

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 22, 1997

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, April 22, 1997.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B. A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., MA., (Econ.),

J.P.

Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Hons.)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister for the Civil Service)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.

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

Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE (Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)

Mr. D. CARTER

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL

Mr. F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J.P., B.A., Dip. Ed., B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Health and the Environment)

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. Econ. (Hons.), M.A. Public Finance.

Prayers were led by Mr. Speaker. Mr.

SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the meeting of Tuesday, March 17, 1997.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minutes of Tuesday, March 17, 1997, have been circulated, I beg to move that subject to any motions for amendments they be taken as read.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report receipt of the following:

1. The Accounts and Statements for the months October, November and December, 1996 as prepared by the Accountant General.
2. The Accounts and Statements for the Financial years, 1995/96 including the Appropriation and Revenue Accounts as prepared by the Auditor General.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Guarantees granted under the Exempt Insurance Act, Cap. 308A to the following:
 1. Arch Insurance Ltd.
 2. Atlantic Offshore Insurance Ltd.
 3. Camarin Limited
 4. Caninco Insurance Limited
 5. Compco Insurance Company Inc.
 6. Dover Insurance Inc.
 7. Engineers Liability Insurance Company
 8. Evergreen Indemnity Limited
 9. F. F. H. Insurance Corp.
 10. General Casualty Insurance Company Ltd.
 11. Hastings Underwriters Ltd.
 12. Langevin Holdings (Barbados) Limited
 13. Langevin Insurance (Barbados) Limited
 14. Lincoln National Reinsurance Company (Barbados) Ltd.
 15. Northeast Reinsurance Ltd.
 16. Novalta Insurance Ltd.
 17. Penn Oceanic Insurance Company Ltd.
 18. Phoenix Insurance Holdings (Barbados) Ltd.
 19. Professional Associates Indemnity Company Ltd.
 20. Selecta Insurance Inc.
 21. Tristar Reinsurance Company Ltd.
2. The Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 1997.
3. The Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year, 1996.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would just like to indicate that at the next meeting of the House, we would like to do obituaries to the mother of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and Sir John Stow, the former Governor-General of Barbados.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20,

42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the balance of today's Sitting.

Rt Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 3 - A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
THE VESTING IN THE BARBADOS NATIONAL
THE OF 969.4 SQ. METRES OF LAND AT
SYNAGOGUE LANE, BRIDGETOWN,
ST. MICHAEL

Hort. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution pertains to the vesting of 969.9 square metres of land at Synagogue Lane, Bridgetown, St. Michael, Barbados in the National Trust.

This site is one of seven parcels of land which was compulscribly acquired from R. St. C. Hutchinson in 1980 for the provision of a Supreme Court and Registration Department.

In 1980, the Supreme Court administered the offices which are presently handled by the Corporate Registry, the Land Registry, the Supreme Court Registry and the Appeals Court. Since 1980, there has been a separate Land Registry with a separate Registrar of Titles, a Corporate Registry with a Registrar of Corporate Affairs and an Appeals Court operated in the precincts of the pre&nt Supreme Court building.

The Jewish Synagogue made certain representations to Government after the land had been acquired by Government for the purpose of the construction of a Supreme Court Registry. Subsequently, Government recognising the contribution which had been made by the Jewish Community in Barbados, decided to abandon the acquisition of that portion of land, housing the Jewish Synagogue and subsequently, with respect the Supreme Court Registry. Government therefore initiated plans to construct a Supreme Court Registry elsewhere. Initially, the property at White Park Road where the former Rudder School was located was the site which had been earmarked for the Supreme Court Registry. Government has recently decided to acquire the land which formerly housed the Foundry Building for the construction of the Supreme Court Registry.

It is hoped that when the final plans for the Judicial Centre have been completed that this building will be able to accommodate the Land Registry, the Lands and

Surveys Department, the Corporate Registry, the Supreme Court and the Appeals Court. There had been plans which were completed for the inclusion of a Supreme Court Registry and an Appeals Court Registry but because of certain representations which have been made by members of the Bar Association having to travel various distances to attend business in various parts of the Island at the Land Registry, which is situated in a different place, the Corporate Registry and the Land and Surveys Department. The Lands and Surveys Department is important because of the fact that we now have registration of titles and there is a lot of interfacing between the Lands and Surveys Department and the Land Registry. It is felt that it would be more convenient to have all of these offices in one place, if they can be accommodated.

At the moment, the inclusion of the Corporate Registry and the Land Registry was not included in the original plans for the area but it is hoped that after further consultation with the Attorney General's Department these other offices can be accommodated, taking into consideration the complaints and the concerns of members of the Bar Association because of the fact that their clerks have had to travel in various places in order to do business on a regular basis.

The Jewish Synagogue was built in 1654 and the local Jewish community had over the years maintained the Synagogue and its cemetery. One must compliment the local Jewish fraternity for the excellent work which they have done in the restoration of that building and certainly Government is pleased with the work which they have done and as a result we have decided that this property should be vested in the Barbados Trust.

Mr. Speaker with those brief remarks, I beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

Hon. D. A. C. .SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I just wish to make a few points about the proposed new Supreme Court Complex.

The Honourable Minister has given a brief history. Plans were first drawn in 1985/86, in my last period as Attorney General. We had a presentation from an English firm called Trollope & Colls and nothing happened beyond the receipt of those plans and the acquisition of the site at the corner of Country Road. 11.30a.m.

Mr. Speaker, the modernisation of the administration of justice requires the modernisation of plant and equipment within which the administration of justice is expected to function, The Government has therefore determined that it will seek to construct a new Supreme Court complex fairly close by the existing site but the closest we can get is the old Central Foundry Building that has been burnt out. I think it is at the corner of Gills Road and White Park Road.

In November a party of officials and Ministers went and looked at that site and it appeared to be ideal to us. We already have architectural drawings and plans completed and a model of the new Supreme Court Complex. The question in November when we visited was whether the design and the model could fit comfortably on the new site, the design for the corner of Country Road and White Park.

The matter was referred back to the architects, Gillespie and Steel and they have come back and reported, Sir, that it can fit comfortably. I think that site at Gills Road will also provide enough parking. Whereas the site at the other place was a little bit cramped we believe that we have ample space because this land runs deep, .back towards the Biscuit Factory. We have enough space to develop a modern Supreme Court Complex there.

Now, what is the next step? On April 30, which is tomorrow week, Sir, there is a meeting between the architects and various officials and myself to review the architectural drawings and the brief for space. We have to see to what extent the proposed complex can carry additional storeys to accommodate some of the other departments which have functions ancillary to legal practices. Next Wednesday we will be reviewing the architectural drawings. It is only after a determination has been made of additional floor capacity to accommodate other Government offices that we can properly seek funding for the project.

Some time after next week, I expect to be in a position for the Government to start discussing the financing of the project with financial groups. Government is not interested in going to the Inter-American Development Bank for funding for this project because the procedures that attend such applications to that bank will have the effect of delaying the project for many years.

I am happy to say that a number of financial institutions have offered to finance the project but at this stage we are not in a position to negotiate with any until after the Government has determined whether the site can carry as many Government Departments as are presently desired, certainly by the Ministry of Housing which

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has departments ancillary to my Ministry. However I hope, Sir, by the end of May, to be in a position to start negotiations and then to have the project ready for submission to the Planning and Priorities Committee and to have all the planning and preparatory work done before the end of this financial year so that that project,,,

I have said I hope, Sir, I am not making any definite commitment, In planning construction there are certain imponderables and pitfalls which one has to avoid but we believe that if we start as early as next week Wednesday that by the beginning of the next financial year, if not sooner, we should be in a position to begin construction,

Now, Sir, if that project goes ahead as planned at some date in the future after the completion of the project the present Supreme Court at Coleridge Street will become free, the present Registration Office will become free and it is at that point that Government will be in a position to give consideration to, I am not making a decision, to give consideration to the centralisation of many of the Magistrates' Courts, That is an end that many lawyers desire, There are merits to it, Sir, there are also demerits but only after we have gone some considerable distance towards completion of a new Complex will we be in a position to start any process of centralisation.

Moving the Registration Department over to Gills Road in new accommodation will also make that building which presently houses the Registration Department available for further Government use so that the complex at Coleridge Street could become available to Government for other offices, Mr. Speaker, I wish also to add that the work at the Magistrates' Courts and the Central Police Station will soon be finished and those departments will be fully functional again, 11.40a.in,

The real problem there was the destruction of the properties by termite infestations particularly, Anyhow, at the end of the day, Sir, what will be offered will be virtually substantially renovated, almost new construction, certainly at the Police Headquarters, Sir, and certainly more commodious facilities in the Magistrates' Courts,

I am obliged to you, Sir,

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. James South.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the course of the comments on this resolution so far two things have emerged,

First of all that there is going to be the rationalisation of the use of property in that area to provide offices for Government purposes and I would welcome this use, When I practised law, large numbers of people came to town to access services given by the Supreme Court and the surrounding offices and there *act* others not as centralised, they are just outside of town,

Therefore, if we could develop the whole concept of a civic centre at that location, catering to this wide range of Government offices, then we will not only use the land and space in a more efficient way, but clearly will benefit those persons who have to take public transportation to town to access these services, They will be able to do so far more readily and can conduct their businesses in one location,

As I understand it however, this land is now being given back to the Barbados National Trust as part of the Synagogue Complex.

I would wish, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to take this opportunity to speak to some of the work that the Barbados National Trust has been doing in relation to the development of the Synagogue and its wider projects.

I think that often we take the considerable work done by the Barbados National Trust for granted. They have been in the forefront and have contributed significantly to the whole development of the concept of heritage tourism and the preservation of that part of our national character that is defined by our architectural style.

We have originally as a tourism destination promoted sun and sand, Increasingly however, we are trying to extend that concept, Whether it is to attract the considerable benefits from dive tourism that is to be found or whether we are going to develop the whole concept of eco-tourism on a broader base, the fact is that there is a calibre of tourists who travel to look at architectural details who have an interest in property and architectural style. They can tell you what different type of architectural style characterises various islands in the Caribbean and various parts of the world, It is important from that perspective therefore that we recognise this component of our heritage as a resource and seek to exploit it.

But, more than that it is also important that we seek to preserve that part of our architectural heritage which is good and which characterises what is typically Barbadian architecture, And, that is part of the role the Barbados National Trust has taken to itself and has pursued quite successfully,

We have the Barbados National Trust to thank for raising the national sensitivity to this whole concept of preserving our architectural heritage. There are a number of buildings that were it not for the National Trust designating them heritage properties, we would have lost them completely.

I can think for instance in terms of the work that they have done on their own to develop the Tyrol Cot site, that is the residence of a former Premier of Barbados and of the Federation. Only last week Monday, I had the opportunity to entertain there and was amazed at the potential that this property has for attracting businesses and tourists.

In fact, large numbers of Barbadians who were at this function which I hosted and people from all over the Caribbean, because it was a Regional Health Ministers Conference which brought together Health Ministers from the Region together with several National, Regional and International organisations. Everybody wanted to see the property, to see the house, to look at the furniture, to speculate about how they lived and where they lived and the persons who occupied this property.

It is important in looking at our current cultural heritage that we do not lose these buildings to rapid new development and new architectural styles.

We must think too and thank the Barbados National Trust for the work that they have done in relation to the development of the signal stations, particularly the one at Gun Hill in St. George, which is another one of their widely acclaimed projects. When the National Trust is given charge of properties, they really maintain them exceptionally well.

When I speak to the point of the tourists and the fact that tourists spend time looking at these heritage properties it is not widely known that the second most visited site in Barbados is the Sunbury Plantation House.

The first is the Harrison Cave and the second destination in Barbados most visited and most sought after by tourists is Sunbury House and that itself speaks to the fact that this is really a part of our culture and a part of our tourism product that we can exploit beneficially, not only for the use and benefit of tourism but certainly for the use and enjoyment of the nationals alike.

Sunbury House is one of the properties that is being used to host lunches and dinners and all sorts of receptions and large numbers of Barbadians are taking the opportunity

to exalt in what is their own and what is part of their history and to enjoy the benefit of these properties.

The Barbados National Trust has served and continues to serve on a large number of Boards. They served very well on my own National Conservation Commission and gave tremendous input in terms of advice and guidance and their perspective on issues at that level, and insofar they made this input on the NCC and other Boards and statutory corporations and other Government departments and projects. They sat on the Solid Waste Management Task Force which was set up within my Ministry. Insofar as they continue to make that kind of input into national development and national projects, then the Barbados National Trust is very much one of the social partners that has helped to ensure the development of Barbados.

