

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 24, 1997.

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.25 a.m. on Tuesday, 24th June, 1997.

PRESENT

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

J.P.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.

Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Rons.), 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. TOLL, Q.C., M.A.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport) (Leader of the House)

Hon. Dr. 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. (Hccis.), Dip. Ed., LL.B.(Hons.), LEC (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 Rev. Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes for Tuesday, 10th June, 1997.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable, the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday the 10th day of June, 1997, which minutes have been circulated be taken as read.

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

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

On June 23, I received a request from the Honourable Leader of the House asking for the televised recording of a Ministerial Statement to be made by the Right Honourable Prime Minister and that permission is so granted. This will be a recording for later broadcast.

I have also received a request this morning from the Leader of the Opposition to have live televised debate on a Resolution. This Resolution deals with the abandonment of compulsory acquisition of land from C. O. Williams Farm situated at Bay woods and Apes Hill, and this is on the Agenda for today. Unfortunately I have had to refuse permission for this debate to be broadcast live today.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Duties, Taxes and other Payments (Exemption) Nos. 8, 10 and 11 Orders, 1997.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to lay the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Technical and Vocational Educational Training Council known as TVET Council for the periods April 1, 1994 to March 31, 1995 and April 1, 1995 to March 31, 1996.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Urban Development Commission Bill, 1997 be read a first time.

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 1833 the British Parliament passed legislation which freed the slaves in the West Indies with effect from the following year. The exact details of the transition however were left to the Colonial Parliament. History reports that this Barbados House of Assembly of which we, the descendants of those slaves are now members, were hostile to the momentous decision before they finally passed the legislation.

Our ancestors, like those in other West Indian Islands became free from being the oppressor and the oppressed on the 1st of August 1834. This was however under the conditions of an apprenticeship which lasted 4 years until the 1st of August 1838. Barbados then set about to begin to create a free society.

This event occurred some 200 years from the date that slaves were first brought to the island. It was to be a further 100 years before another event of significance dictated the birth of the Barbados Progressive League, the Barbados Labour Party and the Barbados Workers Union. I refer to the 1937 disturbances which resulted in the death of 14 persons, injury to 47 persons and the arrest of some 400 loyal Barbadians. The process of emancipation took a monumental step after this event and this in no way diminishes the importance of the confederation riots of 1876.

In the decade prior to the disturbances Barbadians got caught up in the wave of enthusiasm, for the idea of social justice which was sweeping across many of our countries. The event saw the emergence of democratic movements which made the formation of the Democratic League by Charles Duncan O'Neal in 1934.

As the economic situation became progressively worse and with the advent of the 1929 depression offering no hope for relief, Barbados was ripe for discontent and unrest. The return of Mr. Clement Payne to Barbados and his speeches denouncing working conditions for ordinary Barbadians and calling for the formation of working class organisations, inspired the masses but did not please the leaders. Ultimately Clement Payne was arrested and convicted but acquitted on appeal albeit too late to stop his deportation. The rest is now history.

Payne's deportation order led to protest among the masses and his departure resulted in riots across the island. As a result July 26 has become a landmark in the history of Barbados due to the disturbances which occurred on that day. When the dust cleared the Barbados Progressive League emerged under Grantley Adams, C. A. Brathwaite, Hugh Springer and others. Shortly thereafter the Barbados Labour Party which was the successor to the Barbados Progressive League and the Workers Union were formed and fought on behalf of the masses of this country.

The Barbados Labour Party remains the champion of the cause of the underprivileged winning for Barbadians universal adult suffrage in 1950. The right of one man one vote must clearly be recognised as the next significant date in our history. This party blazed the trail in the 1950s which led eventually to the next date which was to

influence us as a country, that of independence on November 30, 1966 under the then Premier, Mr. Errol Barrow.

The Barbados Labour Party Government committed to the recognition of significant events in our history and to the contributions which our people have made to its progress and development has in the past paid tribute to these events and to our patriots. The Emancipation monument, a greater than life size statue by local sculptor, artist and teacher, Karl Broodhagen, was erected at the St. Barnabas Roundabout to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of Barbados from the institution of slavery. It was commissioned by a previous Government and was unveiled by the then Prime Minister the Honourable H. B. St. John on March 28, 1985. The sculptor's name for the statue, Emancipation, was as true of 1937 as it was of 1834.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that all Barbadians today, from the very young to the very old, come to know that the freedoms which they so cherish today, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of religious conviction, workers rights, one man one vote, were won by the blood, the sweat and the tears of our forefathers. The suffering and the pain of the horrible conditions which brought them across the oceans in the middle passage, the whippings they received as they toiled and slaved in the plantation fields, in the plantation houses, and in the houses and business places of other colonial masters were but a prelude to the victories won on August 1, 1834 and July 26, 1937. These dates, Sir, are significant in our calendar and must never be forgotten.

The story of the trials and the tribulations must forever be told. It must be repeated from generation to generation and remain imprinted in our minds. It is for this reason that my Government believes that the most significant date in our history is the date of the emancipation of the slaves of this nation. Without this achievement no other date nor any other achievement in the quest for social, political and economic justice would have been possible. It is the fount from which we emerged to start the battle of controlling our destiny as a people and as a nation. 11.35 a.m.

Equally as we recall the date of emancipation, we must also remember the disturbances of 1937. A report of the Deane Commission refers to the harsh and equitable conditions under which the majority of Barbadians leaped out of existence just 60 years ago. The over population, rampant unemployment, the removal of immigration as an option, the exploitation of those who did have work, the shortage of food, the high cost of housing, clothing, fuel

and soaps were some of the arduous conditions to which some of our people were subjected. It is without doubt therefore that the heroic actions of those courageous persons on July 26, 1937 laid the foundations for the emergence of modern Barbados.

Sir, when we consider how far we have come in the last 60 years, it is really a testament to us not only to successive Governments and leaders but to all Barbadians of all colours and of all classes. For us to have achieved to the point where the rest of the world recognise us today as leading the human social index without the violence and dissipation of Ireland or Bosnia is a credit to all of our people, those who were disenfranchised and those who were privileged.

In the light of the foregoing, Mr. Speaker, my Government will continue where previous administrations began by putting in place measures which will enhance and give greater significance to these two historic events.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, Government proposes, first, that as of this year, August 1, 1997 shall be celebrated as Emancipation Day and shall be declared a public holiday every year.

Secondly, as of this year, July 26, 1997 shall be a day of national significance and shall be so celebrated every year.

Thirdly, a public commemoration will be erected to those involved in the disturbances of 1937 and specifically will list the names of those who lost their lives.

And fourthly, we propose to recommend to His Excellency the Governor-General that those persons who were convicted during the disturbances of 1937 should be pardoned under the section 78 of the Constitution of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I strongly believe that these decisions are as crucial to our future development as a sovereign country as the implementation of the correct economic policies or the reduction of unemployment.

Barbados must not only be proud of its economic and social achievements but it must also do right by its people. It must record with pride the sacrifice of life and dignity of a people who fought because they believed that there was a better life for their children and their grandchildren. We must record with pride the struggle of a people whose bravery had deep roots in our heritage. We must record with pride the memory of a people who endured because they knew that one day this Assembly which acted with

complicity in the oppression would one day act in the interest of the preservation of human dignity and fairness of all of its citizens.

