

THE
House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.17 a.m. on Tuesday, July 22, 1997.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
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.

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

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

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

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

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 M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

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, July 11, 1997.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the Minutes of Tuesday, July 11, 1997 have been circulated. Subject to there being any motions for amendments or alterations of the Minutes, I beg to move that these Minutes do stand confirmed.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Report on the National Task Force on Crime Prevention.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The White Paper on Housing.
2. The Barbados Water Authority (Water & Sewerage Rates) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I give notice of the following:

1. Final Appropriation (1996/97) Bill, 1997.
2. Barbados Water Authority (Validation of Water and Sewerage Rates) Bill, 1997.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that the following Bills be read a first time:

1. Final Appropriation (1996/97) Bill.
2. Barbados Water Authority (Validation of Water and Sewerage Rates) Bill, 1997.

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

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

OBITUARIES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to make a very short statement. The Government and the people of Barbados, the Opposition and all right thinking persons in this society would have been shocked, indeed traumatized by the events of yesterday where a number of young children lost their lives by drowning at Brighton.

The Honourable Prime Minister has already made a statement on behalf of the Government and I rise merely to say that I am sure, and I speak for the whole House when we tender our collective condolences to the families of those young children who lost their lives yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, in the circumstances, I shall be obliged if the House would agree to stand for one minute silence as a mark of respect for those children who died yesterday.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, very briefly on behalf of the Opposition, I should like to fully associate myself with the remarks made by the Acting Leader of the House, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in saying how saddened and shocked we on this side were, to learn of the tragic events of yesterday. We want to take this opportunity to let the families of these persons know that our thoughts and sympathies go with them and that we should be remembering them in our prayers. The entire Democratic Labour Party is on all-fours with the Government in this issue and the motion of the Leader of the House has our co-operation.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my colleague has spoken for the Opposition but one of the lads who lost his life did in fact come from my constituency and two of the other youngsters who are in shock are also from my constituency. On behalf of the people of St. Michael West, many of whom in the Alkins area are still in shock because of this tragedy, I would like to go on record as saying that on behalf of the entire constituency that the families have our heart-felt sympathy.

It is customary when there is tragedy for everyone to have a reason why whatever it is has occurred and there will be calls for all kinds of measures but in truth, these freak accidents, when they occur seem to come out of the blues and it is very difficult to make provisions for all and every occasion of such a freak accident. It is obvious, to me, that that area of Brighton, behind the Rum Refinery, which is part of my own heritage has always been the source of tragedy at some time or other for families from the Black Rock and Eagle Hall and other areas.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very treacherous area of sea. It is extremely treacherous. One is able on a given day to find the water at one's foot and at another time, as Your Honour probably will remember, within a very short time it is extremely difficult to negotiate. There are many hundreds of people who go every morning, I see them practically every morning, Sir, and sit in "the pot" and I think the opportunity has to be taken to make the point that sitting in "the pot" itself or what constitutes "the pot" is not dangerous. One has actually to sit in it to benefit from it but it is the area beyond "the pot" where a small reef has started to form and where the sand is extremely treacherous, it functions sometimes like quick sand and to someone, especially a youngster who is not accustomed, there could be panic. I suspect that the problem is just beyond there where the water suddenly deepens that the tragedy occurred.

I think all Barbadians join not only with these families but all the families who during the summer become victims of these tragedies. All we can do is hope and pray for the best but in the meantime express our sorrow to the families of these very unfortunate children.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The House has already spoken on behalf of this side but it would be remiss of me not to speak on behalf of the Ministry of Education. Many of these youngsters were involved with the St. Leonard's School football team and also with the summer camp which is normally conducted at this time of the year. It came as a great source of shock to us yesterday when we heard of this tragedy. I would also like at this stage to extend our sympathy to the relatives of the gentleman who placed his life in danger and gave what is the greatest possible sacrifice in his attempt to save those youngsters having successfully, as the report states, saved two but on the third occasion to attempt to save, lost his life.

We have determined that we will be in contact with all of the families. The Chief Education Officer and the Deputy Chief Education Officer already yesterday visited some of them and we will continue today. It is really a source of tragedy and as the Honourable Member for St. Michael West said every summer it seems as though we are in fact having to receive news such as this which really shakes us to our core. I think the fact that so many could have gone in this one really underscores the tremendous tragedy.

We would like therefore just simply to extend our sympathies to all of the grieving relatives both of the children and the gentleman, whose life was lost and to say that we will continue to be in contact with them and to make appropriate arrangements on behalf of the Ministry in this regard.

Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would associate this Honourable Chair with all the sentiments expressed.

As a mark of respect, I now invite all assembled here, in this Honourable House to stand and observe one minute silence.

The House stood for one minute silence.
11.30a.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the following Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the balance of today's sitting.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3 - THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BILL, 1997

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Urban Development Commission Bill be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is the engine of the vehicle which will propel the Urban Development Commission which will be responsible for the implementation of the Government's urban development programme.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of those persons who might have been suddenly awakened only in recent times on receipt of this Bill by certain comments, whether in the newspapers, at constituency branch meetings and otherwise, I would like to refer this Honourable House to page 28 of the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party. That particular page reads as follows under urban development.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we on this side believe that the Manifesto is part of a social contract with the people of this country and this is another in the series of measures being implemented by the Government in satisfaction of the various pledges which we made at the time of the general election campaign.

In our Manifesto, Mr. Speaker, under urban development, we indicated that the impact of the Democratic Labour Party policies have been particularly severe on urban and suburban areas, particularly in the parish of St. Michael. Many tenancies were established before the days of the Town and Country Planning Development legislation and are markedly deficient in the provision of roads and drainage. Housing is inadequate and buildings are very small and often in a very poor state of repair. Buildings are located very close to one another and there are few facilities for recreation. Poverty has always been a problem in these areas. The Dems have made the situation worse by their destruction of jobs. This has impacted most severely on women and youth. The Charter for urban and suburban areas will focus on the provision of special opportunities targetted on a number of urban renewal projects which will create employment now and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we indicated then, at the time of the election campaign, that this would have been one of the major issues that we would tackle. The question of poverty alleviation which has been the subject of some debate in recent times is nothing new and we indicated then that we would deal with this problem, the whole problem of urban renewal, the problem facing those marginal groups in the urban areas. We did this because we realised their

plight and we felt, as representatives of the people or as candidates seeking the vote and the mandate of the people, we should at least come up with a programme for the improvement of their well-being.

We indicated then, Mr. Speaker, that we would execute a programme of renewal of the physical environment of those city districts that had suffered greatest degradation. That was contained in our Manifesto.

You have seen, Mr. Speaker, over the past few months, it is getting to years now, Mr. Speaker, where we have attempted and we have succeeded in implementing the programme as set out in our Manifesto and it would be wrong for anyone to come at this time to give the public the impression that this whole concept of our urban renewal, that our concern for the plight of the people in St. Michael and Barbados generally, Mr. Speaker, of which you are aware is something new.

Mr. Speaker, you would have noticed that we did not waste any time with respect to the implementation of our programme for rural Barbados. Throughout the length and breadth of the election campaign of 1994 we indicated, Mr. Speaker, that we would attempt to redress the imbalances which had been created by the neglect of the rural areas. Mr. Speaker, perhaps I must compliment the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who made that an issue in almost every speech which he gave in this Honourable House and we wasted no time with the implementation of that programme with the setting up of the Rural Development Commission.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if you go to the people and you tell them that you will do certain things for their, well being and based on what you tell them, they decide that the programme that you have is one which would be for the benefit of the entire country and as a result of which they have given you a mandate for a period, it is your responsibility to execute and carry out the promises which you have made. Mr. Speaker, we have done it with the Rural Development Commission.

, In setting up this Urban Renewal Commission, Mr. Speaker, we are executing, Mr. Speaker, another of the programmes in our Manifesto in the hope that the people of St. Michael will be able to enjoy a better life with the rest of Barbados in the same way that we attempted and that we have been trying to redress the imbalances in the rural areas.

The problems in the rural areas are quite different. The problems in the rural areas relate to the delivery of certain facilities which have been denied them. I would not like to say that it is any fault of the Members on that side or any fault of Members on this side, but, Mr. Speaker, one

must be very suspicious of the rationale behind the neglect of the urban and the rural areas when it is realised that during the last administration almost all of the members of the Opposition that form the Government now were actually from those areas.

Mr. Speaker, already the Rural Development Commission has started to redress those imbalances and already, Mr. Speaker, we are proud to say that we have complied with at least that aspect of our Manifesto and by bringing this Bill, Mr. Speaker we will be complying with another aspect of our Manifesto as it relates to urban areas. 11.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I must at this stage commend the officers of the Division of Housing for the work they did in ensuring that Government come up with a programme which will be satisfactory to all parties and all interest groups, and immediately after coming to office we set up a Committee as a Government to look into this whole question of urban renewal.

The programme was not a programme that was conceptualised and that was prepared simply by the Minister of Housing or by a few people on this side, Mr. Speaker. The Division of Housing did an in-depth study and survey of the problems concerning urban and suburban Barbados. I do not think we can praise them enough for the excellent work which they did all hours of the night, work for which they will never be paid. At times we have a habit of criticising government officers when they do not perform. I believe that when they do perform we should praise them for the fine work they have done.

I know, Mr. Speaker, it is not usual for you to allow us to call names in this House, but I crave your indulgence on this occasion to thank the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing, the Chief Housing Officer and the Permanent Secretary before him, who is presently the Permanent Secretary in the Division of Public Works. I believe you would excuse the slip of the tongue, if I say, Mr. Goodridge and Mr. Jones.

These individuals have done an excellent job together with Ms. Talma, in ensuring that we have the type of programme today, so that we are now in a position to implement an Urban Renewal Programme.

The Division of Housing was ably assisted by some of the students from the University in doing this survey. We had on our Committee various representatives from the relevant Ministries, Officers from the Division of Housing, the Division of Public Works, the Ministry of Health, the Chief Town Planner and the National Housing Corporation. We also, got a lot of advice, as well, from certain

private sector agencies in preparing the White Paper on Housing which has been laid today. We also got the input of the various private organisations, the Barbados Association of Professional Engineers, the architects, the builders, some of the contractors and we solicited the input of the banks as well.

Mr. Speaker, we are glad to report that in the Urban Renewal Programme, the document which was prepared by the Division of Housing, we have been able to capture all of the problems associated with urban Barbados.

I know that the Members who represent those urban areas would be aware of the type of problems from time to time, including yourself, Mr. Speaker, but it is fairly obvious that for a programme like this to succeed we will have to deal with a selected area. The plan for this particular Urban Renewal Programme also includes a pilot project, which unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, is not in your constituency.

Some startling things came out from this report on urban renewal. I believe if you focus on the actual commission itself, the Bill before us, Mr. Speaker, the whole purpose of this exercise which has been done by the Division of Housing, would really be lost. Because, this is just one in a series of measures which this Government will take to ensure that the Urban Renewal Programme is executed.

You have seen some of the recommendations which have been made with respect to the Urban Renewal Programme already being implemented. And, even though I have not got to the recommendations of the actual Urban Renewal Committee, as yet, only quite recently, you would have noticed the "brand new" market in Palmetto Street. Among the recommendations for the Urban Renewal Committee, we have provided sanitary facilities for the vendors on Swan Street.

I am proud to be part of that project. It was contained in our Manifesto and that too was one of the measures which we placed in our Manifesto which we said we would do which we have executed. You see, when we go back to the electorate and I have to say this if only because before this debate in this House we have seen in the newspapers certain comments which have been made by other individuals about the establishment of an Urban Development Commission, and the Commission has not been set up as yet, but certain comments were made, so we have to set the record straight.

This debate has been unnecessarily publicised and I believe that the public needs to know that the Democratic Labour Party's administration of the past and I believe my colleagues on the Other Side are of the view that a

Manifesto is not part of a social contract. So, they never believed that we would have implemented the measures with respect to the provision of the market for the vendors in Swan Street and you saw the reports in the Press of the vendors. I mean, I found it hard to believe when I heard certain comments coming out of Swan Street about the vendors and when I spoke to the vendors, it was a completely different story. I was wondering whether or not these comments were being orchestrated by other persons who are not on this side. Because, when you realise the smooth transition from Swan Street to Palmetto Street, you are left to be suspicious, that other persons not on this side were responsible for those negative reports about the vendors not wanting to move from Swan Street, which was all part of the programme for urban renewal.

But, Mr. Speaker, I said there were some startling things from our report and as I indicated we did not just want to make sure that our Manifesto was executed, but we wanted to make sure that it was done in the right way. And, as I indicated we did the survey which was conducted under the supervision of the Division of Housing and what did we find?

There are a number of things that we know, but the actual gravity of it is not captured until you have actually done a survey. I think that many of us when we travel all over Barbados would see a number of derelict buildings and some of us might not even be aware of the amount of derelict buildings in our midst. When you are faced with a serious housing situation and when you are faced with an area of urban and suburban Barbados where there is a scarcity of land, one needs to do a proper survey to come up with the type of answers which would solve the types of problems which the people in urban and suburban Barbados face. 11.50a.m.

I must say I was somewhat struck by the report with respect to the vacant lands in the urban area. You see, in this House, almost at every session, because of the fact that we have been trying, certainly in this session, to deal with a number of outstanding housing acquisitions, not because of the Opposition but because we made a commitment that we would satisfy all of those outstanding housing acquisitions. We made a commitment to those persons whose lands were acquired by Government that we would ensure that they are paid, and we have been endeavouring to do our best. I do not think that the Division of Housing could do any better but in this House we have been attempting to ensure that we clear the backlog and the backlog goes before the last administration, certainly back in our times.

We have on occasions dealt with the Government's policy of making land available on the outskirts of

villages available for housing but it is unfortunate that in the urban areas and I think most of the Members of Parliament would readily admit that there is very little land available for housing in their constituencies. You might find some marginal land, but it is not much and our survey reveals that there were 1174 properties, 300 acres of vacant land in the urban area.

Could you imagine planning going ahead with a programme without the benefit of a survey like this? When you read the report coming out of the newspapers with respect to what has been said about the Urban Development Commission one is led to believe that you are just setting up a commission and you do not know what you are doing.

We have done a survey and from this survey now, Mr. Speaker, we know that there "are 300 acres of land that can be utilised by this Government to address the serious housing shortage in urban Barbados. Three hundred acres of land, 1174 properties. It is strange that you have 300 acres of vacant land, land which has been zoned for residential use. Normally when in the rural areas we have acquired land for housing it has to go through a process whereby in some cases, if it is marginal land that has been in an agricultural area, you have to go for a change of use or go for a subdivision.

This is land that is ready for development, idle land, because of the fact that some of the owners have been deceased or you have situations where people might have invested in land waiting for a buyer to make a big profit, you have situations where people might have been overseas.

Our survey has revealed that this is land that we could utilise without any burden on the land use policy of Barbados. The existence of abandoned structures - 330 properties. These are the types of properties that we can give incentives to the owners to improve to make the living conditions of the people in the urban areas a lot better. Worse still, the presence of derelict buildings. Derelict buildings - 79 properties on 23 acres of land.

Mr. Speaker, you can imagine if only a quarter of this land was in the constituency of St. Michael Central the use to which it can be put. I know for a fact that the constituents of St. Michael Central have a very serious problem relating to housing because you will recall there were certain amendments made to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and because of these amendments the people in St. Michael Central together with the people in urban Barbados were suddenly disadvantaged - 1000 of them overnight. Mr. Speaker, we do not have any marginal land in St. Michael Central and in many of the St. Michael constituencies on which we can actually place them.

This survey at least has given us the opportunity to look at these derelict buildings so that we will be able to put them to good use. We have a situation within the urban areas as revealed from the survey where people have been living in substandard conditions, houses very close to one another, houses which have been placed on sites without reference to the Town and Country Planning Department, where people cannot even open their windows. These are the types of problems that the Urban Development Commission will have to address.

Mr. Speaker, of even more serious note from the survey, is the zone 1 area, the catchment in the Belle, the largest source of ground water in Barbados. There are 5000 residents living in the Belle. I would not want to remind Honourable Members on that side that a former member of this Parliament who was not on this side at the time encouraged people to go and put their houses in the zone 1 area to contaminate the Barbados water supply. I would not remind Members on that side about that; but that has posed a very serious threat to our water supply.

Only this week, I had a meeting with the General Manager of the Barbados Water Authority and the problems which we are facing in this country with respect to the contamination of our water supply was discussed. The fact that we are the best in the region does not mean that we should not try to improve our situation. The Barbados Water Authority indicated that if we did not move swiftly to correct the type of problems which were created more so at the time when that individual physically went on lands in the Belle and encouraged people to come on the land that our water resource would be in a serious situation in a very short time.

Mr. Speaker, 734 households are in the Belle without septic facilities. Government must move swiftly. This programme will allow us to deal with that problem. There is no agency at the moment unless you create another unit within some other Ministry that would be able to deal with these serious problems of which I speak.

Mr. Speaker, the problem pertaining to housing for certain vulnerable groups, people who have for some reason or the other are unable to pay their rents like the rest of our people below the poverty line, persons who have been mentally and physically incapacitated who have been neglected in our whole housing thrust programme even in the way how our houses have been designed. These are the types of problems that we saw coming out of this report. The problem of house fires has been debated in this House on more than one occasion. It is a problem for which we do not know the answers but it is a fact that we have a serious problem when, it comes to house fires in Barbados and it is obvious that we must make

some provisions for those persons who are affected from time to time by these house fires. 12.00 noon

I do not know if the problem of battered women is something which was always around way back in the time of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South or if it is a problem which has only reached us in recent times but it is a serious problem and it is fairly obvious that we would have to make some provision for persons who are affected as a result of these hardships.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most serious problems we found in the urban areas is the problem relating to the security of tenure of tenants. I indicated earlier that there were about 1 000 tenants who became disenfranchised overnight as a result of the amendments which were made to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. I do not believe that it was a deliberate act on the part of the last administration to bring an amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which would overnight disenfranchise 1 000 people. The fact remains that after the legislation was brought there were 1 000 persons who had a right to purchase the lot on which they lived and they were suddenly disenfranchised. They were at the mercy of landlords. The landlords could have immediately served them with notices to quit and they would have had to relocate to some other place.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I do not think it was a deliberate act on the part of the last administration but it meant that provision would have had to be made for these individuals. It is true that in the legislation at the time provision was made for those, persons to be compensated. I indicated the plight of persons in urban Barbados with respect to the difficulty of getting house spots.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: You disadvantaged people. You made provision for them to get compensation but you did not make provision for them to be accommodated on any house lots.

In addition to the persons who were disadvantaged, there were persons who were living on lands for over 20 years who were at the mercy of their landlords simply because there was no protection for them under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act or no protection for them under the Landlord and Tenant laws of this country.

As it stands now, Mr. Speaker, you could be living on land for 100 years and your landlord can give you a notice to get off the land and you have absolutely no recourse, but

that is the law as it is. One would think it would be heartless for a Government to bring an amendment to legislation where a person has a right to purchase, as happened under the Democratic Labour Party, and then to lose that right overnight and not to provide land for those persons.

If the same people in the DLP who are talking now about the suspicion of the setting up of this Commission had done what we have done since 1994 and had set up a committee to look at the problems of urban Barbados, we would not have had the situation which we now face because there are tenants who have been dislocated and we do not have any land on which they could go. If they had done the survey at least they would know there are 200 acres of vacant land. At least they would know there are 75 acres of abandoned land. At least they would know there are 23 acres of land on which there are derelict buildings but we must still find, because of the legislation, a place for these persons.

Simply, Mr. Speaker, these individuals were given the right under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which was passed in this House by a Barbados Labour Party Government to purchase their land where the land had been let in lots to more and more tenants. This is legislation that was long overdue.

We were dealing with a situation where our parents, in some cases our grandparents, our great-grandparents were promised land by plantation owners over the years and years passed and they never got the land. A previous Barbados Labour Party administration brought legislation to this House to give those persons the right to purchase their land and the last Administration took away that right.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because if one interprets his statement one gets the impression that the last Democratic Labour Party deprived people who lived on plantation tenancies from getting the lots they had a right to purchase. That is not correct, Sir, and should not stay in the records of this House.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is the point of order. I just want the Honourable Member to know that even if I take him seriously that the amendment did not apply to the persons who had gained their right under the provision with respect to plantation tenancies.

He has made a point which would make one appear as though he knows what he is talking about. He sounds like a lawyer but if he is a lawyer he should understand that if, taking your point a little slowly, a person has bought a parcel of land from a plantation, which

happened in St. Michael, and then he had two or three tenants on that particular land, and those persons were living on that land for over 40 years, which happened under the last administration, it is still plantation land, and because of the amendment that was made by the last administration, the Democratic Labour Party administration, that person would be disenfranchised.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I could bring a number of cases.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Orderly, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is misleading the House again. He is giving the impression that if you purchase a piece of land from a plantation that even though you have purchased that land that the land still belongs to the plantation and you know, Sir, that cannot be correct. If not the impression would be that every piece of land in Barbados still belongs to the plantation owners and that is not correct.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I have been mandated by this Cabinet immediately after the Barbados Labour Party won the last election to make sure that the provisions of paragraph 28 of this important document are satisfied. I have worked very closely with the persons in the Division of Housing. I do not know if the Honourable Member is aware of the example I gave but I believe that he is confused. If you want me to give examples there are examples in Headley's Land. There are examples in Straker's Land. There are examples in a number of plantation tenancies in rural areas where persons had bought parts of the plantation over 40 years ago and then they had the land rented out to four or five persons.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, I think I made the point. I believe from the attitude of the Members on that side and from the discussions which I have had with them on their corridors and elsewhere that they know now that it was a* mistake to have amended that legislation in the first place. I believe it is a saving of face...

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Minister for Housing was trying to make the point that the amendment to the legislation to allow less than five tenants...

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order, Sir?
12.10p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a the point of order. The Minister is misleading the House on this issue. I asked for one example to be cited. I am saying that he is misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you make your point of order, please. The rule relating to the point of order is that your point of order must relate to what is made by the Minister.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. The Honourable Minister for Housing was trying to make the point that the amendment to the legislation was to allow less than five tenants.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The Minister is misleading the House on this issue. I asked for one example to be cited.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your point of order must relate to what is made by the Minister.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: That is precisely what I am doing, Sir. I am suggesting that the Honourable Minister is misleading the House because he is trying to suggest that the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act did in fact disenfranchise a number of people. The example cited in Straker's Tenancy cannot be true because there are 24 tenants in Straker's Tenancy. Therefore, to cite Straker's Tenancy as an example of the amendment disenfranchising tenants is incorrect. So too is Headley's Land. I am suggesting to you that the amendment did not disenfranchise tenants in those two tenancies.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to prolong or deal with this issue in any detail. The Honourable Member must understand that because you have twenty-four tenants in a particular tenancy does not necessarily mean that it is part of one lot. We have seen it in Alleyne's Land. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East can tell you that there are a number of land owners in Alleyne's Land. I do not have to argue about it. I said in my opening remarks of this amendment that I am not casting any blame on Members on that side. It is a fact and because I am not casting any blame does not mean that it is not a fact that because of the amendment a number of people were disenfranchised. You cannot deny the fact that because of the amendment of the other side that 1 000 persons were disenfranchised. The Honourable Members on that side cannot deny that 1 000 persons were disenfranchised as a result of that amendment. I am not casting any blame on that side.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is misleading this House, Sir. He is giving the impression that 1 000

people, due to an act of the Democratic Labour Party, were deprived of their right to compensation and that is a lie. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is aware that the Ministry of Housing had a right to find alternative land and also to provide funds to buy land up to \$15 000 for those people. The Honourable Member cannot continue with that line of his argument.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I would not even ask the Honourable Member to withdraw the remarks when he said that I said that the tenants were disenfranchised and there was no compensation. I made the position very clear that the legislation made provision for compensation. The point that I am trying to make is that the persons were disenfranchised and the Act made provision for compensation and the Democratic Labour Party administration did not make provision for house spots for these individuals, that is the point that I am trying to make. I was saying that if they had done a survey like the one we had done, they would realise that...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Democratic Labour Party under the National Housing Corporation provided lots at Cutting Road and also at Husbands.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, if they had done the survey, they would have realised the extent of the problem that we are facing today. They would have been able to realise that the 300 acres for vacant land and the 75 acres for abandoned land and 23 acres for derelict buildings would have been available. We have a serious situation on our hand and we cannot deal with all of these outstanding problems.

Mr. Speaker, other problems which have been faced by tenants related to the fact, not because of Members on that side, that a number of landlords because of their pricing policy made it extremely difficult for tenants in the urban areas to own their lots. This is the reason why the time has come when there must be some intervention by Government to insure that persons living in tenancies for all of these years, persons who are qualified tenants within the meaning of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act are given the right, not only to purchase as under the Act, but that the price is right.

We have also dealt with situations whereby persons who have a right to purchase under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act were not aware of their right to purchase. We have instituted a programme with the assistance of G.I.S. where persons who have a right to purchase under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act will know of their rights. As a matter of fact, people who have certain rights as it pertains to land and security of tenure will be made aware

of their rights. We have also had situations where they have been wrongful evictions. There have been cases where the matter has actually reached the court and the court orders have been made and the tenants, due to the fact that they were too poor to obtain legal assistance, they allowed the property to go without seeking legal advice.

Asides.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member from his seat is saying that the Ministry is failing to inform people. But when the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act was made, Mr. Speaker, even though it made provision for compensation and there was no corresponding provision with respect to land, the onus was not on the Government. The onus was on the tenant to come in. Even though we have indicated that there are 1 000 lots, there are a number of persons that we are seeing almost every month because the Act gave a certain time in which you should register. Almost every month we are seeing new persons and we are saying that it could very well be 3 000 persons that were disenfranchised as a result of that amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

Other problems which we found, Mr. Speaker, that have been faced by residents in the urban areas are the high rents which are being charged by landlords to tenants in urban areas. Our records show that there are situations where houses have not been repaired for as much as 20 years. People are sleeping in the worst conditions. The tenants cannot afford to repair or patch the houses themselves. This is a serious situation.

These are the kinds of problems, Mr. Speaker, which we believe this Urban Development Commission would be able to address. Because of the numerous problems which have been revealed from the survey, it is fairly obvious that something must be done almost immediately in order to address the types of problems that I speak of in urban areas. 12.20 p.m.

I would not like to say that I am surprised we had a number of Members of Parliament in St. Michael over the years from that side and they have not seen it fit to address these issues.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that we do not have as strong a presence in the St. Michael area as Honourable Members on that side, does not necessarily mean that we will not address the problems in the urban areas. At least we are not going to do to them in urban Barbados what they did to us in rural Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, these are the types of problems which we face in the urban areas and it is fairly obvious that this Government has a responsibility to rectify this problem. Even if it was not included in our Manifesto, Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility if only because of the startling facts which have been revealed by the survey on urban renewal.

Mr. Speaker, what are our plans in order to rectify this situation? Firstly, Mr. Speaker, it is our intention to set up a land bank in urban Barbados where we have estimated from our survey that we would need about 1 000 lots of sizes from about 3 500 square feet. Already, Mr. Speaker, because of the urgency of the situation in certain areas, not that we are dealing with this matter on an *ad hoc* basis but very shortly we will be coming to Parliament for the acquisition of some land at Lower Burney to alleviate the problems being faced by persons who have had problems pertaining to drainage in Ellis Village and we are going to Lower Burney where we are hoping to put in over 40 lots in that area to deal with an urgent situation. We are hoping that we will be able to move swiftly to identify other areas within the urban area to alleviate the type of problems of which I speak. So you are looking at 1 000 lots, 3 500 square feet, approximately 100 acres.

We are hoping, Mr. Speaker, to bring legislation to this Parliament to give security of tenure to persons who have been living on lands for 20 years or more at the first of January 1997. This would deal with a number of problems which are being faced by a number of old age pensioners who over the years were given notice to quit, not by the original landlords. We have had a number of cases where a number of old persons, particularly in the constituency of St. Michael West, have been given notices to quit by individuals who were living overseas, came back to Barbados, heard that their family owned some land and as a result of the fact that there has been no security to these old people these people have had to vacate their lands.

Now, there is no provision in the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act for Government to compensate or to make lands available but this Government as I indicated earlier, has got a social responsibility and we have been dealing with situations like those.

In the case of old age pensioners we are going to make land available for them because with the 1 000 lots that we hope to make available we will give them the land. We will have a system whereby there will be a loan in place for the construction or the repair of their house. The payments would be delayed over a period of time so that if you have an old age pensioner who has been given a loan of say, \$10 000, the loan would not be called in

during that person's lifetime but the person who inherits the property will then be given the opportunity of repaying the loan.

We have already spoken, Mr. Speaker, to the anomaly with the rural tenancies and the urban tenancies. As a matter of fact there is no real definition of rural tenancy or urban tenancy but the fact that the most of the plantation tenancies in the Schedule are located in the rural areas have given rise to this unofficial definition of rural tenancy and urban tenancy.

As I have indicated already in this House we have a situation where when you have one of those rural tenancies or plantation tenancy in the rural area you have a right to purchase at 10 cents a square foot whereas if you are a qualified tenant in a so-called urban tenancy you have no such right, the landlord benefits as a result of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act in that he does not have to go to Town Planning to subdivide the land. He benefits too because of the fact that Government has put in all of the facilities and notwithstanding the provision in the Act that the provision of these facilities must not be taken into consideration in fixing the price, he arbitrarily fixes a price of \$5 and \$6 a square foot.

