
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 – 96

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 14, 1992

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 12:15 p.m. o'clock.

PRESENT

His Honour L. A. WEEKES, G.C.M., J.P., (Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.),
J.P., (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic
Affairs and Minister for the Civil Service)

Mr. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B., (Leader of
the Opposition)

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 Public Works, Communications and
Transportation and Leader of the House)

Hon. M. A. KING, Q.C., LL.B., (Attorney General
and Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., J.P.,
(Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)

Mr. H. A. BLACKMAN, B.Sc. (Econ.)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, J.P., (Chairman of
Committees)

Hon. E. E. GREAVES, G.C.M., B.A., Ed.M.,
(Minister of Housing and Lands)

Hon. W. W. HALL, G.C.M., H.R.M., (Minister of
Tourism and Sports)

Mr. R. L. MORRIS, B.A., Cert. Ed.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.), (Minis-
ter of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.

Miss B. A. MILLER

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc.
(Econ.)

Mr. J. O. TUDOR

Hon. D. W. BOWEN, (Minister of Community
Development and Culture)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of **Tuesday**, July 7,
1992.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The Minutes of the last meeting
of the House which was held Tuesday, July 7, 1992 **have**
been circulated and I presume they have been read. I beg
to move that those Minutes be **confirmed**.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no observations or
corrections **then** let those Minutes stand co rmed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give
notice of a Resolution to approve the sale to Isolene Roach
of the parcels of land at Coverley **Tenantry**, Christ Church.

We propose to do the Resolution unless there is
some objection. I don't think there is any objection from
Honourable Members on the other side.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice that Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 42 asked by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5) and 44 be suspended for the remainder of this day's sitting.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the order of the day.

ORDER NO. 3 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING
OF A **BILL** TO PROVIDE FOR THE IMPOSITION
OF A STABILISATION TAX OF 5%
ON COMPANIES

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, this Bill is a Bill to provide for the imposition of a stabilisation tax of 5% on companies other than hotels and restaurants and companies that are exempt from payment of corporation tax.

As a result of the Government's fiscal arrangements in 1991, the Companies Stabilisation Tax was introduced with effect from December 1, 1991 at a rate of 5% on corporations on the total insurable earnings of the employees of the corporations. At that time when the legislation was passed, the Act itself ceased to have effect on March 31, 1992 so originally it was proposed that the Companies Stabilisation Tax would be in effect from December 1, 1991 to March 31, 1992.

Pursuant to the budgetary proposals by the Minister of Finance which were made March 31, 1992, it was agreed to keep the Companies Stabilisation Tax in place and this Bill before the House is to give effect to that decision to continue to apply the Companies Stabilisation Tax effective April 1, 1992 and also to terminate the applicability of the tax under Section 14 of this Act from June 30, 1992. All this particular Bill does is to continue in place of the stabilisation tax for the period April 1, 1992 to June 30, 1992. Honourable Members will recall that in the Supplementary Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals in pursuance of the direct tax reform which Government has undertaken it was indicated that the stabilisation tax would be removed from July 1, 1992.

There will be a few small adjustments to be made during the course of this Bill going into Committee, both to the explanatory note which reflects that the Bill should

have effect on June 30, 1992, which I think Honourable Members will detect from the provisions of the Bill. A clean draft bill containing the minor amendments has been circulated and is now before Honourable Members.

With those few words which I think clearly set out the reason for this Bill, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. M. A. KING: I beg to second that, Sir, and reserve my right to speak.

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the issues raised by this Bill have already been canvassed in this House on many occasions and therefore, it is not the intention of this side to detain the House for any considerable period of time on the Bill.

At the outset and in the process of this very brief intervention, I would just say that this Bill puts the Opposition in a very invidious position. The Bill is at one and the same time asking us in this House to approve the imposition of a tax as well as to approve the cessation of that tax. I want the House – and I am sure I speak entirely for my colleagues on this side – to understand that when we vote aye for this Bill we are voting for the tax to cease to have effect rather than voting for that part which says that the Act should be deemed to have come into operation on April 1, 1992. I do not want it to be said at all that the Barbados Labour Party and its members were associated in any respect with anything to do with the stabilisation tax on companies. I feel I have to make it abundantly clear for the record that if we vote "Aye" for this Bill we are voting for it with a sense of relief because the Bill, in essence, is really giving effect to 2 budgetary proposals – the budgetary proposal in April that called for the extension of the tax which should have expired at the ending of March and the second budgetary proposal, the one of last week, which stipulated that the tax would end.