The charge, Mr. Speaker, to us who form and lead this Nation, is always to remember how easy it was to become slaves and how difficult it was to gain freedom. And, these days therefore must forever live as a reminder to all of our people that we should never allow ourselves to become slaves or bond servants whether physically, mentally, or in other ways.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Numbers 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise on this point of order in relation to this particular resolution. On this side of the House, Sir, we are particularly distressed and I am speaking to the issue of the suspension of the Standing Orders with which we might not be able to agree or for any procedure of Government's business in the House except for those matters which were on the original Order Paper.

The first point I want to make, Sir, is that the Order Paper and the Supplement to the Order Paper in some cases were only distributed to members as late as Sunday. But that would relate to the first supplement to the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Chamber has been meeting infrequently. This Chamber has been engaging in all kind of small matters and I believe myself that if the Government was serious about conducting serious business in this Chamber that this Parliament would not appear to be cynically manipulated by forces outside of the Chamber and that members would be accorded with the basic respect to which they are entitled. Adequate notice of matters on the Order Paper and in relation to that, Sir, I should also add that the second supplement to the Order Paper, the one that deals with a massive supplementary of 7.4 million dollars in the month of June 1997 was distributed to members of the Opposition as late as last night and it would be expected that members should debate matters of that sort this morning.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know of no way in the world which practices parliamentary democracy in which

arrangements like that can be acceptable. I know, Sir, that you yourself have always been of the belief that a higher level of credit and respect should be given to members of the Chamber. I do not speak only for the Opposition.

I could only speak in relation to the facts for the Opposition because I have no personal knowledge of when members on that side receive their documents. But, if I were to speak for members on that side, I want to say that they too are being cynically manipulated to come into this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and receive documentation for the conduct of government business the day before.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I say if the House was meeting every week and had a heavy work load and these were supplements to substantive business, I could understand. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, these are supplements adding five new items of business to an Order Paper which has on three old items of business, one of which has been on the Order Paper for 14 months with no explanations. Item No. 1, Item No. 2 the Honourable Attorney General has explained why there is a delay and we accept that. But there can be no excuse, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and the Members of the Government could not expect the Opposition to be satisfied that we must conduct business today when notice of these matters would only have been given on Sunday. It can have serious consequences, one of which resulted in the ruling which you had to give today and I am not reflecting on that ruling but I want to say that that ruling would have occurred because the Order Paper got to Members late. They would only have had the chance to consider the item on the Order Paper last night and therefore they could only have requested the broadcast of an item this morning. 11.45 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it can hardly be in keeping with the tradition which the Honourable Member for the City says she wishes to maintain in here, and we support any efforts to that end. It can hardly be in keeping with those traditions that events such as these could be occurring today. We have these two-week hiatuses which in each case have been sufficient time for Government to get its act together. There is no way that parliamentarians can be treated with this scant respect and there is no way that this cynical manipulation of Parliament can continue. I do not know who is responsible for it, but I am saying that it is degrading to this Parliament for us to have to continue on this basis.

I know the Honourable Member for the City, as I said, shares these kinds of concerns and we cannot agree to participate in debates in this Chamber on the basis of the late arrival of papers. The supplementary Order Paper for my Members was delivered to my office last night for me

to hand them out to people. What kind of Parliament is this? Papers were sent to my office downstairs for me, as Leader of the Opposition - I am not an officer of Parliament to distribute like some messenger to Members of the Opposition.

One Member, a Rt. Honourable Member of this Chamber, has not even received his copy of the supplement to the Order Paper and Government says it wishes to proceed with a number of items, forcing Your Honour into a ruling that an item which he only had notice of yesterday cannot be broadcast. Mr. Speaker, we on this side in the spirit of compromise agreed quite readily when we were asked by the Honourable Member for the City at the eleventh hour last night to concur that the Prime Minister's presentation this morning under Statement by Ministers should be recorded for broadcast at a later time.

The Government cannot agree with the Opposition that matters of which we have notice yesterday could be deferred to another time so that the people whom we serve in this Chamber can have a chance to a live broadcast of those issues. The Government wants to hide something and I am saying it is also manipulating the process and Members on this side have to register their strongest condemnation. We consider it to be a breach of trust and it cannot be the basis on which we can continue to function.

There must be Members on that Side who have to have the same concerns about these matters and some of whom would not even have seen these measures until last night as well. It cannot be a basis to continue.

I say to the Honourable Member for the City that we are willing to assist in whatever way we can and have tried, up to last night, and have agreed to an arrangement which would be satisfactory but the Government having gotten us to agree to that now wishes to railroad us into debating matters on the Order Paper for which we would have had notice as late as last night. This cannot be the basis to move forward.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government will not be accused of being manipulative. I do not know who the manipulator is of whom the Leader of the Opposition speaks. He clearly is privy to something that I am not.

As Leader of the House, from the time I assumed that post, I have spoken on divers occasions to yourself,

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with the Leader of the Opposition and with the Clerk of this Parliament as to the process. When matters which are legislative matters leave our Cabinet on Thursday, and from the time I knew myself this Honourable Chamber was sitting on a Tuesday, and from the time that Cabinet Government was introduced, the Cabinet of Barbados met on a Thursday and still does. When matters which are legislative matters leave the Cabinet on Thursday afternoon and our Cabinet in Barbados through successive governments is not like certain other Cabinets in the rest of the Caribbean. This is not a Cabinet where a prime minister comes in at 9 o'clock and at half past the Cabinet meeting is finished, or where a prime minister comes in and gives instructions and within 20 minutes the Cabinet meeting is finished. This is a Cabinet where other prime ministers in the Caribbean wonder what it is that we do working through a whole day in successive governments in Barbados. We wonder too on our side what it is they do in other countries that a Cabinet can be finished in an hour.

When the Cabinet's meetings end at 4, 5 o'clock, sometimes 6 or whatever hour, having started at half past 9 in the morning, matters which are legislative matters must then go back to the Ministry. In some cases such as the one at No. 8 of our Order Paper today which is a supplementary it also has to go back to the Ministry of Finance. Then it has to come back to the Cabinet office before it can come to the Clerk of Parliament who must get it to us. We are all human. The earliest, in my understanding, that a matter can leave the Cabinet and get back to the client ministry would be the following Friday morning. Then it has to go through those processes. So often it does not get to the Clerk of Parliament before 2 or 4 o'clock of the afternoon of Friday.

From the time I came into this House papers were delivered to my home and, indeed, to all the homes of the Honourable Members, sometimes Saturday mornings, Saturday afternoons, Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings or whenever, because it is known that the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party both have a parliamentary caucus on Monday evenings where they work through the Order Paper in preparation for House meetings on Tuesdays. Sometimes this process is slowed down for one reason or the other.

It is not a case where you can point your finger and say that somebody is to blame. Sometimes it takes longer in the client ministry, sometimes it takes longer in the Ministry of Finance if it has to go to the Ministry of Finance as indeed the Resolution had to go. Sometimes for all kinds of reasons this thing happens.