We have got a lot of unscrupulous landlords that have done that and I hope that the Honourable Member would not ask for names because we cannot call names in this House. They have fixed a price at \$5 to \$6 per square foot and a number of poor people in urban areas are unable to pay for their land.

We are hoping, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation could be amended whereby there would be a definition of urban tenancy, where the right of the landlord to receive the full market value of his land will not be denied but where Government will pay the difference between the market value and a standard price and the price we are looking at is \$2.50. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has seen that programme and he has actually complimented the Division of Housing in the corridors for this provision and I am thankful for that.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Even if it was your idea it is a good idea and we intend to implement it. There are provisions, Mr. Speaker, under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, where notwithstanding the fact that a person is given the right to purchase under that Act they have to file a Form 1 notice and then they have to file a Form 2 notice. Most of us, as adults, we do not like filling out forms and I do not mean for any confidential reason. We believe that one form is enough and we believe that a Form 1 notice should be sufficient notice to the landlord

and there should not be any need for any further notice by the tenant to the landlord.

We believe that the Registrar of Titles should be given the authority, under the Act, not only to convey but the actual machinery for the conveyance should be set out in detail in the legislation. So that, when you issue that Form 1 notice and it goes to the landlord and you follow certain guidelines with respect to notice and then the Registrar of Titles sends notice to the landlord, whether it is one notice or two notices and the landlord refuses to acknowledge that notice, whether or not they are out of the island, the Registrar of the Supreme Court can then, within a specific time, issue a conveyance to the tenant and that conveyance would be a good and marketable conveyance. That will solve a lot of the problems being encountered by a number of tenants who have expressed an interest to purchase and have been frustrated by the landlords.

It is all right to put certain things in legislation but when you do not have the machinery for putting things in place the loopholes in the legislation are taken advantage of and this has been happening with respect to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. Notwithstanding the fact that the Registrar of Titles has the power to compel the owner of the land to produce certain documents in court, it is a process in terms of the work load of that department which takes up a lot of time and we believe that the tenant should not in any way be prejudiced or inconvenienced because of any red tape. 12.30 p.m.

We are hoping, Mr. Speaker, under this programme to provide loan funds for the tenants to purchase the lots on which they reside. Already a number of persons who are qualified tenants under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act are not aware of the fact that they can go to the Barbados National Bank and get a full loan. We are hoping with the assistance of G.I.S. to let it be known that there is a facility. We are hoping to increase this facility. We are hoping to make this facility available to all tenants in urban Barbados who want to purchase their land. We are providing all of the loan funds, 100 percent loan funds to assist these persons in purchasing their homes.

We are hoping that the provision of surveying services will not be a deterrent and it is expected that when the Commission comes on stream that they will also be able to deal with this issue as well.

Mr. Speaker, we are hoping that we will be able to provide adequate roads, electricity and water services in certain specially designated areas. In areas like Bush Hall, Bank Hall, Black Rock, Westbury Road, the criteria for designation will be in accordance with the needs for

roadways, drainage, water supply, sewerage disposal or electricity service.

I did mention the fact that there are many vacant lands, abandoned lands and derelict buildings and I would like to state that the programme which we have for urban renewal is not a programme that will be implemented within the next year or the year after, it is more or less a ten-year programme. We are hoping that we could acquire all the vacant lands except for those where the owners have given us the assurance that they have something planned for the area. This is a project which will cost us \$18 million. This is the acquisition of the vacant land to loan.

With the abandoned lands, we are hoping that we could repair some of the buildings and then rent them out to tenants within the urban area. This project is expected to cost about \$18 million.

We have got to come up with a further plan for the utilisation of derelict buildings. We believe that some of them are placed in certain locations whereby they can be utilised for recreational facilities, together with housing. It is a \$10 million programme to demolish them.

The demolition alone of all the buildings in the urban areas from our preliminary study reveal that it will cost about \$10 million. So, after we have demolished, we then have to come up with a programme. After consultation with the various parliamentary representatives and the various community groups in the urban areas, we will then come up with a programme for these areas.

Mr. Speaker, the programme speaks to the granting of assistance to landlords to repair their homes. All of the Honourable Members in the St. Michael area will have cases where there are leaking roofs and landlords not actually satisfying the condition that the house should be fit for human habitation. We, notwithstanding the fact that the landlord is liable to do that will be offering the landlords assistance to repair all of those houses that are in need of repair and as a concession, they will have to agree that the tenant will not have to pay rent for a certain period of time or they would be a reduced rent for a certain period of time.

We are hoping to offer a number of incentives in the form of tax relief to homeowners whose dwellings are under occupied so that they may accommodate persons in need of a place. The idea of people accommodating persons who do not have anywhere to stay might be something novel to people in the rural areas, but certainly from our survey it is something which is welcomed. There are a number of persons in the urban areas who would certainly welcome this proposal.

We are hoping, Mr. Speaker, with these measures to improve the housing conditions of persons in urban Barbados. We are hoping, Mr. Speaker, that we would be able to create a climate within the St. Michael area whereby both the rich and the poor can live comfortably in urban Barbados. Already, especially in areas close to the city there has been some drift in the population outside of the city area. We are hoping that with these measures we could encourage or entice people back to the city area. We know that a lot of land is being utilised for commercial purposes, but on the other hand, there are a lot of commercial businesses that have been moving outside of urban Barbados.

*It is hoped, Mr.

Speaker, that with these measures we would be able to bring people back to urban Barbados and that all the Members of Parliament who represent urban constituencies, at least will be able to go and tell their constituents that this government is a caring government and that there is a programme which will see the improvement of their condition in life. I would hope that the Honourable Members on that side will, as of tomorrow, go and tell their constituents. I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, as an honest person certainly will do it but I cannot speak for the other Members of that side.

Asides.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the housing for the vulnerable groups, you have seen the National Housing Corporation embarked on a programme of providing hostels - for the benefit of the Member for St. Lucy, hostel accommodation, "h-o-s-t-e-l" and not "h-o-s-t-i-l-e" - hostel accommodation for persons like battered women or persons who have been affected by house fires.

We are hoping that within the programme we will be able to provide accommodation for certain disadvantaged groups. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South came up with a very good idea - I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West did indicate that he is not giving anymore ideas to Members of this side - but his idea of a type of accommodation whereby you always have a sort of container type housing for persons who have been affected to address the serious problem which we have been faced with house fires, is one which I have given to the Division of Housing to look at for whatever it is worth. And, I will give the Honourable Member for St. Michael South the assurance that whatever decision the officers in the Division of Housing come up with that he will be informed.

I would hope however, that as the proponent of this idea of container accommodation for fire victims that he would be willing to come to the Division of Housing and

spell out in further detail this grand plan of container housing as it relates to house fires. It sounds like a good idea, but I do not know what he is talking about and I am not very sure if he would be able to further elaborate on this type of accommodation. But, certainly, it is not a suggestion that I would ignore if only because I have seen the problem that has been caused by fires.

I remember in my constituency, even though I have not had a fire recently, there was a time when in one week, I had five house fires and if you could have a system whereby persons can be accommodated for a short period of time, it would alleviate the type of problems that we have seen from this report on urban renewal. 12.40 p.m.

The problems with the Belle. I did indicate the problems which we are faced with in the Belle. It is hoped that we will be able under this programme to alleviate the problems of the 740 households with the provision of septic tanks at a cost of \$3 000 per household. This will cost about \$2.2 million. Our survey revealed that there were 5 000 households with dry pits. This is also a fairly startling revelation as well.

We are hoping that we would be able to deal at least with those persons who are keen on improving their sanitary conditions. At this stage, it is not intended to force anybody to comply with any set requirements as long as certain basic health conditions are complied with. We are hoping that these persons will be given a grant in order to assist them in having proper toilet facilities.

Mr. Speaker, we are hoping in this programme to rationalise the configuration of houses. I did indicate that we will relocate persons in areas that have been affected by drainage. In Church Village, Ellis Land and areas in the City in particular, you would have recalled that since we came to government in September 1994 we made a policy decision to give those persons who have been dislocated by the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act a \$15 000 grant. We intend to give a similar grant to all persons who have to be relocated or who have been dislocated, not only as a result of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act but we intend to give grants where as a result of certain drainage problems or certain reconfigurations they have to be relocated in certain areas.

We have noticed that in this area there are about 75 households and it is obvious that it would be necessary for us to do a survey of this area before the project can be put in place. I am talking about the entire urban area where there is a need. I am speaking of areas where because of the closeness of the houses, persons must be relocated. Ellis Land, Church Village, the Greenfield district are the

areas of which I speak. I am not aware of any such areas in St. Michael West because the representative for that area certainly took care of that particular problem in the past.

We hope to upgrade the Nelson Street and New Orleans area. These 2 areas comprise about 1 100 households and we estimate that we will have to spend about \$2.2 million based on an average of about \$2 000 a lot.

You would have noticed, Mr. Speaker, that we have already cleared the Pondside area. It is hoped that we will be able to put 15 units in that area. All of that is part of the Urban Renewal Programme. As I did indicate there are a number of programmes within the programme which we will have to deal with from time to time notwithstanding the fact that the Urban Development Commission has not come on stream.

The National Bousing Corporation will be responsible for the construction of that facility and it is expected to cost about \$5.8 million. The contract has been awarded to a company with Chinese connections. They bid for the contract and have won the bid and very shortly it is expected that we will be seeing the beginning of the Pondside project.

I am given the assurance that the Pondside project must start some time next month. We have done a complete clearance of the area. It is going to be necessary for us to further remove one or two other buildings on the site but at least the site is clear in a way that we can actually see at this moment.

Notwithstanding the fact that we have embarked on a policy of abandoning most of the public baths we have accommodated persons in that area. It is anticipated that we will continue to accommodate them elsewhere because there are a number of persons in that area without normal, water-borne facilities. We will try to accommodate them elsewhere but it is going to be necessary for that bath to be demolished, if it is not demolished as I speak, and alternative facilities found for the residents in that area. Hopefully, when the facility at Pondside is completed most of the low income persons within the area will be accommodated, those persons who are below the poverty line, those persons who passed the means test by the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, this is going to be a different type facility from most of the terrace units that you see throughout Barbados. It is the type of facility which will have day-care facilities. There will be a number of shops in this particular facility and it will certainly satisfy a need in that area.

It is hoped that when we have completed that aspect of our housing project in the Nelson Street area that we will be able to address a number of the problems which we have seen in that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, I did indicate that it is going to be necessary for us to have a number of amending legislation. I mentioned the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. It may also be necessary for us to make some amendments to other legislation pertaining to landlords and tenants to ensure that properties within the St. Michael area are fit for human habitation.

The Urban Renewal Programme spoke to problems pertaining to the improvement of roads in the St. Michael area. I would like to indicate that there are a number of programmes which will be dealt with by other agencies. The Bridgetown Road Project which is a programme which is funded by the IDB is a \$53 million project. Very shortly, you will see the start up of work within the St. Michael area in order to alleviate the problems which are being faced by bad road alignment; the fact that there is a failure to have the type of sidewalks that are needed in the city area. This programme will improve the traffic flows and parking patterns in and around Bridgetown. We will see the rehabilitation of two bypass roads around Bridgetown. 12.50 p.m.

It is in three packages. Package A from Eagle Hall to Spring Garden, Package 2 section B from Welches, Highway 4 to Pine Road to the Collymore Rock Junction, Section C from the Pine to the Collymore Rock Junction to the Garrison/Highway 7 Junction and Package 3 from Roebuck Street/Country Road Junction, from Country Road, Passage Road, Westbury Road to President Kennedy Drive. This will certainly address the problems with respect to the sidewalks and the bad road alignment in the St. Michael area.

Already, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would have known that in his constituency we have actually started work on the houses which will relocate persons who are in the path of the actual road re-alignment.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I am speaking about the Passage Road area under the Bridgetown road programme.

I was asked a question only a few days ago by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West whether these properties will be utilised by persons in the Passage Road area. Those houses are actually built for persons who are in the area of the actual road, not necessarily those persons in the Passage Road area.

We have just completed a storm water drainage study. Most of the problems which have been set out in the Urban Renewal Programme will be addressed by the Storm Water Drainage Study. There are certain recommendations which have been made to Cabinet with respect to this report and very shortly the findings of this report in terms of the measures which will be taken by Government will be revealed.

I did indicate, Mr. Speaker, that we intend to upgrade a number of markets throughout urban Barbados. You have seen what has happened to the Palmetto Street Mall of which I spoke earlier. We intend to do a little surgery on the Cheapside Road Market and the Fairchild Street Market. The market at Eagle Hall, as I had indicated earlier, will be demolished and a new market will be built elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, it is hoped that the setting up of this Commission will then be the vehicle for seeing the implementation of most, if not all, of the programmes within the Urban Renewal Project.

The Bill itself, Mr. Speaker, follows most of the previous legislation pertaining to Commissions of like nature. It is similar in nature to the Rural Development Commission except for the fact that there is a strong emphasis on slum clearance if only because of the problems I detailed with respect to the number of derelict buildings in the urban area.

It is like the Housing Act in that provision has been made for the demolition of a number of buildings in the urban area. But we have gone a little further than the provision in the Housing Act which gives the National Housing Corporation the power to demolish in that we have given the owners of the properties the right to appeal against any decisions which have been taken so that it would not be said that they have not had the opportunity to object even after a decision to demolish has been taken by the Urban Renewal Commission.

Mr. Speaker, we are hoping that this Commission will be able to own lands following the procedures in the Land Acquisition Act. There is nothing in the legislation which would in anyway take away the constitutional rights of any persons. We are hoping under the legislation as well to establish an urban enterprise fund whereby persons would be able to obtain loans in order to establish, develop and improve on certain commercial ventures within the urban area.

The Commission itself, Mr. Speaker, will comprise of a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman. There will also be the presence of the Chief Town Planner and the Permanent Secretary in the Division of Housing if only because of the

fact that this Commission will have a planning role. The powers of the Commission will follow along the lines of similar commissions.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have dealt at length with this particular matter. There are a number of amendments which have been circulated to the legislation which I will move in Committee. I would like to table those amendments as circulated at this time and I reserve my right to speak later in this debate.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion that was moved at the beginning of the Member's speech.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, it is now 1.00 o'clock. I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today, Sir.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly. 1.00p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, in some ways I regret that we have to have this debate in the circumstances in which we are having it because I do not believe that the Minister intends any of the consequences which some of us perceive in relation to legislation. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, if one followed him from the inception until he came to the end flagging, but nonetheless an end, one recognised that he wanted to talk about almost everything else except this legislation.

He gave us a synopsis after having referred to the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party and a run down on the philosophy behind the Party's attitude. He sought very hard to ensure that he did not ascribe any blame to the D.L.P. while giving them entirely and completely all the blame which is an intellectual gymnastic feat that many have tried and none have been successful at. He also showed very clearly his own knowledge of some aspects of land law and conveyancing. In that respect, none of us over here have ever doubted his ability and capacity in that regard.

He spent some time on the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which was not before us but which I could appreciate that Your Honour would have some

difficulty not allowing to be referred to in the context of this legislation which is coming before us and again he showed his whole knowledge of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. He got some facts mixed up. There are times when I am sure that the Honourable Member is capable of mixing vigorously deliberately. To the extent that he sought to give the impression that the Democratic Labour Party had committed some heinous crime against some tenantry dwellers by passing legislation which merely sought to restore the *status quo* after the Barbados Labour Party had moved in with a coach and four right down through the centre of the basis of the approach to tenancies in this country, which essentially was to secure those persons who had lived in tenancies all of their lives or their ancestors lives and who needed security from the plantation and other landlords who would deprive them of security of tenure that was desirable after many, many years of living in tenancies.

There have been doubts, Mr. Speaker, that there was a divide. The Democratic Labour Party believed with the original tenantry legislation that a tenantry comprised not less than five houses. The Barbados Labour Party came in and without paying sufficient attention to the consequences of their changes they reduced it to two houses, which on the face of it appears to be a more equitable dispensation but in the end created certain hardship. The Democratic Labour Party had said that on their return to office that they would restore the position to what it was, and we so did.

The Honourable Members sought to suggest that we had left in the wake of that decision some people who had been, as he put it, 'disenfranchised'¹. For those of us who do not speak that exotic language, it would have meant disenfranchised, but either way we knew that he meant that there were poor people who did not have the benefits they had before. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members on this side intervening during the course of his presentation were able to put to rest the concept that we had disenfranchised anybody.

Mr. Speaker, I always regret when these matters of serious import regarding the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are brought to the altar of partisan politics for their resolution. It creates a difficulty for me personally, and I think I can speak with impunity to say, for our side, when these matters have to be dealt with on the anvil of partisan politics. Mr. Speaker, as Your Honour used to know, before Your Honour ascended to this position, if someone draws first blood, you have a responsibility to respond and once they draw first blood, we feel that we have no compunction about responding.

We are a formidable political force, individually and collectively on this side and we will not allow anyone to distort the record. We will not allow anyone to put us at a

disadvantage in relation to how we are perceived as a political entity in this country. Therefore when these issues are framed in political terms, stark, political partisan terms, I believe that the citizens are robbed of a unique opportunity to understand the governance of themselves by those who they elect and select. I will eschew the natural inclination to go for some of the things which the Minister said and to try to deal with this very important piece of legislation a bit more dispassionately than I normally would. The reason for that has to do with the fact that this legislation is serious legislation.

Sir, we have said, and we will maintain that we cannot support the legislation in its present form. We do not do that out of any particular partisan position. We do that because in all seriousness when we examine the legislation, we are concerned about the result of the legislation, we are concerned about the import of it. I raised the question very early after I read it the first time as to whether this legislation had been subjected to the proper analysis of those persons in the Barbados Labour Party with experience in these matters.

When we had the debate in here, Sir, about the Rural Commission, there was a question raised on this side by more than one speaker and in the community at large as to whether we were dividing Barbados into rural and urban.

We recognised, and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew was very quick to move to that position today that a larger section of the Barbados Labour Party's Government represents more rural constituencies than urban. We recognised that they felt constrained to respond to a particular theme that had been struck during the election in which they indicated very clearly that the rural people would have some advantage over the rest. We responded to that, Sir, and we suggested to the Honourable Members on the Other Side that they should not seek to divide Barbados into two Barbados. I recall that very well. 2.15 p.m.

Soon thereafter, in the spirit of the debate, voices were heard from the Government side suggesting that soon there will be an urban commission. The Honourable Member strained like a gnat and provided solace from the Manifesto, page 28, I think he quoted, suggesting that the Manifesto had portended this urban commission. The truth is that anyone who reads the pages of the Manifesto will see that the urban commission is but a mere parenthesis in what they propose on the pages he quoted.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing we are certain about it is that we studied the Manifesto of the Opposition very, very closely and that Manifesto deals with almost everything else but an urban commission. So that I will

put to rest in the mind of the Minister any difficulty he might have. It is clear that if...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member is now deliberately distorting the Minister's speech. The Minister's first words this morning were that this Bill is the vehicle for execution of policies which are rooted on this page 28. It says, Sir, that the Barbados Labour Party Government will execute a programme of renewal of the physical environment of those city districts that have suffered the greatest degradation, encourage restoration of buildings of architectural interest and so on. We did not say we would set up a commission called this or that, that is a matter of detail. The policy is there.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is obvious to me that the Attorney General has decided very early that he is not going to allow this side to go in a certain direction and to the extent that he is enthusiastic, he is even misquoting his colleague because his colleague did not say anything about it being a vehicle, his colleague said it is an engine.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House when he says that my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is misquoting what I said. I did mention exactly what the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said in that I said it was the engine relating to the vehicle through which this programme will follow.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is clear that we are going to be here for a long time because the Honourable Member now gets up and confirms that what I say is correct and what the Attorney General said was a misrepresentation of what he said. But that is all right, Sir. They are accustomed to confusion over there and they will be able to work that out. I am not spending any time on them this afternoon and the Attorney General, fresh from his triumphs in other areas, will not be able to misdirect the darts that will be going towards his side.

The point I was making before an interruption was attempted, Sir, is that there is no reference to the establishment of an urban commission. There is no reference to the establishment of the mechanism by which you would do urban renewal. There is a very, I would not say specious because it is a serious document, there is a superficial reference to urban renewal that can be found in almost every Manifesto of every political party of every country over the last 30 years but in this, there is no particular reference to urban renewal. You see, Sir, urban development is written large at the top but there is no concept of creating an urban development commission. I am stating categorically that the concept of an urban development commission was conceived and the birth occurred right in here in the well of this House when they

were doing the rural development commission and we challenged them as to whether they would have two Barbadoses and they then decided that they must have an urban development commission. But let that pass for the time being.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If the master bluffer says that from his chair you know that we are doing well, but let that pass for the time being. If we are going to see evidence of what I am saying let us now turn to the more serious stuff. What disturbs us about the legislation that has come is not the intention because we understand that the Government, given the responsibility for running the country, is entitled to use whatever vehicle and whatever old engine they feel like using to bring it to the point that they have identified. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, when they come with legislation which in itself creates serious legal and constitutional difficulties then we have to say, oh no, we would not let you go down that road.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who is not now in his seat has impressed upon this Honourable House, over many years, a level of scholarship in relation to constitutional matters which have resulted in his being regarded as a serious practitioner of the art of constitutional government in Barbados. I say that ungrudgingly.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas knows that in some matters we have no difficulty being generous if the evidence is there. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West has been appointed Chairman of the Constitutional Review Commission in this country and my concern and the concern of my colleagues over here has been heightened by the Government's haste to introduce an Urban Development Commission so called just months before a constitutional review commission in this country is required to report.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to quote from H. W. R. Wade. I am going to quote from the individual who has been identified by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and by many of us as one of the linchpins around which administrative law has developed over the last 25 years or so and in Chapter 2 of his Sixth Edition, page 23 he says "this requires every Government authority which does some act which would otherwise be wrong such as taking a man's land or which infringes a man's liberty as by refusing him planning permission must be able to justify his actions as authorised by law." Then he goes on to say "every act of governmental power, that is, every act which affects the legal rights, duties or liberties of any person must be shown to have a strictly legal

pedigree." Then on the same page later, he says "the secondary meaning of the rule of law therefore is that Government should be conducted within a framework of recognised rules and principles which restrict discretionary power."

Now, Sir, when one opens this draft legislation that is before us one sees that the Government is either recklessly disinterested in, totally incapable of, or blatantly ignoring the question of the restriction of discretionary power. 2.25 p.m.

When one reads this legislation one has no alternative if one is even remotely committed to the principles which I have just outlined but to reject the legislation in its present form.

Government as a matter of policy is free to decide what it is going to set up but the Urban Development Commission which they set out to create in this legislation purports to be given powers that are entirely beyond the concept of a statutory corporation in the context of what we have known.

What they are creating, what the Minister inadvertently apparently, I have to say "inadvertently" because the Minister spoke for more than an hour and at no point did the Minister advert to what it is he proposes to do in this legislation. The Minister went far and wide and except to say that there will be a report, the Minister did not in any respect explain any of the clauses in this Bill. Perhaps the Minister is expecting that more eminent legal luminaries on his side would take on the responsibility of explaining the phrases and clauses which appear before us in this Bill. But we on this side as legislators cannot ever accept that a Minister of the Crown can come down here proposing to break new ground - for this is nothing short of the newest ground we have seen in Barbados over the years - and to make no reference whatsoever to either the policy of the Bill or any explanation of the clauses of the Bill, and expect that he could just simply snub off the ordinary people of this country.

"we are going to fix Westbury Road, we are going to fix Carrington Village, we are going to fix Black Rock, we are going to fix the Belle, the Democratic Labour Party left a lot of things."

That is political rhetoric, Sir. That is for the campaign trail but not when we come here.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Oh now Sir, I am hearing from the Attorney General who should know better, as he is

walking on his feet, to be speaking as he is walking, I must say the Attorney General disappoints me, every now and again, Sir, but I am going to ignore that, but in the heat of the moment the Minister must be the one who has to respond to this.

I did not know that the Urban Development Commission was to start a campaign. Now, I am hearing that is what it is about. If the Minister had said in his opening remarks that this Bill is about the next campaign, then we would not have got involved in the discussion.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. The Minister is making reference to an aside made by the Attorney General which simply pointed out that the Honourable Member, as he was speaking was behaving as if he was in a campaign and therefore we were prepared to start the campaign with him.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, that is no point of order.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am not questioning your ruling that it is not a point of order by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, but the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is eluding the fact that he understands from the Attorney General that the campaign had started.

There is nothing that I said that alluded to a campaign which has started. And I certainly would like all of those remarks with respect to the campaign being started and references to a campaign be struck from the record by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I am always guided by Your Honour. Your Honour's perspicacity could not be simply or easily misdiscerned, so I am not going to spend any time on the Honourable Member's contribution.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Would you proceed with the debate.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I am making the point that when I heard the Honourable Member, I was disappointed to hear that the Honourable Member did not recognise that we had gone into...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: "Fret not thyself because of evil doers."

Mr. Speaker, so that we will not be sidetracked into political rhetoric, let me deal with the specifics of what I am saying. Mr. Speaker, in Clause 1, this Bill says,

"This Act may be cited as the Urban Development Commission Act, 1997."

It makes some definitions in Clause 2, including, and I read, Sir,

"Urban area" means an area of land designated by order made by the Minister, in accordance with Section 5,"

Then it establishes the Commission to be known as the Urban Development Commission.

And then in section 4, Mr. Speaker, the trouble begins.

"This Act applies only to land in urban areas that¹ is designated under Section 5 and is vested in the Commission."

So the first point we have to make is that all of this, if you could take the Honourable Member's speech that all of the language, I almost said "verbiage" but I know Your Honour would not accept "verbiage", which the Honourable Member used to describe all kind of things in the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, and all kinds of things, none of that is relevant and I am disappointed because the Honourable Member, when he is not a Minister, is an Attorney-at-Law, who practises in the courts and he knows that it is his duty to put before the judge his particular case.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am assailed on all sides that I am misleading the House about what the Honourable Member does. But I am not going to let them deter me from saying, because the law says that "I presume that you do", do not mind them.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The fact that you do not go into court, you are no different from other big shots that do not go into court.

But, Sir, the Honourable Member came in here and gave a recitation on urban renewal. What he has to learn and we have been trying to teach him for some time, he has been a Minister now for over two years. There is no more excuse that they do not know what they are doing. He has to come down here with this legislation and it is his duty, it is his responsibility to explain the importance of the Act, the policy of the Act, the details of the Act and he has

to set the House at rest as to what he is trying to do, not what they have found, not whether the Democratic Labour Party ought to have had a survey. Even that, he was unable to enlighten the House. 2.35 p.m.

Let me draw to the Honourable Member's attention that the Honourable Member is not fair to his officers and to the people in the Ministry over which he now presides if he comes in here and gives the impression that the first time in their collective lives that they have ever done any kind of survey, done any kind of examination, is since he came. It is not fair to the officers. They would have told him if he had asked that the surveys are a continuing, ongoing part of the Ministry of Housing.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, as he well knows. I never ever tried to give the impression or said anything* in* my presentation that would make anyone believe, apart from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, that it is the first time that the officers in the Division of Housing actually did a survey. I do not know what the Honourable Member is talking about.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I am talking about what he did not talk about. I am saying that anybody who listened to the Honourable Member was bound to come to the impression because he said, and this is the language he used - if they had, as I did, done a survey...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I did indicate at the time when I was making the presentation that the amendments to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act by the Democratic Labour Party administration disenfranchised a number of tenants which if they had done this survey they would have realised that there was not enough land in St. Michael. And if they had done a survey at that time they would have known that there would have been land that they could have utilised. But the Honourable Member is now trying to distort what I said because they are ashamed of the fact that they never did anything to address the problems of failure to find enough land in the St. Michael area with respect to the dislocation which they caused as a result of those amendments to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, anytime I am ashamed in this House it is because somebody who is supposed to do something has not done it. Any shame I have today would be because the Honourable Member is someone for whom I have respect and I expect him to operate in a different manner. Now, Sir, he is not even remembering what he said.

The Honourable Member did not say what he said but he also left the impression - he can turn around and ask any of his honourable colleagues on that side - that if the Democratic Labour Party had done surveys it would not have fallen to some of the errors it made. Such errors as disenfranchising people and not having land for them.

Now, Sir, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North does not wish me to take him on at this time, I will leave him for another time.

The point is that no one who heard would have believed that anything approximating a survey has ever been done in the Ministry of Housing before that Daniel came to Judgment. Before that Daniel came to Judgment no one in the Ministry of Housing would have lifted a finger to discover any kind of information about anything relating to planning and programming for housing development in this country!

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these are three of a myriad number of reports from the National Housing Corporation which itself is a successor to a previous framework which itself was a successor to a framework set up by the Barbados Labour Party and what the Honourable Member would have us believe, if we would, that they never did any surveys in this country, that they did not have any information until he came.

Mr. Speaker, this is the Green Paper which was produced by the Ministry of Housing. This is the White Paper which was delivered to us while the Minister was in flight. The Minister was speaking when this was laid on the Table. Fortunately, for us, there is no difference between the two. So those of us who read the Green Paper have already read the White Paper. The only difference between the Green Paper and the White Paper is the colour.

I do not wish to be nitpicking but I think "the Honourable Minister can have a seminar on green papers, white papers and constitutional government so that he will not make that error again or that he will not allow his officials to make that error again when he says we have a green paper and then he says you have a white paper. I am looking forward to the White Paper coming out.