I wish to turn, Mr. Speaker, very briefly to the Synagogue itself. It is not widely known in Barbados that this Synagogue building was constructed in 1654 and dates back to a graveyard from the 1930s which was used by the Jewish community as early as then. In fact, it was destroyed by hurricane in 1831 and rebuilt in 1833. But, if we take its roots back to the 17th Century it is in reality one of the oldest synagogues in this part of the world and that itself attracts tremendous public and tourist attention. Not only because it speaks to the Jewish Community preserving a line of its own heritage and culture but there are large numbers of tourists who daily visit the synagogue for its cultural beauty and for its historical value.

That the Government now is seeking to give back this adjoining land so that the Jewish community and the Barbados National Trust can continue to develop the synagogue site because of its importance. But must not view this as we tend sometimes within our community to see things as benefiting only particular sectors or only particular interests within the community. We must see this as a project that will benefit the wider Barbados because in the construction and redevelopment of the Synagogue project there will be jobs created. There is going to be revenue created. 11.50a.m.

It is going to add to the whole tourism component of Barbados and to the wider number of attractions available for people to visit. We must not think of them as a single component or having only monofocus and one benefit. But it does in fact add to our entire tourism product and in that context must be seen as developing part of the whole appeal of our tourist attraction for Barbados.

I would wish to commend the Minister for bringing this resolution before the Chamber and in doing so,

also compliment him on what is emerging as the ancillary and those tremendous benefits of this particular acquisition, those being the development of a civic centre at Bridgetown, and the rationalisation of the use of the land and government buildings and space in that area. And secondly, the tremendous benefit to tourism which this handover of land will facilitate. With those comments I would wish to thank the Chair.

Hon. O. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now stand part.

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

ORDER NO. 4-RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
LEASE TO ESSO STANDARD OIL S.A. LIMITED
OF LAND AT ORANTLEY ADAMS INTER-
NATIONAL AIRPORT FOR THE
STORAGE OF PETROLEUM
PRODUCTS TO BE USED FOR
AVIATION PURPOSES

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution before this House seeks permission to lease 70 447 sq. ft. of land at Grantley Adams International Airport to ESSO Standard Oil subject to certain terms and conditions. In August 1966 ESSO Standard Oil entered into an agreement with the Government of Barbados to lease 70 447 sq. ft. of land at the Grantley Adams International Airport at a rental rate of \$2 465.64 per annum.

The lease agreement was for a period of 25 years with the option to renew for a further term of 25 years on the same terms and conditions, without the option of further renewal and with the exception that the rent may be varied from the rent provided in the original agreement. The original lease expired on 4th August 1991 but ESSO Standard Oil did not exercise its option to renew the lease in accordance with the contract.

Lengthy negotiations ensued between the Division of Housing and ESSO Standard Oil on a new lease and it was finally agreed the new lease would be for 15 years and that the rental rate would be in the sum of \$35 224 per annum. The rent has been paid up-to-date since August 1991. In the new lease there will be no option to renew.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I just wish to make a fairly brief intervention in this debate. I think it only right to update and inform the public on certain happenings at the airport to the extent that they may not already know. On Saturday last when I returned to the Grantley Adams International Airport, I was almost literally besieged by two individuals in relation to the recent sandblasting of the windows between the gallery and the immigration hall. I was besieged as I said by one person who I did not know and one person who I felt would have known better than to raise the issue with me in the way that he did. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that this is really a continuation in the area of the beefing up of security at the airport.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please, may I ask what has this got to do with the Resolution before the House please?

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker it deals with the Resolution to lease to ESSO Standard Estate Limited, land at Grantley Adams International Airport. In the same way that others talked about National Trust and so on, I would have thought...

Mr. SPEAKER: It is the Chair that determines. I should like to inform the Honourable Member, could you make your comments brief and at least relate them in some way to the Resolution before the House please?

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I am sure, Mr. Speaker that ESSO Standard would feel secure at the airport, Sir, to continue to lease from the airport. I think that they should know the sort of security that is in place at the airport so that they would feel very comfortable with their gas products and various issues relating to the lease.

On a serious note, Mr. Speaker, this is really a very important issue and it really deals with the question of security for all tenants, all alike at the Grantley Adams International Airport and the reason this has been done in particular, Mr. Speaker, is because of the fact that over a number of years both customs officials and immigration officers at the airport have received a numerous amount of threats from persons who were not actually before them in the immigration hall or the arrivals hall at all.

Let me say at the outset too, that it is a bit surprising, in my view, that there would be any serious reaction to not being able to see persons coming in. This is a bit of reaction that has been coming my way, not to be able to see persons coming into the airport when they are actually in the arrivals hall dealing with immigration officers,

when in fact in a matter of a few minutes after a plane arrives, usually 30 - 35 minutes at the most, that is when there is even a delay, they are going to see the person anyhow in the flesh and be able to hold the person.

One would have expected more of a reaction where you are dealing with a departing passenger, where maybe, if you have some sentimental or some other attachment to the person or emotional attachment you may want to see him actually board the flight but in relation to that area of the departure's hall, glass has already been painted with no real serious outcry. In relation to the customs officers, glass has actually been tinted so that you can no longer see into the customs area and now we have gone the further step to sandblast the glass in relation to immigration officers.

This, Mr. Speaker, has been largely at the request of immigration officers who have had to endure very many and serious threats from persons in the gallery. Immigration officers have had their cars damaged, smashed up by persons. Immigration officers have received threats on the phone from persons. We know the reality of the drug trade right now and that is a fact.

One immigration officer, about a year ago, a woman, who would take it on perhaps more than a man would, was actually questioning a visitor at her desk. She became a bit suspicious and asked the visitor who was here to meet them. The person pointed up to the person who was there and the person who was there actually motioned with his fingers in the form of a gun at the immigration officer. That was a very traumatic experience for the immigration officer to the point where she actually had to be driven home the evening. She could not even drive, she was in such a devastated state.

These are the issues that we are now trying to address with respect to the sandblasting and it is something which, if there is any distress or anything like that, by some members of the public at not being able to see persons when they arrive that they will see in about a few minutes time anyhow and be able to hold and embrace, I am truly sorry. But I honestly had to put the interest of security at the airport first, and that is really the origin wholly and solely of the decision to sandblast the glass at the airport.

Other issues as well are of concern to me at the airport and we are moving as well in those regards. I am not going to prolong the debate but just to say, even the issue in respect to telephones in the arrival hall. 12.00 noon

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. I think that is going a bit too far now. The Resolution is clear before the House. I just allowed you a lot of latitude.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I would really thank you for your indulgence for the few moments you have given me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do these telephones relate to Esso Standard Oil?

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: It relates, Mr. Speaker, to the question of security but if you would wish me to deal with it in the context of another debate I would just say...

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I will make a brief point just to say that We are also moving further to have the situation where we are now seeing telephones in the Arrivals Hall before you even clear Immigration. I have already mandated that those telephones be taken out. The management at the airport is in the process of ensuring that is done. When you travel to many airports, whether you go to small countries with small airports, not so small countries with small airports, or big countries with big airports you will find, in fact, that you very seldom see visitors as they arrive or even visitors as they depart. Really the policy taken by us in Barbados now is nothing new. It is meant entirely to be able to beef up the security at the airport, the problems in light of the drug trade and the improved techniques people are using in relation to the drug trade. Therefore, I just thought, Mr. Speaker, that it would have been remiss of me if I had not used this opportunity to clarify that one issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to move a slight amendment to the lease. The Second Schedule did state that the lease should be for a period of 10 years with effect from April 5, 1997. The original 15 years to which I referred was from August 5, 1991. For the purposes of the actual lease which will be done I would like to have that amendment 10 years from August 5, 1997, rather than April 5 as included in the Schedule.

With those brief remarks I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass, as amended.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER NO, 8 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND
AT BAKERS, ST. PETER, FOR
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Hon, G, W, PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution before the House seeks approval for the acquisition of two parcels of land at Bakers, St. Peter, for the purpose of relocating houses from Weston, St. James and also for the general housing development in that area. We have had an extensive debate on the floods at Weston.

You may recall the floods of Thursday, August 3, 1995, an event which a lot of us would not like to happen again. As a result of those floods we have had to relocate a number of persons in the area. Two parcels of land were identified at Bakers, one parcel measuring 6 586.5 square metres which can accommodate 11 house spots and another parcel measuring 22 603 square metres which can accommodate 34 house lots.

Twelve houses which were virtually destroyed have already been relocated on the site. An additional two houses have been relocated from Highway 1 north of the Fire Station and resited at Bakers. A total of 13 houses have been relocated to Bakers. In the main part they are fully serviced by the necessary facilities, electricity, water and light.

Most of the households, Mr. Speaker, which were affected have been resettled. It is hoped that when we have completed this acquisition the lands which we acquired would be vested in the National Housing Corporation so that they in turn will be able to convey the lots to those persons who have been relocated.

I would like to compliment the National Housing Corporation for the swift work they did in effecting this relocation. I would also like to thank the Manager of Bakers Plantation. Very often in this House we tend to be very critical of a certain element of the landowning class in this country. I think it is only fitting that if we could be critical of them on occasions that we could compliment them when they have done the type of service that certainly was done in this particular case.

As you know, this acquisition process is a process which takes some time. I must say the owner of Bakers Plantation, Mr. Wilkie - I do not remember his first name - assisted us in allowing the National Housing Corporation to construct the houses even before the acquisition process had been started.

Even though the owner, Mr, Wilkie, and his company will be compensated in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act, I must say they assisted Government at great loss to themselves because this is land which they had already developed, most of it, At least one parcel of it had already gotten Town Planning permission and, obviously, they stood to gain a lot more if they had proceeded with the type of development they had contemplated in the first place.

I must say how thankful I am, on behalf of the Government, for the assistance which had been given to Mr. Wilkie, maybe reluctantly, in this whole exercise of the relocation of those persons who were affected at Weston.

At the time when those persons had to be relocated, we did indicate that we would have acquired certain lands in the path of the watercourse. All of these acquisitions have not yet been completed but I would like to assure the residents in that area that we will move swiftly to ensure that the necessary compensation is paid as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely grateful to the Minister for first pointing out that there was some kind of conflict between the Ministry and the owner of the land.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I do not recall mentioning anything about any conflict. There was never any conflict. The Manager of the plantation assisted us immediately when the land was identified. Even though he had earmarked the land for his own development, bearing in mind the circumstances of the matter, he readily agreed to facilitate Government in the whole exercise. There was never any conflict.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am extremely grateful again to the Minister, Sir, but I will continue along the line I was going. 12.10p.m.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. We never acquired the land without the permission of the owner. The permission of the owner was always sought. He accommodated the Government even* if he was reluctant to do so.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that today we are now dealing with this resolution to acquire the land and houses have been placed on that land already.

I am also saying that I have a problem with the houses that have been located on that land because many of those houses were not affected by the floods that happened in Weston. There are people in Weston who have been affected by the flood who have not been able to get a house lot, I am seeing a situation, Mr. Speaker, where a replay of what happened in Checker Hall in 1981 is happening again in Barbados in 1997, I am saying that it is disgraceful,,

Hon. O. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, There are no persons in Weston who were affected by the floods who needed a house spot that have not been relocated,

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN; Mr. Speaker, once I have the facts, I will stick to my point. There is a lady with a family in Weston, next to the church in Weston, that has been affected and she has not even been looked at, I am telling you that, There is also another gentleman, Sir, next to the fish market that is now being constructed, who was promised that if he removed himself from the house he was living in, that he would also get a spot and up to today nothing has been done about it.

I am speaking about the North of Barbados, Sir, about territory that I know. I am saying that those two families, I believe they wrote the right person and if not and they had come to me earlier, I would have written the right person and they would have been compensated.

I must congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Thomas for doing some good work re the floods and fishing boats etc., but I am still saying that after giving that, the Government must point out to me today how many people who were not affected, are now living at Bakers. I want to know that because I will not sit idly by and allow a replay of what happened in Checker Hall in 1981 to happen in 1997. People who never owned land got land and people who had no land could not get a house spot. I will speak out against it. It will never happen again.

I am telling the Minister that if he is vesting the land in the National Housing to go and tell the new Acting Manager because the Manager is on leave and by the time he gets back here he will be old enough for retirement and somebody else will have his job.

I am also saying that there are Executive Officers at National Housing who do work well, they will turn up some morning and find that they have to train other people for their job. All of these things are happening in Barbados. I will get back to the resolution before you guide me in that direction, Sir.