I have asked the Cabinet Secretary and the Clerk of Parliament to sit down and try to devise a more expedient *modus operandi*. They have met. They have had that meeting but we still have this situation. It is nothing new. Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition is saying, this is the busiest Parliament in the Caribbean. This is not the Parliament of 1993 and 1994 that has been described by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and agreed to by the Honourable Member for St. John to have been a time of minimalist government.

From September 1994 this Parliament has been busy. We have been so busy that we have worked down through, hardly getting a summer recess. This is a Parliament where we have had major debates. A White Paper on Education has come to Parliament. We have had major debates on tourism, on agriculture. I have put down a resolution giving Members a full 6 weeks notice of a major debate on foreign policy in this country and the debate is set for July 15 so that Members can prepare. This is not an indolent House and it is wrong to try to give that impression simply because what in fact is happening is that the process is so rapid and to some extent so overburdened that you cannot always keep up with broadcasts.

Before I get to the broadcasts the Honourable Leader of the Opposition also made the point about small and trivial matters being debated in here. Major debates have been undertaken in here from which the Leader of the Opposition saw fit to absent himself. He did not think that the debate on the VAT was important and he went about his business. Is the Leader of the Opposition running from debate? 11.55 a.m

I have to say this now, Sir. We have agreed that until there is a broadcast policy in respect of parliamentary broadcasts that a certain process would be gone through, that either the Leader of the Opposition or the Leader of the House would make a request to His Honour the Speaker. If both sides are agreeable to the broadcast, then the Speaker would most probably also be agreeable, but where the two sides could not agree then the Speaker would have to decide. It is his House.

I have to say this, Sir. The importance of the Government's business cannot be superseded about the need for a televised broadcast. The fact of televising cannot be

more important than the substance of a debate, and the Government wishes to proceed with the people's business. There are time constraints in some respects and the Government has its programmes that it wants to be getting on with. It is very unfortunate, and I am sympathetic with the Leader of the Opposition. It is very unfortunate that today, and his letter which is copied to me as Leader of the House dated June 24 asking for live television and radio broadcasts of a debate on the abandonment of a compulsory acquisition of land at Apes Hill in the parish of St. James, it is unfortunate that because the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation has to be consulted in the matter, and do not let us beat about the bush. Cricket is on today and they have their commitments, many of which are financial commitments, that it is just not possible at a few hours notice...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This was put in my hand this morning at twenty minutes to eleven when I walked in here.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. Order, please. The Honourable Member, please.

I am not going to allow you to proceed along the line of referring to a decision the Chair has made. I have made a decision relating to that debate. Could we proceed, please?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes. Well, in that case, Sir, I do not have to go any further except to say that this is a busy Parliament, that the accusation of infrequency is really the most ridiculous I have ever heard.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: It is not our fault that the Opposition cannot generate debate. We have debates in this Chamber, Sir, where all the Members on this Side will speak and maybe two people on the Opposition will speak. That cannot be laid at our door. We bring vibrancy to the debate in here. This Parliament meets frequently. We have no apology to make about the frequency with which it meets. It is a busy Parliament and major matters come

before it for debate. Indeed today we do have major matters we want to be getting on with, Sir.

Thank you.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, this envelope which I hold in my hand after I heard the talk and I opened it, I am showing Your Honour, this is what is in it. Now, Sir, it is very difficult for me to agree to participate in what is apparently being put out by the Leader of the House as the momentous business which we have to do today.

Mr. Speaker, the way they treat us as parliamentarians sometimes is worse than they treat pure bred dogs.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You see now. The Leader says I talk for the sake of talking. Your Honour is aware that if this matter was given to me last night that I would have had no time to study it because this mofning at the bidding of the Leader of the House I came into these precincts at 9.30 to participate in business of Parliament and was treated with disrespect, four of us sitting down up there like four beggars. The Leader of the House, nobody comes to the meeting and the four of us are up there like four beggars.

The Honourable Member for the City is in no position to discuss talking for talking sake. I am talking because I feel the same disgust the Honourable Member would feel in the same circumstances. Why should I be driven to leave my home to come down to Parliament for a meeting of the Commission of Parliament, which is the most important Committee of Parliament, and cannot reach a quorum because not a single, solitary member of the Government turns up?

When the Honourable Member was fixing the meeting at 9.30 a.m. I said at that time, Mr. Speaker, "why is she fixing this meeting at 9.30 a.m.? I cannot afford that time." The next thing I know I am down here ...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. I opened a workshop on cruise tourism at Sherbourne this morning at 9.00 o'clock. I had no notice of any meeting of the Management Commission of Parliament if not I would certainly have been here.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Now, Mr. Speaker, this is monumental incompetence. The Honourable Member had a meeting on cruise tourism and we four idiots...

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, I know. You can make fun at us. The Honourable Member does not want us to broadcast the abandonment of an acquisition and he can laugh at us because we came down here like four jackasses up in the Senate.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Four of us were up in the Senate Chamber waiting for a meeting and the Honourable Member, the Leader of the House said she did not know about it.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the House is notorious for not knowing about things that she set in place. Here we are up there waiting so it means that I have been unable to carry out any business relating to me, furthermore looking at this document, and then they want us to come in here and debate this? The Honourable Member for the City really expects me to participate in a debate for \$7 million on the basis of what she says? We have never been as discourteous as the Honourable Member for the City has been to us.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: But it is not happening today because you were a Daniel come to judgment. You were to correct all wrongs. When we are discussing debate the Honourable Member for St. Andrew should not open his mouth. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew never opened his mouth in here until he became a Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I am very serious. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew might think this is a fun place for him but I am very serious. The Honourable Member cannot expect me to come in here and debate \$7 million in material for the Ministry of Transport. I am not participating because my time has been frittered away today.

Mr. Speaker, what is more, I would submit to Your Honour that we cannot participate, all of us, because we would be in breach of the rules of this House. Rule 22 requires at least a day's notice be given and it has been clearly established that that rule has been broken so it cannot be done, Sir. I submit to Your Honour that it cannot be done. It would be in breach of the rules.

If I may be of any help to Your Honour, Rule 22 says:

"Not less than three clear days' notice of a motion shall be given unless it is Government Business introduced in the name of a Minister, in which case one day's notice shall be sufficient."

We have not had one day's notice, Sir. It cannot be one day's notice. If it was handed in yesterday evening we would have to wait until this evening for 24 hours to pass, so one day has not passed yet, therefore, it is not in time.

The Attorney General will be able to advise the Honourable Member for St. Andrew that one day has 24 hours in it and one day's notice means one clear day. This cannot be done, Sir. I submit to your Honour that it will be a breach of the rules and your Honour may check with the Clerk but my understanding is that this was handed in yesterday. 12.05 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In any event, I was a little disappointed that the Leader of the House could get up and talk about the fact that televising is not going to stand in the way of Government getting on with the people's business.

Mr. Speaker there can be no principle that is higher than the people knowing what business is being done in

their name and the opportunity to see what is being done and hear what is being done in their name must take precedence over doing it in their name. The Leader of the House would only be blowing in the wind when she seeks to suggest that she is putting the people's business before the televising of it.

Your Honour has been forced into an unfortunate position. Until this House reaches the point where the people's business is broadcast on a daily basis, until we reach that point, one would have to ask what it is that the Leader of the House is running away from. Our question is "What would be an abandonment of an acquisition that anybody could have any problems letting the people see, what is it that you do not wish the people to see, what do you wish the people not to hear?"