I got my document a little late and I gave the benefit of the doubt to the Minister and his colleagues in the Ministry. I thought that when we got the White Paper that I would be able to go through fast and see the changes. Do you realise, Sir, that the only difference between the Green Paper and White Paper is the colour? The Minister should explain that. That is one of the things you could have spent 15 minutes explaining to this House. Your colleague for St. George South is embarrassed that you come in here with a

Green Paper and then come and lay a White Paper. Do you know what you have done? This is what you call waste paper!

You take a Green Paper and all you do is change the cover and come in here and lay both of them on the Table. You should know better.

I do not wish to attack the Honourable Member and accuse him of knowing things which I know he does not know because that would not be fair. If the Honourable Member knew the difference between a Green Paper and a White Paper, do you think he would have this problem? I believe it is his officials who need to be spoken to. He may have terrorised them because.... Sorry, Sir, the Honourable Member does not have the capacity to terrorise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you withdrawing those words?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, I withdraw those words. I am not going to attack him. He is my friend. The Honourable Member has told everybody who would listen. He went to Guyana and told people down there who said nice things about me: "Oh, yes. That is my friend." So I cannot deny him.

What disturbs me, though, Sir, is that the Honourable Member would know he has had the benefit of certain kinds of environmental activity which ought to have made him much better than, he was today; but that is another matter.

The White Paper or Green Paper it does not matter, the pages are identical. If I quote page 6 of the Green Paper it is the same as if I quote page 6 of the White Paper.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: What I find unacceptable, Sir, is that if you turn to the White Paper or the Green Paper on page 4 of both, quoting from both the Green and the White, whichever you get to first, the last paragraph on page 4.

"This occasioned the Housing Act of 1955 and the creation of the Housing Authority which supplanted the Housing Board and the other schemes relating to the housing of the working class. However, with social mobility and increased employment opportunity a burgeoning middle class developed with its own peculiar set of housing demands. Consequently, Government set about tackling these needs through the Urban Development Corporation established in 1965. Its initial responsibility was to acquire and dispose of land and other properties

in the Cave Hill area and to provide for collaboration between private land owners and developers to develop communities based on a holistic approach to the provision of housing and ancillary facilities for example to support the needs of the new community, shops, churches and schools."

One of the great things about the computer age is that the language comes out the same. 2.45 p.m.

Now, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was the Deputy Chairman of the Urban Development Corporation. Mr. Carew, the late F. H. Carew, was the Chairman. That was an Urban Development Corporation set up in the context of the English law which was to do a specific job. Urban Development Corporations and Urban Development Commissions flow out of...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know if they make money out of it. If money was made out of it that is a matter which you would know about better than I would ever know. These are matters over which you had...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Please! The Honourable Member, could I advise you? Do like the Chair. Do not hear the asides. You are responding to asides then Honourable Members claim that asides do not belong to the record, so I do not know what we want to turn the House into. If the Honourable Members are going to take advantage of a rule to speak whenever they want to, however they want to, and then claim that they are not records, in other words we have no order.

What I am suggesting to you, Sir, is just to proceed with your speech. I am suggesting to the Honourable Members that we cut out some of these very loud asides especially when we are going to claim that nothing was said.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect. The decision not to include asides was made by a former Speaker and it has not been unknown that Speakers who have a particular view have been able to put that view into operation, and Your Honour is fully at liberty...

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, I put it into operation a few minutes ago.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. I would wish that Your Honour would bring the asides in because I agree with Your Honour that there are very many Honourable Members who wish to be a church and chapel too, who

wish to make the asides but not get the response. What the experienced parliamentarians do is bring the aside into their own speech and then respond to it. Your Honour could do well to allow the Press, if the Press used to cover in here, Sir, the opportunity to hear some of those asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, until that rule is changed, asides are not the records of the House.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Very well, Sir. We know, Sir, and I think Your Honour should put them back in because this is only, as I am on my feet and the matter comes up, is a matter which I would raise in a different place but I think the asides, such as they can be heard, should be put back in the records because they add a little salt and pepper to the debate.

Be that as it may, Sir, I am making the point that the Urban Development Corporation that was formed to develop Cave Hill, specifically to develop an area in Cave Hill, is the exact and correct use of Urban Development Corporations and Commissions.

When you have a commission^— this is the case in English law. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South will, I am sure, give us the benefit of his very extensive experience in this field especially since in the days when he studied law these were matters that were very pertinent to constitutional law, the whole question of Local Government.

The gravamen of the point we make is that this Urban Development Commission in this legislation here purports to put Local Government into the system in Barbados because it gives powers, and I will show that, Sir, to the Commission which powers ought to be reserved and have always been reserved for a Minister. The reason they are reserved for the Minister is not because the Minister is good looking, or tall, or fat, or any of those things. It is because the Minister is accountable, under the system of Government that we practise, to the Parliament and it is deemed that through that Parliament he is responsible to the people. This is the gravamen of the difficulties which a reading of this legislation shows.

Section 4, I had started to talk about, says that it applies only to land in urban areas that is designated under section 5. But section 5 says, Sir, "The Minister may by order" and I notice that "may" has been used in this throughout. The Minister has no obligations. Whereas in previous legislation one would see the word "shall", you will notice that the Minister "may" by order designate urban areas for the purposes of this Act.

Well, if he does not designate a single urban area, nothing in this Act can follow. So to say that he

may designate is, at the least, strange because this legislation cannot come to any activity whatsoever unless the Minister designates, if section 4 is correct.

It says that "the order referred to in subsection (1) shall be subject to affirmative resolution". But then it goes on in the next section to say: "The functions of the Commission shall be confined to urban areas only and are as follows" and they list a number of them some of which are going to be amended by some of the amendments we understand are coming.

Here it is what they will be able to do:-

- "(a) to acquire, hold or manage land and other property of any kind for the purpose of this Act;
- (b) to dispose of such land or other property on such terms and conditions as the Minister determines;
- (c) to construct, maintain and repair buildings";

It goes on:-

- (f) to make advances to persons on such conditions and with such securities as may be prescribed by the Minister for any of the following purposes:
 - (i) to acquire houses and land; (ii) to construct houses; (iii) to refurbish buildings";

But, Sir, all of this can only occur on land in urban areas that is designated by the Minister.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Some Honourable Members are asking what is wrong with that. Let us tell them what is wrong with that. Anyone who listened to the Minister introducing this Bill got the impression that he was going to, if you would pardon the expression, take care of Drax Hall and Kendall. Anyone who listened to the Minister would get the impression that this Urban Development Commission was going to renovate the whole of the St. Michael area.

When you examine this legislation, Sir, and you put it next to the legislation which exists for the Housing Authority, it would have been helpful if the Minister would have been able to indicate to the population what it is the

Housing Authority is going to be doing that the Urban Development Commission would not be doing. A slight glancing reference later on in the legislation to the Housing Authority is only a glancing reference to the Corporation. In fact, Sir, when you examine the two of them you find there is conflict.

I go further, Mr. Speaker, and come now to clause 13. It says "the Minister may give the Commission directions." What one sees is that this has been a wholesale...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The first canon of statutory interpretation is that you must read the whole Act. Section 35 says:

"Except with respect to the urban areas designated under section 5, nothing in this Act affects the functions conferred on the National Housing Corporation by the Housing Act."

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, the Honourable Member demonstrates that he can read, Sir. That is what he demonstrated because it is precisely that question which, if the Honourable Member had not anticipated me, but since he wants me to take it early, it says "Except with respect to the urban areas designated under section 5." Your Honour will remember, Sir, that I was dealing, in fact, with the difficulty posed by sections 4 and 5.

Section 4 says the whole Act only applies to land in urban areas that is designated under section 5. Section 5, however, says the Minister may by order, designate urban areas for the purposes of this Act, so unless the Minister designates, all of this is signifying nothing. This is the point in relation to sections 4 and 5. It may be too subtle a point to be taken. 2.55 p.m.

If you heard the Minister presupposing that all manner of things were going to be happening in the urban areas and if you related this, Sir, to what in fact formed the legislation for the Rural Development Commission, you will see that the point I made at the beginning is valid, that this is a hurried attempt to bring something in to say that we have an Urban Development Commission. I am saying, further, Sir, that what they have done is drawn from English legislation, they have lifted it lock, stock and barrel.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, that is not true. I have carefully checked this last night with the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and George Fergusson who was in the House earlier today. The sources for this legislation are the former Urban Development Corporation Act,

the National Housing Corporation Act, the Housing Act and the Land Acquisition Act. You do not even understand. We drew on existing legislation in Barbados, either what existed or what pre-existed. We drew on Barbados legislation, the sources are not extra-Barbados at all.

Mr. B. M. TAUT: I have sympathy for the Attorney General because it is clear to me that the Attorney General has very little to do with this legislation because what he just got up and said only confirms my point. He said that he checked with somebody last night. I am not in the business of proving anything. I can give you chapter and verse out of here. The actual words have been taken lock, stock and barrel from the legislation which existed in the United Kingdom.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Barbados legislation came out of the United Kingdom. The point I am making, if you would listen to me is that when they took it up for the Urban Commission they were giving it to a statutory corporation without recognising that the statutory corporation in Britain is grounded in the local council government and therefore the powers which an urban development commission has in Britain are different from what we are seeking to do even though we are using the same language. Here in Barbados, there is no Local Government and the Minister referred to here is not being treated in the same way as the Secretary of State. If the Attorney General wishes to, he can take the legislation and go and examine it afresh.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That is the point that I am making, Mr. Speaker, they have taken it willy-nilly and dropped it into this legislation and when you examine it, I do not mind who you check with, if he wishes and he has the time, I will go through it with him in detail. But the essence of what we are saying is that we will take six persons or ten or however the Commission is made up and we will give them police powers, we will give them authority where they are not answerable to anybody. People appointed to a statutory corporation would be able, according to this legislation to go out and do things which up until now were the province of a Minister.

A Minister, by definition, is answerable to the people. People appointed by a Minister are answerable only to the Minister. I go further. The Constitution of Barbados requires that if you are going to take property from anybody that that property has to be taken in a particular way. Mr. Speaker for ease of reference, I remind Your Honour and by extension, Honourable Members in here that Section 16 of the Constitution of Barbados says:

"that no property of any description shall be compulsorily taken possession of, and no interest in or rights over property of any description can be compulsorily acquired, except by or under the authority of a written law, and where provision applying to that acquisition or taking of possession is made by written law, -

- (a) prescribing the principles on which and the manner in which compensation therefor is to be determined and given; and
- (b) giving to any person claiming such compensation, a right of access, either directly or by way of appeal, for the determination of his interest in or right over the property and the amount of compensation, to the High Court".

Mr. Speaker I am suggesting that inadvertently perhaps this legislation purports to give a statutory board the powers to acquire land.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, my friend is really letting me down today. Listen to the Housing Act. Section 9 - introduced in here when the Honourable Member who was on his feet was a member of the Senate, in 1973, he sat in the Senate and voted for the Housing Authority to have these powers.

"The function of the Corporation shall be"

"(a) to acquire, hold and manage land and other property of any kind as the Minister determines".

He voted for that and after twenty something years he comes in here criticising it. He comes in here and criticises that you give a statutory board the power to acquire and own land and now we are giving a statutory board the same power. What foolishness am I hearing!

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Are you abolishing the Housing Authority? Did the Attorney General or the Minister get up and say that the Urban Commission is replacing the Housing Authority? Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that they do not understand.

It is clear to me, Sir, that what they are setting up is a second National Housing Corporation. Is this what you are doing? It seems to me, therefore, that we have reached that point and this is what the Minister had a responsibility to say when he was introducing this Bill. The Minister is saying that one National Housing Corporation is not sufficient so he is bringing a second statutory board and

he wants it to have the same powers as the National Housing Corporation and we are going to work in tandem, side by side, the Urban Development Commission and the National Housing Corporation. Is that what the Attorney General, the Minister and the Government are saying?

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: It is the merging. If you try hard enough you will get the policies merging. The Attorney General is batting like "blind Elda", swiping as you go along. It is clear to me that he is unfamiliar with the policy of the Act but being bound as the Attorney General to defend it, he feels free to get up which is fine with me, except to say that when one examines this one finds that this Urban Development Commission has been lifted lock, stock and barrel from the United Kingdom legislation. They have not taken account of the fact that the Minister has the authority in the Housing Act and that nothing that the Housing Authority does can be done without the authority of the Minister. That is not the case with the Urban Development Commission which we are about to put together. It says "the Minister may". Very often it says "the Minister may by order". It says that the function of this Urban Development shall be to acquire, hold or manage. It does not say that they have to get authority from the Minister. If you look at the same Housing Act you will not find that that is the case.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Take your time and look at it. They are those who will come after you who will raise some very serious questions about what is intended by this Commission.

Sir, it says that the Commission shall prepare and submit to the Minister the Urban Renewal Plan. That is authority that has been given to the Town & Country Planning. 3.05 p.m.

Honourable Members, again Sir, because when you have an urban development commission it is usually for a specific set of property to be dealt with in a particular way and it is a temporary...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. This one is from memory now. As far as my memory serves me Chapter 240 of the Town Planning Act, says that the Chief Town Planner must prepare and submit to the Minister responsible for Town Planning a physical development plan. I think it is in section 9.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is right but the Honourable Member will realise that urban and

rural have already been defined in Barbados in the context of the execution of precisely the law which the Honourable Member is quoting. The Honourable Member should know that there has to be a development plan for Bridgetown, for the urban areas. He has to know that the Chief Town Planner has already defined urban in terms of the development of Barbados, that there has to be a plan for the development of Barbados and it is in the context of that that we raised the question. What it is that you are bringing now when you say the Commission shall prepare and submit to the Minister an urban renewal plan which shall serve as a guide for carrying out of slum clearance and for the redevelopment of urban areas? I say it is a conflict.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It is section 5 of Cap. 240.

"As soon as may be practicable the Chief Town Planner shall carry out a survey of the whole island.

(2) Not later than four years after the appointed day or within such extended period as the Minister may allow, the Chief Town Planner shall submit for the approval of the Minister a development plan consisting of a report of the survey together with a plan showing the manner in which he proposes that the land in the island may be used and the stages by which any such development may be carried out."

That is the Physical Development Plan.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, there is a document. It had about 4 attachments to it. The Barbados Development Plan was eventually produced. The Barbados Physical Development Plan amended in 1986 was eventually produced in a document that had about 6 like this attached to it and it sets out what is urban and what is rural. We have now brought legislation which has the Minister of Housing determining that something is an urban area and arising out of that urban area an urban development commission will then be making decisions. I am saying that this smacks of total confusion. It smacks of waste, it smacks of inability to understand what it is we are to do but it looks like a palliative which is being presented in order to be able to say we have formed an urban development commission.

If you look at section 7 of this legislation, it sets out what the Commission shall do. Meanwhile it is the Minister who may do this.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to go through it *seriatim* because it is important. The Honourable Member told me in his speech that we should be able, after he was finished, to go and tell our constituents that that is a caring Government. I am no such liar, Sir. I am not going to

go and tell my constituents any such thing because they know I do not tell them anything that would mislead them. The Honourable Member knows that in this legislation there is not only duplication of functions that have been set up for other agencies of Government but in this they are going beyond what are the accepted norms and principles for the operation of this system of Government which we have here.

Listen to this, Sir. They deal with the salaries and then we come to section 15. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker

"Where in the opinion of the Commission a building to which this Act applies -

- (a) is derelict;
- (b) is unfit for human habitation;
- (c) creates a nuisance; or
- (d) is injurious or likely to be injurious to health,"

I put it to Your Honour, the Health Services Act has already determined...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This has nothing to do with the Minister. The Honourable Member, the Attorney General, continues from his seat to...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I do not think he knows what he is talking about and he is giving the impression that he knows.

Mr. Speaker, under section 11 of the Housing Act, Cap. 226, the same provisions that are included in this Act are included and it does not simply relate to any matter being referred to the Minister. The National Housing Corporation under the Housing Act can take the same action as the Commission in this case. There is no difference in the functions of the Commission in this case and the Corporation in the Housing Act, so I do not know what the Honourable Member is referring to. He is misleading the House and I would say that he is doing it deliberately. He is having fun doing it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, to the extent that I am misleading the House it is deliberate because if the Honourable Member is the only one who is being misled then it is deliberate. I cannot help if he is incapable of being led. But, Sir, I draw to Your Honour's attention the

Barbados Labour Party Government brought the amendment to the Health Services Act in here which would allow the Minister of Health to be the determinant of whether a building was derelict, whether it was unfit for human habitation, *et cetera*.

The National Housing Corporation can only respond to that which falls within the ambit of the National Housing Corporation. The authority to declare a building derelict is now vested in the Minister of Health. The authority to determine whether a place is unfit for human habitation is now currently vested in the Minister of Health and what they are saying in here is that where in the opinion of the Commission, and if the Minister is so daft as not to recognise that if he brings legislation which puts a commission that he appoints *pan passu* with a Minister then I have no hope for the Minister responsible for Housing.

You are saying, Mr. Speaker, that he can now appoint a commission that will have the same power as a Minister. You have not taken that point yet. The National Housing Corporation can only do it by and with the leave of the Minister and for the Minister's ambit. I am saying that in Barbados today the power to determine if a house or a building is derelict is happily, safely vested in the Minister of Health. I am saying that we are now bringing legislation which is saying that a statutory board is going to have the same power as a Minister of Health and I am asking the Government if that is what they intend to do.

Ask somebody to research how it is the Minister declares buildings derelict. Let one of the Clerks research it. You have not done any research for a long time and may not know how to look up ordinary things now.

Mr. Speaker, the question has to be what the Government is saying that the Commission which the Minister of Housing would now appoint will have the same powers as the Minister of Health. Here is what the Minister can do.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member is speaking too loosely in this debate and he should have done his research.

Now let us see what he is complaining about. I am saying you are misleading the House because you are saying that the Commission is now being given the same powers as the Minister of Health and I am showing the difference in the powers.

In section 11A of the Health Services Act Cap. 44, subject to this section and section 11B,

"where property is in a dangerous state or is injurious to the health of human beings, animals or plants

the Minister may take possession of such property and execute any work that is reasonably necessary and after the expiration of 42 days or such period as the High Court after hearing an appeal under section 11B orders, the Minister may direct that the property be sold by public auction for the recovery of the debts due to the Crown in respect of any work so executed."

That is different. It goes on to say,

"(2) Where property is taken possession of under subsection (1) the Minister shall send notices" and so on.

That is the part I found, Sir, relating to work in a dangerous state, but this Act says, where the building is derelict and unfit for human habitation, creates a nuisance or is injurious or likely to be injurious to health. 3.15 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have heard reeks of vision, in the past but I am not going to even spend time on that. What I am saying and the gravamen of the point is that the Minister of Health, properly by this Parliament, has the power to determine whether a place is a derelict. That is part of the Law of Barbados.

The Minister of Health can determine if a place is unfit for human habitation, whether it is a house, a dwelling, no matter what, the Minister of Health has that power. This Minister could determine whether a place creates a nuisance. The Honourable Member knows that only recently he was a beneficiary, indirectly, of a situation that created a nuisance. It is injurious or likely to be injurious to health. I am saying, Sir, that a Commission appointed by a Minister cannot, unless this House takes leave of its senses, have the same powers as a Minister.

I wish, if that is what they are saying on that side, that statutory corporations appointed by Ministers will now have powers equal to the powers of Ministers, if that is what they are saying, I would like them to state that categorically.

They go on, Sir. Here is what the Commission can do:

"The Commission may serve on the owner or occupier thereof, notice in writing requiring him to demolish, secure, repair or rebuild a building to the satisfaction of the Commission within the time specified in the notice."

Now an occupier, Sir.

"The Commission" created by the Minister "can serve notice on an occupier that the occupier can demolish,".

Now, Mr. Speaker, when Hast spent sometime with the law, an occupier had a certain definition. It is possible that it has a different definition now, and so, an occupier can demolish property. When the Commission serves notice on an occupier to demolish, that may be a new law, I do not know, Sir, but you mean to tell me that we are going to sit in this House of Assembly and pass legislation saying that a Commission can serve notice on an occupier of a building to demolish it?

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But, I go further, Sir. If you have occupiers of the kinds which they are likely to run into in these kinds of properties, the chances are that these occupiers will be prime subjects for the new alleviation of poverty...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not understand it? I understand it too well. They will be prime beneficiaries of the new Poverty Alleviation Programme. So, Sir, the chances are that a person who is in one of these properties that is derelict, is an occupier. Now an occupier, may or may not be legitimate, but once the Commission has served a notice on the occupier, the notice is served.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Members are quoting me the law as it exists. I am trying to deal with this legislation that you have brought here. It says, "Where in the opinion of the Commission," and I am saying no Commission has any right with that opinion, "a building to which this Act applies", has the deficiencies which are identified, "the Commission may serve on the owner or occupier thereof notice in writing requiring him to demolish, secure, repair or rebuild a building to the satisfaction of the Commission."

This is straightforward, Sir. Mr. Speaker you do not have to have any learning to understand what this says. If it is served on an occupier, the occupier is required to demolish, secure, repair or rebuild a building to the satisfaction of the Commission.

Now, the next one, Sir, which is very interesting, it does not say where the owner or occupier,

"Where the owner fails to comply with the requirements of the notice served, pursuant

to subsection (1) within the time specified therein, the Commission or any person authorised in writing by *the Chairman of the Commission may execute the works mentioned therein and may, if the Commission deems it expedient, order the whole or any portion of the expenses thereby incurred to be defrayed out of funds at his disposal for such purpose."

Mr. Speaker, I do not know about the others, but I have a lot of difficulty with that. I represent a constituency in which there are many occupiers.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Precisely, but the areas are going to be in my constituency, not yours. The owners are going to be in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and the Commission is going to be appointed by the Minister.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the point I am making to the Honourable Member is that he has not conceptualised the Bill properly, because, having served the notice, you then have to ask yourself a question. If I am served with a notice what are my rights and your rights are in section 16, which say that,

"a person served with a notice under section 15(1) which he quoted, or any other person having an estate or interest in the building to which the notice relates at any time before the expiration of the period may appeal to a judge in chambers against the notice on any of the following grounds." And they are set out from (a) to (g).

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: But the point is that once you have a notice it does not mean that the building is going to come down, because you have a procedure in the Act for challenging the notice and preserving your rights.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is clear to me, Sir. I thought that there was a different kind of problem, but the problem is that the Honourable Members on that side had not had any acquaintance recently with the kinds of occupiers of the same kinds of properties which are going to be identified as derelict.

Do you expect, Sir, - the Honourable Member goes on to Section 16 - that you can charge that to somebody in Chapman Lane who is occupying a place that is deemed to be a derelict by a commission. The Honourable" Members are unbelievable.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the Honourable Member and I did not interrupt him deliberately.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber as to the attempts against an occupier. This legislation does not prescribe to any action against the occupier other than the servicing of the notice on it.

All of the action pertaining to derelict buildings or buildings unfit for human habitation or those creating a nuisance or injurious or likely to be injurious to health are in fact contained in Section 15 in the rest of the subsection and those relate only to the owner, not to the occupier. There is nothing that affects the occupier's interest in relation to the occupier himself. It relates to the owner. You serve the notice On the occupier because the occupier has a right to know that what the Ministry or the Commission is proposing in relation to that particular house. 3.25 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not believe that anyone who practises law and who is familiar with what is going on will accept that rubbish.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot refer to what the Honourable Member said as rubbish.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I withdraw "rubbish". I can find no acceptable word, so I leave it unsaid. The Honourable Member says that there is nothing applying to the occupier. I am going to read it. It is written in English, Sir. It is not written in Hebrew. It says:

"The Commission may serve on the owner or occupier thereof..."

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You can shout until the cows come home. You cannot just get up every time on a point of order.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please! It seems to me that it has a lot to do with a point of interpretation of the different regulations.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am on a point of order, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Can you proceed on a point of order.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Just now when I rose on my feet, I said that the section 15 relates to the occupier only insofar as a notice is served on the occupier so for him to say that I said it does not relate to the occupier at all is misleading the Chamber.

There is no action against the occupier in respect of any penalty in respect of its charges or in respect of any money.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I appeal to Your Honour's intellect. I go no higher than that, Sir.

Section 15 says "where in the opinion of the Commission..." Let us take that, Sir. If there is anybody who does not understand that, put your hands in the air!

Now the Commission is not made up of judges. This is not the Appeal Court. This is not eminent lawyers. This is the opinion of the Commission appointed by the Honourable Member. It then sets out:

"...a building to which this Act applies

- (a) is derelict;
- (b) is unfit for human habitation;
- (c) creates a nuisance; or
- (d) is injurious or likely to be injurious to health."

Listen to the next words now, Sir.

"The Commission may serve on the owner or occupier thereof notice in writing requiring him..."

Now, Sir, this is in English. You know, Sir, in law, which may have eluded one or two Members over there, the ordinary English interpretation is preferable. "...requiring him..." Can it be him, the owner, but not the occupier? It has to be him the owner or him the occupier, if the occupier is the one on whom the notice is served.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you saying that it should be requiring "them"?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, I do not write laws in here. The Government brings the law. I am pointing out to the Government that as it stands now they are requiring a feeble old man who lives in a broken down house in Morris Gap where a Commission appointed by them determines that that is a derelict building and serves a notice on the occupier who does not even know whom the

house belongs to, to demolish. That is what I am drawing to the attention of the House. If the Honourable Members feel that that is fine let them go ahead.

But we go further. This whole section 15 gives police powers, and this is the gravamen of the contribution. It gives police powers to a set of people appointed by the Minister. Where the Minister is appointing those persons in the context of urban development in the United Kingdom that is for a specific set of activities to be carried out in the area like, for example, the docklands. When they have finished the work and they are satisfied that the thing has reached a certain level they, as it were, dismiss themselves or they disband the Corporation.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is familiar with what I am talking about. They move on. This is to be distinguished from a statutory corporation and it is set up to have permanent life to go on to do a number of things. If the Honourable Members are saying that here in Barbados they are going to have a hybrid that is made up of the 2 ideas, that is their privilege. At least the Minister owes it to us to explain what he intends to do. To come in here and talk about the Freehold Tenancies Purchase Act and all other issues that passed us way back down the road he is not, I am submitting, doing justice to this Parliament.

I go further. Can you believe that in this day and age that the Minister would bring up legislation again lifted wholesale and put in here, after allowing an appeal to a Judge in Chambers, it says that the decision of the judge is final?

I thought we had debated that around here over and over again and that by now it was trite law that putting that in legislation is only a waste of ink. No judge who is making a decision about the deprivation of property or the destruction of property or any of those things can have a final decision. We passed in here an Administrative Justice Act in 1981 brought by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and I am amazed that we can bring legislation in 1997... In 1997 we have legislation which is being brought here ostensibly to allow a statutory corporation to destroy property to come to conclusions and we have seen that errors can be made.

Only 2 weeks ago I read in the newspapers - I was not in the House - that the Attorney General was able to say that one government department licked down a whole building that the other government department wanted to use for some useful purpose. I believe that Honourable Members in here who understand how these matters go were able to say and I believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was reported as saying that in

the government of today one hand does not know what the other one is doing, the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. Yet the Minister comes in here and says nothing as to why he wants to bring legislation to say the decision of the judge is final.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw something to you that is even more iniquitous. Section 18(3) deals with the question of serving notice. After having set that out they have the temerity to bring legislation in here which will say:

"Where the Commission fails to serve the notice referred to in paragraph (b) of subsection (3) the validity of the scheme shall not be prejudiced by such failure."

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member says that it is from the Town Planning Act but the Town Planning Act was written years ago. We brought the Administrative Justice Act in here since then.

What manner of people are we if we come thereafter? We are merely perpetuating and perpetrating all of the ills which purportedly were corrected by the Administrative Justice Act. How can we bring legislation in here at this time with these kinds of... Somebody said that people are Neanderthals but this is antediluvian. The Honourable Member brings it in here and says not a word. 3.35 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am trying to be gentle. I said earlier that the Honourable Member was my friend. You wish me to call him a Neanderthal too? The Honourable Member for St. George South wishes me to attack the Minister who is his friend, but I am not going to do that.

I do not blame the Minister. The Minister has no responsibility for this legislation. It is the Attorney General, who is not now in his seat. The Attorney General should be embarrassed and if he signed this document he should resign. The Attorney General if he signed this as a certificate of legislation to bring in here he should resign. I hope the record does not show that the Attorney General signed this. It must have been when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was acting as Attorney General or some such thing. It could not be when the Attorney General, this champion of causes, known and unknown, who would have signed this and brought it in here.

This is old time, backward legislative clauses that went out ever since. I think that in some ways this is an attack on the Honourable Member for Christ Church West because he is heading a Commission that is supposed to report by October and this is a constitutional measure, if ever there was one. This has all the elements of Local Government without any of the burdens.

Now, why would we bring a local government issue in here when a Constitution Review Commission is sitting and you have people like the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and his political party who are strong proponents of local government? We have other people in Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He is retired now.

Sir, I am really very concerned where we have: "Where the Commission fails to serve the notice referred to in paragraph (b) of subsection (3) the validity of the scheme shall not be prejudiced by such failure." Now, Sir, they tell me the Honourable Minister does not practice in the courts. I do not know that because I do not practice there either. But I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. George South when he saw this for the first time his hackles went up. I am sure of that.

No self-respecting believer in rights of the people, and especially when you are discussing alleviation of poverty and this is legislation to deal with urban plight, this is legislation to deal with urban renewal, how can you come in here saying that where the Commission fails to serve notice.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that is crucial in acquisition of land and land matters it is notice. If there is one thing that is crucial, there is nothing like somebody sneaking in the night and doing something and then saying that if you did not give proper notice that will not interfere with the validity.