12.30 p.m.

The Bill incorporates 2 sets of proposals, one of which the Barbados Labour Party agrees with. The proposal we agree with is the one that the tax will cease. I just thought I would make it abundantly clear at the very outset of my brief presentation that we are glad to see that this tax will cease and our support for this legislation, since we are not in a position to vote "Aye" and "Nay", we have, therefore, to make it very clear that we will be voting for this Bill to cease.

I also want to say, Sir, since we are in many respects writing the epitaph of this piece of legislation that it is really very sad that this legislation was introduced in the first place since its only effect was to provide a financial incentive for the private sector to lay off people. It was imposed at the wrong time. It was imposed at a time

when business in the country was declining, when access to credit was limited, interest rates were punitive and a **tax** on the payroll could only have been a financial incentive for people operating under difficult financial **circumstances** to lay off staff which has been the result. We are, therefore, relieved that this piece of legislation which had no merit in the **first** place, is now going from our Statute **Book**.

We are glad as well, Sir, that the Government is complying with the IMF recommendations in this respect. We criticise the IMF when it needs criticism but it really has to be said that the IMF was among a large cross-section of voices and interests which recognised the folly of this legislation. The removal of the stabilisation **tax** has been one of the few recommendations coming from the IMF which we have been able to agree with.

Having said that, Sir, I really want to close on this point. There is but one Government in Barbados. I would hope that future Governments of Barbados would honour all undertakings that come out of this present IMF Agreement, including the undertaking to repay the monies borrowed from the IMF. Therefore, I really want to state today and for the records that any statements to the effect that any part of our present economic problems have been caused by the repayment of the IMF loans incurred in 1982, are really a bit dotish and ought not to fall from responsible lips.

For the record, Sir, I want to make this statement very clear that between September, 1982 and March, 1989, Barbados' reserves rose from \$81 million to \$402 million. The bulk of the repayment of the IMF loan raised in 1982 occurred within that period when our reserves rose from \$88 million to \$401 million. Barbados' reserves, therefore, rose despite the requirement on the country's part to repay the International Monetary Fund.

Secondly, Sir, between March 1989 and November 1991 Barbados net reserves fell from \$401 million to minus \$2.6 million. In that interval, Sir, I doubt the Government had to expend more than \$20 million to repay the 1982 IMF loan. It is really irresponsible behaviour for anybody to **try** to impute that the repayment of \$20 million to the IMF arising from our obligations in 1982 could have caused our reserves to fall by almost \$400 million between March 1989 and November 1991.

I think we have to say these things for the record because we have to be responsible. I am sure that the Minister of Finance who is armed with these facts and who is opposed to people who do lie, at least deliberately, would want to tell the country that for sure the repayment of the IMF loan did not stop our reserves from increasing between September 1982 and March 1989 and, for sure, the magnitude of the repayment between March 1989 and

November 1991 could not at all **be** any considerable factor in Barbados' present difficulties. I feel the record has to reflect that.

We give the House the assurance that all undertakings entered into by the Government of Barbados with the IMF or any other entity would be honoured by a Barbados Labour Party Government. We believe that the carping attitude that from time to time emanates from the lips of certain people who ought to be more responsible in **respect** of what they have to do in relation to repayment of loans is an attitude this House ought to condemn.

As I said the Barbados Labour Party will not detain the House on this matter. This legislation, as far as we are concerned, will put an end to the stabilisation **tax** with effect from June 30. We are voting for the legislation with a sense of relief and will be voting for that aspect of the legislation.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the contribution of the Honourable Member. He has indicated all of the issues over which he has concern. I wish to thank him for indicating that he will support the legislation.

Basically, I would like to move now that this Bill be read a second time.

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

On the motion of Hon. B. M. TAITT, seconded by Hon. D. J. N. THOMPSON, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in committee.