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I have just drew to the Speaker's attention that it is illegal what they have attempted to do so I have no doubt that after he has consulted with the Clerk he will discover once again that I am right. If I need to call on higher counsel, I have on my left hand here, proper counsel in these matters. We are not novices in this field. We do not give bad advice, Mr. Speaker.

I believe I have made the point but I am disappointed in the Honourable Member for St. Andrew because I have tried very hard with him, Sir.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. I have not spoken in this debate this morning.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, my disappointment has nothing to do with his speaking. Mine is a general disappointment. I am disappointed that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew could not have brought his tremendous skill and courage to bear to allow the Government to agree to the broadcast of this debate. I am disappointed because I cannot begin to think that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew could have anything to hide in the abandonment of land that was about to be developed. I do not understand what the problem would be and I have no doubt that before long we will hear the answers.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that Your Honour has responsibility to ensure that the rights of the minority in this House are not trampled upon by this Government that has shown a cynical disregard...

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Leader of the House in her utterances has tended to demonstrate that the Government is capable of cynicism and our making any statement about the cynicism of the Government is based on the history.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Speaker is consulting, I have to wait until the Speaker is ready.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was waiting until Your Honour is ready for me. I just wish to be certain that Your Honour understood the submission I had made to the effect that according to the information this matter cannot be proceeded with.

In the circumstances, Sir, I will sit and listen for Your Honour.

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

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I was not present, Sir, at the start of the debate but it has been drawn to my attention that some words were attributed to me by the Leader of the House which I certainly never indicated. I do not wish to misquote her, Sir, and if I do I will certainly give way for her to clarify exactly what she said. It has been reported to me that the Member for the City indicated that sometime in 1993, I indicated that my Government was...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. It is a pity that the Honourable Member was not in his place. I said that in 1993 and 1994, in that time up to September 1994, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, and later agreed to by the Honourable Member for St. John, described Government business then as 'minimalist Government'. I never said that he said it in 1993. He said it in here in 1995.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I did not rise when the Honourable Member spoke because I am used to her distorting the records. But Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because the only person who ever used the

expression 'minimalist Government' was me. And what I said was that a matter had not been dealt with after June 1994 because the Parliament was not meeting and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and I agreed, that what essentially was in place was 'minimalist Government'¹.

I am talking about before the no confidence motion period up to the election. The time when you all accused us of doing a whole set of things, signing contracts, passing legislation and told lies all over Barbados so it cannot fall from your mouth now to say that it was 'minimalist Government'¹ because you also said it was the most active time of Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please, you have made your point.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am glad that the Member for the City of Bridgetown has indicated that what was reported to me was basically true that she was attributing to me statements which I did not make and if there is any doubt about what was said, Sir, I would ask you to go for the record so that we can see exactly what was said. I would like to know, Sir, because on many occasions many things have been said about me and I have taken them in my stride but I am not, Sir, going to permit any more distortions of my actions or of my political record to go unchallenged, especially by persons who apparently do not wish to speak truthfully to the records.

I am denying, categorically, that I ever said in here in 1993 that I was operating a 'minimalist Government'¹. I do not even recall, Sir, that I have ever said so in here except perhaps after the Honourable Member for St. John had used those words. I recalled dealing with a matter of public business on the files of my Ministry in which it was suggested that some action should be taken, some major decision and I indicated that it would not be appropriate in the circumstances for my Government to take any action because at that time we would have to be minimalist, we would be operating 'minimalist Government'¹. I do not recall it being said in here, except in clarification, sometime late in 1994 and relating to that time. I want to clarify that position but I also wish to point out that as I came into the Chamber I heard the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown indicating that this Parliament was a very busy Parliament and I could not believe my ears because only about 2 to 3 weeks ago I made a statement in this Parliament ... 12.15 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, all of this harangue is that I got it wrong and I confess my mistake. It is the Leader of the

Opposition who was the mover of that phrase minimalist Government, seconded by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and not the other way around. I confess that that was a mistake.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member has this House totally confused. The Honourable Member was making a presentation to suggest that when we were the administration that we were in fact operating a minimalist Government and see-king to compare that period with what is happening now. The facts are that during the period that the Honourable Member referred to the Government, when we were in Government, was an active Government with regular meetings of the House of Assembly. The point being made today is that the Government is meeting on an infrequent basis and we can properly say that this is now a minimalist Government. That is the point.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, it is now clear to the people of Barbados that what I said on that occasion was true and it is again demonstrated here today because apparently to all intents and purposes the government has no major matters to discuss and to share with this Parliament which is representative of the people within the framework of the rules of this House. It is clear that after 2 weeks, without Parliament meeting, that there is no major business for discussion in this Chamber and I want to register again my own deep concern, Sir, about the way in which this Parliament is being managed, not in terms, Sir, of your presiding over this Honourable Chamber. I certainly am not calling that into question and I know the procedures that I should follow. I certainly will not do it, Sir, because I know that you are much wiser now, Sir, in the conduct of this Chamber and the way in which you have re-arranged the facial hair around your lips and under your chin. You certainly look smarter, Sir, and I certainly do not intend to cross swords with you.

I want to make it abundantly clear that this Opposition, the Members on this Bench and I dare say I could speak for the Member for St. Michael South Central, is ready, willing and able to discuss matters that are brought in a timely manner for the discussion and consideration of Honourable Members. That is all we ask for, Sir, that we be treated with the courtesy as Honourable Members and as the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has indicated we are treated in ways which are not deserving because if we are a part of the formulation and discussion of public policy in this country we should be so treated. I should not have to wait, Sir, to hear at some school in St. Peter that some agreement is being signed when Parliament is meeting today and we are not treated with the courtesy of giving that information in Parliament. Parliament is being ignored, Sir, and all of the major decisions are being taken elsewhere. That is what is

happening, Sir. They know better and are still not doing what they should be doing. We want to make that point and I will make it. Here it is, Sir, that we are going to have a meeting of Heads of Government and we have not even been summoned as members of the Caribbean Assembly of Parliamentarians to discuss regional matters prior to that meeting. All along we are being sidetracked and I am calling upon the Government and particularly the Leader of this House to try to come to terms with her position as Leader of this House. If she is too busy with her other responsibilities...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Let me say, Sir, I want to clarify the point but the representative of the constituency in which I live is indicating that I want to be invited to a Heads of Government Conference.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I have not spoken in this debate.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I have to listen to the asides and to any comment. The Speaker cannot do that. He cannot hear that.

I have gone to some in my time and I believe I have made a contribution at that level so that would be the last time.

Aside.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: That is an aside that I am not hearing. I want to make it clear, Sir, that I was speaking about the Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians Meeting.

Sir, I want to put these matters in their perspective and I would wish, Sir, this is not a matter of Government and Opposition, this is a matter of fundamental importance for the conduct of our public affairs, that Parliament should be treated with greater courtesy, both sides of Parliament, Sir. As members we should be given the kinds of priority that should be accorded to our position as the Leaders of our respective constituencies. I am certain that those senior members in here, on either side, will support this position and support this call. I refer particularly, Sir, to my honourable friends over there from St. George South, St. Joseph and Christ Church South. When I called, during our last debate, the Member for Christ Church South did get up and make a point that there was a need for the revision of the Standing Orders of this House. He has said that in here, Sir. It was not in opposition to what I was saying it was a further point that he was making and...