Fortunately the judges we have to deal with these days are not moved by such language, but I say it is wrong for the Legislature to continue sending this kind of language up to the courts for the courts to turn it back. The courts are hurling this back on a continuing basis.

In the United Kingdom every day they are charting new ground, but we in Barbados have moved even beyond the United Kingdom with our Administrative Justice Act and I am amazed that a Barbados Labour Party administration could bring legislation in here that would have a clause in it which says, and I quote again, Sir:

"Where the Commission fails to serve the notice, referred to in paragraph (b) of subsection (3) the validity of the scheme shall not be prejudiced by such failure."

Now, Mr. Speaker, for those who do not read through all of these things, perhaps I should say what (b) is. Listen to this, Sir. (b) says:

"serve a notice to the like effect on every owner and on every other person who to the knowledge of the Commission has any interest in land in the area affected by the scheme, except persons holding under a monthly tenancy or tenancy for a lesser period."

So they are saying that if you are the owner of land and you live in St. Lucy beyond the Judge Gap, and your land is in Chapman Lane, and the Commissioners appointed by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, and you know, Sir, if he is appointing them you can work out what kind of Commissioners they are going to be. You can be certain what Commissioners they are going to be. Any Honourable Member in here...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. You do not need to go down that road.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I was merely saying that they would be people of a high quality, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You are saying that I am wrong to go down that road, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: No, you continue.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, anybody knows that the Commissioners when they are appointed are likely to be people of a like mind. I am saying that somebody who is in the United States and who hires a lawyer who looks after their business and the notice is served...

Mr. Speaker, recently the Ministry over which the Honourable Member presides decided they were going to serve some notices on persons who owned land running from the Frank Worrell Roundabout all through Peterkins right through areas that Your Honour knows very well. That Ministry served notices. Mr. Speaker, you should see the notices. They fulfil the law because they served notices but you had to get a microscope. No ordinary person could read anything that was stuck on. They stuck them onto property land, they stuck them on to piece of wood, they stuck them onto old trees. I saw all these things one morning as I was walking. I said what is this? Is somebody

vandalising the place? If you had seen the notices, Sir, they were all up Black Rock. They stuck them on the Mental Hospital wall. It is true.

I eventually got curious and went to look at these things and realized that while I was walking in the morning I could not read it because, Sir, I do not walk with my glasses and I am over 40 so I need glasses.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I got the lady to look at it for me, as the Honourable Member is suggesting, and she told me it was an official notice. I said it could not be an official notice. No Government would serve an official notice in such small print. I wondered if the Ministry was saving some paper because these are notices saying that they are acquiring people's land, what, in essence, was the first shot across the bow to acquire land for the new development which the Minister was going to be doing in the road - I do not know what they call it now, Sir - so they have to acquire little pieces of land.

I would have thought they would have had the decency to invite the parliamentary representative. I was very disappointed and my people were very disappointed that the parliamentary representative for St. Michael West, a man who can be found with many of the owners of land that is about to be taken compulsorily by the Government was not invited. The parliamentary representative was very upset that this caring Government that the Honourable Member spoke about did not consider it desirable to invite their representative but I explained to them that this Government functions in a peculiar way and we will get over that.

The notices were in a point - I do not wish to tell any lies on them - it looks like 6-point but just out of an abundance of caution let me say it was an 8-point. There is no old lady who owns land along there who had any idea what it was about. There was no notice in the newspaper telling people that these notices stuck on had anything to do with anything.

Eventually the same parliamentary representative had to send notices out to people saying, "Do not despair. There is nothing to worry about. It is just the bureaucracy saying to you that you should get a lawyer to come in to discuss how much land you can afford to sell to the Government because the Government is going to take it whether you sell it or not."

I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in some instances when the old ladies discovered what it was about they were very relieved because some of them were very concerned. I am saying that to say that where you have notices of

that kind that can be published you can then bring legislation which says that if the Government fails to put a notice you are to say that does not in any way invalidate the action. I could not support that, not in these days, Sir. The rest of the legislation is an attempt to prevent the lawyers in the private sector from attacking this legislation for fear that it is in conflict with the Health Services Act and other legislation. Even in that regard, some of the language which has been used in the Sections all the way to Section 35... Take Section 35, Sir, it says that "except with respect to the urban areas designated under section 5, nothing in this Act affects the functions conferred on the National Housing Corporation by the Housing Act." You know what that means, Sir, that we are going to give the Minister power to obviate the Housing Act. 3.45 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, it is a subsection. The Honourable Member is saying from his seat that it is a subsection. All they need to do is to let us know what it is.

This Urban Development Commission has powers which the Housing Authority do not have so it is more than a subsection. It is a superior section. This is the point. The Housing Act requires the Minister to act. That is the bulwark of the law system that we have, the Minister is responsible, the Housing Authority is responsible to a Minister. I wish the Minister would pay attention to the fine point that is being made. Once this has been set up, we will discuss this when we discuss the clauses, there are powers which this Commission will have which are equal to the powers of the Minister.

The only legislation in Barbados that gives their functionaries the same powers as the Minister is the same Health Services Act which gives the Chief Medical Officer the same powers for certain purposes as the Minister because those are required under emergency circumstances. These are functionaries who by their very nature ought to be given those powers. No statutory corporation created in the circumstances that this legislation seeks to set them up should be in a position to do that.

Mr. Speaker, when we come to the Committee there are some other questions which we will deal with. Can you imagine that in Section 13(2) that they are purporting to give a Commission authority to lease land for 99 years?

Sir, do you know that Section 18(4) nullifies the need to give notice. I will finish by drawing this to Your Honour's attention. The areas that have been described as urban areas in Barbados are Bridgetown and the suburbs, Speightstown and Oistins. This is the legislation which

exists. This Act will allow the Minister to designate any area of Barbados as an urban area. I do not think that this is the intention but that is what the Act allows. I wish to be perfectly clear. There are some of us who have constituencies in this St. Michael who are wary of indications that you are going to be able to designate an area. You speak in this legislation of special development areas. You spoke of special development areas in legislation which came here that dealt with the development of certain areas for economic purposes. We now have the Minister being able to have special development areas for purposes of slum clearance.

Mr. Speaker, the dangers of that should be apparent to almost anybody but I will speak about this in Committee.

The Minister in the process of making his presentation had some comments to make about the Democratic Labour Party. The Minister sought to give the impression that the Democratic Labour Party did not participate in urban renewal. The Minister sought to talk about the historical development of the suburbs of Barbados. I draw to the Minister's attention that when we were in the Government between 1971 and 1976, there was a Cabinet subcommittee that walked every single inch of the areas of Hanshell Land, Busby Land...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying that I did nothing. On the contrary, they walked then with officials including the Chief Town Planner and it was the compassion of the Cabinet of Barbados, that allowed some of those people who had been duped into buying property that had as small an area as 1 800 square feet... The Honourable Member says that he wants to have a land bank with 3 000 square feet as the minimum. That is fine but when it comes to examining their titles that people now have in areas such as Busby Land, Alkins Land and Halls Road, the Minister cannot fail to take cognizance, no Government can fail to take cognizance of the fact that it is now virtually impossible to change some of the configurations which exist.

It is alright to give people the impression that we are going to have this glorious situation in which all the land lots in Barbados are going to be standardised. The truth is, as the Honourable Member knows, that when we have looked at these lots in Passage Road and Vietnam and Alkins and Lower Richmond Gap and other areas you will find that there are people that have lots with 1 800 square feet or 2 000 square feet but they have title. They own those lots and to those people, that is their castle.

The Town Planner Of the day and I could call his name because he is no longer a public officer,

Luther Bourne made a passionate submission to the Cabinet in the early 1970s that Barbados cannot plan an urban renewal and land reform without reference to the history of Barbados. When somebody was able to buy their little house spot, to deprive them of the house spot by virtue of some change would be dangerous.

The Honourable Member suggested that we had not done anything but I am saying that the whole of Busby Land, Alkins Land, the newly recovered areas of President Kennedy Drive, both sides; all of those areas were resurveyed and people now have lots, minimum size 2 500 square feet. We subsequently looked at some places in the Bay Land and surrounding areas and therefore it would be wrong to give people the impression as the Minister sought to do that the creation of an Urban Development Commission will suddenly change the nature of the existing situation.

If the Barbados Labour Party believes that going out and giving people sums of monies in their hands for various reasons, under various pretences is the way they are going to get St. Michael, they have another thought coming. The people in St. Michael are not hand-to-mouth looking for handouts, they are not hungry.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by using language that we do not understand. I do not know what he means when he says that we on this side would like to get St. Michael. He needs to explain that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: He wants explanation, Sir. In the course of his presentation he kept referring to the fact that there are more Members on this side with seats in St. Michael than there are over there. It was clear to me that he was looking with the long eye of the envious. I know, Sir, that he included you over here for purposes of that argument.

Sir, I just want the Barbados Labour Party to understand that it is by compassionate policies, removal of VAT from the food, which you are going to do in October, treating the civil servants with decency, understanding the morals...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. I still do not understand what the Honourable Member meant when he said that I was referring to more Members on that side. I do not know if he was including the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, but I think that he is misleading the House. As I know, there are five Members on this side from St. Michael and five Members on that side and I do not know to whom he is referring.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member can rest assured that only enlightened policies, only policies which the people of St. Michael and indeed the people of Barbados can perceive to be policies in their long-term interest, no short-term handing-out, no matter on what basis the handouts occur, no short-term handing out of cash in the hands of people will get...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I recall very well the Honourable Member including Bush Hall.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member looks over and he knows that there are six Members but he deliberately says five. Sir, when it comes to who is with whom, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, who is my representative would know, he is an expert on who is with whom, I have no quarrel with that. If he says that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central whom I have known as my colleague... If he is saying that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has now cast his lot with the Barbados Labour Party, if he is saying that the Honourable Member is capable of and will speak for himself in that regard, what I know is that the Honourable Member has said on more than one occasion that he would rather die than be a member of the Barbados Labour Party, 3.55 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is my view that urban renewal should occur by ensuring that the people of President Kennedy Drive who have waited for nearly 3 years in order to get what is legitimately theirs...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We are going to take away your seat if you are not careful. We have a plan for the Honourable Member, the Minister of Education.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Could you proceed please?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir. I am going to wind up now. Mr. Speaker, you cannot come in here and mislead the people of Barbados like that because you have a rural development commission in which when the pattern of spending is examined you are going to be found wanting.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not talking about the Member for St. Thomas, Sir. The Member for St. Thomas and the Member for St. Peter do not fall into

any categories I describe. They are separate and apart. They are super receivers.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. I was saying from my seat about the 4 people from St. John who have already benefitted substantially from the rural enterprise fund and I said wait until the Minister of Agriculture speaks and you will hear chapter and verse about the disbursements of that fund.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am very glad that somebody is going to hear from the Minister of Agriculture. I look forward to that. That the Minister of Agriculture is likely to speak in this debate is a matter of great importance to me. The Honourable Member is giving the urban commission \$6 million. This is the same amount as a village in St. Thomas just got.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I ask that that bare-faced lie be withdrawn and expunged from the record. Mr. Speaker it is a very outstanding untruth. The village in St. Thomas that got a road, Forty Acres, that they were denied for so many years was the recipient of \$458 000.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He should be the last to talk about Arch Hall. I am going to get in this debate now. I am going to talk.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, please protect me from the Attorney General. Now he is inciting them to kill me, Sir. He is saying from his seat that if I go through Arch Hall the people would lynch me. No, Sir, you have the wrong adjective, the wrong verb and the wrong side.

Mr. Speaker, quite seriously the Barbados Labour Party cannot lay claim to any of the improvements. If you look at what has been described as the urban areas of Barbados and I wish to remind you, the Farm was a mere pool. The Farm was a recipient of effluents from the Psychiatric Hospital. The Farm was transformed into an urban area. We went up the Hill and we transformed...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You want me to say Fernihurst and Rosemont. Fernihurst and Rosemont that voted for the Democratic Labour Party in the last by-election. I can say that. I have no problem with that. That was part of the transformation by a man called Philip Greaves as Minister of Housing whose record is second to none. I think the Minister owes it to posterity to stop putting urban

development and urban renewal in purely political terms because if you wish to discuss the transformation of this country into an area where people who were not of the middle class and upper could still have the benefits of what was happening in Barbados then you would have to recognise and accept that it was the Democratic Labour Party over its term that changed the pattern that is still even now haunting the Pine, the pattern that allows for window-less and door-less rooms and that whole concept of equality of life for the individual was changed for the Democratic Labour Party. 4.05 p.m.

It is the Democratic Labour Party that envisages the people of Barbados in their individual state. We perceived every single Barbadian as an end in himself or herself and not as a means to an end. We say that the bringing of this legislation has too many flaws in its present state for us to accept and therefore we would not be able to vote for it.

We are saying that bringing a legislation like this and then in presenting the legislation, going up on a high horse and presenting it as some massive decision that has been made for the good of the people of St. Michael will not work. The people of St. Michael are too discerning. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is in the best position to advise the Members of the Barbados Labour Party to beware of believing their own propaganda. The Honourable Member can tell them what is the end result and if the Minister for Housing is going to come back to this House, and I hope that when he winds up, he will at least explain what are the intentions and the policies of this Bill rather than to come here today and try to give the impression that he is an expert in conveyancing and an expert in land law.

We do not wish you to treat the people of St. Michael as certain people on the west coast have been treated. We do not wish the people in St. Michael to feel that langesse and special development areas could only mean for them something different from what it has meant for others. We expect the Barbados Labour Party when it comes to legislation to uplift the people of this country, to bring legislation that is straightforward that can be seen and not "flim flam" which seeks...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The possibilities are there, but the probabilities are zero. Under the circumstances it will be left for the Democratic Labour Party and as our Leader recently spoke, if this legislation goes on the books in its present form, we will have no alternative but to cl^an the slate within the next two years when the people get an opportunity. In fact, the next 18 months when the people get an opportunity.

Now, the Honourable Member is threatening me, Sir. The Honourable Member is seething in his seat saying, and Mr. Speaker, you know that there is nothing more heinous than anybody...

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not heard anything.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I know Sir, but had you heard it, Sir, you would know that there is nothing more heinous than anybody threatening a person who speaks on the Floor of the House that as the result their constituents would suffer. Fortunately, I know that the Honourable Member has other vested interest in St. Michael West which I will be able to deal with if he does not treat us fairly.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few comments on this particular Bill which will provide for the establishment of an Urban Development Commission for slum bearers and the improvement of social amenities in urban areas and for relative matters.

Much of this debate so far has dealt with the intentions of the Government and the limitations of the Bill as put forward by the principal spokesman for the official Opposition.

I have made it abundantly clear on numerous occasions that I think that the time has come in Barbados where the number one priority must be the eradication of poverty in this country and the stigmata associated with poverty, whether it reflects in housing and other environmental conditions, they need to be removed and be substantially improved.

There is nothing that I consider more important now, in an atmosphere of macroeconomic stability where there is economic growth than the targeting of eradication of the poverty in this country as the number one priority. Because, I do not think that as black legislators just a few generations away from slavery that we should be taking this country into the 21st century with some of the stigmata of near slavery or the immediate post slavery period still among us, especially in the urban areas of this country.

This is a matter on which I feel very passionately and I feel that in a sense, we have lost our way in the aspect of the development process which should be geared to the upliftment of the broad masses of the people and especially the poor people in this country. The great movement that took place in this country following the 1937 riots under

the Barbados Labour Party and subsequently in the early days of the Democratic Labour Party most of the social changes were targeted towards lifting people out of poverty, resulting in the expansion of the middle class of Barbados.

It was at that time that I happened to participate in what was called the Urban Development Corporation and that Corporation was part of the process of providing housing where people can move from the depressed conditions associated with poverty into more salubrious surroundings. But, along the way many many thousands have been left behind and I think it is the responsibility of this Government, it is the responsibility of this Parliament to do something urgently, to do something decisively and to do something that makes sense in terms of the upliftment of these people.

We are all aware of what my thoughts are on this matter. I believe that the time has come when there should be a formal re-introduction of local government in Barbados which will be dealing with most of these issues. I think that gap between central government and local government responsibility has widened and will continue to widen as the governance of this country becomes more and more sophisticated. As those of us inside here will be called upon more and more to deal with legislative matters whether emanating from here or responding to legislation brought down by the executive arm of the government, I believe that many of the problems that we have stem from a lack of local government in Barbados. Local Government which is rooted in a democratic process.

I myself, Sir, have made certain submissions to the Constitution Review Commission asking that at the very least an enabling provision should be placed in the Constitution of Barbados to provide for the establishment of local government.

There will be differences of opinion of whether it should be on a parish basis, or whether it should be on a zonal basis, but I am a great believer that it should be on a parish basis with which people emotionally identify.

I think that with the establishment of local government, many of the objections that I have made to such a commission would disappear, because many of the functions being designated by the commission or for the commission would fall as the responsibility of local government and the officers in that area to execute those projects in the particular area.

I think that would be of much more lasting value. Sir, as I see it, and as I said during the debate on the Rural Commission, that we have sought in this country to establish central government and to establish

statutory bodies to try to bridge the gap in areas where it was thought that central government would not be effective. This is an extension of that process of establishing statutory bodies because of the bottle necks in here in the operations of central government.

All that has happened over the years is that it has not worked. The fundamental decision that has to be taken as this country approaches the 21st century is whether or not we are going to have a return to local government in this country to deal with the major issues including the multiplicity of issues surrounding the area of poverty eradication in this country. 4.15 p.m.

I, therefore, regard legislation of this nature as just an interim type of legislation that will be overtaken by more fundamental, democratically based legislation which will result in elected persons participating in the governance of the country at this level. I think it is important.

There are those who may say it may be too costly but there is never too high a price to pay for a well working democracy. I am quite sure that you will get better efficiency, more satisfaction, among the people and a parliament that really functions more effectively in the long run.

I would hope, and my view is, that I will continue relentlessly to campaign for the re-establishment of local government in Barbados because I believe that that is the appropriate structure in which much of the kind of activity envisioned in this legislation should take place.

As far as the Bill itself is concerned, there was a nice little document which the NDP produced, if I may make reference to it, which deals not only with the issue of local government and the reasons for it but also in the very next section it talks about special development areas and projects. I think that it is a matter of regret that so much emphasis is placed on the words "slum clearance" rather than on special development areas and projects. I will tell you why.

We have had this debate in this House before as Members will recall and, very often, what others may consider a slum many of the residents in that area will not consider a slum because in that area there may be a lot of happiness, a lot of love, a lot of history related to generations of families and they become very offended if where they live is referred to as a slum. I recall this happened in relation to Bannister Land and Delamere Land in a debate in this House some years ago. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew would know from a professional

perspective that Delamere Land has changed considerably over the years in terms of people buying the properties that they lived on and improving their properties.

I would rather think in terms of special development areas and projects rather than think in terms of slum clearance. Areas like New Orleans, areas like Halls Road, parts of Carrington's Village, rich in cultural history of this country, these are areas that I think should be designated as special development areas. In the context of that special development area what I am thinking of is to bring to bear a combination of public expenditure and the facilitation of private investment and tax benefits over a given period in order to propel the transformation of that area.

If you take the Halls Road area where there is a large tenantry there the Government put in the roads. The Government put in the infrastructure and the trustees who are the landlords are willing to sell to the tenants. If that were a special development area it means that the Government would be able to go in there and say we are willing to lend or grant x amount of money to purchase those lots, we are willing over a next 5-year period to allow you to participate in the improvement of your house by giving you tax free benefits, let us say, on shingles, a sink, faucets, Tentess, siding - some of the main components of construction within that particular area which would reduce the cost to the person living in Halls Road by 30% to 40% overnight. That would be the quantitative value of that concession to that particular individual in that area, if you get those main things that go into the cost of a house and make them tax free for a period of time.

What you are doing then as this document points out very eloquently is that it is time that the poor people of Barbados get some benefit from the tax concessions in order to help improve areas. When you add to that some special lending programme because do not forget that every single individual in that development is going to have special circumstances, you make a variety of instruments available so that almost each and every person inside there would be able to benefit from it.

Then we would have apart from that some who cannot benefit from any of the instruments that you offer and in those cases some of the persons who are very poor, the elderly, those who are disabled, in that situation the Government goes in there and makes sure that they provide a proper house for those persons with wallboard facilities and so on. I think that is the direction in which one should be going.

Of course there are going to be instances where houses are so dilapidated they are a threat to the community which will have to be dealt with. I want to

say this for this reason. Not all dilapidated houses you see around Barbados are owned by poor people. There are a lot of people who buy those houses and the land as an investment and leave the houses there. They become rat infested. They become a threat to the community and it is a matter of regret that the existing law which was passed by this House since I was in here in 1978... I recall laws being passed in here when the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was either Prime Minister or Minister of Tourism. That law was passed in here. This gave the Government the power to go in and deal with those properties and charge the owners for it.

I can think of several properties right now in my constituency owned by people with money who have gone in there and bought them and left them in a dilapidated state and then the persons living around them have to live in the most acute discomfort.

Last week I went to visit an area in Bannister Land where someone who lives in your constituency, Sir, just dumped a whole lot of stuff on a lot owned by him and left it there as a fire hazard. You may recall, Sir, only 2 to 3 months ago, I had to disturb your rest over a similar problem in your constituency creating all kinds of serious, psychological problems to persons living adjacent to those things. Those things are wrong and they need to be dealt with and they need to be dealt with decisively. The law as it stands, and I suspect my recollection is that this is largely just a repetition of most of what is in the Health Services legislation, only a different agency executing the order or something like that. But certainly I think that something has to be done with those people who behave in that manner. It is quite wrong. 4.25 p.m.

I have seen someone recently with a severe allergic reaction to a centipede bite. It almost killed the person as a result of the centipedes living and nesting next door to them and that person who owned that property living in luxury elsewhere and leaving people to live under those conditions.

The State needs to intervene and I have no difficulty with the State intervening in those matters. Where, on the other hand, a person is living in a dilapidated condition because of his peculiar circumstances in life, great caution has to be taken how you go in there and destroy his building to make sure that he is properly compensated and if possible, that a house can be placed on the site and under any conditions, and very importantly, try not to disrupt in anyway the traditional community life of these people. It is very important.

When people are relocated, it often takes about two or three generations before people get acclimatised to the

new environment. For example, you take the residents of Clapham Park. The residents of Clapham Park, which is now part of my constituency, their social relationships are still substantially with the part of the City where they were removed from 10 to 15 years ago so you have to be very careful and try to preserve the communities as much as you can. Certainly, as far as a major thrust towards dealing with poverty and dealing with the conditions of poverty, I think it is high time that this becomes the priority of attention in this Honourable House of Assembly.

Another point I would like to comment on is this question of the decision of a judge. The decision of a judge shall be final. I am not a lawyer. Each time I raise this matter in this House of Assembly, the lawyers tell me I am talking nonsense, but I will insist. I notice the same thing was repeated in the recent Paramedical Professions Act. The same defect is in there. The defect is in the Medical Council Act. The defect is in many other bits of legislation, but it is not a defect in the Legal Profession Act. The lawyers make sure that any judge taking a decision against them that they have the right of appeal to the Privy Council, and that is a fact, over all the rest of humanity in Barbados the right...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is section 8. The decision of a judge is final.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Well, if you are a lawyer and you do not know the law that is your problem. It is not for me to advise you on that.

The decision of a judge is final, I have a problem with that. Judges are human beings. Judges can wake up one day not feeling well, not thinking well and come to a decision. My feeling is that in all that, this is part of a whole generation of legislation which has in it the decision of the judge is final in these matters. My view is that any appeal or any time anyone is exposed to the judicial process that every citizen should have the right of access to the total judicial process. That is my own feeling.

Sir, they are some of the main issues I wanted to raise. I think a lot of the legal aspects have been raised already.

There is one other point. I think this kind of development has come about, as I said earlier, because of the failure of central Government to deliver the goods to poor people in this country. It is a fact that when you are dealing with agencies like the Welfare Department,

agencies like the National Housing Corporation, agencies like the National Assistance Board, agencies that should be dealing with matters relating to poor people aggressively with some degree of energy, that you just cannot get anything done.

In a sense I believe that this legislation is probably part of the frustration of Government to get around the problems that relate to the activities of those agencies. That is why I have a considerable amount of sympathy with the Roett Report - not your report, Sir. It is nothing to do with you - which recognises at least one reality, and the reality is, that you just cannot get anything done.

I have just seen, Sir, and this is a fact, a three-bedroom wall house started on the same day on which an attempt was being made by the National Assistance Board to move a one-bedroom chattel house already constructed from one area to another area, right in my constituency, add on another bedroom out of wood with an outdoor toilet and paling around it. Do you know, Sir, that three-bedroom wall house was constructed and people moved into it before the one-bedroom was completed by the National Assistance Board? That kind of activity is normally completed in Barbados in one weekend.

People will move a two or three-bedroom wooden house, put it on a truck, get friends to help them on a Saturday morning and by Monday or Tuesday they are living in the house. That is a fact.

Now if that is one that I can tell you about, that I have seen a three-bedroom wall house started, completed, people have moved into that new house and I am not quite so sure but unless they have moved in since two days ago they have not moved into that little chattel house yet. Now, that is the level of delivery I am talking about.

The Government will never be able, neither this Government or any Government in the future, to solve the problems of poverty in Barbados unless they have executing agencies that are going to function effectively. As a matter of fact, apart from Local Government I believe that there may well be a case for the establishment of a Ministry that focuses primarily and totally on the issue of poverty eradication in this country where all the various services and all the various elements that combine to perpetuate poverty in this country would be supervised and handled by that particular Ministry. 4.35 p.m.

There are many other things but the important thing is that if it is going to be done, it has to be done efficiently. I think that the demand is there, the need is there and I think that it is very important that we clearly understand that we have to look at deficiencies within the

system that even prevent you once you have taken a decision to help, the things that obstruct you from being able to help.

It is ridiculous that people vote for you as a Member of Parliament and send you in here and you could make 30 or 40 or 50 calls to these various departments and when you call they probably return 1 out of 10 of your calls to start off with. The other times they say that so and so have just stepped out and the other 10 they are just bobbing you off. People out there believe that they have elected people who have the authority to do something on their behalf and they do not know that all they have done is to elect people who come in here and put a case with their mouth and with no authority to give instruction to anybody to do anything for them.

Sir, I will tell you something. You know what I am talking about, the things that hurt me. I have toured my constituency with public servants two years ago. There is an elderly lady with a large tree next to her house. There was a time when I would be glad to cut it down when it cost \$200 but now people tell you that they are tree surgeons and you are now talking \$1000 to cut down a tree and get it carted away. Try getting any public agency in Barbados to come and help you cut down a tree. Sir, that elderly lady, especially now as the hurricane season is starting, she is not going to be able to sleep any time she hears the word storm or hurricane.

What you really need in this country is a re-introduction of local government and let people have the resources available to them to deal with these problems when they develop. I am quite sure that as a consequence of that, just as it happened after 1937 when the main of development was to help a substantial number of people to move from a situation of poverty. I think that thrust needs to be rekindled.

What is needed, Sir, is not only urban renewal but a renewal of spirit, a renewal of the dedication to help the upliftment of those people in greatest need of the kind of help that I am talking about. I therefore feel that this can only be regarded as a means towards an end, a means towards bridging a recognised gap, that gap being the inability of central government to deliver the goods and therefore the creation of an agency to do it. I think that the real agency that needs to be created is the creation of a system of local government in Barbados and I challenge the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the most senior Member on that side, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I challenge him to get up and say that he is not in favour of a reintroduction of local government in Barbados. I say, I challenge the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. 4.40 p.m.

As a matter of fact, Sir, I am going to put him on the spot now. What I am going to do, Sir, I am going to give him a minute of my time so that he can get up, if he does not agree with me that there should be local government in Barbados, he can get up and say so. If he does not get up and say so, Sir, it is quite clear to one and all, to every single person within this area, that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South still supports the reintroduction of local government.

Now, Sir, that is a generous offer to an Honourable Member on the Other Side to get up and say that he does not agree with local government. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise in this debate to give my strong and full support to this Bill which is before us today and to say that for me this is indeed a proud moment because it represents for those of us who have the fortune of representing the people in urban Barbados the culmination of a commitment made to them, not in 1994, Sir, but certainly in my case, Sir, since 1989 when I started my interaction with the good people of St. Michael North East.

For many of us, Sir, it was an essential part as you would know, Mr. Speaker, for inclusion in the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party which clearly sets out its commitment towards the development of an urban renewal programme. Even before my time, Sir, and my involvement with those persons, indeed the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party in 1986 clearly spelt out, when the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was then Prime Minister, the difficult proposals for urban renewal throughout the St. Michael and Christ Church areas.

Therefore, Sir, this is nothing that this party has fallen upon in the midst of wanting to change people's attitudes, Sir, or change people's support overnight. Sir, it comes from a genuine commitment that the social and economic lives of people living within St. Michael and Christ Church, generally the urban areas, are such that they should have the opportunity to be able to chart their own lives in circumstances where they can provide for themselves in an environment Sir, where they are capable of living in decent surroundings. Where, Sir, their surroundings are not threatened by unsanitary conditions or those things which can be deemed as public health nuisances or where, Sir, they can finally meet the challenge of living in areas that can be planned properly. So that many of the circumstances that attend now to the fact that the majority of tenancies, particularly in urban Barbados, have come about as a result of the haphazard development and laying of houses here, there and everywhere and have led from generation to generation to significant social tensions between neighbours and between families etc. should become a thing of the past.