Clause 1 was called.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure what the procedure is but I would like to make an adjustment to the Explanatory Note. The Explanatory Note should be amended as follows:

"By inserting after the word "that" in line 3 the word "are"."
12.40 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am having a little difficulty in hearing the Honourable Member.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON. And by inserting after the full stop following the word "employees" in line 5 the following:

"The Bill shall cease to have effect on the 30th day of June, 1992."

That was not stated in the Explanatory Note. I feel it should be inserted there.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No. That is the Explanatory Note. A minor adjustment to the Explanatory Note. The Note does not indicate that this Bill is also seeking to give effect to the cessation of operation of the Act.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Explanatory Note does not really form part of the Bill. What I would say is that Members should take note of the comments made. But it would not necessarily fall under clause 1.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not think you heard me, Mr. Chairman. I did not mean to indicate that it was part of the Bill. But I was seeking, before dealing with clause 1 to have this adjustment made.

Clause 1 was passed.

Clause 2 was called and passed.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: In clause 3 (b), Sir, the words "to the extent of that business only" should follow after the word "Act".

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, a clean copy has in fact been circulated. But the original that went out did not have that in it. I beg to move that clause 3, as amended, stand part.

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

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

Clauses 4 to 6 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 7 to 14 inclusive and the Schedule were called and passed.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Schedule stand part. But in the original copy that was circulated there were two Schedules. It is the first

of those Schedules. The one that is headed **Part II** should be deleted. There is therefore now only one Schedule. I beg to move that that Schedule stand part.

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. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee with amendments and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. W. O. FRANKLIN, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 4.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SALE OF LANDS AT COVERLEY TENANTRY, CHRIST CHURCH TO ISOLENE ROACH

Order No. 4 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the sale of lands at Coverley Tenantry, Christ Church to Isolene Roach.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks to dispose of two parcels of land by way of sale at Coverley, Christ Church to Mrs. Isolene Roach. The background surrounding this sale stems from the fact that Coverley Tenantry is part of Coverley Plantation which was acquired by the Crown in November 1978. Since the tenantry is specified in the First Schedule to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, Cap. 239B qualified tenants have been offered their lots at either \$1 per square metre or \$300 whichever is greater.

Accordingly several of the tenants have exercised their rights to acquire their lots under the provisions of the said Act. Mrs. Roach, the tenant of lots 37 and 38 which consist of 437.3 square metres and 401.5 square metres respectively had applied to purchase these lots but failed to qualify under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act because she does not have a house on the land. She has been using the land for agricultural purposes and has been a tenant prior to 1972. She therefore qualifies to purchase the lots under the Agricultural Holdings Options to Purchase Act, Cap. 221. The value of the 2 lots has been placed at \$7 200 by the Commissioner of Land Tax and we are therefore seeking Parliamentary approval to dispose of these 2 lots at Coverley Plantation, Christ Church, lots 37 and 38, by way of sale to a Mrs. Isolene Roach. I have passed the plans over to one of the Members of the Opposition and

it is available for Honourable Members to view. I therefore beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.
12.50 p.m.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that and reserve my right to speak.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: I am not going to oppose in any way the implementation by Government of the obligations which are placed upon landlords to tenants under the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act. There are 2 matters in relation to this that I would like to draw to the attention of this Honourable House. One is that there is a considerable area of land still available for both house spots and for agricultural activity in the area of Coverley and in the area of Fairy Valley and those plantations which were acquired by successive governments for the development of the Grantley Adams Airport.

Now I happen to know as a fact that there are a number of tenants on these lands who would like to formalise their relationship with the Crown in relation to these lands. I am thinking in particular of Fairy Valley Plantation. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East will be in a position to indicate that certainly on the bluff overlooking Long Bay there is a whole area in which there has been an informal subdivision as a result of the pressure which has arisen for house spots in Christ Church in that area. It is ideally suitable for development. It is hard rock stone land and services are nearby at Fairy Valley. The airport has divided the estate into 2, on the way going to the Light Aeroplane Club. The whole of that area there. People have been living there from time immemorial. I believe that problem can be solved. Not the part in the flight path coming in. There are other areas. That is one point.