Sir, I see some movement behind me so I have to be very careful. I do not know what is going on, Sir, but I have to call on you to protect me.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir, Why should you be called upon to protect the Honourable Member. Does he fear that he might be stabbed in his back again, Sir? 12.25 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe the Honourable Member is a student of Julius Caesar.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Yes, Sir, I am a student and I am constant as the northern star.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I am making the point that while the Standing Orders are in need of revision and I am a member of the Standing Orders Committee set up by this Chamber, Sir, but I have not been summoned to a meeting of that Committee for quite some time. That has nothing to do with the meeting of this Parliament in order to transact the people's business.

I think we need a little more purpose and a greater sense of urgency and the fitness of things in dealing with these matters.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, just to clarify a few points. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South just made reference to the Standing Orders Committee. I have in my hand, as I know he must have in his possession, a draft of the revised Standing Orders of the House of Assembly of Barbados and a guide to the draft and a covering letter from the Clerk of Parliament, dated 12th May, 1997 and it says among other things that the draft which is enclosed herewith is updated to April 30, 1997 and takes account of proposals by the Committee for improving the draft and suggestions by the Members of the House in areas not yet considered by the Committee.

So this work is close to fruition. I would also wish for the record, Sir, to make the point that in the year 1996 this Parliament sat on 44 occasions. There are 52 weeks of the year. It tends to meet usually on a Tuesday. In February of 1996 we met six times. In March we met seven times.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: How many Tuesdays? Do you want me to read out the whole list?

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, please. The Honourable Member, could you address the Chair, please?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We had a Summer recess, Sir, we had a very short Christmas recess. But this Parliament met 44 times in 1996. That is just to give the light of talk about infrequency of meetings in here. The Attorney General is drawing to my attention that 32 Bills passed this Parliament in 1996.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is that those Standing Orders so mentioned be suspended for the remainder of this day's sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE NOTIFICATION OF ABANDONMENT OF THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND FROM C. O. WILLIAMS FARMS AT BAYWOODS AND APES HILL IN ST. JAMES

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move this resolution for the abandonment of the compulsory acquisition of land from C. O. Williams Farms at Baywoods and Apes Hill in St. James. Mr. Speaker, this land was originally acquired by Government for the purposes of satisfying the housing needs in the northern part of Barbados brought on mainly by the problem surrounding land slippage in certain parts of the Scotland District and as you may recall there are a number of houses in the St. Joseph and the St. Andrew area that were due for resiting.

Mr. Speaker, at the time when this application for acquisition came to Parliament, we had not yet completed the social survey in most of these areas in St. Joseph and St. Andrew. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we were also placed in a situation where government was under an obligation to re-site persons as a result of the amendments made by the last administration to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

As a result of that Act, Mr. Speaker, you may recall there were a number of persons who overnight had lost a right to purchase simply because they no longer had the benefit of the provisions in the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which had indicated that where there is more than one tenant on a parcel of land that that person,

provided that they were a tenant for over five years was a qualified tenant under the Act and had a right to force the landlord to sell the land.

That amendment meant that the qualifying number was now five or more tenants and as a result of the amendment the government was under an obligation to compensate those tenants who would now have to vacate the land in case the landlord decided to issue a notice to quit.

There was a provision in the Act which gave them five years security of tenure. As a result, Mr. Speaker, there were a number of areas that were earmarked including the land at Baywoods, St. James which was formerly owned by C.O. Williams Farms, Ltd. In addition to those two categories of persons as I indicated earlier, those affected by land slippage and those affected by the tenancies relocation, there were also a number of persons who we refer to as low income persons who had made a demand on the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation for the purchase of house lots. 12.35 p.m.

It was felt at the time that the land at Baywoods, part of the Water Hall and Apes Hill plantation was a suitable parcel of land for the resiting of such persons and for the provision of house spots in the circumstances. It was part of the policy of Government at the time in keeping with our manifesto to provide house spots on the borders of existing villages so that such persons would be able to have house lots to relocate their houses or to purchase depending on the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, subsequently, events have proven that Apes Hill is not as attractive as we thought it would have been at that time. The residents in White Hill have opted to go to Farmers. Most of the applicants that we have interviewed have opted to go to Farmers in the parish of St. Thomas rather than come to Apes Hill. Farmers is much closer to the areas that have been affected by land slippage than the area of Apes Hill, Water Hall and Baywoods.

In addition to that, because of the fact that there has been an amalgamation of schools in the Airy Hill, White Hill, Hillaby, Mount All areas a number of parents now find themselves in situations where they send their children to school at the primary school which is adjacent to the land at Farmers. Even though this school is in a deserted area it would mean that with the acquisition at Farmers the parents would be next to the school where their children attend and it was found more convenient to resite those persons in the White Hill area to Farmers rather than send them to Water Hall.

With respect to those persons who had been affected by the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, the choice for such persons in addition to persons who are normally categorised as low income persons was land further to the west in the Deane Town area. It is hoped that eventually we would be able to develop an area of over 100 acres of land which is approximately one mile away from where this land is located. It is hoped that when we have finalised plans for the acquisition of this large parcel of land we would be able to make about 1000 lots available to low income persons, persons who have been affected by the tenancy relocations. It is also hoped that we will make provision for community facilities, day care nurseries. The ultimate aim of this Administration is that every single Barbadian who wants to own a house spot or would like a house spot to rent will be able to do so at will. It is hoped that with the provision of this land at Water Hall we would be able to satisfy the needs not only of those persons who might not be able to be accommodated at Farmers but also those persons who would be affected by the tenancies relocations and the low income persons of whom I speak.

Mr. Speaker, a number of persons have expressed an interest in this project. As a matter of fact, we are not short of persons who are willing to fund this project. It is going to involve other Government agencies namely, in addition to the Town and Country Planning Department, the Barbados Water Authority, seeing that we will have to look at the water levels in the area. It is hoped that we would be able by a process of water redistribution to be able to effect a meaningful development in this area.

The plan, Mr. Speaker, eventually would be the construction of a small bridge from the Hope Plantation leading to Water Hall and the acquisition, of lands to the west of Orange Hill at Lancaster so that we would have enough land to accommodate a project of that nature. A project of that nature would take some time. We are presently at a stage where we are now identifying the lands and making the necessary applications for acquisitions and we are hopeful that when we have completed the process of the acquisitions that the project could become a reality. Most of the persons or the concerns who have expressed an interest in this large project have also requested that all acquisitions be finalised before they can put a meaningful proposal to government.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there is one particular Canadian investor who is so excited by the project that he has actually sent 5 model houses to Barbados for Government to examine at no cost should we decide to go ahead with the project. It is anticipated that this project will probably take about 5 years to conceptualise. We are hopeful that we would be able to satisfy most of the house needs in that particular area.

It is regrettable Mr. Speaker, that with respect to the area of Deane Town that when the Government of the day at the time realised that there were no services to that tiny area that they did not attempt to come up with a project which would have brought these services to the area. What the Government had done at that time was to relocate the 46 or so residents from the small Deane Town area where there were no water borne toilets, no electricity, no means of transportation, no telephone, and we are hoping that in finalising this project we would be able to bring some level of development back to this area.