We believe, Sir, that the days when simple amenities cannot reach people's houses whether it is an ambulance for a woman who is pregnant, whether it is a fire engine, Sir, trying to get to a house but cannot reach there because the house is two, three lengths back from the road and there is no proper road or there is no footpath, whether it is the simple circumstances that during the rainy season people cannot leave their houses with good shoes on because outside the houses are not paved properly and invariably, Sir, the ground then becomes muddy and slushy and it destroys their shoes and their clothes.

We believe, Sir, that must become a thing of the past and there must be a commitment on the part of the Government to be in this for the long haul. This, Sir, is not a one-year, two-year or even a five-year programme. This is a programme that recognises that the dignity of Barbadians must be preserved and honoured and that they must be given the opportunity to live in those surroundings that are habitable and pleasant but more importantly, Sir, that they themselves, as individuals, must have the opportunities to be able to provide for themselves economically, socially and otherwise.

That is why the Urban Development Commission Bill that is before this Honourable Chamber today, Sir, does not limit itself only to the physical and infrastructural issues. It recognises that there is a high degree of poverty in urban areas and everywhere else in the world. It recognises that there is a high degree, Sir, of persons who are unable to provide for themselves with a larger number of single old age pensioners being found in the urban areas, some 15% compared to 12% nationally who live alone. It recognises that there is a larger percentage of persons working for money near the poverty line or below the poverty line and it recognises that there is a larger number of people without jobs than those outside of the urban areas and therefore the creation of a clause under section 6 which provides for the encouragement of economic activity and enterprise is one that would warm the hearts, I believe, of all those Members of Parliament who have the capacity to be able to work along with their constituents and give them the opportunity to provide for themselves.

More than that, Sir, the Honourable Minister of Housing has indicated that there would be the establishment of an urban enterprises fund to which Members from St. Michael and Christ Church may either make representation on behalf of their constituents or the constituents themselves can apply directly to the urban enterprises fund to be able to have assistance particularly in a climate where the private commercial banking community in this country does not recognise and does not have a range of instruments to be able to assist persons who have no capital to start with. In other words to be able to give a man

a chance or a woman a chance to start, to be able to borrow some money, to have access to some money to start a little business, they have the ability, they have idea but they just do not have the opportunity to be able to borrow the money, Sir, and they do not have anything to mortgage and they cannot find anybody to sign the loan for them. These people, Sir, deserve as much right to be given an opportunity to participate either singularly or collectively in some form of cottage industry and community group enterprises, Sir, so that they may be able to provide for themselves, and the days of having to rely on priests, politicians, teachers, family, for them to be able to have a living in this country, would become a thing of the past for them.

There is a significant difference in respect of powers under which the urban development commission serves and therefore to suggest that it is simply trying to do what the National Housing Corporation can do or what the Minister of Health, under the Health Services Act can do, is to fail to understand that what is being required here, Sir, is a holistic approach ranging from the physical infrastructural needs to the individual needs of the person living in that area.

Now, Sir, I almost sympathise with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West whom I know, Sir, in other circumstances would support all of the aims and objectives, Sir, of what this Bill sets out to do but who, Sir...

Mr. B. M. TATTT: On a point of order, Sir. At no point in my presentation did I indicate that the aims and objectives of the legislation were defective. What I said was the methodology by which they intend to reach those aims and objectives is faulty.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Now, Sir, as I was saying, under other circumstances the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would not only support the aims and policies of it, Sir, but would urge and agitate for its urgent execution because of knowledge of his constituents plight which are no different from those of mine and because of the fact that to make them wait on a bureaucracy or to make them wait for years and years just to be able to get a footpath put in or to be able to have access to some form of financing for a good little venture that they are doing would in fact make the difference between a person who can survive ultimately or who is going to go down and never be able to rise again to provide for themselves.

I sympathise with him because he has a leader, Sir, who while coming out and opposing the establishment of an urban development commission is part and parcel of efforts to make representations to the rural development commission, writing the rural development commission, getting money through the rural enterprises fund for his

constituents and seeking to do those things but would want to tell some of us who have the charge to represent people in urban Barbados that we should not have the benefit from the same opportunities.

Now, Sir, if I could say so, I would say it is hypocritical but I am not going to say so because the rules do not allow me to say so. I understand, Sir, that having been stymied by the words of his leader the Honourable Member for St. Kflichael West could only come in here today to dwell, Sir, on the legalistic matter, Sir, of which he knows that the interpretation, Sir, in my view and certainly in the view of the Attorney General and certainly in the view of the Honourable Minister of Housing who is also a practising lawyer are not the views which can be sustained.

Now, Sir, I want to say this that it is unfortunate that the location also which the leader of the Democratic Labour Party used to launch his attack against the work that we are trying to do for urban Barbados was in fact in St. Michael North East in my constituency.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Well, Sir, the *Nation* reported North East because the people in St. Michael North East yesterday evening, Sir, when I went through Bush Hall were not too pleased because they are the ones in the pilot scheme which I will speak to in a short while... the ones who have already started to benefit and understand what this Government's policy is in relation to urban renewal. 4.55 p.m.

Now, Sir, it is unfortunate still that he makes those comments in St. Michael North West because I really hope that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West will make representations that his constituents, as much as any others and perhaps more so than a lot of others in the rest of this island need to benefit.

There are parts in Danesbury, Sir, which I believe have never seen anything called development. And yet the Leader of the Opposition can get in here and tell his Members not to support an Urban Development Commission. But, he is drawing funds on behalf of his constituents from a Rural Enterprises Fund and a Rural Development Commission.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That is what is happening. So that while out of one side of his mouth, he says that this is the worst thing and that the

Democratic Labour Party will repeal it on election to Government, on the other hand, he is benefiting.

I am not going to dwell anymore on that because that is a matter that they will have to live with and sort out on their own. But I want to make the point, Sir, that in relation to this, as I indicated, this is not a one-year; two-year or five-year programme. As you know this is a programme which exhibits a commitment to be able to put people on their own footing.

We recognise that there are problems in relation to the age of the housing stock in St. Michael and Christ Church. The survey which we have done shows that over 60 percent of the housing stock is 15 years or older. It shows that over 22 percent of those people living in St. Michael, live in rented houses and very often the conditions under which they live in these rented houses are deplorable and substandard and they need to be some monitoring in respect of the conditions under which people are supposed to live in and pay rent for, in many instances out of salaries which are very, very meager.

Further, Sir, we recognise too that when we have other glowing areas of industries of development, you must feel bad that there are still people who have to resort to going outside to use washroom facilities. And at the end of the day, Sir, that that also must be eradicated from the landscape in Barbados before the year 2000.

Therefore when we have found out from the surveys, the very surveys that caused us to bring this a year later than the Rural Development Commission, because the document and the information has been comprehensive and when we can find out Sir, that 76 percent only in St. Michael have access to water borne facilities, then those of us who represent St. Michael must join hands and determine that we cannot feel good about ourselves unless we can eradicate that within the next three to four years in this country.

I believe, Sir, that our Urban Renewal Policy which seeks to provide solutions both by way of the provision of grants for those who are single, old aged pensioners or by way of loans for those persons who are working that they should have the opportunity through our policies to be able to participate and make that conversion.

In the pilot scheme we did a comprehensive survey of every single house and every single piece of land and I want, Sir, with the permission of the Minister of Housing to make this Plan a document of this Honourable Chamber, which clearly sets out, Mr. Speaker, the ten areas that have been demarcated in the tenantry generally known as Alleyne's Land. It clearly sets out the number of rented houses which are marked in yellow, and generally represent

one fifth of the housing stock as we found to the rest of St. Michael and it sets out the owners of the tenancies and the areas in which, only in green, where people own the land, where people have bought.

Now in Alleyne's Land, in particular, Sir, there was a difficulty in that notices were sent out since 1991 and 1992 requiring persons to pay \$5 per square foot for the land. Now, Sir, the Tenancies Development Act is very clear that land owners cannot benefit in their pricing of land from improvements made from a third party.

The Government put in all the roads, what limited drainage there is the Government put in. The electricity and the water, the Government put in and therefore the first thing that would have to happen would be a revision of that price for the services made by the Government in that area.

But secondly, even in those circumstances, we felt that this being a residential area, the price which is being asked to be paid by the almost 150 persons in the 150 houses in that tenancy was still exorbitant. And, we feel as a matter of conscience, that in the same way in rural Barbados or plantation tenancies, persons when we brought the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act in 1980, were given an opportunity to purchase land at a subsidised rate on the understanding that their families for the most part had lived on those spots for generations. At the time of the abolition of slavery the only action taken by the state was, (1) to compensate plantation owners throughout the Caribbean by the British Parliament and (2) to pass in Barbados, even after it went and had to be amended again in 1840, the Masters and Servants Act which then tied your labour to a plantation if you wanted to have access to housing, bringing about a form of enforced labour. And therefore you found a pattern where families remained for generations on the same land, largely because they were unable to get other opportunities for living and in any event, land has always been a scarce commodity in this country.

So that in 1980 out of a sense of commitment and executing what perhaps may be regarded as one of the only Acts of reformation by any government in the Caribbean on that wide scale, this Parliament passed the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act giving persons right to purchase land at a subsidised rate in the specific instance of 10 cents per square foot.

What it disregarded at that point, however, Sir, was that there was a massive development of tenancies in the urban areas, over some 200 urban tenancies, and while it recognised the right of urban tenants in terms of prevention, evictions and those other things, it did not give them the right to the subsidised rights in respect to purchasing. So you have a clear disparity.

What was the difference between a fellow living in Drax Hall from a fellow who is living in Jackson who had come to town. In most instances Jackson has a strong relationship with St. Andrew and Hothersal Turning with St. Joseph. One of the amazing things is that you find after you have been in a district for a while, the relations that one district in St. Michael has with a particular country district largely because a lot of people came to town in the early 20th century and the mid 20th century from those particular country areas whereby swelling the numbers who live in that particular district.

What happened was that we were able to ameliorate the conditions of those in the country but not those in town. And we believe, Sir, as a Government, that the same opportunities where the people in the country were capable then of spending money to build and refurbish houses, because they did not have to look for exorbitant sums to purchase the land, that those same opportunities must be given to people in urban Barbados stretching from Holders Hill in the north in St. James right back down through St. Michael to Christ Church where the development generally of the tenancies has mirrored the same type of pattern. 5.05 p.m.

We have, therefore, said publicly that we believe that given the fact that some 17 years have passed since 1980, given the fact that in most instances a lot of urban tenancies are in fact close to commercial areas and therefore would reflect a higher land value that we feel that persons in urban tenancies in Barbados should have to pay no more than \$2.50 a square foot for the land on which they live.

We recognise in coming to that conclusion that there was one critical difference between the development of plantation tenancies and urban tenancies, that being that with plantation tenancies the ownership of the land more or less remained vested in the plantation or large holdings. In urban Barbados, to a large extent, the type of landowners who own tenancies were in many instances small land owners and to that extent we felt that even though we were seeking to give an opportunity to the over 3 000 tenants in 200 tenancies across the urban areas that we should not at the same time seek in anyway to disenfranchise the land owner who, in many instances, may have been a small landowner.

To that extent, Sir, we have said that we believe that government should then pay the difference between the \$2.50 and the bare market value of the land, not taking into account the services put in by the third party.

This policy, Sir, is part and parcel of the urban renewal policy which is to be implemented by this government and it will take some 10 to 15 years before we

can cover the entire urban areas but we have to start somewhere. We are starting now. Anybody who would suggest that we do all one time clearly does not recognise that even in respect of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act for plantation tenancies that only 60% in fact have in fact been conveyed in a period of 17 to 18 years. It takes time. The reality is that there are many tenancies which are already in a position to be conveyed and we believe that those living in urban Barbados will benefit substantially from the provision of these policies because they too now will also be able to make a quicker move towards the provision of their own housing and their own improvements as a result of not having to spend long periods of time looking for money to spend exorbitant sums on the purchase of the land.

What is more, Sir, is that the same General Workers Housing Loan Fund this Government has already taken the ceiling limit for borrowing from that fund from \$30 000 to \$40 000 so as to allow persons to borrow more money and at the same time we have raised the qualification bar to just over \$2 000 a month so as to allow a wider range of Barbadians to be able to borrow, from that fund to either purchase land or assist in the purchase of land or assist in the execution of the construction or rehabilitation of their houses.

All of these are things which seek to be able to put them in a better position. The Minister has already spoken about the plight of persons who are single lot tenants who have been living on the same spot for 20 years but who have no security of tenure. We believe that they must be protected and I therefore look forward, without seeking to anticipate what this Honourable Chamber will do to the passage of the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which will provide both the statutory price of \$2.50 a square foot and the protection for single lot tenants in respect of their tenancy.

Equally, I believe that the provision of the tax incentives which the Honourable Minister of Housing has announced will be part of Government's policy of dealing with the difficulties in respect of the derelict houses and the abandoned houses is one that would be welcome because the provision of housing is not an effort of Government alone but is an effort of the individual and also of other persons who may be involved in that as a business activity. It must be reasonably priced and it must be capable of being afforded by persons whose income levels may be lower than normal and in those areas need the assistance both in terms of loans as well as in subsidies to be able to achieve access to it.

Sir, we will also be dealing in the pilot project with the provision of some 150 feet of road. Right now if

as happened some 3 weeks ago another fire breaks out in the row of houses behind 4th Avenue, Alleyne's Land and it backs out to Review Road and the fire engine cannot reach it next time it will not be one house lost it may be 2 or 3, Heaven forbid.

It is unfortunate that that happened before we were capable of getting that road in. We believe that the provision of the road which will carry us from Review Road to Perfection Road with a cul-de-sac coming off of it will ensure that all houses in the district have reasonable access to a road nearby to be able to benefit from these amenities.

In respect of the progress to date, when I hear the Leader of the Opposition talking nonsense about repealing an Act which only seeks to improve the lives of poor people in this country, I wonder whether it is not in his interest to keep people poor so that he can have something to talk about when the day comes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! The Honourable Member is not in his seat at present.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That is unfortunate, Sir. I will withdraw it. It seems that every time we have a major debate he is not in his seat.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, in respect of the progress to date, already we have had the provision of all the water borne facilities for the single old-aged pensioners put in place. What are they to hear?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I do not know how long this pilot project has been going on. I read in the newspapers and came in here and raised this question and the Minister responsible for Communications and Works told me he would check it out. I have a lot of old people in St. Michael West needing water-borne facilities and if you are using Government funds, pilot the project in St. Michael West too.

Mr. Speaker, the pilot project is going on and we have no urban commission. I want some pilot projects in St. Michael West and in St. Michael Central. You did not have any urban commission before you gave out largesse. We have pensioners in St. Michael West.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is making much sense. But you are on a point of order, you know.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I started my speech by saying that the Honourable Member

for St. Michael West said that he wanted to be next I was speaking the truth. He has maintained that from the time he spoke to me in relation to when I announced the pilot project. What is even more is that all of this which is being done is only a pilot in respect of what the Urban Development Commission will be doing. This is the point that we have been making over and over and over. We have dissected a small part of St. Michael. We have dissected the information that was collected from a small part so all of this has to be done in relation to every district in St. Michael ultimately.

The view of the Democratic Labour Party is that they would abolish this commission, thereby stopping persons from being able to benefit from these things.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. We are saying that if they are able to do it without imposing this on the people there is no need to impose it. The Honourable Member is proving that there is no need for this commission as currently constituted in this Bill.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, the Honourable Member once again speaks out of both sides of his mouth in regard to this issue.

Mr. SPEAKER: Put it another way!

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I will qualify it, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, put it another way before you qualify it!

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: He seems to have difficulties with the legal aspects of the Bill. 5.15 p.m.

Certain remarks made by Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I withdraw and say that I believe that is the case.

Mr. SPEAKER: That what is the case?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: All that I said before, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: But you cannot do that.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: No, but I withdraw it as a fact and say that it is only my belief, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has asked that you withdraw the whole statement.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: And I have, Sir. I am saying, that it is my belief that the Honourable Member would otherwise be one of the strongest supporters of this given my discussions with him.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member cannot approbate and reprobate, Sir. If the Honourable Member is allowed to have those kinds of beliefs which she can utter then, Sir, you know my beliefs are going to come pouring out of my mouth.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: But I have no problem with that.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But I have a problem with that, Sir, because my beliefs I would not like them to...

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay. The Honourable Member, I am asking you to withdraw the words, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I have withdrawn them.

Mr. SPEAKER: What the Honourable Member is objecting to is the reference you are making. He is saying that it is an insult to his intelligence and integrity.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: To what, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: To what you have said.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: For me to say what I believe, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: You have said that he has held a position based on a belief you have and he is saying that he is finding it insulting to him.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: And I withdraw any assertion of facts. I am saying to you, Sir, that I am thoroughly surprised and appalled that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West can come in here and be opposed to policies reflected in a Bill that seeks to improve the conditions of people in St. Michael when he above all people had the misfortune of belonging to a Government that did nothing for them in spite of the fact that he has always publicly tried to support the fact that there should be improvements in their living standards.

Mr. SPEAKER: But that is different.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Further than that. I go further to say that I would be the most surprised person in the world that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West could be part and parcel of any Democratic Labour Party Government that would seek to repeal this legislation

that only calls to improve the opportunities for people in St. Michael.

It is not only about housing, not only about putting in roads and drains but giving them access to economic opportunities that they would not otherwise have...

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Further to that, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East cannot talk because his only knowledge about anything is about collecting money from people...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That is his only relationship with tenancies that he would go and collect land rents from people leaving them in conditions where...

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: ...when, Sir, he should be one of the major proponents for improving the conditions of people living in the tenantry that he has responsibility for.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I have never collected land rents in my life. I have never once collected land rent in my life. In fact, my family owns tenancies in St. Michael East and I do not collect a cent from anybody. They live on the land for free and as far as I am concerned they can keep it for good. I do not want it. Nobody in my family wants it and any person in my constituency on my land can keep it for free.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am glad that he acknowledges that his former relationship with tenancies...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes to conclude, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir.

I am glad that he acknowledges that his only relationship with the tenancies is just to tell them that they can stay there for free living in squalid conditions when he should be there trying to improve the conditions.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I have not spoken in this debate and I intend to speak very peacefully and very organised when I come to speak. I do not want to be in any rabble-rousing but the Honourable Member has nothing to say and says nothing, is rabble-rousing and should be put to her seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay. That is no point of order, please.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I would not bother to agitate the Honourable Member any further because, Sir, he knows that the only reason I know that he is a landlord is because he told me so, but it is all right.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you conclude, please?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, as I indicated, I believe that the programmes as outlined by the Honourable Minister of Housing today go broader than just physical and infrastructural activity. They relate to the development of communities. They relate to the development of economic opportunities for individuals so they can provide for themselves without having to excessively rely on people to provide for them and they relate to the fact that we believe that you can go into a district and do a road but that does not change the characteristic of the district necessarily. You can go in and put in a drain but that does not change the characteristic of the district generally.

It is only when you go in and systematically deal with all the problems in that community, giving people also the opportunities to provide employment for themselves or to seek employment while at the same time dealing with all the physical problems that you raise the tenor of the feeling of the people in that district so that there is a higher level of self-esteem, so that there is a commitment they believe they can do, and so that there is an understanding that this must be pursued on the basis irrespective of where are the people, who they are...

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you conclude, please?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The point is, Sir, that it is a commitment that helps move forward the type of persons in this country who have had for too many years under colonial systems of Government and even under our system of Government since Independence to live under conditions which should be better.

We, Sir, certainly from the post Independence generation in this country, and I look also to those who belong to that generation, must commit ourselves to sustained action in removing this plight and scourge from our society where it relates to poverty and where it relates to people not being able to provide for themselves.

I applaud this Government and will work with every sinew within me to ensure that we can steer the course and complete the effort of allowing people to provide for themselves by giving them opportunities.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing about the Honourable Minister of Education is that she provides passion without pleasure. I must, however, say that in this debate so far we have heard that we are looking to establish an Urban Development Commission but so far no definition has really been given to "urban". What we have had is that the Minister now has power to determine and designate an area "urban". That is extremely loose in terms of which areas can benefit under this Bill.

In fact, when one looks at the White Paper on Housing which is the same as the Green Paper, it states that "Government is committed to a programme of urban renewal, focussing on the Greater Bridgetown Area but also impacting on the urban settlements in St. Peter, St. James and Christ Church."

Now, what is fascinating is that the survey which was conducted focussed on the Greater Bridgetown area which is supposed to run from Holder's Hill in the north over and across the ABC Highway, down towards Rendezvous and around that area. It is within the population census data described as the Greater Bridgetown area which has a population of just over 103 000 people.

First of all, while we can accept that a survey would have been conducted in 1995, I have every reason to believe that most of the information collected would be from the population census for 1990 but that in any case the comprehensive information contained in the preparatory work to the Urtfan Renewal Development Programme contained other information as well. It contains information even on poverty because in that survey we were told that about 35 per cent of the population surveyed in the Greater Bridgetown area earned less than \$5 000 per year. 5.25 p.m.

What is significant is that the recent discussions across Barbados about poverty in St. John came from a study that identified \$5 290 per year as the poverty line. The survey which was used in preparing the Urban Development Renewal Plan identified \$5 000 per annum, of which I said that 35% in the Greater Bridgetown area earned less than \$5 000 per annum. This therefore means that by extension that poverty in this Greater Bridgetown area is of a magnitude much higher than in St. John.

Those of us who know the population census data also know that St. Andrew is in fact by many other different indicators, the poorest parish in Barbados, that is known. The discussion surrounding St. John was purely political to demonstrate that the parish is represented by a former Prime Minister and is now being represented

by a former Minister and yet it is to be supposed to the poorest parish in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you would not want to get into that now. You are going a bit far from urban, you know.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I have to get there by way of the bus but I am getting there. The thing about it is that other information came to light in the survey but perhaps the most fascinating piece of information from that survey conducted in 1995 by the Statistical Department showed unemployment to be 19% in Barbados, the unemployment rate from that survey was 31% among females and 24% among males given an average of 27% unemployment in the Greater Bridgetown area.

I am suggesting to you that the Statistical Services does not do as comprehensive a survey as was carried out in this study that informed the Urban Development Programme. Therefore one should have great difficulty with the disparity between the Statistical Services information and the information contained within this particular document. There is concern again as to the unemployment rate in Barbados. This is a matter for all of us to be concerned about. I just wish to suggest that we all have difficulties in relation to what the unemployment is.

On the question of urban renewal, it is now known that the impetus given to this poverty alleviation programme came as a result of the by-election of 1996. For the first time it was discovered that there was poverty within the St. Michael North West area, the Prime Minister was suggesting that. We all know from the inception of Government that poverty was an issue for all Governments of Barbados since as far back as we could remember. To have discovered poverty in December of 1996 is quite amazing.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: All of a sudden the magnitude of poverty was discovered for the first time in December of 1996. I am grateful that it in fact it was recognised within the constituency of St. Michael North West. What I am hoping for is that the Government now gives sufficient resources to the constituency to afford the constituents who are affected in the area an opportunity to improve their standard of living. Just as the Government is capable of accepting a proposal, which I made public in relation to the plight of the tenants in Straker's Tenantry, I am hoping that the Government would listen in this instance. I suggested then after there was again an attempt by my former opponent to intrude in the affairs of the constituency of St. Michael North West, that Government

as a matter of duty should seek to establish a standard rate for tenants paying for land in urban tenancies. I identified a range of \$2 to \$3 per square foot. In fact, I am wondering now whether I should not go below Government's proposal of \$2.50 and accept the lower end of \$2.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is not a question of back-raising. Having now recognised the extent of the poverty within the area, I am saying that even \$2.50 might be above the pockets of many from within my constituency. Therefore I am asking for consideration to be given to a lower rate of \$2 per square foot for the tenants of Straker's Tenantry.

In addition, I am now saying on the Floor of the House, that tenants in that area should not purchase any land from anyone at this point in time at \$5 per square foot as was being suggested by the agent responsible for that area. Recent letters have been sent and I am saying in this forum that the tenants should heed advice and not in fact accept such a proposal and await the amendment to the legislation so that they can benefit from any such amendment which I am told is coming.

In addition, there is of course, evidence of poverty with the Danesbury area, Pile Bay and parts of Brandons. In the by-election again, I identified an initiative which seems to be consistent with the objectives of this Bill to have a more holistic approach to addressing the needs within the constituency. It was the Brandons Development plan which I have been accused of not costing.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: That became an issue in the by-election, which is that area between the Farm and the Spring Garden Highway.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: That was in fact what you have occupied by force for the Independence affair that caused the tragedy.

All I am suggesting to you is that I had given a period of 90 days knowing fully well that it is traditional for budgets to be given in Barbados around the time of March and April. That has been denied me this year but it does not mean that I did not have a preliminary costing of the project. However, given that there is an Urban Development Programme in place I am suggesting that a project has already been identified which would cost Government approximately \$5 million to put in place

for the benefits of the tenants of the constituents of St Michael North West.

What is fascinating about that project is that it will provide job opportunities, it will tie in the commercial area around Spring Garden. It ties very well into the tourism sector which is predominantly Sandals, which has been delayed in terms of the renovation exercise that is going to be conducted there and apparently did not come but I am telling you here that I hope that it does come because that immediate area stands to benefit substantially by way of the operation.

More importantly, there is no reason why the areas of Brandons, Spring Garden, Deacons, Deacons Farm, Straker's and Free Hill should not benefit from the existence of the Bridgetown Port. They have not benefitted as much as they could and the project ties into that. We have a ready-made market by way of the cruise ship passengers who can be brought to that area to purchase the many products, crafts and art, that will be produced and can be produced and are being produced in the area. In fact it also ties beautifully into a project which is to be opened this week at the Farm on Friday. It is a project that was conceptualised as far back as 1992. It is a project which has tremendous potential. It is a project that in fact has been conceptualised by residents of the Deacons Farm area and they ought to be given their due whenever the time comes to be elevated to the position that they deserve for having conceptualised the project in the interest of the residents of the area. 5.35 p.m.

Already politics is being played with that project because as far as I have gathered certain individuals are supposed to speak at the opening of that project and no one can tell me yet under what designation they will be so doing. I have been reliably informed that individuals on the Other Side, that an individual who ran against me in the last by-election, will be given a piece of the cake at the opening in terms of making a presentation. As representative for the area I have been denied even an invitation to the opening of that project. There are individuals who are making sure that politics is being played in that project already and that should not have been the case at all. If they are going to be serious on the question of poverty alleviation, if they are going to be serious on the question of urban renewal which involves housing, which involves commercial activity, which involves cultural activities then you have to recognise that such a political stroke cannot be played in the interest of that project and further development of the St. Michael North West area.

It will not happen in the area because conscious individuals recognise the politics that is being played at the

level of the technocrats who are proposing to undermine the nature of the project by insisting that politics be played. And I am saying that if we are serious about urban renewal, if we are serious about having a holistic approach to alleviating poverty and if we are saying that St. Michael North West was the basis on which these kinds of initiatives came then we have to make sure that we start right and we cannot start by politicising this effort. And this is precisely why the Democratic Labour Party has objection to this Bill because while there might be laudable objectives in the Bill it appears as though there is an underlying sinister motive, an odour of suspicion.

When one looks at this Bill it seems as though one is being prepared for something further to come and that while there may be genuine concern on that side for the needs of the Barbadian population within the urban area there seems to be a great motive which obviously has political undertones. While one can accept that any Government has a right to play a political stroke one cannot accept bringing along the Opposition to be fooled or to be hoodwinked into believing that that objective is laudable for all residents while there is a capacity within the Bill to identify and designate particular areas for urban renewal. That is, if we are saying that we have identified as a matter of a survey in the Greater Bridgetown area that we have 103 000 people living there, that we have evidence to prove that people still use pit latrines, that we have identified a housing stock that is aging, that we have identified unemployment within the area, how then can we give the Minister the opportunity to designate an urban area outside of the scope of the Greater Bridgetown area? It does not make sense.

You have done a survey which is supposed to inform your policy, yet still you are giving the Minister discretion to identify any area in Barbados as an urban area for the purposes of this Bill. It bears an odour of suspicion but the survey that was conducted identified the Greater Bridgetown area and already we have in place a rural development commission. Are we saying that the rural development commission has not performed or does not have the capacity to perform at the level that the Government would like it or would require it to perform? And are we therefore saying by extension that the urban development commission now gives Government a greater opportunity to do more effectively the things that it wants to do for the purposes not only of the residents of Barbados but also for the political objective that the Government would have identified in terms of setting up both the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission? It is not, but certainly if you are going to do a survey to be informed by that survey then you cannot allow the discretion.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I just went for the list. Your name is number 16 on the list, Clyde Mascoll.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Attorney General cannot get up with those old tricks and pick up a piece of paper and say that somebody's name is on a list. That is *infra dig*. An Honourable Member of this House cannot be on a piece of paper. He says he has not received an invitation for something on Friday and now you are sending a piece of paper. If I were you, I would not send any paper because I might only go and tear it up. This is a piece of paper that could have come from anywhere. Let me read this, Mr. Speaker. Specially invited guests for the Deacon's opening.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, the point of order has been made.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, as suggested earlier, while the objectives might appear laudable one obviously has to question the overall method that is being used. For the urban development commission to be successful it really has to operate like a private sector organisation. It therefore means that this commission has to acquire assets immediately because this corporation is going to have the power to borrow money and you cannot approach any financial institution without having a proper financial statement which you can use to access money or capital, however you care to put it. So that in fact there are ways. The corporation can get subventions from Government. It can acquire assets. It has the capacity to borrow. 5.45 p.m.