The second point is that I hope those tenants will be given the opportunity. I happen to know some of them, Sir, and they are always besieging me about it. The Honourable Member who represents Christ Church East now will be able to tell you that they beseege him about it too, because these people want to improve their houses. The agricultural people... There is a riding school and all kinds of things up there. People are using it because it was government land and they were given permission. I can tell you that the former Cabinet – it was somewhere in the 1970s, Minister Brathwaite was then Minister, either of Agriculture or Minister of Housing – agreed that the lands would be used to encourage the people to farm in those areas that were capable of farming and that in respect of the other areas that the tenancies would be allowed to develop.

This is in Fairy Valley. If you look into the electoral list you will see that area has been developed from time immemorial. People were always living there. The

Government grows cotton on one part of the lands. I would like to see that regularised.

Another point is a more fundamental point of principle and I feel the Government has to make up its mind on this. Just as the legislature has to be involved in the sale by the Government of small parcels of land, we feel too, that where the Government is a landowner, particularly via a company, that the sale of all of the land of the particular company should also have to come before this House. It is a very important point of principle. Where you have the Crown owning land you have to come here under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act. Now let us take a situation and I am going to deal with it straight. Something like the Heywoods Corporation, the Government can sell the whole of that without coming here. It is a very serious thing. The Honourable Member for St. Peter raised that matter already because there is a gap in our legislation for parliamentary control because the Government itself can sell millions of dollars worth of shares without having to inform the legislature or anything. A Government can sell properties owned by a Corporation in which the Government is 100 per cent owner. I am not talking about a Corporation where the Government does not have 100 per cent ownership. The position is that there are no rules even for information. I do not want to wake up one morning and find that all these things have been done and we don't know anything about it. I want an input in it. I feel that is right. I feel, as a matter of principle, now that the Government is in this mood, you see previously the Government was in an acquisition mood, right now the Government is in a disposing mood. You get what I mean? The Government is in a disposing mood.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: You had better try and see that you pay the people at the Hospital for all those bills that they owe.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital as well as the other one and also the Geriatric. You bought goods, though, and you don't pay the people. Even the latest Auditor General's Report says that you are not paying the people.

Now, Sir, the point is this. We must have, Sir, and we are entitled to that information. It is a very important point of principle. Now that the Government is in a disposing mood the Government should be in a position to go all around and have an inventory. The Government should have had an inventory. We created a special department in the Ministry of Housing to bring surveying and land valuation skills in there to create a terrier. In addition to that it was backed up by legal expertise, of course the Government in their reforming quest have decided to

do away with that or drastically reduce it. They have done away with the legal unit.

Aside.

Hon. H. B. St. JOHN: They have not done away with it? They have reduced it. I want you to reply because I would be very glad to hear that the Government has not reduced that unit. I would like to know if the Government owns land in Oistin and there are people who wish to go on that land, who have been begging you to go on Ashby Land. All of those areas, the Government owns the land. There are private tenancies in that area and the people have written to the Government and begged the Government to come, help us, because it can only be done now as a result of an integrated programme. That is so because the tenancies are small in relation to the Government works. So, it is time for us to clean up all of these things. If you want to make believe now that you are doing something for the benefit of the people because you don't have any real money to spend, at least you can do the surveying cost, at least you can identify the plots, at least you can let the people understand that it is the intent of the Government, now that it has to dispose of everything that it has. I am only hoping that now that you are in this mood that the people in Christ Church as a whole – because they still come to me all the time, I don't know why – will be able to get some of the things that they know were well planned for.

Sir, the defect is set out in section 39(1). The Cabinet may make rules for all or any of the following matters and it says, to provide for the purchase, receipt, custody, issue, sale, transfer or delivery of any stamps, securities or other Government property. So that is the point, Sir. We really need those rules. Cabinet should make the rules even if it is only for the information subject to a negative resolution. We just want to have this done. It would not be a bad thing if the parliamentarians have a greater input. The Honourable Member is a great admirer of the United States system of government and he knows that the legislative branches of the United States Government play an important role in ensuring that public money is well spent. As a matter of fact, had it not been for legislative investigations many malpractices in the United States would have taken place. Well, I want that kind of thing to happen here. We would like it here. The Honourable Member would be controlled properly. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

1.00 p.m.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: It is interesting how the Barbados Labour Party when in Opposition has become so meticulously interested in the virtues of Parliament, Sir. Your Honour will recall the "fight" which this side had between 1976 and 1986 when the Honourable Member was leading the fight to acquire people's land by going and

sticking a piece of paper on it. Up to now, there are people who have not been paid.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The Government does not have any money. The Honourable Member for the City asked why the Government does not pay them. What are you going to pay them with? The Honourable Member who just sat down in his capacity was the ring-leader of a particular policy of the Government. I know because we spent a lot of time arguing the principle. The Honourable Member for St. Peter might not be aware of that. But we argued the principle about acquisition whether it was desirable to acquire people's property and then negotiate with them or to negotiate with the people first and only if you cannot reach an agreement to have acquisition. We discussed this at length.