Mr. Speaker, you would note that I did indicate that there were a number of government agencies that would have to be involved in this project. It must not be assumed that once the acquisitions have been finalised that that would be the end of the project. There will be a number of demands which will be made from time to time by the Town and Country Planning Department. It will take some time before the entire project is finalised. 12.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we are also speaking to a number of financial institutions on this project. It is hoped that the concept of 100 per cent mortgages will become a reality for those persons who are interested in constructing their own homes. We plan to have a mix of completed houses and starter houses as well so that there will be a wide choice to all parties who are interested in a house or a house spot in the area.

Mr. Speaker, the owner of this land, C.O. Williams Farms Ltd., - you would have noticed that in abandoning this land it will revert to C.O. Williams Farms Ltd. We have had a number of discussions with the owners of the plantation, the directors of C.O. Williams Farms Ltd. They have expressed some disappointment at the fact that most of the land we are acquiring is land which is owned by C.O. Williams Farms Ltd. You would have noticed that most of the land to the east of the Deane Town area is owned by C.O. Williams Farms Ltd.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The land at Farmers is also owned by C. O. Williams Farms Ltd. The land adjoining the 47 acres of land that we hope to acquire to the east of Deane Town that land is also owned by C. O. Williams Farms Ltd. so we are taking a very big chunk of land from C. O. Williams Farms Ltd.

At the time when we had completed our survey of this particular land we did realize in the Ministry of Housing that the cost of developing it would be a little bit more expensive than we had anticipated in the first place. It is not level land. There are a number of holes in the actual terrain. It would need skilled engineering in order to have the type of houses that would attract the type of prices we are looking at for that particular area and, Mr. Speaker, we are not so sure that we would have been able to achieve this.

At the time when we considered abandoning the land, C. O. Williams Farms Ltd. themselves did indicate that they would not mind proceeding with a project of housing similar to the one which they had done at Bourne's Village. We certainly welcomed this. It would mean that notwithstanding the fact that we are abandoning the acquisition for housing, that some other company was interested in actually taking over the project.

Mr. Speaker, the related company of Eastern Land Development Co. will be building 36 units on the said site. The houses that are to be constructed on this parcel of land will comprise 1, 2 and 3-bedroom wooden units. They will be built on permanent concrete block foundations with purchasers having the option of a wall kitchen and bathroom section.

The houses will, however, be offered as wooden units. These are not the type of units we were thinking about when the project was conceptualised. As I indicated earlier, we were more thinking in terms of making house lots available for persons who had been dislocated either by the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act or as a result of the land slippage in St. Andrew. So they are doing a completely different project to what we had envisaged. In any event, the use that is being put to the land is a lot better than if it was being left abandoned.

In terms of floor areas, the houses will range from 300 to 600 square feet. The properties, houses and the land will sell within a range of \$55 000 to \$75 000. These houses are made strictly for low income earners. If you go anywhere around Barbados and you try to assess the values of small parcels of land you would see that this in many respects is more or less a give-away for low income earners.

Aside.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: You have to face facts. Even the terraced units that we presently build for not only low income earners but people below the poverty line, it is costing the Ministry of Housing \$100 000 just for

one unit. To get a unit for anything less than \$100 000 is certainly within the range of most low income earners. I do not think we could go much lower than that especially when you see that land is being sold in ranges from \$5 to \$8 per square foot. We have proposed certain amendments to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act for the benefit of those St. Michael Members of Parliament who might be pondering prices in situations like these but even at \$3 per square foot, and you are looking at 5 000 square feet, that is \$15 000.

I mentioned the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act because of the fact that in the areas that we hope to acquire for low income earners, there will be a level of subsidy by Government in that the sale of most of these lots will be at cost.

Corbin's Village in St. Andrew which is also one of the areas that has been earmarked for the low income earners is being sold at a price of \$3 per square foot, but that is a different area because that is an area where very few people would like to relocate.

It is not expected, Mr. Speaker, that we will need this land for any purpose whatsoever. The arrangement which is being made by C. O. Williams Farms Ltd. has absolutely nothing to do with Government. In the Green Paper on Housing which we will be debating in Parliament very shortly, we have indicated that Government will not only be directly involved in the building of houses or in housing but we will also be acting as a facilitator.

Mr. Speaker, I think this type of project, notwithstanding the fact that it is not a project which is being coordinated by Government, but this is the type of project where Government can be a facilitator. We are certainly looking at areas throughout the length and breadth of Barbados where we can acquire small parcels of land, and when I talk of small parcels of land I mean land between 5 to 10 acres where we can give small contractors the land to build up to 40 houses with the assurance by Government that the financing of which I speak, the 100 per cent mortgages of which this Government has been speaking about so often, will be used in funding the houses that will be constructed in this type of project. We have already asked Members of Parliament, both members on this side and members on that side for information as to land on the borders of existing villages. I have not yet received the information from the Honourable Member for St. John but most members have indicated... 12.55 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. He has

today added a new element to this Debate and he is now mentioning about lands attached to existing districts. This is a new phrasing by him, Sir. Previously, he has never mentioned this before. He asked for areas to be developed for housing.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. On Thursday evening, Sir, I received a letter from the Division of Housing asking me to comment by a date rather than by another date and I wrote a letter yesterday to the Ministry of Housing saying that I was unable to comment because I had not yet received whatever it is that they asked me to comment on. It may very well be that the Minister is of the view that he had sent information to Honourable Members but I am saying that I wrote a letter to the Division at Sir Frank Walcott Building yesterday, pointing out to them that I had received that letter but I did not know what they were speaking about, just as I do not now know what the Honourable Member is speaking about.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I refer to the Green Paper on Housing. If the Honourable Member has not yet received his copy of that document, I must apologise to him but the Green Paper on Housing has been circulated or rather should have been circulated to all Members of Parliament. I have given instructions to the Ministry of Housing. It is the first time that an attempt has been made in the Ministry of Housing to really deal with the problem surrounding housing in Barbados and at least to get the input, not only from Members of Parliament, but all the players in the housing arena.

We have already had meetings with bankers, various construction companies and a number of professionals. We believe that the Members of Parliament by their identification with their various constituencies will have ideas for the Ministry of Housing. We do not believe that there is a monopoly of knowledge at the Ministry of Housing and we certainly welcome the comments from the Members of Parliament. I would hope that when that debate on housing finally comes to Parliament that I would not hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael West say that he did not have an opportunity to peruse the document.

I would hope that in the same way that he offers suggestions, very good suggestions, outside of this House and along the corridors that he would be able to make his suggestions in writing. Certainly, some of the recommendations which have been made in this Green Paper - if I say White Paper I mean Green Paper - are certainly suggestions which he himself have made to me elsewhere. They are not suggestions coming from any one person. They are suggestions from a host of persons and we are hoping that we would be able to address the

housing situation in this country after the views of all members have been sought.

Mr. Speaker, I had indicated that Government is seeking to abandon this parcel of land because it no longer will serve the purpose for which it was going to be acquired in the first place, in that we will be providing house spots elsewhere for those persons who have been dislocated as a result of the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act as a result of the land slippage in the Scotland District area and as a result for the demand for low income housing.

