has brought this Resolution, that as he knows I have written him about three areas for housing acquisitions that we should look at, and I want to say that I am going to contact him to do a site visit within the next ten days or so, if it is convenient for the Minister.

There is one particular area of St. Thomas, however, which is crying out for attention and I would urge the Minister of Transport and Works - I am not going to stray too far - to address it. It is the area known as Forty Acre, which is ideal for housing and which can be acquired by the Government for housing development, but it has none of the services. It is just west or north west of Glendale. It is a terrible road, no water to speak of, individual strings of pipes, no road. I have written the Minister of Transport and Works and he would not even reply to me.

Aside.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Oh, I will go on a site visit with him. I am grateful, Sir, but that is really a bad area of Barbados where the people are denuded of some of the basic facilities. It is not a big district, it probably has about 30 or 40 houses, but it is a district with great potential for

development, so I am glad to see that the Minister of Transport and Works is also willing to do a site visit with us. I am grateful for that response.

I am happy, Sir, that this project is coming on stream. I think it had been planned for 1987, but then one has to reschedule and I hope that it will start, if not within this financial year, certainly by the next financial -year, so that the children of Hillaby Mixed and Turners Hall will have a lovely new building in which to study.

As interesting as this project is, I could not help but wonder if the Barbados Labour Party did not have the foresight to do so many projects in its time, what would have been shown to His Excellency the President of Guyana. He went to the Cave, travelled on the Tom Adams Highway, Arawak, Parliament Buildings...

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, and the Honourable Member knows very well I enjoy some of the exploits, but I will suggest to him there is ample opportunity...

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I can't talk about Frank Collymore Hall, Bussa Statue and those things, Sir? The Fishing Harbour and Ilaro Court, Sir? All right, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: And nothing to do with Farmers.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I acknowledge your ruling, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: And therefore, having acknowledged that, then you are likely to be breaching the rules.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I have gone a little too far, Sir. I am the first to admit that.

Mr. SPEAKER: So I would think the Honourable Member will have ample time to expand on those areas.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, Sir. I have them in the record. Thank you very much.

Mr. C. A. NEBLETT: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a small point with regard to this acquisition and give my wholehearted support to this as it would meansome improved facilities for the pupils of the Turners Hall Primary School who at the moment are taken from the Hillaby and Turners Hall areas and some from White Hill.

I would hope that the planners, who would be drawn not only from the Ministry of Education but probably the Ministry of Transport and Works, recognising the narrow winding roads that the children will have to be travelling, would at least consider the provision of sidewalks that would at least ensure the safety of these young children that will be covering from the Hillaby area to Farmers.

The other point I would like to make is that currently you have an intake at Turners Hall of five year olds going right through to the 11 plus stage, the 11 age range. With the distance for the five year olds, I am hoping that some form of infant facility could be retained at Turners Hall to help the younger ones whereby they would move on to the newer school around the age of seven or so. This would indeed help the parents to a reasonable extent. In fact, they would be happy to know that they can keep an eye on these very young children until they mature and develop some road sense.

With that, I hope that these points will be taken into consideration.

Thank you.
1.00p.m.

Mr. R. P. BYER: Sir, I crave your indulgence to raise a matter which in my opinion would fall within the ambit of the Resolution, in that it would have to do with land use policy.

Recently the nation was brought face to face with, if I may say so, a confrontation between the residents of a district in my constituency, Dash Valley, and the Richmond Foundation about the establishment of a half way house there.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now the Honourable Member, had he made that a side issue, might have been allowed some latitude, but the substantive Resolution deals entirely with acquiring land at Farmers in St. Thomas. Now St. George is near to St. Thomas, it is true, but I do not think it can stretch from Farmers and a school building to a half way house in St. George. I think you would be asking me to bend the rules too much; so I would prefer that the issue be raised at a rather more convenient time rather than to expand on it on this Resolution to acquire land at Farmers to build a school.

Mr. R. P. BYER: Whilst I am not questioning your ruling, I was looking at it within the context of land use policy and this is essentially what the debate is about in a wider sense.

Mr. SPEAKER: But the Resolution is specific.

Mr. R. P. BYER: Very well, Sir.

Mr. J. J. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a very brief contribution to this Resolution. I believe that having heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas raise various points in support of the Resolution, I was expecting that he would compliment the Government on their policy in pursuing a direction in this educational programme which does not bring politics into the whole policy.