The Honourable Member, therefore, is fully seized of the large quantity of land acquired from the people of Barbados for which they have not been paid. I believe there is somebody who has been waiting for 17 years to get paid for land that was acquired by the Government. I agree with the Honourable Member that we should have more parliamentary control, but I do not think that it should be running hot and cold. I believe that what we need is a reform of the entire system of Government, Sir. Do not let us talk when it suits us in the Opposition and try to give impressions that they are suddenly more interested in these matters than anybody else when for 10 years they took no interest whatsoever in Parliament. The Honourable Members for St. Michael South, St. Lucy and St. Philip North can recall the number of times because the record is replete with evidence of the then Opposition of the Democratic Labour Party virtually begging the Government to pay some attention to Parliament. I remember one time, Sir, the then Prime Minister Tom Adams once said that, if the Honourable Members on the other side wish to become the Government, all they should do is get a majority. Yes, he said that, Sir. In fact, I remember the Honourable Member for the City making the statement that she did not have any time...

Mr. SPEAKER: I quite understand but at the same time we are still dealing with a Resolution of land acquisition.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Quite seriously, Sir, I believe that we have no difficulty in agreeing with this Resolution. But I think that regarding the whole question of the disposal of land I was very interested in the point made by the Honourable Member about when the Government is disposing of land in its capacity as a company. Sir, you cannot have it both ways. On the one hand, you have

the companies established and, when once a company has been established, the company is subject to the law of the community as a corporate citizen and therefore is not in the same category to have the immunity which the Government itself has. Therefore, either you accept the principle that once it becomes a company then the company has complete jurisdiction over its activity or you have some other new system. But the point that has to be made is that no company can dispose of land that has not been vested in the company and, before land is vested in a company, it has to come to Parliament. Take for instance Heywoods, Sir. Heywoods could not have been in charge of the land until the land was vested in Heywoods through this Parliament. So Parliament disposed of the land at that time. The issue is really a non-issue. It sounds like a great issue but it is a non-issue. At the point when Parliament is disposing of the land by establishing a company or by vesting in a company, that is the time when the citizen through its representative in Parliament has the opportunity to pronounce on the land. But you cannot have a situation where you are saying on the one hand the reason why you want to make it a company is that it must behave like any other corporate citizen and then say, as a corporate citizen because the Government is a shareholder, it must come into the ambit of Parliament.

Now if the Honourable Member is saying that, if Government through some obfuscation becomes a 100 per cent shareholder of a company and in those circumstances it is not really a company in the truest sense of the word, I can perhaps understand that. If the Honourable Member had made that point and he had made it as a lawyer, I would have taken the point easily. But he made it, Sir, with a certain amount of political rhetoric which would be misleading. Now he is agreeing that what I am saying is what he intended. That is just what he said from his seat, Sir. If that is so, then there is no argument.

The disposal of shares is a very neat, interesting legal question. Is a share property in the context of the law which requires Parliament to be made aware of all property that is disposed of? The law already exists that any property which the Government has and which it disposes of by lease or sale has to be accounted for in Parliament on an annual basis. Therefore, if the Government owns shares in a public corporation, it is a moot point whether the shares constitute property for the purposes of that Act because shares add up to property. Indeed, common shares may be traded across the table, but in the context of what the Honourable Member is saying it is open to question whether shares owned by the Government are subject to the same law. This is a point that can be raised. But the fact is that, as it now stands in Barbados, once they are shares, they have not been subject to this particular law. Unless you are going to have reforming legislation, there is no point in discussing it in those terms. If you wish to have a

reform package where you are looking at the whole question of how Government owns property, and the whole concept of eminent domain, what constitutes property and how you are going to dispose of property, then we can discuss reformation, but to take the law as it is now and to raise questions about it may be to mislead people who do not understand the situation.