I am saying that I want to see some proper drainage work being done at Weston the same way it is being done in St. Peter, I believe that because the people in St. James are poor they are still entitled to the same benefits as the people in St. Peter, I say no more on that matter.

I am saying that the Government has to change their high-handed policy where they are prepared to take up people's land and then go and talk to them afterwards, That is exactly what happened at Bakers, I challenge anybody to disown that, I know they can't,

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that these are trying times and the young people out there are watching what is going on in this country. I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, they are not happy. They are seeing poor people being oppressed whether it be in the housing policy or in the Incomes Protocol, I will deal with the Incomes Protocol another time because it would not be relevant in this debate. A time will come, Sir.

I am saying that the poor people in Weston must get their benefits. I am calling on the Minister to give information on how many people have been re-sited and how many have been affected and how many people who have not been affected have houses in Bakers.

I take my leave at this time, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this resolution. It speaks of the sense of fair play and justice when the Government can seek to acquire land to assist people in distress. I am glad to see that the good folks of Weston, St. James are being looked after and I am looking at the circumstances in which this has taken place. I therefore believe that this sets the tone for similar situations in which people find themselves in distress.

It is therefore in this context that I wish to refer to a situation in which a group of 75 Christian people in Christ Church happened to be unfortunately thrown off a piece of land and are now in distress with their church, beside the road in a most despicable fashion. It burns my heart every time I pass and see this church hanging next to a fence. It is a private matter, I understand, in which there was some dispute over land and the church found itself in the middle of it with the result that the church structure is now beside the road at Kings Corner.

I pass this area very regularly and every time I see it, it pains me to see this church beside the road. I believe that these people are in distress, these people who wish to

serve the Lord and who are providing the kind of social contribution that Barbados so direly needs at this point in time, need to be given the upmost consideration.

I am hoping that just as the people from Weston, who suffered from a disaster of another sort and are being looked after, I believe that in the similar spirit that this Government will look after these people who have found themselves with their church besides the road side. The church is the "Art of Safety Spiritual Baptist Church". I spoke to a Miss Perline Browne and I also spoke to the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of clarification, Sir. I want to know if he is speaking on the one in Christ Church or the one in Cuttings, Haggatt Hall.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: There is no church in

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Haggatt Hall. I also spoke to the officer at the National Housing Corporation. Since I am informed by Miss Browne that she has filled in the necessary application. I know that there is some land available at Bournes Land and a few other parcels of land available in the Christ Church area near to where these people worship. Most of these people come from Breedys, Gibbons Boggs, Sayers Court in the constituency of Christ Church South and generally from that area. 12.20 p.m.

I believe that the National Housing Corporation would want to assist these people in finding a location so that they can serve their God in peace and if we are talking about morality and we are looking at all these noble values I believe that this matter should be addressed with the utmost urgency.

I have just indicated to Miss Browne, I just called her on the phone and I indicated to her that I will use these Chambers to make known that I am pleading on her behalf and on the behalf of my people who wish to serve their God in peace, that a place be found. It hurts my heart every time I pass Kings Corner to see a Church beside the road. I did say at a meeting the other night that I do not know what the circumstances are and I am not taking sides, but I believe you would have to be a bold person who would dare to dismantle a church and put it beside the road. It is not something I would ever do because I would be fearful that something evil would befall me. Likewise as M.P. for the area I believe that if I did not stand in these Chambers and say something that evil would also befall me. Therefore I had no recourse other than to come here and address a social problem when I see it. You could not want a bigger social problem than that where people who want to serve and who are providing a good in the

community are out there scattered and torn asunder with nowhere to go. I have utmost confidence that this matter will be addressed in keeping with the tone of this Resolution which I so much support today.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to make a few remarks on this Resolution and also to support it. I want to correct the misrepresentation which was done by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. It must be corrected, Mr. Speaker, because I visited Bakers Plantation, I also visited Mr. Wilkie and he agreed when we asked his permission to resite those persons at Weston who had suffered the flood of 1995.

It was approved for development previous to that. We have gone ahead and we have resited a number of homes from Weston at Bakers and it is not true to say that there are people at Bakers who are suffering and who want land and who have not been resited or who have not been compensated.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have never mentioned anything about anybody at Bakers suffering.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He said the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member was saying that there are people at Weston who have not been compensated who are still in need who want land, who have problems that have not been addressed at this moment.

I am saying to the Honourable Member that as far as the Ministry is aware most of the problems at Weston were addressed. If he knows of any that we do not know of then he can at least enlighten the Member and enlighten the Ministry. Tremendous improvement has gone on at Weston since 1995. A number of homes on the beach side have been relocated. We are still looking at land to resite the other homes and there are about two or three people there who do not want to move because they have been living there for years but the Ministry has done, whatever in its opinion was the right thing to do to resite those people. We have compensated them and we have restored, repaired and all the agencies, Welfare, CERO, have worked tremendously hard to make sure that the persons who are affected were compensated.

I just want to say it is a beautiful development at Bakers. The owner is in agreement and then

again Members must understand, despite we say we are compulsorily acquiring land, it does not mean that we do not negotiate with the owners. Whenever we acquire land one of the very first things we do is to talk with the owners to find out what they have planned for the land. We do not ever disadvantage the owners so I want to correct this myth, Mr. Speaker,

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, this matter raises a question of principle that I wish to deal with because this area of land happens to be situated on the new Highway 2A. And what I want to advise Government is that my experience has been that when once a highway goes through land there is tremendous pressure upon the Government and others for subdivision permissions to take place so that the landowners can realise the gain that inevitably follows.

The Honourable Member as a dealer would know when there is a potential deal. The basic position is, Sir, that as I understand it Weston people who were affected by the disaster were placed on the Eastern side of the road next to an existing settlement which was there. As a matter of fact I know that settlement very well because there was a Waterworks well or tank there and I knew very well the gentleman who was put in a chattel house by the Water Authority. In the past the Water Authority used to have people whom they put near to either reservoirs or other things so they could work on a 24-hour basis if necessary. So I knew there was a settlement there.

My understanding is, Sir, that the land that is being acquired is on the opposite side of the road which is actually physically situated on what one would call a "IT" because the old highway passes to the Western boundary of this land and the Eastern boundary would be the new highway. Now, I would doubt very much if the Town Planner would give a subdivision provision for a series of exits on the new highway. I believe that you would probably find that the old highway would still be used as an exit because the Town Planner tries to reduce the number of exits. To me, when I looked at it, I felt that it was a reasonable acquisition.

What I think is unreasonable, and I will say so very clearly, is that I am told that there is an application for permission to develop another area by the school, a larger area of agricultural land, but Honourable Members know my views very clearly on this. I do not believe in giving permission to subdivide agricultural land in any area except in very restricted circumstances. I have always consistently said that and I know on this same Highway that there is a lot of grass piece land that should be given development permission first before taking up agricultural land, I do not care who is trying to put pressure on whom, if it takes

place, I am going to be the clearest critic of any such thing. I am saying that because I know the pressure.

Aside,

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am not serving any notice. This is a question that has been fought consistently in Barbados certainly over the last 30 years that I have been in politics and it has been highlighted more so since the ABC Highway and Highway 2A.

For my part if I had my way the Government would have repaid the cost of all those Highways by putting a special tax on this land but apparently we cannot get that through in Barbados although we have the legislation. It is always a question of not doing it in time or if you do it a question of valuation. But politicians have to be brave enough to make these decisions. So I support this acquisition and I would advise those responsible for housing that a proper assessment be made of all the land that Highway 2A has generated potential for development and that a policy decision be taken openly by the Government saying grass piece land must be developed first.

I do not care about the LADB. One of the problems of Barbados is that the Democratic Labour Party sold out this country to be ruled by the IADB and the IMF and they have perverted all of our concepts. 12.30 p.m.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Do not bother with them and the World Bank. That is one of your problems. The Barbados Labour Party and the IADB...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The Honourable Member must understand that our record of dealing with those associations is much better than yours. We actually put out an IADB representative already. You know, when he got too big for his boots, do not forget that.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am glad the Honourable Member remembers that, so that is what I would caution the Government, Sir.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sandy Lane is no different from the land you have in Inch Marlow, They have covenants on it, You should check the covenants on yours and theirs to see why they are not similar,

Therefore I finish, Sir, by asking the Government to do this survey and let it be public. The Government should make it clear that they are only going to support subdivisions on that land which consists of sour grass land, and the lowest value agricultural land. That is all, Sir. Marginal land.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, there are two points I would like to respond to. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy did mention that there are persons in Bakers who were not affected by the floods at Weston.

To my recollection from the information which has been submitted to me by the officials in the Ministry, there is only one person and that person had been affected because of the realignment of the boundaries at Benn Hill, St. Peter.

We had already allocated the house to a person who had been affected by the floods at Weston and that person was physically in the house, but they had the facilities to another house and they consented to allow this person at Benn Hill to utilise the facilities at Weston for a few months. That is the only person that I know about.

With respect to the point which has been made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, I know that it has always been a familiar sight during the last administration to see persons being placed beside the road by unscrupulous landlords including Churches. I would like to assure the Honourable Member that the Ministry of Housing is aware of the problem.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He gave the impression that under the last Government there was a policy or there was a consistency that Churches used to be placed alongside of the road, implying that is a policy of the Government. But I want to remind the Member, Sir, that is not true and it is the complete opposite. Because if you go to Six Men's Housing Development, you will see a Church in there, Sir. If you go to Hope Road in St. Lucy, you will see a Church in there also. The last Government had always made provision to find places for Churches to go including Cutting Road in Haggatt Hall and Husbands in St. James, Sir.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would just like to give the Honourable Member for Christ Church East

the assurance that the problem with respect to the dislocation of the Church will be one which the Ministry of Housing will be looking at and with his assistance wherever they can be accommodated the Ministry will facilitate them.

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

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

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF
LAND AT CONSTANT, ST. GEORGE,
FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution pertaining to the acquisition of land at Constant, St. George do now pass. The Honourable Member of St. George North will speak to the Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the land at Constant, St. George is contained by admeasurement 21 513 square metres. Mr. Speaker, this land at Constant is situated to the South of St. George Parish Church and the East of the St. George Secondary School. This land, Mr. Speaker, is situated to the East of Constant Tenantry and is fixed into the Government's policy.

Since 1994 the Government's policy is that we would develop marginal lands abutting and abounding the existing communities. With this in mind, Mr. Speaker, the land at Constant, St. George is marginal land and it is suitable for housing development, especially low income housing which ties into the existing tenantry at Constant in St. George.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the demand for housing in the area, one finds that the demand is very, very elastic. I conducted a survey recently, Mr. Speaker, and out of 150 persons who have visited my office in St George over the last year or so, 90 persons are in demand for house spots. 12.40 p.m.

It shows the extent to which there is a demand for housing at this site and when one looks, Mr. Speaker, also at the fact that there are a number of people of households who now live on the zone one area in Ashbury and Golden Ridge and who cannot now obtain permission for water and so on, we have to resite these people.

When one considers, Mr. Speaker, that we have to relocate a number of people from the Parish Land and the Lower Estate area who are now situated very close to the existing playing facilities at Parish Land we have to develop this site at Constant to provide the opportunity for a number of persons who want to own their own homes.

It is a policy of government to provide opportunities for a number of persons especially the young people who are trying desperately to own their own homes. Recently, Mr. Speaker, a number of persons have been ejected off their lots. A number of people have lost their right to purchase the land and therefore this development would help to solve some of the problems that now exist especially in the St. George area where a number of people have been asked by the court to remove their homes or a number of landlords and lawyers across Barbados have been asking people to leave the lots especially in the St. George area.

This Resolution, Mr. Speaker, is important because it seeks to provide the opportunity for these people. The other problem that needs to be addressed is the fact that recently a number of house fires have been occurring in Barbados. A number of house fires have been occurring and I must say that in many cases I have found that when houses have burnt down the land itself was not owned by the householder. Many householders find themselves in problems. They have a house fire but when they have to replace the house they do not have land, so we have to look at this.

The question someone asked me recently is what are we going to do about these fires? I strongly believe that Government needs to set a policy in place where timber houses will be compulsorily insured. I think we need to develop a policy to help protect those persons, who now suffer because of these prevailing fires. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this development is in keeping with Government's policy. I believe the demand for housing in the area is strong and I would ask members to support this Resolution.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to get involved in the debates going on in this period but the Honourable Member who just sat down made a suggestion and since he is part of the governmental machinery I would like to suggest that much thought would have to be put into the concept of compulsory insurance.