We note here, Mr. Speaker, that the Government is moving ahead and acquiring land in St. Thomas which indeed is an area which is represented by the Honourable Member for that constituency, and we know that this is part of a whole programme which Government is setting about not only in St. Thomas but in various other parts of the country. I believe that the fact that we are able to give St. Thomas some priority goes to show that the Government takes its policy with regard to education very seriously.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is unwittingly misleading the House. I say unwittingly because he was not even considered as a candidate when this matter was negotiated with the World Bank and the site identified when the Barbados Labour Party was in power.

Mr. J. J. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I will make the point a little more explanatory that he will understand it more clearly. What I am trying to suggest, Mr. Speaker, is that if the Barbados Labour Party was administering the programme, they may have made some amendments in view of the fact that that particular constituency of St. Thomas is not held by the party which is in power, but we, recognising that the Barbados Labour Party holds the St. Thomas constituency, are still prepared to give St. Thomas some priority. As a matter of fact they have given it priority over St. James, because he may not know but there are also plans to build a school in St. James at St. Boniface. The point I am making is that I am pleased to see that the Government is not putting politics into the matter in that they can look after the Barbados Labour Party even though they are in Opposition and follow their programme.

I think that point has to be forcibly made, Mr. Speaker, because whenever we see this kind of thing, I think it must be highlighted, and I think that the Government must be given some credit.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, again the Honourable Member is misleading the House. It was agreed in time for the 1986/87 Estimates in the submission to the World Bank that St. Boniface and Black Bess would be amalgamated into a new school at Black Bess holding 300.1 will pass over the document from the Ministry of Education to show the Honourable Member.

Mr. J. J. PAYNE: The final point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that I think the Honourable Member made a very valid point when he suggested that the whole plan for that particular school and so on be discussed in the light of a visit and so on, because I believe that many of the schools, including the one at St. Thomas which is now being replaced, have served the educational development of this country for perhaps more than 150 years. We have to recognise that this new institution which will be constructed will be required to serve perhaps for another 200 years or

so. It is important for us to look and take into consideration the long term service that will be involved. I believe that if we construct a school in St. Thomas or any other part of the Island in 1989, we should look in terms of that school serving the country for another 200 years or so, and we should take into consideration all those factors which will be relevant not only in 1989, but in perhaps 2089. This is a consideration no doubt that I believe the Ministry of Education should give serious consideration to.

I know, for example, that some of the new schools which have been constructed have made provision for small auditoriums. I know that in some districts in St. Thomas still, Sir, there are communities where there are no community centres and people still in 1989 resort to schools to use the facilities whether it is the playing field or the school hall for various functions. I believe that in concluding the plans some consideration should be given to the long term service of these institutions. In making this contribution, no doubt I will look forward to the time when I can speak on the Resolution for St. James North. Thank you very much.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I think any Resolution relating to education is one that would occupy the very close attention of Honourable Members both because of the place that education as a subject holds for this Honourable House and for our country, but also from the point of view of the interest which Honourable Members may show in developments as they relate to the constituencies which they may from time to time represent. 1.10p.m.

I wish to urge all Honourable Members to give their support to this particular Resolution, not on any partisan basis but because it is in the interest of the children, the parents and guardians, the teachers and all those in this particular area who may now and hereafter use the facilities that may be provided.

It is a development that is desirable because of the difficulties being experienced at the existing schools and in order to improve the facilities and thereafter the admission which those who attend may get from the improved facilities.

Successive Governments have looked at this matter very carefully to ensure that facilities are located in the most appropriate places and that they take into account developments at the time and developments some time in the future.

Planning, where it is development planning, or physical planning, is a very difficult undertaking because there are many problems which it may be difficult for one to foresee or to forecast especially when we are talking about demographic developments or we are talking about the movement of peoples, the development of one area as

opposed to another area, new housing developments and related issues.

It is not at all an easy task and I believe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas did indicate some of the problems involved in planning because you may plan a school, let us say, at Sharon, and then discover that because of developments some of which may have been foreseen, and others which may not have been foreseen, it is necessary from time to time to make adjustments which were not in the original plans.

Even when we build new facilities - let us take the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic built for a certain number and, perhaps, even before it was completed there was need for additional facilities so that you may have temporary or wooden classrooms attached to a permanent structure even before the structure is 10 years old in response to additional needs.

I think when we are talking about educational planning, development planning, physical planning, we have to be understanding and there is no point trying to make political points, or cheap political points on issues which I believe should be above that kind of level of discussion when we are looking at the total national interest.