1.10 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is now saying that it is his duty to mislead and my duty to put them right. I did not know he would be so bold as to suggest that misleading is part of his portfolio, Sir, but I know from statements I have heard him make outside of here – because he would not dare make them in here – that he is quite capable in certain circumstances of misleading, but he never does it in here. He would not dare with you in the Chair.

But quite seriously, there are some countries where the definition of property has been so refined – of course, they usually have local government as well and the local authorities are usually the ones that own the land...

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member for St. Peter missed the point I was making. Either one of the two gentlemen sitting on the side of him would be able to explain to him that property is not restricted to land. I do not have the time nor the inclination to teach the Honourable Member anything today, but if the Honourable Member will stop fulminating with himself... I beg your pardon, Sir, I withdraw that.

Mr. SPEAKER: But even to make comment on the Member sitting...

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I withdraw that, Sir.

Aside.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Of course it is no less irrelevant than his. The point I was making, Sir, since the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said that Heywoods could dispose of all of its property without reference to Parliament, I am making the very simple point that the land was disposed of when it was vested in Heywoods. If that is the case, we would then have to redefine the whole area of disposal of property and land. I do not think I need to make the point any further, Sir, I merely wanted to deal with the issue raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, because it is an interesting issue and one which could warrant some further discussion, but in the present circumstances it is only the land that is

vested in the Crown which has to be brought to Parliament for discussion if it is to be leased or sold or otherwise disposed of in a permanent manner. That is all, Sir.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, just a few points I wish to make in winding up this debate. I want to lay to rest the allegation made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South that the Legal Unit in the Ministry of Housing and Lands has been reduced or abolished. The Legal Unit is still functioning, it has not been reduced.

The question of the inventory of lands, the compilation of the terrier, which the Honourable Member has spoken about, is something which I believe is an objective of all Governments. Governments in the past and up to the present have had some considerable difficulty in being able to get an up to date inventory of all the properties and lands which they own. The Property Management Unit and the Legal Unit of the Ministry of Housing and Lands are supposed to work to develop this. They have been working on it but progress is very, very slow. It is too slow for my liking, but the fact of the matter is that those are the persons who have been appointed to do this specific task and I could only hope that they will work hard in trying to ensure that we see some light in this particular area. I myself have been prodding them from time to time to try to get all of the information properly collated and put at our disposal so that it would enable us in the Ministry, and certainly in the Government, to have more than a fair idea of the properties which are owned by the Government and indeed what could be developed or what could be disposed of. It would also be very important from the point of view of the collection of rents.

There are a number of people in Barbados who are renting properties from Government that the Government may not even be aware of, and therefore they are not paying rents, and who are indeed squatting on Government lands and are not paying their due to the Treasury. The whole purpose of having the Property Management Unit and the Legal Unit in the Ministry of Housing and Lands established is to ensure that that work is done and that information is brought together, but, as I said, that is the role of the public servants and I think that all of us who had the opportunity to serve in Ministries know some of the difficulties which can be experienced by the meticulous way in which the public servants do their work. It is not as speedy as one would like, they are very meticulous in their procedures.

The Honourable Member made reference to large areas of land in Christ Church which have been acquired by the Government and which can be used for housing development. He cited Coverley, Fairy Valley and I would want to add another in the Parish Land area. Let me say that one of the things we have found, particularly in the

Christ Church area, is the kind of development which has taken place on Government lands. I am referring to the almost abandon with which people move in on the properties of the Government. In Parish Land there is a situation which has developed over the years, which had its genesis, I am told, way back in the 70's, where people were told by sitting Members of Parliament representing those particular constituencies that they can go in and put down their houses. The result is that you have a massive development up there which is very difficult to control, because people have gone in on instructions and encouragement from Members of Parliament and put down their houses in all sorts of ways, and now that we are trying to bring some kind of order into that, it is causing some very serious problems.

Aside.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I happen, Sir, to have been invited to speak to a Branch Meeting up there about 3 or 4 weeks ago and the people in the Parish Land area – when we said we would like to bring some order back to that development – the people said that they had been told by Members of Parliament that they could go in and put in their houses, so that, as one Member has said, we have now developing up there a massive slum. From the point of view of the National Housing Corporation, we would like to have it regularised.