I have read the Bill sometime where it said that you can borrow money, section 30. But more importantly the Committee has to acquire assets immediately. How is the Committee going to go about doing this, even before it is established, since it has been set up to acquire and manage land effectively. So, the initial assets must come from somewhere and I am very hazy about what the Government proposes to do to ensure that the Committee does have assets and it has to do that, before it becomes an entity.

The other thing is that this Committee should be made just like the Town and Country Planning has to provide a development plan, this Committee should be made to provide a development plan. Because, I cannot see how just by the Minister's instincts that this Committee would know where it is going and this Committee is going to be a six-man Committee. Now, it therefore needs research staff of all kinds. It therefore has to go to the same National Housing Corporation to get information. It has to utilise the resources already available within the Ministry to be able to make sense about where it is going. But it seems to have just as much power as the National

Housing Corporation, yet still it is just a nine-man entity. And a nine-man entity cannot do the required research to carry this Committee forward, such that the Housing Ministry would be doing all of the work for a Committee to make decisions and I am wondering on what basis would this Committee be able to make decisions. What would be the expertise of the Committee that permits it to make that kind of decision to take this country forward.

This is a big issuer urban renewal. This is holistic. This is housing, commercial. This is financial. This is the works. This Committee must be able to make serious decisions to advance the cause of this Government. Are we being told here that the hard workers in the Ministry, and there is already a Property Management Division of the Ministry of Housing which could be upgraded to do almost the same thing that is being done or will be done by this Committee.

I do. not understand it at all how a nine-man Committee made up of persons who will be made directors or whatever, by the Minister, who would be individuals already in full-time jobs. Where would they find the time and the expertise from to make these very serious decisions to carry this Urban Renewal Project to its final destination?

It is a serious thing to ask because the Civil Servants within the Ministry of Housing must be offended by this. I do not know how you can take Tom, Dick and Harry off the street, make them Members of a Committee, then ask experts, trained people in the area to carry information which they have conducted, surveyed, researched, whatever from that source to a Committee of nine men selected on the basis of political affiliation or whatever, to make decisions about the future direction of Barbados. A nine-man committee with no staff. A nine-man committee without the resources. A nine-man committee to take whom forward, this country forward. A nine-man committee, based on what, a capacity to do what, to satisfy the political objectives of the Government?

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: What about building roads? Would this Committee have the capacity or the ability to build roads in urban Barbados? Would this Committee be able to build tenantry roads? Would this Committee therefore side step the MTW and decide that roads are needed in Danesbury on the basis of demand, on the basis of poverty within that area? Deprivation? Does this Committee have a greater heart than the Ministry of Transport and Works? Does this Committee have a greater social consciousness than the Ministry? Is this *C^f* amitteee going to identify more appropriately where roads should be put, a nine-man Committee? Is this Committee going to be searching for the thousand lots which are needed,

this nine-man Committee? Men who are already working and who are only devoting two hours per week or per month to this exercise, and they are going to make these great decisions for people in urban Barbados? This is a boss Committee.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Is this Committee going to recommend to the Minister of Housing that there is need for finance and therefore you need in fact, to put some housing bonds out there in the market, about \$50 million in order to do these things? Is this Committee doing this? You cannot have a housing programme of this magnitude without finance.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am smart? I was born smart. Perhaps it has something to do with my resemblance to other people who are smart. But I am saying to you that a committee cannot operate in urban Barbados without finance and that finance cannot come out of the sky. It cannot come out of revenue that already exists. There is substantial liquidity in Barbados. It therefore means this is a prime opportunity for any such organisation to go into the market to raise funds.

The Commission has in fact made this decision even though it has not been established. This Commission is a boss Commission, \$50 million or so in housing bonds, and no one knows the configuration of the Commission. It is amazing.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: No, you cannot find it out. It is not difficult having been trained in the Central Bank for 15 years to anticipate these things. Nobody has to tell me anything in the housing industry. I do not need information. I can look at reports and dissect and do all kinds of things. That is why I can take the Central Bank to task. I can take to task unemployment data because I know how it is done. I know that you cannot have such a project without finance. And, you do not have to be a guru, this debate is not just legalistic. This debate is not just about law, this debate is about finance, accounts and sociology. This debate is about all the other social sciences that you could wish. This debate is not strictly a legal exercise.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes to conclude.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The Commission is obviously going to take away certain powers, but I wish to know how

you are going to replenish this fund. When you put this Commission in place and it spends x amount of dollars per year, where would the funds come from in year two? And year three? And year four? What proposals have you put in place to ensure that this entity is not just an entity that lasts for one year, or perhaps this entity is an entity that has only to last for two years to reach the general election of 1998 or 1999.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am asking the question. What methods of financing are being considered to ensure that this Commission has a long life, and does not collapse under the pressure of an austerity programme or under the pressure of some degree of hardship somewhere down the line? It is futuristic. It cannot be the case that a commission like this, could only be established for a two-year period or a three-year period. In fact, let me just say that I have no fear at all about the political damage that this Commission can do.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Because, I know only too well that it is going to take a number of years for the objectives contained in this Bill to be realised, if ever they are realised, and therefore to have no fear about this Bill doing any damage politically by 1998 or 1999 is to misrepresent how the financial system works in this country.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: What I would like to happen is that there is a degree of fairness and equity in terms of the distribution of the resources and that since you identified St. Michael North West as the constituency that was poverty stricken that you allocate resources according to need and not on the basis of political patronage.

So wipe the politics out of this issue. See it as a concern for all Barbadians. Use the information which you have available to you from the survey which clearly identifies areas like derelict houses, abandoned structures, unemployment, commercial problems and on the basis of sensible policy because, without that you are going to continue to have the kind of deprivation that you have now. 5.55 p.m.

I am suggesting that if you fail to treat these problems of housing, unemployment, poverty, in the right areas that all you will do is serve to multiply the damage that will occur. By way of example, if you identify areas only on the basis of political location then you are bound to cause even greater poverty within those areas that most need the assistance. I am suggesting to you that while the

underlying objectives do not appear to be less than laudable the structure and the method by which Government proposes to introduce the Urban Development Commission tends to arouse suspicion. There is an odour of suspicion surrounding this Bill and therein lies the difficulty that this Opposition has with this Bill.

It has nothing to do with the credibility of the objectives. It has more to do with the fact that out of a clear blue sky poverty has emerged to erase job creation as the number 1 objective in Barbados.

Therefore when you have something like poverty which is like the kitchen sink, you can do anything in Barbados, any measure that you introduce you can say this has a poverty element to it. The tfame cannot be said for job creation. It is smart and prudent on the part of Government to remove job creation as number one and to go for something that is less tractable...poverty.

I am saying to you that the Urban Development Commission will be tested in time and that there are many concerns and more importantly the structures which you are seeking to establish must be of concern to the wider civil service.

I end on this note. I cannot understand how you can put such a structure in place, bypass the expertise and the professionalism of the civil servant, to give decision making to a 9-member committee who obviously would not have either the time, hardly the experience, and expertise to make wide ranging decisions necessary to carry this process forward. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the Honourable Member speaks, could I just make one observation? I notice once again Honourable Members that we are constantly making references to the asides. I would just like to draw once again to the attention of this Honourable House that asides do not constitute a record of this House. I advise members that we would not like to have a situation where we do not have asides. It would be too dull, as is said by the Honourable Member, but the records of this House, and I say this especially for the Press, according to our Rules, do not include asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am rising to give my support to this piece of legislation which, in my opinion, seeks to supplement the existing powers which are vested in a number of bodies in Barbados but which, in the light of our experience of their operation under several administrations have for one reason or another been unable to achieve the objectives which we all, I believe, recognise as being desirable and necessary.

Many attempts have been made in the past by this Administration to deal with the problems of urban and rural underdevelopment. A perusal of the manifestoes of this political party" in successive elections, certainly since 1971, would reveal that the political party had adverted to the need for improvement in the urban and in the rural areas. Pursuant to that objective and pursuant also to the firm commitment of this Government and this Administration to implementation of its manifestoes, the Rural Development Commission Bill was passed. This is a companion piece of legislation which deals with that area in Barbados which does not come within the definition of the rural development area.

It also recognises that the activity which is needed to be carried out in the urban area is not necessarily the same activity which has to be carried out in the rural area. So a perusal of the objectives of the Bill defines where the differences are.

As I understand it, all of Barbados that is not within the definition of Rural Development Commission can be capable of being designated as an urban development area.

It is clear and the Bill says that once the Minister has made an order designating that area, then the special powers that are contained in the Bill are triggered. I regard that as very important because my constituency has to be an area in Barbados in which a small part comes within the rural development area. It is the area from what is known as the Basix to the Silver Sands junction with the boundary of Christ Church East. Just that small area.

Since the boundary of my constituency consists of that land that comes between the top of Maxwell Hill and Church Hill right down to Rendezvous, between that area and the sea, it is outside of that rural development area because that top road is the boundary.

I have a particular interest in the passage of this legislation so as to ensure that all of the constituents in my constituency who live between that area and any other part of Barbados not within the rural area that their special needs can be serviced.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am very glad that the Honourable Member recognises the potential for dealing with the problems inland.

Sir, I think Honourable Members are taking a very restrictive view of the utility of this piece of legislation. There can be no doubt about it that all of us must be concerned with the delivery of services to the people of Barbados. As parliamentarians we have passed

repeatedly a number of laws. We have appropriated large sums of money to what one would call empowerment and the provision of amenities to people. Yet every Member of Parliament can testify to the fact that within their constituencies there are areas of need and areas of legitimate expectation that are not being fulfilled. It is my hope, Sir, that this Bill will be another vehicle which will be able to fulfil some of these objectives. 6.05 p.m.

Now, I agree with the Honourable Member who just spoke that the Bill, for it to be effective, has to be backed by financial resources. It has to be backed by personnel and other human resources. We have to deal with that. I cannot see how the Honourable Members on the other side can seek in their examination of this Bill to impute all kinds of improper objectives to the Government when in truth and in fact a perusal of section 6 in particular sets out the objectives.

I challenge any Honourable Member on that side to state that these objectives are other than laudatory. What then is the basis of the criticism? If the objectives are highly desirable, what then is the basis of the criticism? Honourable Members on the other side have said that they object to the fact that the Commission is being appointed by politicians. Now, I want to say this. As politicians the Honourable Members must understand that...

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The Honourable Member said that the Commission is going to be appointed by the politicians, that it has too much political content. But let us get it clear. If you have to make decisions, as you have to in Government, somebody has to make those decisions. I prefer the politicians who are accountable to the electorate to make those decisions rather than others.

At least if the decisions in relation to the appointments are such that the Honourable Members on the other side do not approve, they can be raised in here as opposed to decisions made by other people. Honourable Members on the other side will learn and appreciate that they must not always agree with this criticism which is fanned by many people outside politics that there are certain decisions that have to be taken by people who are other than politicians because somebody has to be accountable.

If Honourable Members wish to know man's inhumanity to man, just check some of the decisions that are taken by non politicians, particularly civil servants, in relation to one another. You check that out yourself and see who they are accountable to, an amorphous body called a Public Service Commission that has been designed by the

British at the time when we became independent and which in itself in no country in the world has performed satisfactorily when it comes to accountability.

When politicians get and say that they object strenuously to the investment of power in relation to important areas such as this, I want to caution Honourable Members that very often greater protection is provided to the public by having a Bill such as this in which the decision makers are accountable to Honourable Members in here than the decision makers who are not accountable in here.

What else has been said in relation to the Bill? As I understand it, there will be additional conditions introduced to delimit some of the powers of the Commission with a view to ensuring that there is timely reporting to the Minister as well as to Parliament. I also would like to point out, as I understand it, that under the terms of this Bill, the provisions relating to planning are not being suspended. I do not see that there is anything in this Bill that in anyway seeks to remove from the Town Planner the normal powers of decisions in relation to land use in Barbados.

I would also point out that the Bill specifically provides for the payment of compensation in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act of Barbados so that property owners whose lands are affected can take comfort from the fact that no attempt is being made to deprive them of their right for compensation. Indeed, if such an attempt was made, it would be unconstitutional unless there was a special provision in the Act which sought to remove those rights by way of a constitutional amendment.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: It is not in there. The Land Acquisition Act procedures are specifically enshrined in this legislation so that as we move ahead and we carry out a careful analysis of the Bill, I cannot find anywhere in the Bill any provisions which can be deemed to be obnoxious.

Now, I certainly agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and to a large extent the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, that we, over the course of the last 25 to 30 years, have been unable, despite many efforts by all Governments, to deal with the question of derelict buildings and the enormous problems that arise therefrom.

As the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central mentioned, in his time in this House and certainly in my time, legislation was passed on many occasions to deal with it under the Housing Act. 6.15 p.m.

If one looks at the Housing Act itself one will see it specifically set out in Section 11, Cap 226 dealing with a building which is derelict, unfit for habitation, creates a nuisance and is likely to be injurious to health. All of those things are specific powers granted in the Housing Authority under the Health Services Act, there are specific powers granted there.

The position is this, it shows you that perhaps these powers should be granted in a single purposed, single minded Corporation so as to get action. As soon as you have other activities to be carried, the Corporation regards that, as the experience has been, as being not important enough to deal with. This will be among the primary purposes of this Corporation. I expect a better performance.

The problem with the Housing Corporation, as Honourable Members should recognise by now, is that their primary objective appears to be to provide housing for people and unfortunately they are faced with the impossible task of not having enough resources to carry out their function in that they have to house a section of our community who are unable to pay economic rents and at the same time there is not clear decision that the cost of doing that has to be funded adequately. That is a fact. It is an enormous burden that has been placed. There is absolutely no doubt that it is an enormous burden.

I have done some comparative research in this area and I would advise Honourable Members that the creation of a single purposed vehicle such as this Corporation is one for which there are many precedents. The object being that you create a vehicle to do a specific job and after it has carried out its function, it is disbanded. Redevelopment corporations have been created in many parts of the world. People who know the state of Maryland in the United States of America and Sheffield in the United Kingdom, all of those cities have been the beneficiaries of redevelopment corporations who have carried out a redevelopment quickly and finished their job and that is the end of it. We are only tailoring that machinery to suit Barbados. I want this to function because I wish to see carried out in my lifetime the further development of Oistins. I would like it tomorrow morning. I have great difficulty with all my contacts to get the other agencies of Government to have the same enthusiasm that I have for that.

Asides.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: By now everything should have been done. We are still suffering from the fact that in the nine years that the Honourable Member's Party was in power nothing was done. Absolutely nothing was done. I am not saying that the economy...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is giving the House the impression that it was the Democratic Labour Party that passed the Special Development Area Bill and that the Democratic Labour Party did nothing since the Bill was passed.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I think the Honourable Member misunderstands what I was saying. I am going beyond the Special Development Area Act. The Special Development Area Act, as I understand it provides a setting for private enterprise to do certain things. What I am talking about is activity which has to be carried out by private enterprise. Do you know of a private enterprise that carries out slum clearance? I do not know of any. That is a public sector function.

I really believe, Sir, that there is scope for a proper public sector enterprise activity in the Oistins area, I believe that. I do not know of any private enterprise that is going to build a Fish Market, I do not know one. The problem there is that we are victims of our own success. It has been so successful that we need to expand it now.

Sir, I can see very clearly that there are areas, within that area that I have defined that can be great beneficiaries of this. I can see that there has been provision for accountability and respecting the rights of Barbadians, there are no departures from the constitutional guarantees. I have absolutely no problem with supporting the worthy objectives of this Bill. I can only hope that the resources that are available from the Ministry of Finance will be such that it will allow this Bill to be carried into effect swiftly.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Bill and I would want to first of all say that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has really put this Bill in its proper perspective. I also want to say that the Honourable Minister was broad-based in his approach and he outlined to Honourable Members in a speech that was indeed special in that he outlined the functions of this new Corporation.

I first would want to say, Mr. Speaker, that any Commission that sets out to renew either a city or a rural area must first set out to redevelop, rehabilitate and of course, set new standards. A Commission of this nature, Mr. Speaker, is indeed relevant to our society today. In fact, the Member for Christ Church South made the point that in the world today a number of countries are passing special development Bills to uplift certain areas within societies. I can think of Mexico and Chile who over the past five years have passed specific legislation to upgrade specific areas of economic activity within their urban process. When we look at the habitat process throughout the world, it is indeed refreshing to know that Barbados

is in keeping with the developed countries and we have to look at our city in a special way.

I do not represent, Mr. Speaker, an urban constituency but I happen to be part of the Ministry of Housing in which, on a daily basis, I am in contact with members of the St. Michael area. St. Michael, to me represents more than one third of the population of this country. In fact, members have said today, based on their knowledge of the report that over 103 000 persons live in St. Michael. 6.25 p.m.

We recognise, Mr. Speaker, that there are a number of issues facing the urban people and members today were treated to a number of factuals which I do not want to go into at this stage. I just want to state one problem that has existed within the urban area discussed with members and this happens to be the homelessness that we find from time to time within the area. There are a number of persons who are homeless, cannot find homes. A number of them are either shacking up with persons who are not relatives, who sleep in the streets at night. There are many people who sleep in the cemeteries at night. There are many people who sleep in churches, who sleep under trees, under cars and in persons' backyards. These are things that happen within our society and members who are representatives of these areas are aware of these things and we must not hide what we see.

Mr. Speaker, we must recognise that these things exist and try to address them. I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was speaking to the fact that there is a need and he asked many questions. What would this Commission address? Would it address the homeless? Would it address battered women and so on? But I find that where persons live in rented accommodation, I want to stop here because I find that within urban Barbados the statistics show that there are about 22% of householders in Bridgetown who rent their accommodation.

We may think that is not high but when you think that the national statistics is 15% this is higher than the national average. When you look at it, Mr. Speaker, 32% of this figure pay less than \$200 per month for rent. I want to tell Honourable Members that we rent a unit for \$50 a week. What type of accommodation can any person in Barbados get really for \$50 a week that is suitable to quality living? I am saying that when you look at some of this accommodation, Mr. Speaker, in your constituency, in the constituency of St. Michael West, in the constituency of St. Michael North West, in the constituency of St. Michael South Central, in the constituency of St. Michael East you find that a lot of these accommodations are very derelict and a number of persons live in squalour.

Mr. Speaker, quite recently I met a family of five, a young woman of 26 years old with four children and the complaint was that there was no toilet facility and she had to go to the next door neighbour. There was no bath. The flooring was almost non-existent and she had a young baby less than 2 years old. Not only that, she could count the stars at night, the roof was leaking and yet she had to pay \$45 a week. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that within my experience and I am sure Honourable Members have the same experience, the conditions are horrible and something has to be done to alleviate the problem of those persons who have to pay rent.

The other thing is we can blame the landlords but there are many landlords who cannot afford to fix the homes and some of them are old. Some of the landlords live abroad and they do not care. They leave maybe an agent to collect the rent. A lot of these landlords, Mr. Speaker, know about the conditions under which tenants live and I believe that we need to set proper standards. I believe that standards need to be set and persons, who because they are poor, should not have to live under these conditions. We need to set standards. It is horrible to see young people living in conditions that exist in some of these back alleys, in some of these slum areas.

The Member for St. Lucy does not represent a very poor constituency and he does not even go into those slum areas. I am aware that he does not know what we are talking about but when you go into areas, Mr. Speaker, within the Bridgetown area and Greater Bridgetown you see these things.

I went to Straker's Tenantry recently. I went to New Orleans. I went to places in the Bank Hall area, not the main road, and members need to go beyond the main road and see squalour. These things need to be addressed. All of these things, Mr. Speaker, will be addressed in this Bill and the Bill speaks, Mr. Speaker, specifically to the clearing of slums.

Sections 17 and 18 speak to the clearing of slums and despite that we realise they may be overlapping in several areas yet the National Housing Act, the Town Planning Act and other Acts that were referred to by Members and the Health Act do not speak to the clearing of slums, to the renewal of the slum areas. It does not set out, Mr. Speaker, how the areas will be developed, whereas this Bill states categorically how the areas will be declared as slum areas. It states the notification, the demolition and the use of land, how the land will be used after it is cleared and that is important. 6.35 p.m.

We cannot talk about the clearing of an area like Church Village or New Orleans and not putting it back

in its use. It has to be used and therefore the Bill states that the Commission will look at the land and put it to its true economic use and that is important. We have to redevelop and renew the urban areas.

Not only this, Mr. Speaker, the toilet facilities will be upgraded. A number of pit toilets exist within the urban area. They have to be addressed. We have to address the pit toilets. There are a number of people who cannot find the \$2 000 or \$3 000 to put in water toilets, but when this Commission is in place, loans will be provided. We have made the point that persons over the age of 65, old aged pensioners will be able to get their toilet facilities improved free of cost, based on the various surveys that will be carried out by the Commission.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Clearly defined criteria, yes. We have to do that sort of thing. We have, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of course to put in walk ways to people's homes. As I said, Straker's tenantry is a perfect example. It reminds me really of places within the country area where you have to walk into lines, into grass, into mud, up to their homes. And this is the type of thing that the Commission will be doing.

It is not possible to comply with the Town Planner regulations throughout St. Michael, despite the Minister's speech today that he would like to see a situation where all lots are 3 000 square feet or whatever. Because in the St. Michael area there are some house spots that are less than 1 800 square feet but the Minister did not say that all lots will be 3 000. That is an ideal situation that the Minister wants which is true. The new house spots will be 3 000 square feet. Any new area will be 2 500 and over. But, if you look at Thomas Gap, Westbury Road, some of the lots, and the Town Planner Acts was relapsed because it was a special area. You will find in other areas like Peterkins Land and other lands within St. Michael, where the houses are so close and the people some of the tenants who now own the lots would like to develop them,

Where people have the right to own the land and although it is not specific in this Act, and as the Minister pointed out, there will be other amendments to the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act and other amendments coming, which would give the urban tenant the opportunity to buy his land at a statutory price.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West believes that a price of \$2.50 is reasonable. It is reasonable in the sense that a number of landlords and lawyers are asking for prices of \$6 and \$7 per square foot. I remember cases in Bank Hall where a number of lawyers have been asking tenants to remove their homes because they could

not pay the price and of course the rent. Some lawyers also increased the rent exorbitantly without going through the correct channels.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Lawyers representing landlords. And Members of Parliament have been representing their constituents whenever this happens. I must say that Members usually write to the Ministry of Housing and say, "Look, you must investigate this case", which they have a right to do. But we want to see a situation in this country where equity and fair play is the order of the day. And a mechanism must be put in place to ensure that you have fairness. Wherever Government has put in the infrastructure, roads, pavements and so on, the cost of land must be taken into consideration, and a statutory price of \$2.50 or whatever the Minister may decide to set, because the Minister may very well set a price of \$2. It has not been decided. Figures have been bandied around, \$2, \$3 per square foot, but surely the Government is saying to the St. Michael tenant that we believe that you have a right as well.

Those persons who have bought at \$3 per square foot, I believe that some system should be put in place to give them, maybe, a refund. But those persons, and one Member said to the House that he believes that the tenants who want to buy should wait and I believe that that is a fair judgment.

Only recently in Bournes Village, 25 tenants wrote to the Ministry and said "Look, the landlord is asking \$5 per square foot for the land. We cannot pay it. We were on the land for more than 30 years or 40 years." There are some people who have been living on the land for 40 years and they have already paid all of the rent. If you count the rent that they have paid, it would be more than would buy the land.

So again, when you set a statutory price, this would help the tenant to own his land and have proper security of tenure. This is important in the sense that when a guy has security of tenure it not only improves him economically, but it helps to enfranchise him as well, economically. So that this Act and what the Government is proposing to do helps the St. Michael man. No wonder the Honourable Members on that side are a bit scared. If I was in the Opposition and the Government was doing these things, I would get scared too and especially when...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. Being on the Opposition is very comfortable because the Government is not doing, the Government is talking. It does not bother us on this side. The Government just talks. There is nothing to be scared about.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Government is not only talking the Government is acting. We are now carrying out a pilot project in Alleyne's Land and if you go into Alleyne's Land you will see that surveying work has begun. You will see that toilet facilities have been upgraded. You will see a number of little roads have been put in and so on. So that work has begun and I am saying that when this Act has come into being a number of pilot projects will be done.

In fact, one Honourable Member has made the point already that he believes that we should be undertaking five and six pilot projects at a time to make any impact within the urban area and that is what we intend to do. We have also, and the Minister has spoken to the fact, that 29 acres at Lower Burney will be acquired to help low income housing within the St. Michael area and help all of those persons who are disenfranchised. 6.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Bill is important for the urbanisation process and if you look at the recommendations to this Act there are about 5 broad headings. The recommendations are in improved housing, the improvement of transportation and road works, the improvement of health and solid waste, the improvement of the conservation of the built up environment and, of course, the sustainable environment for management and so on. Of course, there will be the urban funds. This will help provide economic activity for those persons who are desirous of getting into cottage industries, those persons who want to start to improve their businesses and so on.

We have coconut vendors, the wayside mechanics, a number of young entrepreneurs who are looking to start their own small business. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke about economic activity at the bottom of the Farm pasture at Brighton. Again, little markets can be developed there. Not only there, markets can develop throughout St. Michael where you give small people some help in terms of start-up capital where they can get their own business.

Government cannot provide all employment and therefore we need to look at self-employment. We need to create the environment for self-help and this Bill creates an environment where people will truly be independent and where the urban area will be properly cultivated.

I notice that when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South was Prime Minister almost all the homes in his area were painted. He did a good job in making sure the roads in that area were paved, drainage was done. I would like to see throughout St. Michael a miniature of what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South did. I

would like to see throughout St. Michael a renewal not only in St. Michael South but in Peterkins Land, a renewal in Straker's Land, Black Rock, a renewal in Fairfield. We would like to see a renewal in Halls Road, in New Orleans, Cats Castle, Nelson Street and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I support this Bill and I would urge all other members who represent urban areas to support it. Thank you.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, this Bill before the House clearly is one that was designed primarily to be a marketing tool which may in fact be used skilfully by the Government to create the impression, as they have done in the past, that they are about to embark on a massive programme that will see the upliftment in the standard of life of a Barbadian in the shortest space of time when the public has come to accept these kinds of scenarios as nothing more than gimmicks and public relation stunts to try to create an impression and to give people hope.

It also sends a severe message to the agencies that are presently servicing the social needs of Barbadians that they have failed in their duty to respond to the needs of the public and that to some extent they may in fact be deemed to be useless participants.

It is a serious indictment of the work that they have done over the last 25-30 years. As Honourable Members try to patch up this legislation this has nothing to do with an addendum or an enhancement of what is presently in operation. It is a slap in the face. It is amazing that money cannot be made available to the agencies presently in operation to let them do precisely what has to be done because it does not really need any amount of surveys or extensive programmes or studies to determine what is right or what is wrong in Barbados.

All of us as parliamentarians are fully aware before we get involved in politics of what are the crying needs in our respective constituencies. We know and know very well what the problems are regarding housing, toilet facilities, drainage, unemployment. All of these are issues that we are fully aware of. Yet they come to use a tool and then will walk around Barbados saying they have introduced the Urban Development Bill and the Rural Development Bill just to give the impression that they and their government are now doing something and calling it something different.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am not into a press speech. I speak in the House of Assembly. What I say in the House of Assembly I say in my constituency and I left here and I went and had a short meeting already in my

constituency. What I say here I say in my constituency so I do not need the Press, because I am going to repeat it all over the country because I understand the Barbados Labour Party and how they operate. I understand clearly what this is all about.

I have no difficulties with the objectives of the Bill. As I said, I always give the Barbados Labour Party credit for finding political tools to inveigle their way into the society so as to make sure that they have a way of appealing to the public. You are very skillful but the public sees through it just as how they see through the slogan of Thirty Thousand Jobs and that you will give this poverty alleviation fund, accountability in the system, no more supplementaries... The public sees through it.

It is amazing that members in here will believe that when you pass this Bill, the general public out there tomorrow will feel that the Barbados Labour Party got an Urban Development Bill and they will get so and so, only to find out that if by 1999 they are still in government that 2 years from now still nothing has been done.

Today 3 years after and you walk around Barbados and go through the St. Michael constituency nothing has changed. If you go into the bus stand - you talk about urban development — right next door to Parliament here you will be amazed at the non-performance of the Ministry of Public Works who have refused to even put proper facilities in place for the Barbadian travelling public. In the minibus stand, if we had had the time we would have set up proper toilet facilities, proper drainage, have the place environmentally friendly, proper shops in place and proper lights. What is happening now out there? Not a single light is burning in the bus stand. 6.55 p.m.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House when he is referring to the bus terminal.

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise, Sir?

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. He is misleading the House when he is talking about various sheds, stalls, lights and the other things. You may recall that it is the Barbados Labour Party that provided a new bus terminal for the Transport Board for persons who used the public transportation system provided by the Transport Board.

There is certainly no provision by the Democratic Labour Party for the provision of these services and they certainly did not do anything in this connection.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the Barbados Labour Party did, in fact, place the terminal for the Transport Board in Fairchild Street. I am not talking about the Transport Board's Terminal. I have no problem with that. That is development, but we are talking about progressive development. You had a situation developing where you had to shift the ZR operators from the area east of the small market at Fairchild Street. They were accommodated in the area behind Queen's College. I am saying there were plans and we had intended to put proper facilities in place, provide the areas for vending, make them environmentally friendly, keep the area well lit to make sure that the safety of the travelling public is ensured, but nothing of the sort takes place.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Yes, and you have to take the Barbados Labour Party at its word. If you have to take the Barbados Labour Party at its word, one has to wonder if they are so interested and so keen on development why a simple exercise of going into that area and seeking to upgrade it and sanitize the place...