Getting insurance is not the problem. Paying insurance is the problem. How are you going to compulsorily make people pay insurance if they do not work, if they are pensioners. In my constituency I have house fires on a fairly routine basis but I also wish to say

that there are many insurance companies who are giving the public the impression that they are making insurance available for timber houses.

When the pensioners try to get the insurance, the price does not accord with the ease with which they say to the public that insurance is available for timber houses. It is one thing to say insurance is available. It is another thing to get it. The Honourable Member is saying ICB had a policy.

ICB was insuring timber houses. They were the only insurance company insuring timber houses. Apparently, the other insurance companies had a strong discussion with ICB and before long ICB had to stop insuring at all to review their portfolio because they were the only people insuring timber houses and everybody in Barbados was going to ICB and ICB had a problem. I do not know if they have resumed but I think that all of the insurance companies in Barbados owe it to Barbados. All of them should come together and there should be an insurance policy that is reasonable to reasonable persons and that should be the rate for all insurance companies and they should share the burden.

If they have a conscience, they would do it without any government having to make anybody do it. You cannot make anybody do it and therefore I am discussing you know, we talk about corporate citizens, corporate this and corporate that. There is a lot of jargon which is thrown out in Barbados recently, over the last few years. It is really senseless to attempt to discuss these issues in isolation. What we need is a conference. We need some kind of gathering of the insurance companies and the Government. The Government owns an insurance company and therefore the Government can be represented at this conference by the ICB.

ICB is probably one of the best run insurance companies in Barbados. I have said that before. I have had dealings with them. I have had dealings with others. I have no difficulty saying that I have found ICB to be the best run insurance company in Barbados.

That notwithstanding, I believe that the Government should seek to promote an all-insurance company conference and other interested parties to discuss finding a medium of insurance for those who cannot afford the premiums as they now exist. Anyone who owns a house in Barbados...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying that I see them very well from the Opposition.

The Honourable Member must know, from his own vantage position, that is one of the beauties of this system we have. When the people put you in the wilderness for a while they put you there to regenerate and that is why we are surprised that it has taken so short a time for that Government to reach the position it has reached where we know that they are vegetating and it is time for them to go.

The Honourable Member is obviously recognising that my short stint in Opposition has assisted me to reach the point where I am able to see more clearly now in some areas. The Honourable Member also knows that I do not exercise my public speaking in areas such as this but since we are discussing it, I am bringing my considerable experience in the constituency to bear and offering some wise counsel to a Government that had demonstrated hardheadedness in areas that disappoint me.

I am hoping that on this occasion I can find favour in the fertile mind of the Minister 'of Transport who on occasion has shown ingenuity when it comes to practise ecclesiastical.

Mr. Speaker, this is the gravamen of my intervention. I am suggesting that we need an all-party, all-national, whatever you choose to call it, but you can remove the parties so that there is no partisanship in the discussion. Let the insurance companies and the Government and other interested parties be...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is making an alternate suggestion.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Let us look at the possibility of having an insurance policy that would be for persons who fall into a certain bracket or who fall into the level of pensioners or whatever so that all of the houses in Barbados, or nearly all of the houses in Barbados, the timber houses especially, would be insured and no one entity would be required to carry the burden as ICB was carrying the burden at one point. I believe if that could be done we would be on the road to finding a solution. The solution must not, however, be only to find insurance because nobody is interested in having an insurance policy paid for a house. No one wishes to lose his or her house. 12.50 p.m.

I must tell you I was very frightened when a public officer, I am going to say someone who works in one of the public entities because I am not sure if he qualifies as a public officer, suggested that people would burn their houses to get into a housing entity...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know if it is a fact. I tell you I was frightened when I read it. I know of no one in my constituency who is a known arsonist, who would burn their house in order to get housing in National Housing Corporation. I cannot believe that anyone would do it. I know of no one who would do it and if the officer who said that, or if the National Housing Corporation is able to show from its statistics and studies that that is a pattern, they have a duty and responsibility to make their research available.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not want to attack anybody. But anybody who attacks the poor people in this country has made himself a target for me.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not wish to attack anybody. Mr. Speaker, you would not allow me to attack anybody in here. I did not even remember where I saw what was said. I am merely saying that it is foolish for any Government Department to base a policy on such a belief unless they are able to demonstrate clearly and reasonably that what they are saying is valid.

I am amazed that neither the Minister nor the Parliamentary Secretary...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Over the last two weekends there were a number of fires in Barbados and it was reported by the authorities that they suspected they were caused by arson. We have to understand. There are people who burn down their houses.

I went to a fire only last weekend in Bourne's Village and as soon as I got there the people told me: "Do not come. The man burned down his own house." This is a fact. Some people do this. It is just like people deciding to commit suicide.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Only an arsonist, and I am not discussing criminal activity. I am discussing a statement that was made from a reputable entity in Barbados by a reputable public person that -persons burn down their houses in order to get a house from the National Housing Corporation. If that is true, we have a problem. If it is not true, we have a problem.

The country deserves to have the information that would justify that statement. That statement by itself is not good enough coming from a public entity. That is the only point I am making.

The Minister and/or the Parliamentary Secretary, and/or both, and/or the Government owe it to the country to lay the facts bare before the bar of public opinion otherwise they should apologise to the ordinary people in the country who have had fires from time immemorial and for that statement because it suggests that poor people in Bush Hall, people in Thomas Gap, people in Orange Hill, people in Fan-field, up in St. Michael North, that their morality is at such a low level that they are capable of burning the house they are living in so they can get a National Housing Corporation house.

I tell you, Sir, when I saw it I was frightened. I was not attempting to deal with the individual who made the statement because I know from my own experience that you can make a statement, you can even make a statement in the House and by the time it is reported when you see it you cannot believe it is a statement of what you are supposed to have said. Therefore, the reason why I can say it, is that I am not attacking the officer because I do not believe he said that. I know the particular officer and he is not like that.

I was suggesting that the authorities in the National Housing Corporation owe it to the community to put out a statement saying that (a) he did not say it, or (b) what he said was misinterpreted or (c) he said it and he is sorry, or some such thing. I do not need to belabour the point, Sir.

It would save us who represent constituencies from having constantly and in an almost ongoing basis to have functions for fire victims such as fund raising dances. Members who represent urban constituencies know/ that is what we have to do. We have to find ways and means.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I cannot speak for the rural constituencies but I know where we have houses cheek by ghoul in our constituencies we have to spend a lot of time trying to assist fire victims. Some of the fires are caused by a sociological problem we have which is not being addressed by the Minister of Health and others. That sociological problem has to do with a number of elderly persons who are living by themselves and who are forced to live by themselves. It is in the interest of the country to keep them in their own homes but we need to find a methodology for assisting in supervising them as well.

I can speak to this, Sir, because it is an issue which I attempted and will continue to attempt to find a solution for.

One of the fires that occurred in my constituency is alleged to have occurred because one person suffering from

a form of dementia refused to use the Government's water to put out a fire that had started to affect her paling. She said: "Not one drop of the Government's water." So in adherence to one set of instructions, she was the perpetrator unwittingly of the destruction of two homes. That is what I have been told.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Let us hear the Honourable Member, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is talking to me about outing out marks. I do not know how you out out marks.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. Let us hear the Honourable Member, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But I notice they are going to people and putting red marks by houses where the people are dead.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I have given you so much latitude. I wonder when you are going to get back to St. George?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: St. George? Is that where we are?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Resolution. You are still at Bakers?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was making a tour. I was just about to go through Bush Hall, Sir, but if you wish...

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed then, if you are going through Bush Hall.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I really got up to make the point about the insurance. I really believe we should find a solution to this question of the replacement of timber houses. I do not in the foreseeable future see that we are going to move away from having timber houses in Barbados. I do not know of any timber houses we can produce that will be fireproof. We have an elderly population that is growing older. 1.00p.m.

We have the sociological problem of persons living alone and so we are going to be susceptible to fire especially during this time when there are no showers and water is scarce. I think therefore that among the

solutions which we might find is one which I call a "community solution" to the problem of fires. It makes no sense everybody screaming at everybody else. It is not going to provide the solution. It is necessary that we put our collective heads together in the community.

I am suggesting that if necessary Government subsidises this insurance in an attempt to finding an answer to the prevention of fire. Information and education should be continued in taking preventive steps. There are people who still leave their children at home and they leave matches near to hand but that is a case for somebody else to answer. I think I have made my point.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, this debate deals with the land at Constant. This is a very serious debate, Sir. This is the first time that we are really seeing the I.A.D.B's policy in place.

Listening to the Honourable Member for St. George North who said this land is marginal land, I am calling on him to provide evidence that this is marginal land. All of my years in the sugar industry, Constant Plantation in St. George, they have always been paid the lowest price for sugar cane in Barbados because the land was considered to be land less suitable for sugar cane. I cannot understand how he can call this land marginal land.

I am saying, Sir, that contrary to that, what I would refer this to is the highest use of land policy being in place now. This goes right back to the I.A.D.B report. What is going to happen in St. George is that plantations next to Constant will be saying that the same way Constant was given permission to develop the land that they must have permission to develop land in St. George as well.

Sir, it goes further, all the talk about Bulkeley should be in operations - this is the first stage to close down Bulkeley by this Government because as you know, Sir, Constant is one of the plantations that supply canes to Bulkeley and you would know that St. George belt is the belt best suited for growing sugar cane. I will give you one example, Warrens in St. Michael which used to be a plantation that grows cane in Clermont - the Honourable Member for St. Michael North would know where, he just put in some street lights - that land used to be agricultural land. The people in Clermont used an argument that the sugar cane fields were too close to their houses and it was approved for housing development to stop their houses from being burnt by the sugar cane fields.

I am going to tell you, Sir, that the same argument will be used in Constant and that a couple of years from that, Constant will not be agricultural land anymore it will be the land best suited for houses. This is the beginning of the policy, Sir.

All this talk about protecting agricultural land, I am sorry that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is not in here because he said in the earlier debate that he supports any policy that stop agricultural land from going into housing. I want to hear him in here today speaking about this Constant resolution.

You have to bring in Gerry Hagerebery. You also have to bring the ecological groupings because Constant was in that ecological grouping where they had to get the lowest returns for a ton of cane because of the good climatic conditions that they exist in. I am saying, Sir, that in light of all of this information...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: There is no grass piece to the East and even if it is the grass piece, the sugar cane must be next to the grass piece. The argument that we use is that the sugar cane field will burn and it will burn down the houses. The same argument that was used in Warrens and in Welches. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas will tell you about that well, being a good parliamentarian representative, if I might say so.

I am saying that the facts are that if it was grass piece you would not say marginal land you would say rab land in agricultural terms. Marginal land is land that happens to be producing sugar and should be best suited to do something else. He wants us to believe that it is marginal land - sugar cane land that should not be in sugar cane.

Let me show the Honourable Member for St. George North that at Bennetts in the constituency of St. Thomas, Sir, that a grass piece was then converted to grow sugar cane right off the highway. If you doubt me when you go next to Cockade House look to your left and you will see sugar cane growing in a field at Bennetts that use to be a grass piece.

I have spoken already about the I.A.D.B.'s policy or about the high tender and lowest tender and now we are dealing with the opportunity cost of land. I am saying that we have a policy in here that we have to watch because this policy by this Government will be the final policy for the Bulkeley Sugar Factory.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I want just about three or four minutes.

I believe I have a duty as the Member of Parliament for St. Michael South Central to inform this House that I in my capacity as a Member of Parliament, that I too am a fire victim in a very peculiar way.

Sir, it is a terrible situation. I have had one fire in Jones Gap, Carrington Village, one house destroyed. I have had two houses destroyed in Railway Road, Carrington Village. One house destroyed in Grassfield Gap, Martindales Road and the adjacent house burnt. I have had two houses destroyed in Mayers Gap. I have had a house with a family of about 11 destroyed in Valerie only a couple of weeks ago and the house across from that damaged. I have had a house destroyed in Clapham. Not a single person, Sir, except for one - whose house was insured and who was offered a house spot in Valerie and she herself with the insurance fund had to replace the house.

I have not been able to get any satisfactory accommodation except for one person who was in my constituency office for about six months. Now my constituency office again is occupied by a fire victim. I am not prepared to have a situation where the welfare officers come to a fire and have elderly people around and tell them to come tomorrow for a voucher for \$50 and people left on the streets to butt around the place to find somewhere to sleep and things like that. It is totally unsatisfactory. It is not only the problem of replacement of the house but the way in which these people are treated.