In addition to that Mr. Speaker, the residents in the area which have been worst affected have clearly identified the areas to which they would like to relocate. This particular parcel of land is no longer included in that list. The project which is being done on this particular parcel of land, even though Government is not involved in it, it certainly has the blessing of this administration and you can rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that as long as members identify suitable areas, that we will try to encourage small and big contractors to execute projects of this nature.

In keeping with our commitment in the Green Paper, Government will act as a facilitator even if it means having to liaise with the various Government departments to ensure that the project becomes a reality.

Mr. Speaker with those brief remarks I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 1.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, today we are asked to deal with this Resolution and when one looks at this Resolution one gets the impression that it is not controversial but when one remembers, Sir, what went on

when this land acquisition was first made one would have to ponder what would have caused Government in less than one year to change their mind the way they have done today. Today we are told that the reason why they have changed their mind is because the people from White Hill do not want to live in St. Andrew anymore.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. I did not state that the reasons for abandoning this acquisition was as a result of the people in White Hill not wanting to live in St. Andrew anymore. I gave a series of reasons why we were abandoning this acquisition included among which was the fact that we were acquiring land elsewhere and the fact that because of the terrain it would have been more expensive to have developed this land for the purpose for which it was to be acquired in the first place.

In addition to that, having completed a social survey in the area I indicated that people had a preference for places like Farmers in St. Thomas but there was no main reason given as to why this land was being abandoned in the manner in which the Honourable Member has stated. He is misleading the House.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we all live in areas and we all have commitments to the areas in which we were born. I was born in St. Lucy and up to today nobody can convince me to move or sever my relationship with St. Lucy. I was religiously moved from St. Lucy in the 1980s and up to today I am still trying to get back to St. Lucy. So I am saying that the people of White Hill would have had a preference of living in St. Andrew, Mr. Speaker, but it appears to me that it is easier to give those people to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas because if one looks at election reports it is easier to move them from St. Andrew to another constituency because it is easier for the person who now represents them to carry them because even if they reduce the majority it would not affect the next election results.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Honourable Member should be made to explain what he is saying because I do not understand what he is saying and he is misleading the House.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would never say that any Government would use land acquisition in this country to gerrymander election results in this country. I would never say it. Even if the evidence is there, Sir, I would never say it. I am saying that if one checks the voting pattern of the people there, one would see that they have always voted DLP and to bring them to Apes Hill or Baywoods would affect the election results.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I really would not want to go back to the election results but the people in White Hill 100% support the Barbados Labour Party, so he is misleading the House.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying if the people of White Hill supported the Barbados Labour Party 100% something is wrong with the MP for St. Andrew. I know of no other MP, not even the one who represents Six Men's that would remove Six Men's from that constituency and put them somewhere else.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You would not abandon any land acquisition when you could move them to Apes Hill or Baywoods and make sure you maintain that 100% support. So that logic goes right through the door, Sir. It went further, Sir. I am hearing about Eastern Land Developments again in this debate and you know, Sir, I cannot call the name of Michael Cozier, Sir, because I have not informed you that I was going to speak about Michael Cozier so I would not call his name. I would never say, Sir, that he is connected to Eastern Land Development. What I would say, Sir, is that it seems to me that whenever Eastern Land Development wants land in this country that Government is prepared to reverse themselves and stop themselves from building housing units. Terrace units were supposed to be built at Baywoods and now we are hearing that the land is not big enough for house lots. When this land acquisition was brought to this House we were never told anything about house spots, Sir. We were told about 3-storey buildings and Pondside was used as an example and the Minister at that time said Pondside would have 4-storey buildings and up there would have 3-storey buildings.

I want to know, Sir, what has caused the change of heart. The Honourable Minister conceived a very beautiful project for Apes Hill and Baywoods on a ridge. He put in all the infrastructure, the roads etc. Let me tell you something. You are talking about another town in this country. The Prime Minister could talk what he likes. There is another town already in Barbados and it is in the Orange Hill and in Baywoods area. When you drive up there, Sir, you do not want to go in the city again. You are in a different land, curving roads, Sir. I would say to you, Sir, that I find it rather surprising that the people in White Hill would not want to live in the Orange Hill area and they would use the school as an example. I find that surprising because St. Silas School is in that same area, Sir, and it is surrounded by many housing developments. So I do not know why poor people do not like going in the back and living, Sir. It is true that they do not like living close to each other but at the same time when one looks at the infrastructure in Orange Hill and Apes Hill nobody would

want to move from Orange Hill and Apes Hill to go and live in Farmers. Even the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would agree with me. And going by the logic of the Minister he has convinced me that even he does not agree with what he said in this Assembly today.

We hear something about a social survey. I would like the Minister to tell us in this Assembly what the social survey proved to him because, Sir, there is a tendency that you send out people to do surveys and they are supposed to come back with one result and they come back with something else. I am saying, Sir, that it is because of the report from the survey, Sir, that those people from White Hill will be moved from St. Andrew and be put at Farmers and not at Baywoods as they should have.

I want to know, Sir, what conflict it would have created if those people were allowed to remain or if they were allocated lots at Apes Hill. How would it affect the future development of the land at Apes Hill? I would like the Minister to answer this question today because I cannot understand why Government would spend so much money putting in roads and things like that improving areas and then turn around and give up their rights. I do not know all the answers. I would like the Minister to answer me. Why would he remove his 100% supporters and put them in another constituency when other people would remain in Six Men's or Black Bess all the days of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister also said about extending districts and you could not want a better example of any housing policy where you can extend a district because as you know, Sir, Orange Hill leads on to Baywoods and it leads on to this development and the Honourable Minister had the gall to come in here, Sir, and mention about having a housing policy where you extend districts and then abandon this policy.

Today I want to know if the Government is in confusion and I want to know, Sir, what happened when a group of people went on a tour lately which reminded me of the tour that Jesus Christ was taken on by the Devil. It appears to me, Sir, that somebody took somebody on a tour and showed them the glory of Barbados where all of these housing lots will be created and suddenly a decision was made not to touch a certain piece of land. Let it go back to the original owners. Do you know, Sir, that the same plan that the Minister is talking about is the same plan that those owners had all the time for that land? 2.20 p.m.

When the Honourable Member for St. Andrew acquired the land at Apes Hill and Baywoods the C. O. Williams group had already submitted plans for

developing that land. They had even gone further. They wanted a golf course up there and I challenge the Minister to deny that. I want to know if having a housing project in Bay woods would have an effect on any project that would have gone on up there.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member, I find it difficult to understand him over here, but he is misleading the House with respect to a golf project on this particular parcel of land. The golf project to which he is referring relates to a parcel of land which is about 440 yards away from this particular parcel of land and it is the subject, Mr. Speaker, of another application and as far I know, permission has not been given for that golf course.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, as you know any time that you see a golf course, Sir, you do not put low income houses next to it. If you go to Sandy Lane, Sir, next to a golf course you know what you will see. So I cannot understand the point that my Honourable friend from St. Andrew is making. Because, he has just convinced me that the houses are only 400 yards away so nobody who wants to invest large sums of money would like to drive pass these houses to get to their large investments.