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Go and take a walk because I do not believe the Members of the Government saw it.

Now, when I relate the intent of the Government to this Bill, and they talk in terms of providing septic tanks in an area in my constituency in the Belle, I start to get very nervous because I have heard the propaganda put out that they are going to come into St. Michael East, spend an enormous amount of money to try to get Joseph Tudor out of the House of Assembly. It is really an exercise in ignorance.

In the Belle, the area they are referring to is not specifically the Belle. The area they are referring to in the Minister's comments and in relation to what the study prevailed is Licorish Village, Deans Land, My Lord's Hill, Mayers Road, Rouen, Howell's Cross Road, that entire area which is all part of Zone 1 because the Zone 1 line comes up through the Ivy main road. It comes up through "brek-neck" hill and comes right up through Haggatt's Hall. All of the houses on the northern side of that road are in Zone 1 and are part of the survey that was carried out for this exercise.

It means that if the Government is serious, and I take this point very seriously because I respect that the Zone 1 area in the Belle should be properly preserved to protect the water base. I accept that and when I became the parliamentary representative and I realized that people were squatting illegally, I went to them

and said: "I am not going to condone people squatting in this area illegally because I do not think it is fair to the rest of society to have a few illegal squatters functioning in an area that may, in fact, pose a problem for the entire Barbadian at some time later.

I spent an enormous amount of time lobbying with the then Minister of Housing to make sure that land was found to have those residents resided and land was found at Haggatt's Hall. There were some 95 lots that were available at Haggatt's Hall that were to be used for the resiting of those people out of the Belle but the process was stopped during 1993 due to lack of funds and there was not enough money to complete the drainage and the road infrastructure in the Haggatt's Hall area. We went into a structural adjustment and it was put on hold.

Now, an inhuman act is being carried out on some of the remaining people who are still today residents in the Belle. I want to make this clear. I am not apportioning blame to the present Minister or to the present administration because there is an attitude in the Ministry of Public Works, and I am not going to be specific but they know whom I am talking about, that seems not to understand that we are dealing with human beings. There are people who are left to languish in conditions out there and they refuse to provide them with a simple connection so they can get pipe water. I think it is an inhuman act, and I know it is not the Minister. I know it is not the policy of the administration.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I never put anybody in Zone 1. I tried and I cooperated very hard with all the persons who were there illegally to encourage them that they have to go because I feel very strongly about the protection of the water base that is there. I recognise it is huge. I recognise that it caters to a third of the population. In the interim they should be given water.

What is even now worse than that is that the people in the area were drawing water from the National Petroleum Corporation in the Odessa McClean Road and they disbarred the people now from even getting water from that tap. It is unbelievable. I do not even believe the Minister of Energy is aware. I never put anybody in. I never put one single person in but I believe we have to have a human face. If we are a Government, whether we are in Opposition or not, we have to understand that we are dealing with people and that people have to be given some sort of consideration when it comes to having simple things like water.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Yes, they refuse to give them a pipe. Now we are hearing that all of a sudden the Government is going to move into the Belle, move into Licorish Village and provide septic tanks to people who cannot even get a pipe to run a waterborne toilet. We are going to be confused. You have a policy and a programme that you are going to be putting septic tanks in but water cannot run down the septic tanks because there is no provision of water.

This area has been declared a Zone 1 area and there is no new development. The people who are there cannot be facilitated in the Belle but yet we are being told that this amount of money is going to be spent in the Belle.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Because that was wrong and inhuman.

Mr. Speaker, I really am not happy at all. I genuinely am not happy with this Bill. I understand that every thing that can be done by this Commission can now be done by any Government agency. 7.05 p.m.

Why is it necessary to put the government through this? You have a review of the Barbados Constitution. Get rid of all of the wastage in Government. If it is a fact that the people have paid and they are not performing shut it down. The National Assistance Board has not met for over a year. Nobody is doing anything as far as the Board is concerned to repair houses. No repairs are being done in any of the St. Michael constituencies yet all of a sudden rather than give money to the National Assistance Board or give the money to the Poverty Alleviation Fund in the Welfare Department that can do the same functions that they have people doing up at the Prime Minister's Office, you now have to set up another forum to do what could be done by those same people and it is amazing. There is something wrong with this. When we examine the players who are going to be involved in this, and we know who the players are going to be in this. I have not notified the Speaker of the Section 28(10) of the Standing Orders - but when we examine who the players are going to be in this, we know that something is afoot.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East were ordered expunged from the records.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Let me make an example. If the Minister could demolish and lick down and declare any area in Barbados an urban area, Miss Miller's house in Clapham can be declared an urban area, the rules can be applied and Nola is gone.

The Ministry of Health already have the laws to do it but you are going to set up and put the exact conditions in this Bill again to give another Commission the same thing that the Ministry of Health could do.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You can talk about the permits and I can talk about the Drive-in money.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, the Honourable Member please. Have you concluded.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Not yet, Sir. They want a fight and want to talk about permits but I am ready.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot and I will not support this legislation at all. This is an unnecessary Bill. This has been created as a means to an end and I do not believe that it is in the broad interest of the Barbadian public. The Government knows and knows full well that this will cost an enormous amount of money to implement. This is going to cost almost half billion dollars to implement. You are talking about giving protection to the landlord and paying the difference in terms of the tenantry land, anything above \$2.00 or \$2.50. Has anybody sat down and try to work out the amount of money that Government will have to find.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I understand it well. I know you all well but the impression that you have created out there immediately prior to an election is that this is now available. I understand how an electorate functions, you know. You put them in hope and then you pick out a B.L.P house, you are not picking out any DEMS, you know the B.L.P. houses very well. You pick out specifically certain houses. I understand how you all operate. You do that just to create the impression that you are doing it for a broad spectrum of people. You talked about 30 000 jobs, you created 11. As Mac Fingall says 14 jobs you create.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I told the people in the Belle already, that I have argued successfully for replacement of septic tanks in everybody's homes. They know that I have been arguing that for the last five years. That is nothing that the Barbados Labour Party candidate can come and claim. I am dealing with the fact that I have been lobbying in that area of Licorish Village in the Belle for many years, that is a very depressed area. I am not going to quarrel with anybody who is attempting to uplift that area. I do not want you to tell the people that you are coming to put in septic tanks and then by 1999, I do not see the septic tanks

in place because they will feel that I have let them down. They know that I have successfully negotiated with the Government to pay some attention to the Belle.

There is no need for this Bill for the people in the Belle to get septic tanks. You can give the money that you are going to put down the septic tanks with, to the Ministry of Public Works and let the Public Works Ministry carry out the job.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I can tear this up. It does not make sense. You give the money that you are going to put down the septic tanks with to the Ministry of Public Works. I can vote against this any time. You do not have to set up no Commission, give the money to the Ministry of Public Works and let them put it in, that is what you have to do.

I will vote against this.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That does not bother me. This is unnecessary. What I want is the money and I want the septic tanks put down in the Belle. I do not have to get them put down through this Commission. This Commission is not going to put down any septic tanks in the Belle, I know them well. I know the Attorney General whispered to me that they will not put down septic tanks in any Belle. This is propaganda, pure propaganda.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: You see what I am telling you. The Honourable Member is shouting to me that not one septic tank will be put down in the Belle. This is foolishness. When you come to examine the amount of money that Government will have to cough up when they are creating the difference between land, I am warning you that there is a lot of money that you will have to spend in St. Michael East.

I said earlier that I am a landlord but if Government is going to dish out money willy-nilly, I will hold on. I will give the people the land for free but I would like the difference between that and what Government is going to give out because you will have to find a lot of money to pay landlords. I have several cases now in my constituency.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I never said that. I never said that I was not a landlord.

In my constituency right now, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of landlords who are attempting to charge residents in tenancies \$5 and \$6 for land that is near to Sherbourne Centre and because of the development of Julie 'N and the Highway and Bussa and the fancy roads that are up there, the land, which was ordinary tenancy land in Chapel Gap all of a sudden is now prime land and now costs \$6.00 and \$7.00.

The residents cannot pay and I have instructed them not to pay any \$6.00 or \$7.00 per square foot to buy any land.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is what the landlords are saying, that the Sherbourne Centre carried up the value of the land. But the families are still in the same tenancy environment that they have been in for over 100 years so I would tell them to very peacefully hold on, that the Government has some money available and the Government will pay the difference between the \$2.00 that the Honourable Member for St. James North confirmed. 7.15 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The Honourable Member for St. James North said \$2.00, that it is not set in concrete yet and it could go down as low as \$2.00. It really annoys me that Government would throw out that suggestion when Government knows it does not have the money to carry out that exercise. You create an impression that it can be done and you do not have the money to do it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has 2 minutes to conclude.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Sit down and do a simple calculation. Take one constituency and you are going to be amazed at the amount of money if everybody calls it to board and agree at the \$2.00 everybody will flock in to buy it. I am saying Government is creating the impression that it can be done immediately.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I would be very surprised and if you are in a position to do it. I believe it is as a result of your collecting too much money with the VAT and you have too much money available to you. So you are able to do that but we will have to wait and see because there is no budget, there is nothing for us to gauge. We have to wait on the results. We have nothing at our disposal to determine the performance of Government's revenue. We

have to wait and see but I am saying that this is an enormous task and I believe that it is rampant with creating impressions. I would be glad if it was not because if we are able, I think the objective of the Bill is fine but not the reason for setting it up. The objective is consistent with how all of us in here as Members of Parliament think. Fine, but there is something really wrong about the way it is being set up.

Mr. SPEAKER: Would you conclude, Sir?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is why I have a difficulty. I will not be able to support it in its form because I am of the view that everything that can be done to uplift the lives of people can be done under the existing agencies and there is nothing wrong with the professional staff that are presently available to this country in those agencies but they need to be given the same money that you are going to give the Commission to carry out this work. Why give this Commission and not them? If I had a choice, Mr. Speaker, I would prefer the money in the hands of the civil servants who are presently functioning in the existing institutions. Thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 8.15 p.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I fully support this Bill and believe that the Government should be complimented and congratulated for bringing this Bill to Parliament. I cannot for the life of me see anything at all in the Bill to possibly criticise and it certainly is the first time that any Government, certainly as far as I am aware, is establishing a body styled commission to deal exclusively with urban development.

Certainly all of the St. Michael MPs on this side are very pleased that after today this urban commission will be up and running and that in large measure the MPs in the urban areas will no longer be having to compete with all of the other parishes for the funds necessary to do a lot of things.

There is a very popular misconception that only in rural Barbados you find unpaved and dilapidated tenantry roads and other unsatisfactory conditions. That is a very popular misconception but I can assure you that there are these and other maladies as well in urban Barbados. This Bill therefore, as I see it, will seek to deal with these problems and improve the living standards for residents in urban Barbados.

This Commission will have a number of functions set out at paragraph 6. These have already been explained by many of those who have spoken before and I propose just to highlight a few of them. My first focus, Mr. Speaker, is on the issue of housing. This is one of the purposes set out at paragraph 6 of the Bill. This issue of housing across Barbados, certainly in urban Barbados is a very serious issue and I am very pleased to see that thankfully it is being addressed.

I have had occasion before, Mr. Speaker, in fact on more than one occasion previously, to speak on the issue of housing in this Chamber. In fact my very first speech in this Chamber concerned the issue of housing and I highlighted on that occasion how problematic the issue was for a large number of my constituents. The problem stemmed largely from the fact that the last administration, over an 8¹ year period, failed to address or to deal with, in any serious way, the problem of the shortage of housing across Barbados and that is a fact.

It is no fan, it is no pleasure, having on a weekly basis to see constituents come to you in your constituency office and you have to tell them the housing situation is tight. You cannot send them...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Precisely what prevailed at the National Housing Corporation during the administration of the Democratic Labour Party is precisely what is happening today. There is no change. There is still a crisis of housing in Barbados and daily constituents, not only in St. Michael, but throughout the length and breadth of Barbados are still complaining that there are no housing facilities available on request. So the Honourable Member must not distort the record to suggest that the previous administration did nothing and there is some big change. Units were built under the Democratic Labour Party in relation to funds that were available.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point of order, please.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, the problem is that over those 8V₂ years I referred to the Democratic

Labour Party did nothing to construct housing or even to acquire land.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir, because if he looks at the Green Paper or the White Paper or whatever you may call it, Sir, he will see that housing was constructed at Church Village and there were many house spots that were sold to poor people in this country to develop their own housing.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member is correcting me. I said they built no houses. He said they built 50 in 8¹ years. I accept that they built 50 in 8¹ years and I will proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again, I never mentioned anything about 50, Sir. 8.25 p.m.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I have perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the largest number of Government housing estates in any constituency in Barbados. I have three Government housing estates. I believe that I am perhaps therefore more aware of the problems that confront in relation to the shortage of housing in Barbados than perhaps, many others in this Chamber. And, I say that because it is in these Government housing estates that you see more than anywhere else, overcrowding and all the serious problems that emanate from the acute shortage of housing that is faced in this country today. It is a real problem.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Mr. Speaker, going by the argument of the Honourable Member, he is saying, that he is having many visits now to his constituency, which implies that he is having the same problem that he is criticising the previous government for.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is a real problem, its origin is the neglect of the years of Democratic Labour Party rule. It is a problem that is now being addressed across Barbados by this administration. The facts of the matter are, I predict that this issue of the shortage of housing in Barbados, may well emerge as the major problem facing Barbados especially now that unemployment is dropping so drastically and so quickly. It may well be we have to start from scratch in relation to housing. It is not easy but it is a fact. The origin is in the neglect of the eight and one half years the Democratic Labour Party ruled. And I am pleased to see that under this Commission, loans will be provided to residents to assist them to acquire houses and land and for home improvements as well.

I am very pleased to hear that the survey has been done, and that all the vacant lands and derelict buildings and so on have been identified. I am also pleased to see that under this Bill there will now be a system in place where every effort will be made to get the vacant lots and derelict buildings back into residential properties by ensuring that people will have access to loans to buy lots, to buy houses, to carry out repairs to properties or even to construct properties. These are the laudable objectives that the Honourable Members on the Other Side spoke about that are to be found in this Bill, to be supported. I do not see how anyone cannot support it.

There is only one caution I would have in relation to housing. When I was in the Ministry of Agriculture last year, it was just before the Rural Development Commission Bill was presented to Parliament, I remember a study was done in rural Barbados in relation to housing. And one of the findings I remember coming through was that, perhaps it is a bit of a cultural difference, but a large number of rural Barbadians were expressing the view that they would wish to own homes, own properties. Whereas it was found that that was in contrast to the urban residents, some of whom were expressing the view that they would prefer to rent.

Therefore, I just want to add that one caution that when you speak of satisfying the needs of residents of urban Barbados in relation to housing, you have to be mindful of the fact that not everyone has been expressing a desire to purchase lots, and to purchase properties, but that they are quite prepared, perhaps in some cases driven by financial circumstances as well, to perhaps pursue renting a property or say, renting toward ownership at some stage and that is the one caution that I would have. So all the lots that are acquired and the properties cannot therefore be for sale, but some perhaps will have to be allocated for rental.

Another major problem that this Bill is addressing, is that lots and properties are also to be improved through the provision of basic access to the properties by the putting in of roads or in some cases, footpaths, and there are some cases of this in urban Barbados. In St. Michael North, an area that comes ready to mind that is literally land locked, is that area between Bridge Gap in Cave Hill and Phillips Road in St. Stephens Hill. There are quite a few houses in that area and they are all land locked. There is no accessing by road.

In fact, not even a footpath to get to those areas. You have to literally just walk across pasture and my concern is the fact that there are quite a few older Barbadians, pensioners, and so on, who live in that area. And I shudder to think what could be the consequence if there was ever a need to access any of their homes by any emergency

service, ambulance, fire brigade, car, anything of the sort. It is a real problem in that particular area where the houses are land locked. There is no access by way of road. So there is an urgent need as well to provide access and under this Bill, that is a perfectly legitimate function of the Commission.

Another complaint which I want to see addressed and which will be addressed under this Bill by the Commission is the issue of the conversion of pit toilets to water borne toilets. Some other Members have referred to this before. Those who are working will have access to loans. Those who are not working, perhaps primarily the pensioners or other special cases, will have grants to assist them with the installation of water toilets. Now, this is a must. In my view the continual existence of pit toilets is one of the worst forms of human degradation that can ever exist in any country. It is one of the worse forms of human degradation that can exist. Members would know that even in your home, during the course of any night when you have to use the bathroom to respond to a call of nature, sometimes you do not even feel like getting up to walk a few feet. You feel like you are being inconvenienced to go, even in your own house, sometimes, to use the bathroom. Furthermore, when you have to get up during the course of the night and head into a yard to use a pit toilet. You have to walk through grass, as the Member for West Central said, jump over frogs and lizards and all that to go into a pit toilet. It is one of the worse ' forms of human degradation and the harsh reality is that it exists today across Barbados. And, of course, urban Barbados is no exception. So these are some of the major problems that I want to mention.

But, there are other problems as well. In addition to those problems which I just mentioned there are other issues as well that affect the basic living standards and comfort of urban Barbadians. I am referring now to some issues such as street lights and roads. Now, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West say during the by-election last December, when he was parading across the television every night and the newspapers every day and every night as if indeed he was the only candidate in the race, I heard him say on the television that the sum total of his contribution to the development of Barbados is not to be measured by whether or not he can provide a street light.

I have heard another Member, I do not remember who, honestly, in this Chamber made some reference as well to street lights and the marginal role they play in politics. Now, I do not share that view at all. I know some of the older politicians who have gone as far as to say that politics is about street lights and roads.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Some have said that. I know that politics is about the economy, and foreign reserves and so on. But, I share the view that politics is also about street lights and roads. And, I do not feel too proud to say that I, myself, have been on many occasions, at the bottom of street lights writing off numbers from poles and forwarding the numbers to the relevant authorities and I have gotten some results. I was not too proud to do it and I will do it again. 8.35 p.m.

When you walk across Husbands Main Road and you see the street lights, I had walked across there and written down the numbers of the poles and sent them in. When you see Warrens Park South where a certain journalist lives who writes about it and you walk there and see lights up, I had walked through there and written off numbers off poles and sent them in. No programme can claim to be successful if it is not sufficiently sensitive to take into account the safety of people.

Street lights provide safety for the people of various areas. Across the same Husbands Main Road, unfortunately, and for reasons which I cannot understand, those who went to install the street lights stopped just 2 poles away from the bus stop which is a dark desolate area. Only about 3 weeks ago another young lady from Husbands was attacked out there, almost raped. I have to go back down and call to deal with that particular issue.

So it is important under this programme that street lights play a prominent role because I must say, and I am not apologising for saying it, that politics is about street lights and roads as well, the little things that matter to people. It is not only in rural Barbados that you find dilapidated roads. They exist in St. Michael as well.

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: You have areas like Small Land just off Green Hill, Mottley Land just off Green Hill, Phillips Road, St. Stephen's Hill which is itself a whole story. They have been so neglected over the years that in 1986-87 the residents themselves of Phillips Road, St. Stephen's Hill pooled up and went and bought material, marl fill for the road, it was so neglected over the years. All they wanted the last Government to do was just put a little tar on the marl that they themselves had pooled and bought, and that heartless Democratic Labour Party refused to put a little tar on the marl with the result that the rain came and washed it all away and now they are back to square one.

Certain parts of Well Gap in Cave Hill, people still find themselves - the Honourable Speaker will know what I am speaking of. He drives that road I am sure some

mornings - having to put on plastic bags or so over their feet to get to and from their homes when the rainy season is upon them. So that is why it is not a question of who is Minister now but that this Bill will come into force after tonight and address a number of these issues. That is the issue that we are dealing with.

In the end, Mr. Speaker, I have just sought to highlight some of the important functions that the Commission will have. I am not going to detain the Chamber for much longer. This has been fully ventilated. In the end I believe that the success or failure of this will depend on how quickly the Commission can respond to the demands that are made to it.

I do not believe that that will in itself be a problem. This is the reason why it is being taken out of the mainstream. I would have thought that Honourable Members especially those from St. Michael would have been glad to see an institution being set up to specialise in handling urban affairs. In fact, it is only someone who is possessed of a demonic mind who would really oppose this.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are not referring to Honourable Members are you?

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: There is no such person in here that I am aware of. I do not understand the logic of saying that all of the functions prescribed in this Bill are honourable and well intentioned but... What could the "but" be? I am really surprised that Honourable Members on that side would allow their leader to set them up because he has set them up. He has gone. He instructed them to come and refute the content of this in circumstances that he himself is not prepared to come and do it himself. They should demand better for themselves than allow themselves to be set up.

All I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that I expect this Commission not to be bogged down in a lot of red tape and bureaucracy and I expect that all agencies...

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I expect that all the agencies that will have to interact with this Commission will really respond promptly because, as I believe the Honourable Member for St. James North will point out, if and when he speaks in this debate, the problems. For example, some residents under the Rural Development Commission were having problems with the pit toilets wafting for the Town Planner and so on. I would

really expect that all agencies that will have to interface with the Commission will in fact respond very quickly.

We on this side have sat back and been patient for a very long time. We have recognised that the Ministry of Public Works had to share its resources allocated to it with an entire country. We accepted that. Now we have a Commission that has been set up to deal specifically as rapidly as reasonably possible with the concerns of urban Barbados. I therefore expect that these are matters which will be addressed with all due priority and I fully support the Bill and I hope that members on the Other Side will find it within themselves, despite all that they have said so far in this debate, at the appropriate time to fully support this Bill. Thank you.

Dr. the Hon. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, I am confident with the passage of time that the Bill which is under discussion and which seeks to establish the Urban Development Commission will come to be regarded as a major piece of social legislation. I believe too, Sir, that with the passage of time, if not immediately, the Opposition will be seen to have committed a major error of judgment in voting against the establishment of this Commission.

I think that they will be found to have been on the wrong side of the issue and to have misappreciated the enormous potential for good which this Commission wears. 8.45 p.m.

Let us just step back, Sir, to make the point that this Commission and its establishment is consistent with the historic mission of the Barbados Labour Party in addressing problems of housing development, slum clearance and poverty eradication. Those of us who are familiar with the early focus and emphases of the Barbados Labour Party in the days when it was known as the Barbados Progressive League, I am talking about the days prior to 1947 or thereabout when it first came to be known as the Barbados Labour Party, these very objectives embodied in the Commission were part of the early objectives of the Barbados Labour Party.

Grantley Adams, one of the founding leaders, was himself very much identified with the very objectives which are contained in this Bill before the House. That is why I say that the Bill and its objectives are, to begin with, consistent with the historic mission of the Barbados Labour Party.

In more recent years as I shifted my focus away from the politics of Christ Church East to the politics of St. Joseph, I became acutely aware of the fact that there had grown up in Barbados an enormous differential in

development between coastal and urban Barbados and rural Barbados. I have already identified the many ways in which that was so and convinced as I was that we needed to reduce those differences, I campaigned within the corridors of the Barbados Labour Party and also in Parliament for the establishment of the Rural Development Commission.

Immediately as the point was made, those who had an interest in representing urban Barbados saw the necessity for a companion institution, as it were, to address the very special problems of urban Barbados, the problems of residual poverty in urban Barbados. The Barbados Labour Party, I think as early as 1991, but certainly in 1994, made it a Manifesto pledge that should we be returned to office we would see to the early establishment of a rural development commission and an urban development commission tackling the problems in their specific geographic areas.

The Rural Development Commission has already been established and is very much at work though I am bound to say that I am not happy with the pace at which it is delivering its services and some of my colleagues may also quarrel with the focus.

The point I make at this stage is that we have already established the Commission consistent with our Manifesto pledge and we are doing likewise in relation to the Urban Development Commission. I make that point against the background of the charge made by speakers in the Opposition today that the Barbados Labour Party only discovered the problems of poverty existing in urban Barbados at the last by-election in December last year. That is far from true.

Any statement made by the Prime Minister must be seen in the context of the exaggeration of the heat of the campaign if, indeed, it was at all said, but the record must reflect that this was a pledge contained in the Manifesto of 1994 and that it was also very consistent with the historic mission of the Barbados Labour Party in addressing these very same problems.

Mr. Speaker, this Urban Development Commission is one of the institutions which we are using to address what I call the residual problems of poverty in the urban areas. What concerns me with this poverty debate are really two things. To begin with, there is widespread and rather facile recommendations for prescription when in truth and in fact I am not fully satisfied that as good and thorough a diagnosis has been done.

The second point is there is the feeling that throwing money behind the problems of urban poverty and emphasizing too much physical development will be

the answer. I think we need to know what are the common features of those who are still below the poverty line in Barbados? What is it they are suffering from? Do they have reading disabilities? Do they have low IQs? What sort of backgrounds do they have? Is the problem to be solved by throwing money behind their conditions, putting up modern buildings and giving them paved streets or is it much more to be done?

I am satisfied, for example, Mr. Speaker, in so far as I am close to the problem in rural Barbados and the problem in St. Joseph, that a lot of persons in St. Joseph who may be regarded as living below the poverty line, badly need skills. They need to be trained. They are largely unaware of the existence of the Skills Training Programme. They have no idea what is done at the Polytechnic and how you can access entry there.

I am not sure that a lot of the people who are currently without employment in urban Barbados need first of all to have the opportunity to work and they need to be trained so as to offer an employer a skill. Beyond their robust good looks and their strong arms they need to be able to do something. Many of them are without skills.

I am so far disappointed that in the debate on poverty eradication there is insufficient emphasis on the importance of skills training and the importance of giving people ideas for self-improvement in terms of small businesses. You need to give them ideas. Not only tell them that money may be available if you have an idea but to feed them with ideas and also to give others who may be interested in working as employees skills that will make them more attractive to prospective employers.

The goals set out in this Bill admit of no quarrel, in my view. They could be wider. Among its responsibility, for example, could have been the emphasis on training, working closely with the Skills Training facilities and also with the Polytechnic but that aside, there can be no quarrel with the objectives set out in the Bill.

What I fear, however, is that this Commission, like the Rural Development Commission, may become bogged down with excessive red tape and bureaucracy. I hope that the Commission will understand that while it must of necessity realise the objective of accountability in its day-to-day responsibilities, it is a public institution and it must be open to scrutiny. The Minister must be responsible. He will appreciate that he can be cross-examined in here. He could be made to account for the expenditure of public funds. But having said that, there is no reason why statutory corporations, these parastatals as we call them, have to copy in every detail the tendering techniques and the procedures of central Government. They can combine

accountability with speed and efficiency so as to better realise the objectives set out in the Bill. That is where a lot of the recent parastatals have failed. They have become slower in the delivery of their product than the mainstream civil service department because the creativity was lacking in the setting up of systems that combined accountability with speed. The Rural Development Commission is becoming a classic illustration of a parastatal that, if we are not careful, will fail to deliver the goods on a timely basis because I get the impression that they have not designed the procedures that will allow them to be accountable while at the same time being speedy. 8.55 p.m.

There is a second thing that we need to be concerned about. It has to do with the fact that a lot of this physical planning and re-development will call for Town & Country Planning approval. Town & Country Planning has not been suspended in relation to the activities of the Commission. It has not been suspended in relation to the Rural Development Commission. The last time that I enquired, a few months ago, all of the applications in the Scotland District for the installation of modern indoor water toilet facilities, they had not been approved by the Town & Country Planning Department. Some of the applications were in there for longer than six months. It seems to me, therefore, that unless we either amend the Act or create a special desk within the department of Town & Country Planning, whereby there are two officers, for example, working full time on Rural Development applications and two officers working full time on Urban Development applications that that could become a major area of slow down, the whole question of the speed with which you get your Town & Country Planning permissions.

I hope that the Prime Minister who is responsible for that department will regard this as a sufficiently important matter that as early as tomorrow he should be having a discussion with the head of that department and asking him to send him a paper showing him how he is going to address the applications arising from the Urban Development Commission and also the Rural Development Commission so as to ensure that we have some speed in the processing of those applications.

There is also another matter that I think is of some importance. There is built into this Bill an appeal process resulting from the designation of properties as derelict to the High Court. The matter once appealed, has got to be determined by the High Court. I suppose that is very much consistent with the legal system that we have and the provision of access thereto, which even if it were not written in here, the courts are available always to us and its doors are open. Accessing the High Court is not always the most difficult thing, every lawyer knows how to do that and some non-lawyers do, but the traffic over there

is snarled up and passage through the High Court is a very slow one. If an appreciable number of these attempted designations had to end up in the High Court you could have the work of the Commission in some areas slowed down for up to three years. There are certain procedures built into the Bill, which seems to me would make for very slow progress indeed.

I am also concerned, Mr. Speaker, with the fact that many issues and disputes regarding valuation of properties are going to arise. The Government want my land for urban renewal under it panoply of powers and I cannot resist. But what I can do is to hold out for a particular price to force the matter before the appropriate valuation institutions and forums. Those that presently exist are very slow moving. I would have thought that in order to add some speed to this whole process, that it might have been necessary to create a special valuation panel to make sure that we can take care of what can be a very time-consuming problem and get rid of them on a speedy basis.