I have suggested that a simple thing can be done. Government can acquire about 40 or 50 mobile caravans. Just buy a few caravans or get them built, that can be put on to a trailer and bring them to the site where a fire has taken place so that people can have somewhere to rest, somewhere to wash, to wash up and be able to try to retrieve any possessions as a temporary matter. I am talking about the first 48 to 72 hours which is very critical to these people. They want to try to recover any possessions, any jewellery, whatever and in 2 or 3 days time you find some kind of a house. The point is these people are stranded and stranded immediately. They have no clothes. 1.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent 90% of my time as a representative over the past 9 months or so dealing with the issues of fire victims. Sunday morning at about 1.30 was at the Pleasure Seekers in Brittons Hill where I am very glad to see that they were so many young people who

came out to try to raise some money for the latest fire victims. I spend a lot of my time trying to put together clothes and to beg for beds. I have spent an awful lot of money trying to help these fire victims but there is little or no public support and the fact is that the public agencies that are available they are largely unsympathetic. They now have invented this idea that every house fire should be viewed with suspicion that someone might have actually burnt down the house to get a new house or to get a house in the housing authority and certainly there is not a single case in St. Michael South Central where this could remotely apply.

Sir, the difficulty in getting them on the phone. You can spend hours on the phone. I spent about 3 hours today trying to contact 3 public agencies this morning and I have got in touch with nobody in relation to the last fire and when you get them on the phone they give you a run around that the Welfare is dealing with this, National Assistance with this, Housing with this, and nothing happens. You run around all day and you can spend hours and hours and days and days and can get absolutely nothing done. The problem is that these are largely problems affecting poor people. The agencies are totally insensitive to their needs and something needs to be done with that. For God's sake if we do not have the houses let us at least treat these people with some humanity when they are faced with the destruction of their homes and all their possessions and I see nothing wrong in putting a mobile caravan beside the site so that people could go through that recovery phase.

Sir, some of these people need a little psychological help. They need a little assistance in this way and there is nobody to help them. Nobody cares and it is really a terrible situation and something needs to be done about it. I am prepared to do whatever I can in my constituency as an individual. I think in St. Michael South, just in Mission Gap, Brittons Hill over the weekend there were more fires. I have told the Member for the City that one of the fire victims in Grassfield, the family is from Ellis Village, and I am trying my best to help wherever I can but this Parliament has to come to grips with the problem. It is not only the problem of providing housing, immediate temporary housing but adequate money for these people to go and get some food and clothing and it is not good enough to give people a voucher for \$50. What are they going to buy with \$50? This is absolute madness.

I think that Parliament has a duty to address this particular problem as to how they deal with fire victims and how they respond to this situation. We cannot go ahead on the assumption that these are deliberate acts because in point of fact what I think is happening is that a lot of these fires seem to relate to stoves inadequately looked after, inadequately connected. Some of them seem to be

electrical in origin and of course when you have a large number of people living in a house then anything can happen. These are problems that are inherent in the context of poverty in Barbados and we have to deal with these things sympathetically and we have to be able to respond.

If there is a case of arson that is a criminal offence and the individuals making the accusations should report the matter to the police and let the police investigate the matter. Until such a charge is brought then I think we have to dismiss from our minds all this business about arson and deal with the immediate problems facing these people.

Sir the psychological, economic and social devastation that surround these families when they have a fire is almost unbelievable. It is one thing if you are insured. It is one thing if you live in an environment where you can easily find shelter with relatives and so on. It is another matter where you are out on the streets and I believe, Sir, that something must be done. We cannot rely on what the Welfare Department, what the National Assistance and what the National Housing Corporation, are doing. Together they are making a total mess of the entire situation and they are not dealing with these matters sympathetically. Very often they are blaming each other.

Whilst they blame each other when the people continue to suffer, the only persons they have to fall back on would be their representatives and no matter how deep one's pocket is, whether it is as deep as the Member for St. Andrew or the Member for St. Thomas, nevertheless Sir, there is a limitation on what you can do personally. So this is a matter, Sir, for the State to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter and we need to sit down and find solutions to these problems. The Ministers responsible for National Assistance, for Housing and for Welfare they should get together and direct those people and tell them that when a fire occurs that this is what they should do and this is to be a coordinated effort. Either that, Sir, or you set up and fund a separate department to deal with the issue of these fires as they affect poor people.

Now, Sir, I do not think I am making an unreasonable request from this House. Something has to be done and I am at my wits end as to what to do in relation to those people who have been devastated by all these fires in my constituency and I can get no help from the State. I can get no help from people who are paid to help these people. I can get no money from the public purse that has been voted by this Parliament to assist those people. These things are wrong.

Sir, I am going to make a point of paying a call on the Minister of Housing, on the Minister responsible for National Assistance and on the Prime Minister of this country and let them understand clearly what is the plight of these people in St. Michael South Central and around the country. I am not only going on my own behalf, Sir. I know you have problems in your constituency, not as many fires as I have. I know you have a situation where somebody has brought truck loads of garbage and put in front of a poor woman's house and she cannot sleep at night because she is fearful that somebody will come along and set that on fire or some kind of combustion would take place and destroy her home. I know you have that problem and I know the difficulties you are having in getting it dealt with.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That is right, in Buckingham Road. I know that you cannot get the public agencies to go and do anything about it and I know that your constituent has to resort now to the legal route to see if there is anything that the law can do to protect her house from being exposed to the fire bug as a result of the wickedness of someone who has money in that constituency and has dumped all that combustible material right in front of her home. 1.20p.m.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have nothing more to say for the time being. I will work once again with the public agencies and if we cannot get anything done we will mount a demonstration in St. Michael South Central so that Barbados will clearly understand that this talk about poverty alleviation is something that does not apply to poor people.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we thought we might not be needing to break but in the interest of making sure that we get everybody's contribution and other Members on both sides wishing to speak especially to the matter of fire, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 2.30 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.30 p.m. was put to the House and agreed to and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise first of all to support this Resolution before this Honourable House. I would like to congratulate the Minister again for the hard work he is doing in relation to the acquisition of land all over this country and certainly today is no exception.

Quite recently I was fortunate enough to have the technical people from his Ministry visit some land in Christ Church. I refer to the Water Street Boys' and Girls' Schools. Two schools which have the attendance of over 1 200 pupils and to my horror, history will show that these two schools have never yet had a playground.

Fortunate for us on this occasion, I think that the representative for Christ Church South during the time when he was parliamentary representative for -this area, Christ Church East Central, he purchased a lot of land in the Christ Church area, what is known as the Wotton Plantation.

I believe that the time is right now where the Minister can use his authority to transfer some of the land from his Ministry to the Ministry of Education so that the children of the Water Street Boys' and Girls' Schools can have a playing area.

As you know right now in this society we have to protect our kids, and because of certain deviant behaviour in society we have to make sure that at least there is a facility for them to play and certainly a facility that is cordoned off from the rest of the people in the district.

Also, today I was very happy to see that both sides of this House came down very strongly and in favour of the people who lost their homes in this country and in my constituency, Christ Church East Central. In St. David's about six weeks ago two houses were burned, as you say in Bajan, to the ground. At the time I was in England and I would like to congratulate the Reverend of St. David's and some of his people there who actually were looking after those two families over the past six weeks in providing clothing and other amenities.

What is happening now with one of the families is that their two young daughters who are going to school are staying at their families but it is a known fact that over a period of time, you tend to overstay your time, and only yesterday, I was at the Ministry of Housing trying to get a place for them. Unfortunately, there is no room in the inn.

I know that the Ministry of Housing, over the last two years has worked very hard in trying to provide homes and houses in this country, but we have reached a stage where there is nowhere to go. I heard the Member for St. Michael South Central talking about having a caravan set up and I believe it is a good idea. Because, basically when you have got a family with children involved I think the Government have got to provide somewhere along the line, help for these poor people where they can temporarily stay until homes could be provided.

I would like to support this Resolution and certainly in relation to Christ Church it is important because we in this Chamber have had some outstanding people who attended that school. I refer to the Member for Christ Church West and I know that he also, in the past has spoken at length about the possibility of getting a playing area for those kids.

All in all, I would just like finally to say to the Minister, I appealed before for help across-the-board. The help seems to be coming slowly and at this point I would say because of the situation, I would ask him to pay some attention whereby, first of all we were able to house those two families in St. David's. Secondly, and most importantly, to get the two playing fields in the Christ Church area where there are 1 200 children waiting patiently to have somewhere where they can play.

Thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Christ Church West Central.

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution also. I would like to speak shortly on two particular situations which concern me.

The first one the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central spoke about for a very short time and that relates to the Water Street Boys' School. This is a relatively old school and it is unfortunate that after such a long time this school does not have any playing facilities for the boys. 2.40 p.m.

As a matter of fact, this school has a roll of 650 boys and just about 200 square feet of playing area so one can imagine what happens at lunch time when 650 boys are running all over the place. I was privileged to be at that school some weeks ago. I saw some little boys running into each other because of the scarcity of playing facilities at that school.

The Parent Teachers' Association has been asking Government for quite some time now to do

something about acquiring the land to the back which is really, as far as I know, owned by the National Housing Corporation. As a matter of fact, not acquiring it but transferring it into the Ministry of Education. We had a meeting with the technocrats recently and we are hoping this could be done as soon as possible.

The other matter relates to a piece of land. I think this is the only arable piece of land in the Christ Church West Central constituency. It is about 7V₂ acres of land. I am asking that this land be vested in the National Housing Corporation so that I can get at least about 50 or 60 spots for people from Christ Church West Central. As a matter of fact, I have had over...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir, because he is going against Government policy as stated by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South that no agricultural land will be used for housing. He is suggesting that Government will be doing that.

Mr. J. M. EDGfllL: First of all, I never said agricultural land. I said arable land. It is almost barren.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, continue please.

Mr. J. M. EDGHBLL: First of all I have had in my two years over 300 applications for house spots. As- far as I know we had about 10 or 15 from the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. I personally feel that land being such an issue in my constituency, I would like to see something being done as soon as possible so that at least 40 or 50 people in my constituency would be able to get some land for housing purposes.

I would like to ask the relevant Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, to look into this matter as quickly as possible so that the people in Christ Church West Central would be given a chance to own land and later on being able to build houses on their piece of land.

Thank you very much.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, before the break I had started to make my presentation and was interrupted. As I said then, I do not intend to prolong this debate unnecessarily but I think it would be remiss of me if I did not use this opportunity to express some of my concerns. They relate to the whole/macro planning for housing as we are presently witnessing it in Barbados.

There has been a lot of debate, Sir, with regard to the burning of houses, chattel houses in particular, in recent weeks. I am very concerned that there are some suggestions from Government quarters that this may, in fact, be a deliberate act. I am particularly concerned about this development because in my own constituency I am aware of at least two situations where persons have gone to the trouble and insured their properties only now to discover that they cannot receive compensation for no valid reason other than the insurance company indicating to them that they have reason to suspect that there is arson. There have been no charges laid against anybody. They bring in a forensic expert to deny, I cannot put it in any other form, an applicant the right to claim.

I think it is sad in this country that in the absence of a person being charged - I will take guidance from the Attorney General or from learned members of this Chamber, because if no charges have been brought against a person, and it is purely the rumourmongering that takes place in this country, "So and So and So and So" burn down their house because they want to get a Government house or something. This is a very dangerous trend that is happening in Barbados and the people at the lower end of this market of the Barbadian society are the ones who are being affected by it.

I think it is a sad commentary for us as people when we have to witness small people losing their possessions and as you see in the newspapers then many of them crying. They feel the hurt. I do not recall one single coverage in the newspaper where you do not see the agony of loss etched on the faces of these people having lost all their possessions in a fire. It is really sad when people can deliberately or inadvertently just simply say they have done that for a specific cause to get a house or something to that effect.

In that regard I am aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is a severe problem with housing and for house spots throughout this entire country. If it is Government's policy to correct the problems, Government goes through the process of acquiring lands all over the country to accommodate the housing needs of this country or in order to develop housing spots or whatever they want to develop.

In that regard, Government must not lose focus of the fact that even in relocating, or in setting up new communities, or setting up new districts for housing they must not lose their social conscience and understanding that it is necessary from time to time to make sure we have a total society and not a society just based on putting a few houses here or putting a few houses there.

I am speaking in that regard, Sir, because of comments that were uttered in here today about the

shifting of a church from a district. Recent events in Barbados or recent information made available to us suggest that there is a difficulty in Barbados at present where the present administration seems not to understand their social responsibility in developing areas for housing or new communities where a housing area was developed in a particular area, and I do not have to refer to the names specifically. I believe Honourable Members in here are fully aware of the area to which I am speaking and to the church group of which I am speaking.