One of the amusing things I found when I visited there was that there was a sign which was put up by the National Housing Corporation which had a notice to the effect "No Squatting" or "Trespassers will be prosecuted" and one enterprising squatter has incorporated that sign into his piling. I really made an appeal to the tenants that we would like to ensure that everybody gets his fair share and that proper development takes place, because the National Housing Corporation paid quite a bit of money to have the entire area surveyed. There is a survey map which is available, but when you go to the survey map you will find that people have put their houses in places where the roads are supposed to go, they have blocked off roads, they have done all sorts of things, so we will have to go and resurvey the area, or the Government will have to become involved in an expensive relocation programme. As Honourable Members know, this will be very difficult as far as the Government is concerned. What we would want to do is to appeal to members and, indeed, to those tenants for their cooperation. I have indicated to the National Housing Corporation that one of the things which we will have to do is to set up a special task force within the National Housing Corporation and within the Ministry to deal specifically with attempting to straighten out the problems with Parish Land. I would hope that when we do this we will get the cooperation of all Honourable Members because it is very important that this be done.

1.20 p.m.

I would also hope that we do not see a similar thing developing in other lands in Christ Church, **as** indicated as being quite possible through the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I think the Government is prepared to sell off the lands in house spots but we cannot do it when order does not prevail. We would like to think it is done in an orderly manner and the land is properly surveyed and made available to people. This is the only way in which it can be done so that people can feel that it is being done in a proper manner.

Certainly, we have identified the Coverley area as an area which has tremendous potential for housing development and this will be done in the process of time. On the question of the area of land which the Honourable Member has identified, the plot overlooking Long Bay and in the vicinity of Grantley **Adams** International Airport, I am aware that there are a number of problems associated with housing in that particular area. I do not know the area that well in terms of where it is located in relation to the airport, but if it were in St. Lucy...

Asides.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: There is a problem relating to the location of houses in the flight path. I **am** in no position to give the exact parameters of that flight path but **there** has been a very serious problem developing there. As a matter of fact, there are a number of houses which are in the flight path which have to be moved – I think to the top of Parish Land. A file recently came across my desk which indicated very clearly that for the future development of the Grantley **Adams** International Airport this is one of the things which will have to be done. At considerable cost, Government will have to embark on **resiting** some of those areas.

I **am** told that some of the pilots of aircraft have been complaining about interference with their instruments when they are coming in to land. Indeed, **as** part of the civil aviation agreements, housing must be within or outside of a certain area where the aircraft are coming in. Then, there is another aspect besides the flight path. We also have to ensure that a certain area around the approach to the airport is free of housing. That is why you find the Town and Country Planning Department has not **allowed** housing to be developed in some areas on that approach to the airport. I think it is very important that one understands that.

Wheresoever the lands can be developed in the Christ Church area I would want to give the Honourable Member the assurance that the Government will look after that. The Member for Christ Church East in whose constituency a lot

of these areas fall has recently written me a letter relating to the possibilities of this **area** and we want to give him the assurance that Government will **try** to accommodate whatever we can within our resources to ensure that the people of Christ Church and, indeed, the people of Barbados have access to additional house **spots**.

With those few remarks I would want to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you want to do question time now.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: Reply to Question No. 42 asked by the Honourable Member for **St. Andrew**.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: The answer to Parliamentary Question No. 42 is as follows:

- "1. The Barbados Water Authority plans during the current financial year to upgrade the water supply in the Rock Hall system by providing adequate storage at Apes Hill, Indian Ground and Mt. Stepney and erecting a pumping station in the Orange Hill area
2. The water main recently installed along Apes Hill is temporary. The Barbados Water Authority is aware of the effect of this temporary installation on other areas serviced from this system. However, careful regulation of the flow through the temporary line has minimised the negative effects on the water supply to areas such as Hillaby and **Gregg Farm**."

Mr. SPEAKER: End of replies to questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that brings us to the end of Government Business for today. I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until **Tuesday**, July 28, 1992 at 12 o'clock noon.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I beg to second that.

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

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THOMPSON, Hon. D. J. H. (St. John)