The amalgamation of schools has been going on in this country as far as my recollection goes for a very long time in the days of the old Conservative administration, in the days of the first Barbados Labour Party Government, in the days of the first Democratic Labour Party Government, and then in the days of the second Barbados Labour Party Government and now under the dispensation of this Democratic Labour Party Government. It is very difficult to try to establish paternity for projects, very difficult.

We may talk about a fishing harbour but that may be part of a development for the provision of improved facilities for fishing which might have been foreseen by the Democratic Labour Party itself when we started the planning for the development at the main fishing district at Oistins.

The Barbados Labour Party Government came and finished the proposal so how do you talk about paternity in this case? I do not think they even had the decency to invite anybody from the Democratic Labour Party administration to the opening of that particular facility but I do not think we have to make that kind of point.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am just seeking to put this whole matter in perspective when we are talking about paternity of these projects.

To talk about the highway, all of us know that recorded in the Physical Development Plans of this country was the highway along the St. Barnabas way, going not quite to the airport...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am talking about the paternity of these projects in relation to the acquisition of land for their development and so on. I regret I cannot even come via Dash Valley for this but let us understand these things when we are talking about paternity.

As far as the provision of primary schools is concerned, we have to take into account that Governments in this country have always been very interested in the development of education. Sometimes the vision has been clear. Sometimes it has not been that clear. Sometimes we have lost our way and sometimes there have been more vigour and dynamism shown.

I know at one time the argument used to be advanced, in spite of the evidence, that attention was not being placed to primary schools.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am not talking about your misrepresentation of the educational developments at the time but we had primary schools like Deacons, Grazettes, St. Christopher, St. Bartholomew's, major extensions at Christ Church Girls, and other places which were done.

Good Shepherd School was started a long time ago not to mention the secondary schools as well so I think we should try to get away from this particular line and recognize that it is the responsibility of each Government in accordance with their own vision and in accordance with the need to seek to make the provision.

Previous Democratic Labour Party Governments sought to do those developments out of our own resources and the schools, a number of them, most of those which I have mentioned, were out of our own resources. Some of them were in collaboration with the Government of Canada, three schools, I believe, but the others out of our own resources.

There came a time when it was felt that a loan from international agencies would push this together and this is what this particular acquisition is in relation to for carrying out the further development and implementation of a programme that has been laid down and this is what continuity in Government is all about. Government is about continuity.

Now, we are seeking to provide the school at Farmers. The playing field is there. I remember that playing field very well because we had that particular playing field and we had a playing field at land at Holy Innocents which we acquired to provide facilities and we had some quotations which would be almost humorous if I gave the figures which were presented for the levelling and development of those playing fields, both at Farmers and at Holy Innocents. 1.20p.m.

But we were able to get them provided for the people of those areas because of our interest in ensuring that such facilities whether they are playing facilities or educational facilities are provided for the benefit of the people of the area. It is part of the policy of this Government that we should develop nursery schools, nursery education so that as from early an age as feasible, 3 years old or thereabouts, we may be able to provide those initial educational experiences so that our very young children can be exposed to this whole process of education from the earliest possible moment so that they may get a head start.

The point made by the Member for St. Andrew is a valid one and it is one that we will be taking into account to ensure that the very young children do not have to walk very long distances in order to obtain their education.

I thought, Mr. Speaker, that this particular Resolution is one that is deserving of the support of all sides in this Honourable Chamber and I really do not think that it is one that we should seek to make any political capital out of because if we seek to do that, the Debate could go on and on.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 2.

ORDER NO. 2 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF PARCELS OF
LAND SITUATE AT MASON HALL STREET,
ST. MICHAEL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF
THE NEW ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Order No. 2 was called - To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Mason Hall Street, St. Michael for the construction of the new St. Mary's Primary School.

Hon. H. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Speaker, this is again a Resolution for parliamentary approval for land to build a new primary school, a new St. Mary's Primary School. It is under the same World Bank and IADB joint venture with Government and most of the things that I said about the other acquisition can be said about this one.

The only other thing I need to say here is that there are six parcels of land that we need to acquire, but we are having difficulty with one parcel. Therefore this Resolution seeks parliamentary approval for five. When the slight difficulty is sorted out with the other one, we will come back to Parliament to straighten out that.

I do know about the problems at the St. Mary's Primary School because I have seen the newspapers with the photographs last year when the rain falls, so I believe this school is needed pretty urgently.

. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass. Hon.

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

Mr. P. J. M. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Minister in closing said, you have to call it the virtually rebuilding of St. Mary's School which, if it goes by the original plan will amalgamate the Infants' School and the Primary School. I assume that that is still the plan. That is in fact part of the World Bank Project.

As far back as 1986 coming up to the General Election, the persons whose children attend those schools were promised that the school would start in the 1986-87 year. I am not accusing the present Administration of having made that promise. That promise was made by the then Minister of Education.

Since then, I have had a situation where I have repeatedly asked at least two different Ministers of Education as to when the project would start. Because one got the impression having heard from that former Minister of Education that everything was in place that it was only a matter of getting started with the project. Well clearly, the project never got started. We are now in 1989.

One would have thought really that this project would have been given priority given the conditions at the two schools, conditions for instance at the Infants' School, apart from the fact that it is in a very dangerous location traffic wise for those little children. One only has to come around the wall there by St. Mary's School and see the danger that those children are in, because the steps of the Infants' School end up right on the street. When children come off those steps, they are right in the street as it were. Mason Hall Street is a very busy street. There are a lot of minibuses going through there. The Honourable Member for St. James North has a place on that street and he knows what I am speaking of, that it is an extremely dangerous street for children. One must take into consideration that a large percentage of those children come from adjacent areas like the New Orleans, Chapman's Lane and so. If they did

not have to attend that school and cross that busy street, in fact they could just go across what is known as Murphy Pasture and they would be in a relatively safe area, traffic wise.

In addition to that, the condition of the building at the Infants' School, if I can start with that one first. The building is in a dilapidated state. I am not pointing any fingers at anyone. It is in a dilapidated state. It has been so for a long time. Some work had been done to it in terms of - the Honourable Minister of Education had promised that maintenance would have been done and that has been done. But I am sure everyone can remember the photograph in the newspaper last year during the rainy season where people were carrying their children to school on their backs. It floods in that area. You know, we are quickly approaching that same rainy season again. I hope we would not have to provide some bateaux, if we do not get this other one off the ground.

As far as the Primary School is concerned, it has long ago outlived its usefulness, the building is in a deplorable state. There is a small mezzanine floor which looks like any day now it is going to come down. The stairs are falling apart. The Honourable Prime Minister himself knows the condition of that building because he has addressed meetings in that school building in St. Mary's, and I know that he himself was concerned about the condition of the building. And he himself at that time had said that something is being done and it will definitely be rebuilt. So I am very happy to know that at least today in dealing with this Resolution in acquiring this other piece of land that we are no more hopeful that something is in fact happening with the St. Mary's Primary School. To that end, one would hope that the Ministry of Housing and Lands would be expedient in trying to get this whole matter resolved so that construction of the school can take place in the shortest time possible.

But there are a few other things that one has to look at when planning these things. As I said, I do not know what the current plan is for that school. The only plan I know of is the one that was enunciated by the last Administration, and that was that it was to go as far back as Murphy Pasture. For what reason, I do not know. I do not see the need for the school to be that big. But if that is still so, one would wonder what would happen to the hard courts that exist now in that area. If it is that that is going to be encompassed as part of the playing area for the school, then that would be okay I am sure with the residents of the area and the people who have to use those hard courts. If not, then one would hope that the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Housing and Lands would want to tell us where they are going to put the new hardcourts because they are two very good basketball teams in the area and they will need to be able to continue to use those hardcourts. 1.30p.m.

Even in spite of the fact that there will be courts going up in Passage Road, I think it will be a bit far for them and we will still want to use the ones down there in Murphy Pasture.

I am saying that if you could incorporate those hard courts because a lot of expense has been gone into in putting down the hard courts. The only thing we are still waiting for is the lights which the Honourable Minister of Sports, not the present Minister of Sports, a previous Minister had promised to put those lights in. If we are to take the Honourable Prime Minister's word that Government continues, I will expect this Minister of Sports to honour the promise of the last Minister of Sports.

But seriously, I think that we should want to look at that play area. It could possibly be incorporated as a part of the school itself and, of course, with the persons responsible for the school understanding that the school will be used by the community as happens with the Westbury School. That happens at the Westbury School and it seems to be a very good arrangement which works very well. There has been no vandalism that I know of. The community uses the courts at the school and they are still in very good condition after many years of use.