I am concerned that an administration, Sir, would turn its eye to the cries of a young church group in this country who has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt their sincerity and commitment. They have demonstrated vision for the future in building a society at a time when we are crying out against the youth in this country who are being deemed to be wayward. Here you have a young group of people who have a vision for a specific cause in a specific area, made proper representation to a Government, found themselves in sync with a Democratic Labour Party administration's thinking that where we would just develop a housing area we would not just develop it as a housing area and stick people here, there and everywhere but we would tend to develop the entire society. 2.50 p.m.

That would be by the inclusion of a mini-mart, a church as my colleague from St. Lucy quite admirably tried to explain. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this causes more concern to me, in particular when persons take the trouble to purchase land from the Government for that purpose, and having been granted permission and been sold that particular spot of land or those spots of land, for Government then to turn around and say "Well, I am sorry. I want that land and I am taking it back. Go and find somewhere else."

You cannot take up a church group and tell it go and function there *r function here because if it has a vision of a community where there is a new housing development or a community base that is set up here Mr. Deputy Speaker, it must have a vision for that area. You cannot just take up a church and say okay, go and function not here. Go and function there. There where? It has a vision. You cannot just take it up and push it anywhere like that and this Government has a responsibility to correct a wrong before it becomes one. Because we as a Parliament would be condemning and sending the wrong signal to this entire society about our planning about housing and development of our communities in this country.

Every day we seem to be affecting the small developing young person including the church. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am really quite concerned. This whole process

of acquiring land cannot be just seen in the context of grabbing whatever land is available, whether it is arable land, marginal land, whatever kind of land. It does not matter. That is my understanding and the Minister has collective responsibility with all of the other Ministers in the Government. So I have to assume that it is part of Government's policy.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael East I have given you a little latitude in what we are debating. Now you touched on the fact of the church. Yes it is part of Government and so, but I would like you to desist from going in that direction where the church and so on is concerned, please. That is my ruling.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You spoke about a church, right? My understanding, Sir, in this debate is that there was some discussion about churches being put by the wayside and so forth. I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in terms of planning for the future... we have come into Parliament every week that we sit and we acquire land and part of the plan must include the development of a total community. You cannot put houses here and houses there. They have to be built. These communities have to be built. We are talking about developing a Christian society and I am not now speaking from any pulpit. I am speaking from the House of Assembly. I am saying as a matter of urgency that this Government has to correct a wrong before it becomes a wrong because neither you Sir, nor any of the other Honourable Members in this House would want a Government to be in a battle with a church.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael East as I told you already, let us keep off that church and continue the debate as you were continuing as the House has pointed before.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Yes, I am just trying to issue a word of caution because in terms of planning a church, you have a scenario, Sir, where a young group of church developers actually have a conveyance in their hand from the Government, then the Government turns around and says I am taking that away from you. You have to go somewhere else. What kind of message are we sending to the society? It is a dangerous precedent that we are setting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I, as I said, I can only appeal that God will touch the Government and let some sort of common sense prevail. This is a general attitude that seems to be prevailing.

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East, if you are going to continue in a debate will you please address the Chair? I have

mentioned to you on two occasions... The Member for St. Lucy, I am speaking. The Member for St. Michael East, as I mentioned to you on two occasions, let us keep the debate in the line it was going before we had the interval and desist from going the direction of the church. You are repeating yourself.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have heard what you said and I really do not consider I am repeating anything. I am speaking with emphasis because the matter is such a serious one that it is necessary to emphasise to this House the significant danger that we are creating for the society and I certainly as a responsible Member of this Parliament would not want to be part of a decision that deprives this society of proper housing planning. My comments were purely geared towards warning the Government not to go down that road, and they know what I am talking about, Sir. If it comes up in here I assure you that it might not be a very pleasant affair. It will not be very pleasant at all.

I will go on Sir, and I will speak about the fact that the National Housing Corporation has failed miserably in providing any kind of assistance. Not one single person from my constituency in St. Michael East has been facilitated for the last three years by the National Housing Corporation.

I have a fire victim in my constituency office who suffered the loss of his home and his business all in one and I have had to make requests for national assistance and got no assistance. I have made requests of the National Housing Corporation for a house for him, no assistance and that person has been in my constituency office now for almost eighteen months. We can do nothing about it. We have made requests.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, comments have been made in here that in Barbados we have to treat people with respect. What is happening is that once you have a fire in this Barbados everybody deems you to have burnt the property yourself, so you are now the butt of the society. Do not mind him, he burnt down so and so, so do not pay him any mind.

This is a sad reflection on this society because in my own constituency, the same area, we had a problem with the Light and Power with the surging of the electric current. We have had many surges. I get reports about people complaining about television sets being blown, about radios, all kinds of problems with electrical gadgets because of surging by the Light and Power. Where there is a connection in the roof or to the eaves of a house where

it usually connects from the pole, you will find where there are wooden eaves and so forth that a lot of the fires are starting in that specific area. It has nothing to do with somebody wilfully or deliberately burning down a house.

I have another instance where an old lady who was 85 years old saw a red mark in the front of her house with an arrow pointing at it. She told me she was very disturbed about it. She was flabbergasted. She could not sleep. She was confused and later on the night by mishap or whatever, the lantern in her house fell over and her house caught afire.

I am not saying that the Minister caused her to burn her house because of the red marks in the road, but I am saying it is a strange coincidence that the same day they put the red mark in the road the lady was so confused, the lady was so nervous, the lady was panicking and that same night her house was burnt flat. She did not burn her house flat because she wanted to get in at National Housing Corporation, but her house burnt.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am saying that she did not burn it down for purpose. Maybe she burnt it down through fear of having her water cut off and the frustration you caused her. That probably caused her some degree of panic. Here you have a scenario where an accident happened in a household. It can happen in her house, it can happen in several other people's, where there is surging, where there are these accidents.

People cannot pay their light bills now because there is so much pressure out there. The VAT has people so that they cannot pay anything. When your light gets cut off and you are burning the lamps and so forth the risk has increased and the likelihood exists, that you are going to have more house fires. Go and check it and you will see that in 90% of the cases, not only stoves but there are a lot of lamps that are catching blinds and falling and just... Many people left unattended children, old people, so to say that it is a wilful act that people are deliberately doing that is creating a problem for people at the small end of the housing scheme in Barbados. 3.00 p.m.

The re-insurers are saying I am not going to pay the claim because people are deliberately doing it. The Welfare people say they are not paying you any mind because you did it deliberately to get welfare. The National Housing say you are only doing it to get a house. At the end of the day there is a lot of suffering where it need not occur because people are genuinely having problems and have genuinely lost their homes. Yet we condemn them and put them out to pasture and as far as they are concerned they might as well be burnt in the house.

It is wrong to send these messages in this community. This Parliament has a responsibility to bring a total package whether it has been done before or not, the time has come now for us to bring a total package to this society. I am fully aware that people might want to abuse it because it might seem as if goodies are being put in place, but we should appeal to common sense and for sincerity to prevail in this country. Let us educate our people rather than condemn everybody to a dump heap because of a misadventure.

I will watch and wait to see how certain things develop in this country in this regard and I may have to intervene if the Government does not take the course that I think they should adopt. I will give them some time to change, if the course is not changed then it will be a war in this regard.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt at all that housing is a great problem in Barbados. In fact, it is second only to unemployment. Contrary to the view that there may be deliberate burning of house in Barbados, there is need to fully understand that the housing stock in Barbados is quite old. I will provide a few figures to demonstrate that.

Of the total housing stock in Barbados, 40% are wooden and of those 40%, over 50% of the wooden houses in Barbados are over 20 years old. As you would expect, most of such houses would be located within the St. Michael area.

Something that needs to be stated is that while house fires seem to be something that is more urban than rural, there may be an explanation. In St. Andrew, for instance, where the Minister of Housing represents, the indicators suggest that St. Andrew is in fact the poorest parish in Barbados. The indicators from the census do suggest that. What is most fascinating is that whereas that may be so, the ownership of houses is highest in the rural districts. In fact, St. Andrew residents own about 95-99% of the houses in which they live, unlike St. Michael where a number of the houses are rented houses.

This is important from the point of view of the maintenance of houses. While we can say "yes" that St. Andrew by all indicators is the poorest parish yet the residents of St. Andrew own their homes and therefore the evidence can possibly suggest that maintenance of these houses is much better than within the urban area.

Now, that points to a serious factor which is now occurring, that as a consequence of the very old stock of

wooden houses in Barbados, they will be prone to house fires for one reason or another. It may be to do with electrical repairs, or it may be general carelessness in terms of the maintenance of the home. But having said that what we need to ask is this - what happens, as is the case, when there is an absolute shortage of houses in Barbados?

We are now seeing an increase in the amount of people in need of houses because of an emergency situation. The evidence suggests that even those who are disadvantaged by house fires, unfortunately, still do not have access to a home because there are not sufficient houses being kept in reserve or allowed to be kept in reserve by the National Housing Corporation as a result of the already short supply of houses.

I wish to suggest that this area of the economy is extremely vital and has been so for a number of years. I am sending the warning that it is perhaps the area in which there can be all kinds of creativity and innovation on the part of the political parties in Barbados, to the extent that an imaginative housing programme will constitute an important plank of any party looking forward to becoming the Government of Barbados.

I am sending the warning to the Government that they can expect that the Democratic Labour Party will put forward to the people of Barbados an extremely creative and innovate housing policy for the next election. It will constitute, beyond unemployment, an area that certainly can excite the public of Barbados and it is an area that requires substantial investigation by way of research and not just pedantic exercises as have occurred over the years but exercises which show that we are thinking about the future of Barbados. The signal is there.

There are several areas in which we need to put emphasis in this whole question of housing. We have had some misguided policies over the years, where we have put too much emphasis on things like mortgage interest deductions. People should be entitled to mortgage interest deduction but the thing about such a policy is that such a policy only entitled an individual who has a mortgage to a benefit and by its very nature discriminates and excludes the lower elements of the society.

Therefore, any reasonable Government thinking about the housing needs in Barbados, understanding that the housing needs are really within the low income categories of Barbados, would have had to revisit 100% mortgage income deduction as its major policy and look towards policies that cater to the needs of lower income houses. There is need to give back at some point in time some measure of benefit to individual mortgage owners but it cannot be the case that they are allowed to claim the entire 100% mortgage interest. 3.10 p.m.

Sir, there is no harm to giving relief to middle and upper income people in Barbados. But there is definite harm in giving a selected 2 500 people \$17 million in mortgage interest deductions in addition to \$15 million in housing repairs, which constitutes over almost \$40 million in any given year, at the expense to the low income people in Barbados where in fact only 225 people were able to claim a minimal amount in terms of housing returns. But, what you have had is that this present Government criticised the last administration for removing certain privileges as they existed then and now has returned to a home allowance which not only includes house repairs, mortgage interest, but everything even a solar, any other thing up to a limit of \$3 500 per year.

I am saying to you that even that policy is a misguided policy and what has to happen if this Government and any other Government in Barbados is serious is that those funds should cater to the low income people in Barbados and creative policies ought to be put in place to ensure that. That is why the politics have to be removed because on the one hand this administration has now put on the front burner the whole question of poverty alleviation and yet still for political gain is pampering to the needs of certain select middle and macro income people within the society.

There is a contradiction because you already know that the resources which you have, financial and otherwise are limited. And as a consequence if you are saying that poverty is now the major concern of Barbados then your policies have to be targetted, without exception, at the lower end. So it is not a question of merely putting in place measures to attract political gain but fully recognising that housing constitutes the major problem outside of unemployment for Barbadians. The housing policy for the future therefore has to cater to the needs of low income people. And rather than all the rhetoric and people not willing to say these things publicly, because they fear that they may lose a few votes and people not willing to come and say that mortgage interest deduction as it existed was far too generous and only catered to individuals who were entitled to mortgage interest, that housing policies should cater...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1986, 1987 and 1988 even when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South was the Minister of Finance and had of necessity to reverse what happened in 1986 under the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, we made these points. I do not know where the Honourable Member was. These points were made that the foolishness of the alternative budget and its implementation after the change of Government in 1986 was madness.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, the Member for St. Thomas only in the first year of this Government, there were arguments in this Chamber, I was in the Upper Chamber, suggesting that you need to give back people in Barbados such benefits and this is what engendered the home allowance. And I am saying that what was not stated at the time was that there was other substantial relief given to people in all income categories in Barbados during the structural adjustment period. I can quote them: the removal of stabilisation taxes. In fact the effective tax rate in Barbados was lowered as a consequence of the direct tax reforms in 1990 and I am saying that a housing policy...