I fear that if we are not careful, Mr. Speaker, what is going to happen is that even after a fair while, we may not be seeing the speedy impact which we are very much hoping for. Clearly this is a very important matter which others have spoken on and which I need not myself do more than mention. It has got to do with the fact that this is a massive undertaking, it is necessary and I am glad that the Barbados Labour Party is the Party that is beginning to tackle this issue. This is an expensive exercise and no one should doubt that. I hope that the Commission does not starved of funds. I am very much hoping that we as a country, I am not talking about we as a Government now but we as a country will find the resources for this very important mission being undertaken by the Urban Development Commission.

Without having done any work on the sums that we are looking at over a 10 or 20-year period, I have no doubt that it will run into hundreds of million of dollars. It is a 20-year challenge, if not more and there can be no doubt that it will be expensive. Clearly too a lot of co-ordination will be necessary because in some respects the Commission will be trespassing on and overlapping the functions being undertaken by other institutions long established. The Ministry of Public Works, the National Housing Corporation and others. It is going to be very important that we have tactful leadership at the level of the Commission and that the other institutions do not respond in terms that someone is muscling in on their territory. Every now and then I get the feel that that is going on in relation to other areas. This is going to be a leadership exercise that is going to call not only for a lot of energy but for a lot of tact.

The notion advanced by the Opposition that already institutions exist that could well and easily tackle the

particular problems that exist in urban Barbados, I thought is a mistaken view. I accept the view advanced by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, who argued, I think persuasively that the problems that we are dealing with are qualitatively different from the particular problem which for example the Housing Corporation is established to address. The problems of poverty of slums, the need for urban renewal of job creation, all concentrated within a particular area call for an institution with a narrow and concentrated focus. That is what we are seeking to provide by the creation of this Urban Development Commission.

I think that we cannot and should not be looking to the National Housing Corporation to tackle the specific and particular problems arising from long-standing tenancies in urban Barbados which have not really been properly regulated in the past. 9.05 p.m.

The Government and the country have been fairly successful in tackling the problems of the rural tenancies particularly the plantation tenancies but there is nothing but chaos and exploitation arising from the urban tenancies where some landlords are saying to people, well if you want to buy the land, I suppose the law says that you can buy it but I need \$5.00 a square foot and \$6.00 a square foot and so on, well beyond the reach of a lot of the tenants who have been living there for years. So the problem created by these unplanned urban tenancies, call at the end of this millennium, for serious governmental intervention. There can be no doubt about that. In fact that is what this Commission will be attempting to do.

As I said earlier, the major issues of price determination and valuation will arise. They will all, for the most part, reach the court, and most likely the High Court and the Appeal Court too. I have no doubt that that will slow down the speed at which the Commission is able to deliver services very considerably indeed.

But the problems apart and in everything we do we encounter problems, there can be no doubt that the determination to tackle the problem and the recognition by the Barbados Labour Party that as we approach ttle close of this millennium that has to be a problem that we tackle with vigour and with energy. I think the Government has got to be given high marks for that.

A lot will depend on how now the Commission is manned and the extent to which it is fed with resources but it is a problem in Barbados, the problem of urban property.

I am happy that the Government has taken this initiative and I am delighted to be able to lend my

support to it and to be in Parliament at a time when it is being put on the Statute Book.

I just want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by returning to a matter which I earlier alluded to and it is the question of fashioning other techniques to address the problems of persistent poverty and residual poverty not only in urban Barbados but in rural Barbados and throughout Barbados. I think the notion somehow that building concrete or macadamising roads, new structures, physical development is the answer, is I think only partly true and we need to train people, we need to find out too what is it that these people who continue to be below the poverty line have in common and until that serious diagnostic study is done, I am afraid that we may be acting too rapidly and even a little previous in implementing some solutions.

I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, one of the more unfortunate comments made in this debate was made some time ago by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East who said that this smacks of a gimmick. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East was wrong in my view to suggest that what is being brought here is a gimmick because this piece of legislation has resulted from a careful assessment of the needs of significant areas within St. Michael and Christ Church.

The legislation also purports to ensure that not only relief is brought to a number of people in need but also that a measure of social development and a measure of empowerment will take place as well.

Mr. Speaker, a characteristic feature of life in St. Michael is a preponderance of tenancies. These tenancies exist throughout the parish and exist in circumstances where basic infrastructural needs are lacking, in circumstances where, apart from basic infrastructural needs being lacking the people for the most part are disenfranchised from the point of view of not having freehold title. In recent times, in the last two or three years in particular, we have had the undesirable episode of a large number of land owners and landlords asking exorbitant rates for these tenancies in St. Michael.

I have seen correspondence addressed to tenants in occupation of lands for more than 20 years in a situation where the tenancies were lacking in development, trying to extract from these tenants sums in the amount of \$6.00 and \$7.00 per square foot, in a situation where clearly the people are not only unable to afford such high prices but such high prices are unrealistic, burdensome and oppressive.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of this legislation to do something about this problem where we anticipate that programmes are going to be set in stream in consequence of this legislation by which a lot of people in St. Michael are going to be able to obtain freehold title at rates lower than what their landlords are demanding.

It is an unfortunate episode, Mr. Speaker, in the political history of Barbados that some years ago, under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, there were those persons in Barbados entitled to buy lands at 10 cents a square foot and then there were those people in other parts of Barbados who were so unfortunate as to have to pay significantly higher amounts than 10 cents per square foot. I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation is going to be the precursor of some policy that would ensure that the problem of the exorbitant rates being demanded of St. Michael people be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I am also impressed with the fact that this legislation allows the Urban Development Commission to do something about the state and the quality of housing in urban Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I subscribe to the view that those who are poor and those who are needy are seldom responsible for their own poverty and their own privation.

Mr. Speaker, I will never subscribe to the view that Herbert Spencer held many years ago that poverty was self-inflicted. I object most strenuously to the Herbert Spencers of this world saying that poor people are responsible for their own poverty. When I go to St. Michael, and see the poverty in St. Michael, not only are all my humane feelings stirred up but I often ask myself why should a decent well meaning humble, Christian person be made to bear the effects of poverty in a situation where such person was never responsible for creating it.

Successive administrations in this country, Mr. Speaker, have embarked on social programmes designed in an evolutionary way to address poverty but not in a revolutionary way. We seem in Barbados to have settled for evolutionary development evolving slowly and gradually over time as opposed to revolutionary development. But whatever the situation is, I think the time has come when we have to be bold enough to tackle the bull by the horns.

I am impressed that this legislation, Mr. Speaker, allows for something called slum clearance. Now Barbados is in the fortunate position where Barbados does not have the huge slums that certain metropolitan countries have but nonetheless, there are derelict houses in Barbados and there are pockets of housing areas, not the Government owned housing areas necessarily, but there are reserves

in Barbados of very poor quality housing where in the same housing all the signs of poverty are present, high unemployment, low levels of education, low levels of income even when the people are working, poor sanitation facilities and a feeling of despair among the people. In fact there are those who have, and I would remember the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, to his credit, in here sometime ago actually referring to the evolution of an underclass. There are those who have written about the underclass. I accept that there might be something as an underclass in this world, it is just that those who have addressed the problem have defined it very paly. There are those who in defining the underclass will tell you that it is made up of single mothers or their long-term unemployment. So in defining the term, a lot of fellows who have addressed the problem have made mistakes. 9.15 p.m.

Then there are those who talk about something called the culture of poverty. Again, I instinctively sensed that in certain places there is this thing called the culture of poverty, but to define it or to describe it has defied a lot of people some of whom were deemed to be experts in it.

I would like the day to come where the last vestige of poverty is removed from Barbados. I would like to see the day come too where you can go anywhere in Barbados and not categorise an area as a ghetto or a slum. Because the moment you categorise an area as a ghetto or a slum, you are not just categorising the physical area, you are saying something about the poor people who have to bear such deprivations as I said, usually through no fault of their own.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Urban Development Commission Act properly implemented and properly taken to its highest, will go somewhere toward alleviating poverty. Before the large poverty debate descended on Barbados in December last year, our Manifesto at page 28, had actually, clearly and quite overtly referred to the question of poverty in the context of urban Barbados and the Manifesto has already been made a document of this Honourable House of Assembly. Honourable Members can look at page 28 of the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto and see the word "poverty" at page 28 in the context in the relief of poverty in urban Barbados.

Even though Honourable Members on the Other Side are saying at this point that they have reservations about this, if ever they get back in power in Barbados, based on their inclination to be extremely positive, there is no doubt that given an opportunity in Barbados with this preponderance of the politics in them and in their bosoms, they would explore it to the fullest in such a way that any opponents of theirs might very well find it hard to get back in power in years to come.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West in his early days of this House, having been in the Other Place for five years, came down in this Honourable House bringing a new point on this Honourable House and said "the duty of the Opposition is to oppose and oppose and oppose." * •

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Yes, the Honourable Member used to tell Tom Adams so all the time. Whether Tom was jabbing, this Honourable Member used to say that the Opposition is to oppose and oppose and oppose, and the Opposition is today, opposing.

Mr. Speaker, there are elements in this Bill which is before this Honourable House that remind me of the Rural Development Commission. There is, for example, proposed in this Urban Development Commission Act, something called the Urban Enterprises Fund. We, in the Manifesto to which I have referred, Mr. Speaker, had also proposed a Rural Enterprises Fund and we expect that in this financial year they are going to have \$1 million reserved for lending to persons in need of start-up capital for business.

And, even before the coming of this financial year, Mr. Speaker, in the last financial year, 1996-1997 that ended at the 31st March, this year, we were able in the Rural Development Commission to reserve \$100 000 for lending to persons who were entrepreneurially bent. There is a person from Checker Hall in St. Lucy, a Joan, I would not call the whole name, and Emerson, also from nearby who benefited from significant sums of money from the constituency of St. Lucy.

In St. John, Mr. Speaker, we have been able to lend three entrepreneurs some money to get them going in their little businesses and there are other areas that also saw the constituents benefit. I am looking forward to the day when the financial resources required to satisfy the need of every Honourable Member from rural Barbados are made available to us.

Mr. Speaker, the Rural Development Commission has so far not had an enormous amount of money to spend, but no doubt as time goes by, the amount would increase. And it pains me to say that there were things that I personally wanted for certain Honourable Members in this House and I wanted it badly, and did not get because of a shortage of finance, but as the old people of Barbados say, Mr. Speaker, "If greedy wait, hot will cool." But sometimes when greedy is waiting, greedy should always appraise itself of the facts as they bear on greedy. If greedy is waiting for a particular thing for a particular area,

greedy should know the name of the area, population of the area and the particular thing.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas was able to locate a lost village in Barbados, called Forty Acres and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas can tell you that having designed a formula for the development of Forty Acres in a very fast time he was able to make representation, able MP as he is, no trouble about his own constituency, to a degree where he has been able to make a very impressive start at Forty Acres.

Unfortunately, certain other Honourable Members have written vague letters, "do for me up here, do for me there" the name of the place not given, what was to be done not given, and they as they say, "a mighty misfortune has been placed on their heads." Mr. Speaker, they come to this Honourable House and make all types of sly remarks.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. Because there are two Members from this side that represent rural constituencies and the Honourable Member is giving the impression that two Members from this side wrote him and did not point out the specific areas and I would like him to withdraw those remarks because it is not true.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I want to admit that Members had grave doubts about what he rose now on a point of order. I rather admire the fact that he is a political person who is bent on drawing me out to name some Honourable Member that he believes is not either his contemplation or his Party's contemplation. But, such people know who they are and perhaps as they sense that mighty misfortunes might come their way, they can get their act together by doing certain basic things in addition to making request on behalf of their constituencies.

The political culture in Barbados, Mr. Speaker, being what it is requires MPs to show diligence at the highest level. The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South is planful, is diligent, is very conscientious. Many mornings before 6.30 a.m. the Honourable Member for St. Michael South had done a considerable amount of political work in his constituency. This last time before 6.30 a.m., and if all other Honourable Members irrespective to what side they are on recognise what is required of them politically, then sometimes when they feel a little irritated they should probably ask themselves what am I doing in my stewardship. Not necessarily try to say that this entity or this institution is contributing to their unhappiness.

Mr. Speaker, I have managed to ignore the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I seem to be gathering from the Honourable Member that he is saying that the Attorney General and Honourable Member for St. Thomas is a "pork barrel specialist" and that other Members should aspire to reach that level. Is that what I am understanding?

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I am able to say that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas had a specific objective. He located a badly deprived area, he wanted to see it developed, he made the correct approach, he was clear in his own mind about what he wanted for that particular area as indeed he knew the whole of his constituency and its borders, perhaps and beyond the borders of that of some other people. The Honourable Attorney General, an able MP as he, and humane with the common touch in dealing with his constituents, not only to ask in his constituency and get but to so satisfy his people, that they are happy with him. But I never, Mr. Speaker said that the Honourable Attorney General is "a pork barrel politician." In fact even in the political culture that requires us to perform, there is a limit and effective upper limit to which pork barrel politics will take you. Because if you deliver every possible service and are deemed cocky, arrogant, big-headed, and a gigantic intellectual, you will still get nowhere. And you can deliver service upon service, Mr. Speaker and be deemed to be cocky, awkward and arrogant and still lose. I have seen people do all kinds of pork barreling in their constituencies and still lose.

Mr. Speaker, to carry on, there are other things about the Bill which go to show that the Government is extremely interested in raising the level of human dignity in urban areas and I speak specifically now to the whole question of sanitation.

Page 28 of the Manifesto to which I am referring clearly says that large parts of urban Barbados require drainage. I will repeat. The same page 28 of the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto of 1994 clearly speaks to the problem of drainage in urban Barbados. Now several parts of urban Barbados are low lying areas and because of the very problem to which I referred earlier, the problem of unplanned housing development in tenancies where landlords permitted tenants to put down their houses too close to each other, did not provide adequate facilities. We do, in fact, have in urban areas a severe problem of drainage. This Bill aims to set the stage for that problem to be addressed head on. 9.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill also talks about the whole business of sanitation from the point of view of us in

the Barbados Labour Party being concerned that the dry pit culture still persists. We in the Barbados Labour Party did not win the 1991 General Election but even at that time and before we won government we were putting it to the people of Barbados that the time has come when the dry pit culture should be attacked and dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, I am alarmed that in large areas of urban Barbados we still have this hangover from 50 and 60 years ago when persons still have to make use both of dry pit toilets and of bedroom vessels which, Mr. Speaker, has a very unfortunate name in the vernacular and were called "pdts" which reflect the fact that only poor people use them.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997, any political party aware of the fact that vestiges of poverty still persist should be bold enough to deal firmly with these matters and I commend the Government and the Minister for the fact that it is determined as part of its urban development programme to ensure that proper sanitation is being brought to Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty whatsoever in supporting this Bill. I think it was well thought out, I think it was properly drafted. Its objects are clear even though the Honourable Member for St. Michael East who called it a gimmick said that the objectives were clear but the reasons were not, drawing a very slender distinction between objectives and reasons, more reflective, I believe of his inability either to comprehend the English language or the confusion that has reigned in his mind as he took some body blows from members on this honourable side.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this piece of legislation. I am definitely going to support it. I think it bears the potential to transform urban Barbados in circumstances where I believe Honourable Members on the Other Side, despite their stated intention not to support, will certainly recognise its worth and will very shortly be seeing their constituents benefit from the programmes that will follow under this most enlightened piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to hear the speech of the Honourable Member for St. James North. One would not have thought that would have been the speech from the Honourable Member who is responsible for rural development. It is clear to me that rural Barbados is not the same place I know because imagine we had a Rural Development Commission for 3 years and the only 2 things...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we had 3 votes for the Rural Development Commission so far, since I have been in this House of Assembly. The Honourable Minister can only highlight 2 people in the beautiful constituency of St. Lucy, 2 in St. John, who have gained from the Rural Development Commission. We are dealing with individuals, but he could not highlight one single project that has been done in that constituency neither can he...

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I will elucidate the Honourable Member. I made reference to the fact that the manifesto promised a Rural Enterprises Fund and I said that the fund is going into effect this year. I said that we had some money left back last year and I mentioned the figure of \$100 000 and said that out of that \$100 000 we made loans available to entrepreneurs.

Now \$100 000 is not a lot of money to make loans but 2 people got money out of that \$100 000 and they got money in the extent of \$20 000. Do you want the names?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I do not want the names because the names may be connected to the Ministry of Housing. It might be connected to the NHC.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the same thing that the Minister is saying now I said from the outset, that the vote for rural was too low. I am glad that there is an admission in here by the Minister where a Commission was set up to fool people that they are going to eliminate all the problems in rural Barbados and yet the Minister is admitting in 1997 that he cannot get more than \$6 million to run a commission that is supposed to eliminate poverty in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know something, and this information will help you. The \$5 million that Urban Development Commission is getting this year is supposed to be divided between 103 000 because, let me remind you, in urban Barbados there are probably 103 000 and if you divide the \$5 million by 103 000 all you are talking about is \$48.54 per person. Tell me, Sir, that cannot even buy a window for poor people.

Can you imagine, Sir, that whenever this Government comes to this Assembly and it is clear to me because they talk about poverty and they talk about slums, whenever they are dealing with slums they are talking about chicken feed. Whenever they are dealing with poor people they cannot come to this Assembly and bring a substantial vote to deal with poor people. Whenever they are dealing with rich people they are prepared to sit back and give large sums whether it be to the consultants or whatever you want to call it. We are talking about problems of poor people in this country. It is a bare joke and a farce.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The whole purpose for the fund to which I referred is to lend small sums to small business people many of them who have land for agriculture in particular and want money to buy equipment and such like. The Rural Development Commission cannot be in the same position as Barclays Bank or BNB because it does not have the resources to make huge loans so people speaking in excess of \$25 000 have to look elsewhere. It is for small people seeking capital for agriculture.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: There are 8 000 people in urban Barbados who do not have water borne facilities. If you multiply that by \$1 000 per person and you know you cannot get that under a \$1 000 - but I am being conservative - that is \$8 million so the vote will be burst already. They got in here and voted \$5 million to solve those problems and one particular problem would burst the vote. Who are you fooling?

That is only toilets we are dealing with. How about the problem with the Belle. You said there are 5 000 people in the Belle and the Belle water catchment is responsible for V₃rd of the water in Barbados. It is a serious problem that must be addressed tomorrow and not 2 years from now.

You are telling me that you are going to come in here and talk about our voting for \$5 million to eliminate the problems of urban Barbados. It is a bare joke and it is time that this Government stops fooling poor people. They have been doing it for a long time. The same way that this Government came in here a year ago and went to Apes Hill. Let me tell you how they fool poor people. 9.35 p.m.

They went to Apes Hill and claimed that they wanted a housing project up there knowing full well that the previous owner could not get permission from the Town and Country Planning but they got it and reversed themselves one year after. You work that out, Sir, and you are telling me that I must take this party as a serious party which is looking after the interest of poor people in this country? No way. When the interest of the rich is upfront this party is upfront, but when the interest of the poor man is upfront this party is lagging behind.

Mr. Speaker, I must stop here. I cannot identify all of them because the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is a very smart man. He has been able in one swipe to get \$6 million or more which is more than the vote for the whole of urban. You can imagine what I am telling you? When he is representing his constituency, he makes sure he gets his fair share.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, this is the second time for the day that we have had this hyperbole. You must not tell the people that because the people can add and multiply. One hundred and thirty-eight households multiplied by 6 000 could be \$6 million? This is ignorance. They sat down in here and voted over \$800 000 to pay the people at Arch Hall. Since that was done in March, they have now enlarged it to \$6 million.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is only talking about the actual cash paid to the members of Arch Hall but he is not telling us about the land they will have to buy next door to Arch Hall to make the people happy and give them a new housing development, neither would he tell us about the money that had to be spent at Mangrove and when you add that total cost it comes to more than \$6 million.

I congratulate the Honourable Member because I am doing exactly what the Honourable Member for St. James North did, congratulated him for Forty Acres because he had the plan. I would like the Honourable Member for St. James North to tell me who is the MP on the backbench that cannot send a proposal to him that is proper because he cannot be referring to anybody, on this side.

I would tell him that if he looks at the Rural Commission he would realize that he left out St. Joseph. He did not mention the name of St. Joseph for any development in the rural and that is in your Manifesto. Tell me where you read rural and if you see anything mentioning St. Joseph in there. They said the Scotland District hoping that they would catch up with St. Joseph, but St. Andrew is getting all the glory.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that urban Barbados has serious problems and no \$5 million can solve the problems in urban Barbados. This party of which I am the shadow Minister for this particular Head cannot support it because we would be misleading this House and the people in urban Barbados if we were to give them the impression that between now and 1999 they could solve all the problems in urban Barbados.

I am saying today on the Floor of this House that this is a political gimmick to give the impression that they will be solving all the problems in urban Barbados. I am surprised at some of the members on that side who voted and agreed that this is a good piece of legislation.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I heard certain comments attributable to the Honourable Member where he stated that this Government is misleading poor people. He mentioned specifically Apes Hill. I do not know of what he speaks but Apes

Hill is a development which centres around the acquisition of land by this administration on which 50 houses will be sited. It is land which is still in the ownership of the Government. It is land which will be vested in the National Housing Corporation.

I would like the Honourable Member to explain what he means when he is speaking about this administration misleading poor people. I think those words are sufficiently strong that they should be expunged from the record.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Minister wants me to say not Apes Hill but Baywoods, I would say Baywoods then. If that is what he wants I will say it for him.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because in his mention about the development, if he means Baywoods, the land at Baywoods was acquired by the Government for housing development from a landowner as we had indicated when the debate came up. We acquired other lands from the landowner. That land was no longer needed by us. There was another agency connected with the landowner that wanted to develop the land but that had nothing to do with us.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is untruthful when he is stating that we obtained Town Planning permission for that parcel of land. We did not obtain any Town Planning permission for that parcel of land. That was done by the owner himself. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, that cannot be true because when the acquisition came in here the owner said he wanted the land as grass land for his cows. I am saying that seeing it has been brought into the record now, I want to go a step further, Mr. Speaker, because the land was not returned to the original owner.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you might be on good ground but at the wrong time. I would just like to refer you to the Standing Orders Nos. 28(4) and 28(11). I suggest that you proceed with the debate before us. I am not going to allow you to constantly continue referring to matters that have been discussed in here already and decisions made on them as clearly stated by the Standing Orders.

Could you proceed, please, with the debate in hand. I am not going to allow any debate and discussion on those matters, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am also concerned that under clause 15, "the Commission may

serve on the owner or occupier." I would like that changed, Sir. I want the "or" out and an "and" put in there for the simple reason...

Aside.

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Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the way this section is worded it gives people the right to pick on whom they want to pick on. If you want to pick on the owner, you will pick on the owner. If you want to pick on the occupier you would pick on the occupier so I want some clarification on this particular section.

Mr. SPEAKER: You would like to see them pick on both then, you mean?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Well, that is your interpretation, Sir. I am saying that clarity is being sought to make sure. Because it is my opinion that the occupier is not the problem but it is the owner that you need to deal with and the occupier should be taken out of this.

Mr. SPEAKER: What I would suggest to you, Sir, if you can move on is that when you come into Committee, it is obviously a Committee matter, an amendment could be moved and we could move on. You have made the suggestion.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that we have to be clear that when we make laws that it affects the right people and not the wrong ones. It is also clear to me that we are having a serious problem with this particular Bill because we have the Ministry of Health which has particular powers to do something.

The Ministry of Health tomorrow when this Act is passed, it will still have power to go and declare a building derelict. The Commission can do the same thing. Somebody could change their mind and the information is not passed like how it happened in St. George where a bulldozer moved in and the building was pushed down, when someone could have given representation of their future plans and what they planned to do. But because of the conflict between the two Ministries you would create a problem where somebody discusses something with a particular Commission or Ministry but the other one does not know and the bulldozer moves in and demolishes the particular house when the person would have given the undertaking that they plan to put on the roof on that building and repair it and make it in good condition for someone to live in. 9.45 p.m.

I am saying, Sir, that when you have different authorities with the same command, you can create confusion and conflict in this country unnecessarily.

You can also have a situation where you can have two Ministers in a particular Cabinet not speaking to each other and not knowing what is going on and one wishing to frustrate the other and deliberately set about to destroy a derelict house because of a particular reason otherwise.

We must guard ourselves against these particular things. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we have a situation in this country that we sometimes as legislators, we have to protect constituents and citizens of Barbados from the actions of certain people. Personal vendettas cannot be solved with legislation and that is why I drew your attention to Section 15. It is very wide and powerful.

I am also saying, Sir, that in urban Barbados there is the need to empower the people, you have to move from people renting land to ownership. It is clear to me, I have listened well to these Honourable Members in this Assembly today, and they have linked the Freehold Tenantry Act to what is going on in urban Barbados. It is clear to me that the powers that were given to the tenants on plantation tenantry they want to give that power to the tenants in urban Barbados.

If the Plantation Tenancies Act was done by an Act to amend the Constitution, I would wish to draw to their attention, it is my honest opinion that you would have to follow the same route again to do it for urban.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you very much, we are very grateful for that comment because it is clear to me that the Honourable Members on that side were trying to sneak a constitutional matter into this Assembly without pointing out that it was one. It is very clear and I am very grateful to the Honourable Member for St. Andrew for making the point that they have the numbers and that they will get their constitutional matters through this Assembly without our help. I am very grateful to him. That is why this legislation must be seen in the light that we are agreeing with people to deprive more poor people again in Barbados from the land they own.

Mr. Speaker, a poor constituent in the parish of Bush Hall or Bank Hall and who has a building on that piece of land and has three children living somewhere in St. Lucy and going to school in St. Lucy and some day hopes that the children will come back to Bush Hall or Bank Hall to vote for the representative of their choice, the building is in disrepair but the children have promised the parents that when they are finished going through school, they will go to the Bank and borrow enough money to put the building in good standing. The Ministry under the Urban Renewal Programme wants that property so it is declared as a

derelict building and they push down the building and the three poor children are deprived of having a piece of land in Barbados even though the land is rightfully theirs. But because somebody wants a house spot for some constituent that they feel deserve to have a house spot, they are prepared to deprive somebody else to give them that piece of land.

If one were to listen to the Minister today when he dealt with the Freehold Tenancies Act, when he gave the impression that it only affected the plantation tenantry the same argument we used in urban Barbados that whether you own a piece of land as a plantation or small man, they do not care. They want the land and they will take it away if they have to pass the necessary Act in this Assembly once they are pleasing the people that they want to please.

I am saying, Sir, that it does not make sense in Barbados for any Government to deprive poor people to give poor people land. If they disagree with me, they should say it now. I am saying that this Government has a commitment to the poor people to find the necessary land and they have enough. I have said that in here on many occasions. Any land the Government want for people that are poor should be given from their land stock and stop taking away poor people's land to give poor people. What they are actually doing is creating social unrest in this country. It is not fair to a poor man who has to fight to find money. Remember, Sir, the Minister says that \$15 000 is not a lot of money, so the people will be deprived of their land and then later on, they will offer them \$15 000 or something like that to go land searching.

You must understand, Mr. Speaker, the issue of land in Barbados is a serious matter. It is an issue, Sir, that people sometimes take up arms and protect themselves. I am telling you that if the Act is allowed to be passed the way that they want to pass it, you as a representative in urban Barbados, you will want to run from the constituency that you represent because the personal conflicts that it will create on a daily basis, will be so many that you would not be able to handle them and trying to referee that war will be putting your life in danger.

I am saying that all right thinking Members of Parliament will not support this Act but what they should do is to encourage Government to take up their own land and put in the necessary amenities and sell the people the land at the value of the land without the infrastructure that they have put in. I am not saying that people in urban Barbados should not get land, I support the view that poor people have a right to land but at the same time you should not deprive poor people to give the poor land. You do not do it to the rich so why would you want to do it to the poor people.

If you check the record of this Government for the last three years, all they have been doing is passing the land that they have over to the rich and then expect poor people to give their land to the poor. Check the land acquisitions that came to this Assembly and you will see that it is true.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that this Government must seriously look at its policy when it is getting rid of its own land and it must ask itself who they should give their land to. It is clear to me, Mr. Speaker, that the policy of this Government is wrong and they need to go back to the drawing board. 9.55 p.m.

I am grateful to the Honourable Member for St. Andrew for admitting there is no policy. So that is why they need to have a policy because all they are doing is making it difficult for their Members of Parliament. Every time you pick up the newspaper in this country you are seeing people asking for house lots and the Government saying they do not have any. The problem is a particular problem in urban Barbados but yet still, Sir, every Tuesday you come in here you can hear Government is selling land and the Members of Parliament in here are begging for house spots for their people. The Government does not have land to sell to the constituents of the members but they have land to sell to certain groups in this country.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You know if you talk about CLICOI will talk about Eastern Land Developments and you do not want me to talk about Eastern Land Developments because if I talk about Eastern Land Developments you know we are going right down to the Marina.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one minute to conclude.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we also have a particular problem in urban Barbados, Sir, where the Government needs to put some money aside to make sure that the people in urban Barbados can insure their properties because a large number of houses in urban Barbados are not insured.

We must make sure, Sir, because of the closeness of the houses to each other, that the people in urban Barbados are protected and, the last and most important point, Sir, if we are serious about the people in urban Barbados, it is not dishing out money to urban Barbados, but we should find jobs for the people in urban Barbados because with an unemployment rate of 27%, according to the same statistics produced by one of your Government Departments commissioned by you, I am saying, Sir, that at a rate of 27% one of the main things we should be dealing with first in here is trying to bring down that rate from 27%, empowering the people to make sure that they can provide for themselves and their families instead of trying to encourage those people to look for handouts. Thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move that further consideration of this matter be postponed until Friday morning.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Friday, 25th July, 1997 at 11.00 o'clock a.m.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 10.00 p.m.

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