One last point I would like to make on this short intervention, Mr. Speaker, is in the area of primary schools in that constituency in the City of Bridgetown. The Wesley Hall School is one that one would hope that something is going to be done with. The condition of the Infants School is not that bad and I would commend the Ministry of Education since I have noticed that they have finally started to do something about the toilet block at that school. It was in a terrible state.' It was not fit for human use. I have noticed that they have gone in and have started repairing and refurbishing the toilet block at Wesley Hall School and that is commendable. But one would hope that they would take a look at the main building of the primary school at Wesley Hall. That main building to a large extent is in a very similar condition to the St. Mary's Infants and Primary School. I believe it is because of the type of building that obtained then and the fact that it really does not suit what you are using it for now. One would think that we could take a look at that and the other two-storey building at Wesley Hall. I would like to draw it to the attention of the Honourable Minister of Education once more that the flooring needs to be looked at and refurbished, because I believe that sometimes when some of the little children have a problem the ones downstairs get a problem from what seeps through the floor from upstairs. So I would like to ask that that be looked at.

With that short intervention, Sir, I have no hesitation at all in supporting the Resolution to acquire this land. Thank you.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not going to be long, Sir. But we have spoken of the Second World Bank Project and the fact that these 2 schools that we have dealt with today are part of that Second World Bank Project, I think that we need to set it down in the record properly what we are talking, Sir, in this Second World Bank Project. In March 1986, Members who were then in the House were provided with a document setting out all of the work of the Ministry of Education to help with the preparation of Estimates and at Pages 84 and 85 of that document the aims and objectives and the components of the Second World Bank Project were encapsulated, Sir. I think that we need to remind ourselves because I am not thinking of any political capital. Let me assure the Prime Minister that I am not making political capital out of Education. We are dealing with children's minds principally.

Sir, the project comprises, because I do not think there has been much alteration in the basic components maybe in emphasis or priority but not in basic components, two secondary schools for redevelopment and extension, one new secondary school - no site identified - to cater for 1200 pupils, 10 primary schools for which St. Mary's and the Farmers School are but two from an amalgamation of 21 then existing schools, extension of the Barbados Community College to provide Advance Vocational Studies in Industrial Electronics, Health Sciences and Applied Arts and Crafts, one Management/Pedagogical Complex for the Ministry of Education and Culture, and 3 Skills Training Centres for the National. Those were to be the First Phase of the project.

The Second Phase and the other component included provision of technical assistance and training for about 1500 teachers to improve the teaching of reading and writing. Secondly, the rationalization of the teaching of special subjects in secondary schools, upgrading and expanding of training facilities at Samuel Jackman Prescod, improving the data processing capability of the manpower Research and Statistical Unit of the Ministry of Labour, technical assistance and training of 150 managers and 500 school teachers for improvement in educational planning and educational management and, finally, the provision for a study on the possible adoption of cost recovery mechanisms in order to reduce recurrent costs in education and training.

The primary schools to be amalgamated are these, Sir:

St. Mary's Infants and Primary to be amalgamated into St. Mary's with a capacity of 420.

St. Augustine's Boys and Girls and St. Matthew's to be amalgamated as St. Augustine's for 390.

St. Stephen's Junior and St. Stephen's Infants is to be called St. Stephen's with 750.

St. Matthias Boys and Girls as St. Matthias for 390.

Speightstown Boys and St. Peter's Girls, the school would be called Speightstown with 240.

Mount Tabor and Cherry Grove to become Mount Tabor for 390.

Bayley's, Shrewsbury, St. Catherine as Bayley's for 420.

St. Barnabas and Black Bess as Black Bess for 300.

Selah and StSwithin's as Selah for 360.

Hillaby and Turners Hall as Hillaby for 360...giving a total of 4,020. It was fully expected that amalgamation would achieve a certain economy and optimize the use of school plant and resources.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We have no quarrel that the programme that was outlined in the Estimates of March 1986 is being continued and carried on - no quarrel with that at all, Sir. But I know the Prime Minister was being a little bit facetious when he was saying that we should not seek to make political capital and distort things, Sir. I heard part of his speech in St. Andrew on Sunday reproduced on the radio yesterday morning on CBC and you would think that the Barbados Labour Party did nothing in the 10 years - your speech at St. Andrew on Sunday. Part of it was on CBC and he who is now pleading with us not to make political capital and not to distort, Sir, bowled from down there with a ball that came with the back of the arm.