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Listen, you make no contribution in this House and when people are speaking you are interrupting them.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael North West, please direct your remarks to the Chair.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am saying it relates because it has to do with effective allocation of resources and any Government in Barbados that is willing to look at a housing policy must look at its total expenditure and look at its total budget. So that no policy at all can be pursued especially in terms of housing, without a total analysis of the financial environment of Barbados.

On that score I am saying, Sir, that while respecting that there is a shortage of housing in Barbados, which we all know there is, and while this Government has promised 800 houses per year and has not delivered on that promise at all.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. George North, on what do you rise?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North says you are misleading the House. Is that so?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am not misleading the House. They have not delivered 800 houses so that there is still an absolute shortage of housing in Barbados. But I wish to say in this debate that while I respect and understand that and while I know the resources are limited, I am saying that only recently in Cave Hill there was a fire victim, the Boyce family, and that in fact as a consequence of that I wish to make a few proposals. Even though I am in the Opposition I am saying that a fire victim can be accommodated in several ways.

Now, when I arrived on the scene of the fire I indicated to the family that being in the Opposition does not deny me the right to serve their interest and that I will try to put together some fund-raising event and this will happen in the form of a dance on Saturday at Montgomery pavilion. 3,20 p.m,

What I want to say is this, the process of putting together a dance requires permission to be granted from the National Sports Council and that should be automatic.

There is no reason why it should have taken me almost two weeks to get permission to use the Montgomery pavilion to host a dance for a fire victim. Therefore, I am saying that that should be automatic.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Of course you need permission, but to take two weeks to do that? The question is getting a liquor licence and a health license in order to sell. I am saying that there should be an easier process and when a misfortune like this occurs you should not have to go through so much hassle.

You have to get permission from BAMC to play music at a dance. I am saying that in the case when you are organising such an event for a fire victim that there should be one-stop shopping in such an event, and that to go through all these different processes just to ensure that you are doing something which is justifiable and which is within your interest as a representative of the people. That should be eliminated and I should not have to spend so much time going all around the place just to get permission to have a fire victim's dance at Montgomery pavilion.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Yes, I do not mind the work, but I am saying that it can be made simple, especially in a case where you are more or less begging for donations here and there, going around getting permission here and there and you must understand that can be changed.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: How can we in this Chamber put all kinds of facilities in place for special development areas and investment of foreign people and all kinds of things and cannot see it fit to put measures in place that can facilitate such an effort on the part of a representative of an area.

Aside,

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Why it cannot change? In the situation where there is an unfortunate event of a fire, a representative, wanting to help should not have to go around and get all this permission which takes two and three weeks. I have said it before.

Asides,

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: So all I am saying to you is that why not respect and understand that there is a shortage of houses? I am saying that especially as we stand now in Barbados where we are getting four and five house fires a week that we can certainly look into a better system of ensuring that efforts which we are making on behalf of the victims can be carried through more smoothly and we do not have to go through the kind of process I had to go through just to hold a fire victim's dance.

While I can understand that some representatives in this Chamber will never get the opportunity to go this route because they fail to represent the people, those of us who are making efforts are to be encouraged and be given as free a passage as possible to ensure that what we are doing in the interest of the constituents are done without any particular effort. While I respect I have to work, I do not think that I should have to go through so many different barriers.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The Member for St. Philip North who makes no effort, even in his Ministry, will never understand the difficulty that one would have to go through in such an effort. On that score there is so much more that can be said about housing in Barbados but it is definitely the biggest problem after unemployment and it has to be addressed by this administration and other administrations to come. When this administration fails to do so, and I am sending the signal from now that this administration can anticipate that for the next election a creative, innovative, imaginative housing programme will come from this side to test the oncoming election.

I thank you.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very glad to follow the Honourable Member. I look forward to the proposals that will come from the other side because they will be breaking completely new ground, their record is so dismal in respect of housing in this area.

We are really dealing with a Resolution here which relates to the acquisition of land in Constant in St. George which serves to remind me of the fact that this land

is situated in an area which is designated for at least 15 years as an area which was ideally suitable for urban development as opposed to rural development.

Everyone who remembers the Platform of the Barbados Labour Party will recognise that this Resolution is consistent with a well-known and well-stated policy of the development of central St. George as an urban area. This land is situated at Constant, but if one looks at the description of the land one will see that this land is not situated in the area which is suitable for agriculture. This land is situated very near to the St. George Secondary School. This school was built on that particular area of land because there was need in that community for a school and that parcel of land used was regarded as suitable for the school. We also have to remember, Sir, that this land is situated very near to the Glebe project.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is not good agriculture land. If you look at it you will see, Sir, that it is a small area of land and it is surrounded by a number of roads and small owners. If anybody will look at the description of the land, one would glean very...

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am giving the Honourable Member some enlightenment on these matters.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I have definitely no doubt that Constant is not the Best agricultural land in Barbados. But, everybody knows that in every plantation in Barbados there was land that the owners designated for a tenantry and that the owners well knew that that area of land which they were designating was a land which was totally unsuitable for anything else other than housing.

I want to emphasize and I am asking the Honourable Members for St. George North and South never to forget that had it not been for the negligence of the Democratic Labour Party and a lack of vision that Central St. George would have been a very large urban area now, because there was a joint venture scheme between the Anglican Church of Barbados and the Government of Barbados.

Part of that scheme consisted of the removal of houses from the pasture which was opposite to the entrance to the St. George Church in the time of the realignment of the road and the building of a bypass road and that part was implemented up to the time of 1986. To the East of St. George Church a whole settlement was created of houses

which were removed from the playing field area around St. George.

This land that we are talking about is an integral part of that development. Just as from the Charles Rowe Bridge area to that area was to have been the utilisation of the old boys' school and girls' school in which District 'B' Police Station was going to be transferred there and provision for a youth centre. 3.30 p.m.

It was a vicious wicked attitude of a member who was disappointed once by the people of St. George who prevented that scheme from coming into operation because it was not thought of by the Democratic Labour Party and it was being put in an area who had disciplined that Honourable Member, and not even one, you had disciplined two on the other side. Both were in a position. One had the highest post and the other held the purse strings and both of them decided to kill the scheme,

As we will have it, now we have an opportunity to implement it and I am asking the Honourable Members to see to it that this term does not end without that central St. George being brought to its rightful place as an urban area in Barbados.

It has absolutely nothing to do with the sugar industry. That area of central St. George is part of a number of urban areas and we must remember in evaluating our total solution, we have to educate the people in Barbados, that part of the solution to the housing problem is in the urban areas that you have to have multi-rise dwellings. It has to happen because it is impossible with our land area, and with the cost of land in Barbados, it is impossible for everyone to have an individual plot of land. Put that in your pipe and smoke it.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy may be able to satisfy those aspirations, but those of us who represent urban constituencies will be only fooling the people if we do not tell them that we have to have multi-storey dwellings in Barbados. I ask the Honourable Member to remember that too in the planning of this area.

Now, Sir, I was also very interested in the speech of the Honourable Member who just sat down when he talked about this new proposal to come from the Democratic Labour Party. They are the Party that left \$20 million in the Housing Credit Fund unused.

Mr. D. St. E KELLMAN: On a point of order. That same money that the Honourable Member is talking about is the same money that they left in the fund.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I beg your pardon, The Honourable Member would not appreciate that we expected to come and find nothing in it because we were expecting them to spend it, but they did not spend it. That money was to flow to the people of Barbados but, obviously, either they did not understand it or something. We are very glad we came and found it because that is precisely what is being used now to increase the housing stock in Barbados.

Today, we are to be in a position where most of the demand for mortgages, among the lower income group which has special problems of being able to convince the lenders of money in Barbados, with the exception I would say this, with the exception of the Mortgage Finance Corporation who understands its role, that it is a bankable proposition to lend money.

The Labour Party's record in this respect, Sir, is one of great pride.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: What misrepresentation? The Labour Party fought the banks in Barbados to give long-term mortgages. We fought the banks in Barbados to give long-term mortgages. In addition to that, we fought the banks to understand that they should take into account the income of not only the borrower, but either his wife's or his girlfriend's once they were in a permanent union, and they had to move the threshold of lending from one and a half to as high as five. I understand that the compromise is now three times the joint earnings of the two households.

Now, Sir, I am not dealing with mortgage interest deductions today. What I am dealing with is the fact that the flow of funds was considerably increased as a result of the activity of the Labour Party in this country. We made our contributions. We have more to make too and I will tell the Honourable Member there are more to be made, more innovative and you can never be as innovative in relation. There is no thought on that side that can be as innovative on flowing money to people for building houses than on this side.

We have not even touched the tranche of national insurance money which ought to flow to every national insurance payer in this country after they have reached a certain age and once they have in 500 contributions. A proportionate part of that money ought to flow. You have not given thought to that yet. It ought to flow automatically because it is the best security.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: We said what? The Honourable Members have never begun to think of these things yet. We have investigated all of this. Sir, I look forward to the Honourable Members on that side... I may not be in the campaign but I will tell the Honourable Member this. I am going to get up in the campaign.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Some time ago, about two or three years ago when we were dealing with pensions, I suggested to this Assembly that any worker should be able to use any pension fund, whether it was national insurance or a private pension fund as collateral, so I cannot see how the Honourable Member for Christ Church South can now give the impression that only the Barbados Labour Party mentioned anything about that. They are copying ideas and are now making them sound as though they are theirs.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am not dealing with any collateral. I am talking about flowing the funds out. If you have collateral, it is when you use that as a security. I am talking about using it as the source of fund. I am not talking about any collateral. Anyway, the basic position is, Sir, that I welcome this Resolution, and I only wanted to place it in the context of the fact that I regard this as another step in the implementation of the creation of the urban part of St. George and I also welcome the fact that that gas station at the corner of St. George, Sir...

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is pumping again? Pumping gas again, and the well-known proprietor, I knew that proprietor for thirty-odd years is still in operation. That person is one of the icons of central St. George, Sir.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I had not intended to speak in this debate but since it has taken this turn, Sir, I want to make a few points. I will not be long. First of all, I agree with the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. In terms of housing policy in this country, the Democratic Labour Party should be ashamed of their record over the years.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. The Democratic Labour Party's record is never one that would require anyone to be ashamed.

Mr, DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for St, Thomas,

Hon, D, A. C, SIMMONS: Sir, I speak from a certain position of intimacy with housing development between 1976 and 1986,1 was an integral pan of housing policy and housing construction between 1976 and 1979, Sir, if I did not repair one house in St, Michael South when I was Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, it was not deliberate on my part, 3,40 p.m.

Aside.

Hon, D, A. C, SIMMONS: During that time, Sir, Rosemount was built, The one above Rosemount, Pernihurst was built.

Aside.

Hon. D, A, C. SIMMONS: I am saying when the Barbados Labour Party was the Government and I was Chairman of the National Housing Corporation and Lionel Craig was Minister of Housing.

I remember 100 additional units were built in Haynesville, One complete phase of Oxnards was finished and the preparations were made for West Terrace to be built. One is Wildey North, just down by Banks or Harris Paints, when you go in you turn left, right down at the bottom. Those units, the terraced units, the single units of wall, the single units of wood were all built during the regime of the Barbados Labour Party.

Aside.

Hon, D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, I am talking about a five-year period. The figures are in here in the Annual Report and in the Housing Report. I have given them out already in a previous debate, Sir.

I speak not of Wotton, Sir, where the Barbados Labour Party Government also built substantial units. The Democratic Labour Party in 1986 extended, even corrupted...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not mean it in a pejorative sense. They distorted the balance there had been in the tax system that offered to the taxpayer in return for his payment of taxes on the other side certain deductible allowances. Most tax systems are constructed on that basis.

The Democratic Labour Party, of which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was then the spokesman on Finance, said that as far as the allowances were concerned, you could have a freeness, Whatever mortgage you paid, claim all, Whatever repairs you carried out on your house, claim all, The Honourable Member for St, Michael North West just this afternoon, after 11 years is highly critical of that policy and says it was wrong. I eon glad,

Aside,

Hon, D. A, C, SIMMONS: Sir, the result of those policies implemented in the first Budget of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was to create a drain on the revenues to the extent that in his first Budget of 1988 the Right Honourable Member for St, Michael South was forced to say that those policies had put this country almost on shipwreck and he had now come to rescue the country,

Aside.

Hon. D, A, C, SIMMONS: I said the Right Honourable Member for St, Michael South. I will read his words,

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I am not so sure where the Honourable Member for St. Thomas stands in relation to this mortgage interest deduction. He interrupted me when I was speaking and said that he was not in favour of 100 per cent mortgage deduction from its inception. Now in the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto of 1994 it reads:

'In this regard the DLP administration abolition of Income Tax concessions which encouraged home ownership was most destructive.'*

This sentence is therefore saying that when the Democratic Labour Party abolished the mortgage interest deductions that it was destructive to home ownership, So where does the Member for St. Thomas stand? Does he agree with the abolition of mortgage deductions or does he agree that its abolition would be destructive to home ownership? Where does the Member stand?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I usually take the Honourable Member for St. Thomas seriously when he speaks on matters of law. But for someone to be a member of the Barbados Labour Party, to have served in this Parliament at a time when all mortgage interests, all land taxes, all home repairs were all totally deductible going back to the 1930s until there was a limitation put on it in the 1980s by the Barbados Labour Party - that has always been the case.

It is a very simple matter. A man can only claim repairs if he has the money to spend. He can only claim mortgage interest if he has paid the mortgage interest and the whole lot is linked to the individual's income. That has been the case in Barbados. It means that Barbados was built on destructive policies.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Thomas should begin to understand that the entire Barbados Labour Party administration in the SOs and between...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, just a minute.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: He is trying to beg you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I was on a point of order. I am saying you are misleading the House...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You are misleading the House because the entire Barbados Labour Party administration...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER stands.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Have a seat.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am making a point of order. The Honourable Member is...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central I am on my feet. Take your seat.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Why you do not take your seat?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central I am warning you. Any further outburst like that I will ask you to take your things and leave this Honourable Chamber.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central you have completed your point of order.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am trying to make a point of order,

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have completed your point of order. Please have a seat.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Are you saying that I should not make my point of order?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have told you that you have completed...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I have completed what, my point of order?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes. You are not making a speech.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You can sit down there but you will not sit down there with me sitting down here with that kind of behaviour by the Chair. I am very sorry. Goodbye.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can go.

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas continue, please.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member is a bit worried about Mr. Rouse. We understand that, Sir. He is not sure he still has him. He is a very, very confused man.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. It is improper. I do not think the Honourable Member for St. Thomas intends to suggest what he suggested.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas, please continue. 3.50 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is very confused. He is afraid that he loses Mr. Rouse to that side.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Continue, please.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: In relation to the deductible allowances, the Barbados Labour Party's position was that the taxpayer should be able to claim

certain deductibles, but up to a specified limit. To do otherwise and allow unlimited claims, would affect the revenue too much. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would never admit that the policy that he introduced in 1986 was a wrong policy. That's the problem.

Sir, it was always the policy of the Barbados Labour Party that after 1988, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was forced to deny the taxpayers that privilege of claiming some allowances, it was always the Barbados Labour Party's policy that if we ever were returned to Government we would restore to the taxpayers that privilege to claim allowances up to a certain level dependent on...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We started at \$3 500. I have no doubt that over a time that \$3 500 will be increased as the economy and more particularly Government's revenues permit an expansion.

Sir, the second point I wish to make, having dealt with the historical record, is that it had always been the policy of the Barbados Labour Party to develop that area around Glebe, St. George, hence the Polyclinic; hence the other developments that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South spoke about.

In particular, Sir, I wish to let the House know that the old St. George Girls' School which is the building presently west of the existing Post Office has been earmarked for development this financial year. What we are going to do there, is to create new premises for a Post Office with proper parking facilities off the road. Right now you have to stop in the road as there is no parking off the road. Just below where this old school is, there is plenty of land and we are going to develop that as a facility catering for a new Post Office and a Police Community Post.

In addition we would like to have, at that site, the centralisation of certain services. Members of the Government feel, Sir, and I also feel very strongly about it too, that some of the services which are presently being dispensed at Oistins for residents of St. George should be brought back to St. George. In that regard, I feel that the Licensing Department for renewal of your driving licence, the payment of land taxes, etc. should come back to St. George at this new facility that we are creating. Also, Sir, what we want to do is have passport application forms available at Post Offices around the island.

Sir, I think it is a bit of imposition to ask somebody who lives in St. George to drive over to Oistins to pay his land taxes or road taxes. In this building we can accommodate the Licensing and Land Taxes Departments. These are the ideas that we have in mind in the Ministry for the development of that site. Gradually, the dream of the development of that area as a kind of town site will be realised.

I am very pleased, Sir, to be able to support this resolution as another step not only in relieving pressure on the existing housing stock but also giving an opportunity for the development of part of rural Barbados into a modern suburban area. With those remarks, I am pleased to lend my support to this resolution. I do not need to table this as a document of the House, I think it is automatic.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to support this resolution as someone who is faced with the situation where people are coming and asking for house spots and being faced with the realisation that they are very few of these house spots which are available.

I am happy to see resolutions such as this. I would, however, hope that when the distribution of house spots is taking place that at least a few of these house spots will be made available to a few of my people in Christ Church. I would like them to remain where they are in Christ Church and that my people would not have to go over to St. George, so I am hoping that as house spots become available in Christ Church that the good people of Christ Church will gain access to these house spots.

Sir, I am also concerned by acquisition in the sense that we have long-term problems arising out of these acquisitions where people's lands are acquired and they are not paid. We need to address this matter very seriously, the matter of compensation. 4.00 p.m.

Sir, I currently have a case where the Government acquired land since 1986 and I have in front of me a series of letters which have ensued between the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the lawyers for the person whose land it is and up to now the person has not received any money.

Sir, it brings us to a point which can cause some degree of acrimony in that while we are trying to do something good and acquire land for good purposes the persons from whom the land is acquired often have an existence of sorrow because having given up their land they find that there is no compensation coming for the land.

Another consideration, Sir, is that sometimes Government acquires land and then whatever is left nothing can be done with it. A house cannot be put on it. So what happens to that land? In this case where this land was acquired, what was left back, the person could not put a house on it and the person was asking that the Government acquire the whole piece because what was left was of no use, a house could not be put on it. I believe, Sir, that if we are looking at social justice that we need to give consideration to these matters because these things need to be addressed.

Another issue, Sir, is that sometimes there are negotiations over the price of the land. The Government, for example, might want to offer \$2.50 per square foot and the land owner might say they want \$3.50. What happens? Does the Government decide we are giving \$2.50 or do we have to negotiate? Sir, the case of which I speak, I am not speaking of the lady in any bad way so I think I can mention her name. I spoke to her this morning and she gave me these documents this morning. I told her I would be mentioning it. I speak of Mrs. Cynthia Burton of Pilgrim Place whose land in Silver Sands was used for a good purpose, developing a road in Silver Sands in 1986. She has gone through all kinds of processes even up to the point of writing to the Ombudsman and up to this day nothing has been done about paying her. She still has to pay land tax and the available land left there cannot be used for any other purpose. I believe, Sir, that successive Governments need to look at operating in such a way that these land owners do not feel aggrieved over this prolonged period and that social justice does not give way to expediency.

I think, Sir, too many times social justice gives way to expediency and we believe expediency is the order of the day and we should deal with those other matters after and we can push those in a corner while we have people seething with resentment over what they consider to be an injustice done to them.

I believe that all Governments, no matter which party is in power, need to give consideration to these matters. I am hoping that this particular case will be addressed and that in any other similar cases where people's land is acquired that we move expeditiously to address any wrong doing that has been done during the past. You will notice that this case goes back to 1986 so we have gone through a whole administration and now we are into another one. We have to deal with these matters before some of these people die without these matters being addressed.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is good that members of the Opposition can make proposals on

housing after the introduction of a Resolution of this nature for the acquisition of house spots. Certainly when I was in Opposition I did not have that opportunity and I would certainly like to assure* them that the proposals that they have made for housing we will certainly take to heart and we would not ignore them at all.

All of a sudden everyone on that side realises that there is a problem with respect to housing in Barbados and as the Member for St. Michael North West said, housing and unemployment are two of the major problems in Barbados.

It is interesting to note that the last administration did absolutely nothing and when they speak to the area of house fires, I certainly sympathise with all Honourable Members, including Honourable Members on this side when they refer to the fact that there have been a number of house fires and there are no houses available.

This is the reason why we are bringing these series of Resolutions to acquire land on the borders of existing villages so that persons will not only be able to occupy a house for rent but so that people will be able to actually get a house spot and be able to own a piece of land in this country.

These acquisitions are meant to accommodate not only persons who have been affected by house fires but persons who have been disadvantaged as a result of the amendments that they made to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act where in St. Michael alone we have over 1 000 people who have been so disadvantaged and unlike in certain areas in the country no land is available.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: One thousand at the time when the amendment was done. It is down now from 1 000. A lot of people have been relocated. It is not 1 000 at the moment but at the time when the disenfranchisement came the total was in the area of one thousand. What has happened is that there are a number of persons who have been disenfranchised who did not report to the Ministry their plight. Some of them we are picking up- on a daily basis when the landlords decide to take them iff the house spots and this also includes houses or buildings which have been placed on land in tenancies like the Church that the Honourable Member on that side spoke to this morning. He was not speaking of any church in St. Michael. He was speaking about a Church in Christ Church. The land on which the Church was sited is owned by a Member of the Democratic Labour Party. 4.10p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is misleading the House. The Honourable Member that spoke on this side this morning was speaking about a Church in Cuttings Road in Haggatt Hall.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are talking about Wendell Callender who spoke about a Church in Christ Church.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I was referring to the Church the Honourable Member of Christ Church East spoke about. It is on land which is owned by a Member of the Democratic Labour Party and in keeping with their policy, they put the Church at the side of the road.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order again. I have already explained that the Honourable Member is misleading this Assembly. I have already pointed out that it was the policy of the Democratic Labour Party prior to 1994, in every housing development developed by the Government that a church and a mini-mart were supposed to be placed there.

The evidence of this, Sir, is in Hope Road, St. Lucy. There is provision for a church which has been consu acted and there is also provision for a mini-mart which has not been constructed yet because the present Minister has not approved the land space.

At Six Men's in the constituency of the Prime Minister, there is also a church. Also, Sir, I would go further. In Husbands, in the constituency of St. James South you will see that the Honourable Minister for Health, not too long did the ground breaking ceremony but that land was approved, Sir, prior to 1994 by the Government that was representing the country at the time, the Democratic Labour Party.

So the Minister cannot continue, Sir, making statements like that because the evidence is there to prove that he is misleading this House.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: This is just another in a series of those resolutions whereby we will be ensuring that we achieve our goal of satisfying the housing needs in Barbados. We would like to see every single Barbadian who wants to rent or buy a house spot being given the opportunity. It is a policy of this Government.

The last administration did not give us any foundation on which to build. They have absolutely no record on housing. One would have thought that when we came into

the Government, the type of problems that they are referring now, with house fires and people not being able to have house spots would have been a thing of the past.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading this House again. At Husbands in St. James, the Minister is quite aware that house lots were left there that he is now selling. And, the policy here with the house lots at Husbands was that the lots were supposed to be sold at its true market value so that you can get enough money to refinance National Housing, that they could look after repairing the poor people's houses.

So, if he is now reversing that policy, Sir, it is not our fault. That is why people cannot get their pipes repaired and so on, you cannot blame the Democratic Labour Party for that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the Member continue?

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 40 lots will be made available to the residents in the area with the emphasis in relation to the disenfranchised tenants and those persons who have been affected by land slippage and other matters for which they have no control.

It is hoped, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we will also be able, when we come to deal with the Dean's Town Project of which I spoke earlier, that we will be able to accommodate a larger number of house spots in one area close to an existing village.

We already have a number of persons who are interested in this type of development. The problem is that we have no land space available. We do not have the type of land space that one can put down 1 500 houses in one particular area and it is hoped that when we complete the series of acquisitions, we will be able to entertain those persons who are interested in that type of development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those brief remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do not pass.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that concludes Government's Business for the day. I beg to move, Sir, that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, May 13, 1997.

There are a number of important events in the meantime, Sir, that would not make it too convenient for us to meet, so, we prefer to adjourn until 13th of May, 1997 at 11.00a.m.

I will see everybody on Sunday, at 11.00 a.m, at St. Michael's Cathedral for the Barbados Labour Party's Founders Day service.

Thank you very much, Sir,

Hon. O. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that,

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, May 13, 1997 at 11.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the Affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 4.15 p.m.

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Dr. R. C. (St Michael South Central) KELLMAN,
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