Asides.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But he will be suitably answered, Sir. I am not going to stray today, Sir. He was really on a political setting and talking to the party faithful, so I have to allow for some of that kind of bowling, Sir. Do not let us get into what the Barbados Labour Party did in St. James. He did not distort. He bowled fast and fiery according to today's newspaper. 1.40p.m.

He is a new person. He was bowling fast and furious. I am not going to worry to answer the Prime Minister in any detail about Oistins. He bowled one today about Oistins, but he forgets the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto of 1966. You used to hear about the tale of two cities and all the towns and all of that that they coined. Oistins redevelopment was one, as it is today. We only wanted the opportunity to get into Government to do it.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It was not

Oistin, it was when they were going to bring a sea up to St. George. The tale of two cities is about the Glebe. The Barbados Labour Party had decided to develop St. George and we talked about the tale of two cities then.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, just a few brief comments. The Honourable Member for the City, who is not in his seat, raised a couple of questions on the design. I would like to assure him that the new design has been completed and all of the issues raised by the residents vis-a- «* vis the flooding, et cetera. The consultants have already been appointed, the plans are completed and the contracts have already been issued for the preparation and construction of the school. Indeed, I will invite him to either visit the Ministry or he may visit the Project Office and get first hand knowledge of the present design.

As far as Wesley Hall is concerned, I would like him to be assured that the problem there will be eased with the ^ new St. Stephen's School, which I think is in the constituency served by Your Honour, and of course the other raised by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew which has broad implications for the whole community in terms of ."3 nursery school. It is generally known that we intend to convert the old St. Stephen's School into a nursery school.

I would just. like to reassure this House that the document read by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas *** was valid at that time. The Agreement was not signed, however, and there had to be further negotiations and modifications, and part of the whole Agreement entailed a programme adjustment. For instance, when you mentioned numbers, when we look in terms of forward planning, taking into consideration the changes in the various demographic areas and the catchment areas, we have decided that we will not go with any 390 schools, as was mentioned in that document, but the minimum we have for the schools is 420. So we have made provision for at least ** one additional classroom wherever we were building the schools.

Indeed, wherever possible, we looked into the whole question of community involvement and the design -starting with St. Matthias and St. Augustine " incorporates a covered area from building to building so that we can have community involvement, and also take care of students within these schools from the elements which we know ^ come up in early September.

Aside.

Hon. C. V. WALKER: Why is St. Augustine more advanced? You will have to ask the contractors and the Project Office that.

Mr. Speaker, I think those were the main points raised. I would like to state, however, so that we have for the ^

record, lest that becomes the document, that part of the adjustment Package 1 which is now in progress, as raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, is Speightstown, Selah, St. Matthias, St. Augustine and Queen's College. I will not go into furniture procurement, because that deals with all the schools.

Package 2, Mount Tabor, St. Mary's, Bayley's and Wotton Secondary.

Package 3, St. Stephen's, St. Boniface, Hillaby and the reference work at Springer. Also Community College. But these are not new schools, the additional work as raised, but the Skills Training Centres are all in Package 3.

So that that record is not made the official document, I thought I would just for the record clear that up.

Mr. Speaker, I think we will be dealing with Resolutions of this nature for the next two months or so. I do not see the necessity for us to be going over this each time we meet in here, but if Honourable Members so desire they can do it. We are going to be coming all the time with these Resolutions. If one were to check back one will find that most of the information being given here today was already given whenever we spoke of Education. Let us get together and get the students in the proper mood, get the parents going, get the country moving, look forward to what is going on in terms of the response from the parents as it relates to the whole question of education, especially as we look now at the whole structure of the transfer of students from primary to secondary schools. Let us get the country moving and get the youth on the way to a future Barbados.

I thank you, Sir.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, that ends Government Business today.

Someone is making an enquiry about lunch. Should I make a statement about the lunch?

Mr. SPEAKER: If you want to you can make that statement.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I have been authorised, I have the permission of the Speaker, to say that lunch today for all those members who want to avail themselves of the opportunity will be served at the Pelican Restaurant, which is I am sure well known to Honourable Members, the reason being that what has been the traditional lunch room - for the past few years is being converted to other purposes, and what is now being put up as a temporary lunch room is not yet ready and may not be ready now for a little while, so that we will have to seek other means or ways of accommodating members for lunch. I hope that is satisfactory to members.

At this point I move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 6th June, 1989 at 12 o'clock noon.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 1.50p.m.

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