So I could now understand, Sir, why he came to this Assembly today, Sir, to reverse himself. Because, he has been convinced that 400 yards away from any project is too close and low income housing should not be there. The land should be left so that when the golf course is done you can expand the housing stock 440 yards further to the South.

Therefore I want to congratulate the Minister for giving me this new piece of information and I am extremely grateful to him. Because all this talk about building low income houses and let me tell you something, Sir, I have said in this Assembly already, we keep fooling poor people and talking that we are building houses in their interest.

I heard the Minister in here talking about low income houses of \$75 000. Tell me one poor man that can buy a low income house for \$75 000. But I know what I would like to tell the Minister. He can keep some of that land, put the necessary amenities, for example roads, water, light *et cetera* on that land and sell it to poor people at the cost of the land without the amenities. And, allow land valuation to value the land with the amenities in it, so that they can have a conveyance in their hand with a value that they can take to the bank and as you say, get a 100 percent mortgage where they can build a house which they can

afford to repay for, and stop fooling people that poor people can own houses for \$75 000.

If they could own houses at \$75 000 and work, they would not be in here begging you for a house lot. They would go and buy chattel houses from people that are already situated on land and they would own their own property for less than \$75 000. They can buy it for \$35 000 or \$40 000 and still have \$35 000 to put in the bank to invest in bonds or some other thing.

I am saying to the Minister today and let it be the last time I am mentioning this to you, because you have a right, Sir. You have just published a Green Paper on Housing and I have not seen it in here. I am saying to you to go back to your planners. You asked me to comment. I am now commenting today. I am saying to you to tell your planners who planned the Green Paper to go and take the Government's land, put in roads, water and light and sell to the poor people at the cost of the land so that they can have an asset they can take to the bank with a higher value and get the value.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not going to charge you any fees for that. Because the problem with this Government is that it feels the only time they can implement policies in this country is when they bring consultants from overseas and pay them 60 and 70 million dollars.

I think it is time in this country where we have to stop wasting money on consultants. We have enough qualified civil servants in the Ministry of Housing and within the Ministry on the whole that we should stop paying consultants so much money. Because all we are doing is inflating the cost of projects and stopping poor people from getting proper housing in this Country.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: They have poor consultants too. But the problem is that the poor consultants, they have normally come from Barbados. But, when they bring in the ones from overseas they make sure that they leave with millions of dollars.

So I am saying, Sir, that this abandonment had nothing to do with land slippage. It had nothing to do with the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. It had nothing to do with anything that affects the Democratic Labour Party different to trying to squeeze it further in the ground.

I am telling you that from the time you acquired the land at Fanners we understood quite well where we

were going and we waited until you brought the latter land acquisition to point out to you that we were aware of your policy.

And, we are saying, it is not surprising that this Government is prepared to go so far as to cut up the land at Constant, good agricultural land, to put house lots so that they can do, and I would not say they did that to gerrymander up there, Constant, St. George. I would not say that, Sir.

But I want this Government to understand that this Opposition is a working Opposition and they understand quite clearly what they are doing with their land lots policy. Because that is all you can call it now, a land lots policy for election. Where they shift people where they want to shift people and allocate lots where they want to allocate lots hoping that in the future election, they would have shifted people in the right location to safeguard seats.

I am telling you that the land policy must work against the VAT policy.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Well that would strengthen you and try to save somebody else but I do not know if that is the thing. I do not know if all those roads...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, can you imagine a man giving votes to a man that won by three thousand votes?

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not even know the constituency location of this land. This land is in the constituency of St. Andrew. It is in the parish of St. Thomas but in the constituency of St. Andrew. He must know the pavilion at Farmers. Well, it is below the pavilion at Farmers. That side is not St. Thomas, it is St. Andrew.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, some people like trapping themselves. Am I to believe that Rock Hall is in St. Andrew? If it is to the west of Content...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am holding my point, you can talk what you like. I do not care what you say because your information is not correct and you are not going to sidetrack me. Because the Honourable Member came in here a year ago, Sir, and convinced this Assembly

to vote for land acquisition and less than a year he comes back in here and reverses himself and he expects me now to go with him. I cannot, Sir.

I am saying, if you want to convince me, get up in here and apologise to the developers because what you would have done was to stop the developers from developing Barbados at the rate they wanted to develop Barbados. 2.30 p.m.

I would want to know who are the ones to pay for the infrastructure that has gone into that beautiful area of Orange Hill. If the development of this land would pay for that infrastructure?

Sir, I would also like to beg the Honourable Member for St. Andrew that when he is doing housing developments and making preparation for good housing developments in St. Andrew along the Turners Hall Road that he would remove piece of the road at Turners Hall that leads to nowhere and take it to that beautiful constituency of St. Lucy. One thing about this Minister is that he is very futuristic. He is the only Minister in this country without a survey to tell you where houses are going to be in the next 15 years.

When one looks at the road at Turners Hall, it is clear to me that this Minister plans to be in this Assembly for 15 years and he will see that development at Turners Hall where people will live along both sides of the road. I must admit I will have to refer to him as the futuristic Minister who can see far into the future.

Sir, we talk about day care nurseries and all these things but the best place that you can have these facilities is in Bay woods. When you compare the number of people living in Baywoods and the number of people living at Farmers I cannot see how any government could put up an argument for a day nursery in Fanners when there is a great demand for one in Orange Hill and Baywoods.

I would like to know what is the agenda of this government whether somebody has reversed the Minister or whether the Minister has reversed himself because it is rather conflicting. I want to know if this is the policy of the Minister or if it is the policy of the Government. We want to know if this is the Minister's policy. I feel that he has a right not to me but to you to answer these questions.

I also want to know what type of housing development is going to go on in Baywoods that was different to the one the Minister had planned for Baywoods. I want to know who will be living in Baywoods when that housing development is finished and if the

people will be different to the ones that the Minister had that project planned for. I want to know if the demand for houses is the same for those people as they are for the people the Minister had it planned for. Every week in this Assembly we are told about thousands of people going to National Housing to get housing lots and yet still this Government is prepared to abandon land.

I am saying if they had made a judgment error, I feel that they should say so. I want to know who has influenced the Minister and it is clear to me that somebody has influenced the Minister and I would like to know who. I heard the Minister talk about housing needs in the north. Apes Hill is not part of the north anymore? Or is that in the urban area? I am not talking about the Resolution to come but we talk a lot about poverty and I want to know how come there is all of this poverty. I want to know if there is poverty in Apes Hill too. If you go by the Resolution it seems to me there is only poverty in the areas that has slums.

I want the Minister to tell me if he has any slums in his constituency and where they are and how the poverty fund would help. I want to know from the Minister who he has applied to for funds to help out the people who are suffering poverty.

I also want to know from the Minister that in terms of housing development if the NHC is still the agency where I have to apply to help my people who are suffering from poverty and need housing. I want to know that, because when one listens to what is going on in Barbados today and when one reads what is printed one gets the impression that we do not have a welfare board, a national assistance board and we do not have NHC anymore.

I would like to know from the Honourable Member for St. Andrew if when he has a problem with a poor person in his constituency if he is still writing the National Assistance Board or Welfare or if he has a second ministry where he writes. I want to know if there is a change in policy and where I need to redirect my attention to alleviate the poverty in housing for my people in Barbados.

It is clear to me, Sir, that things are changing and it seems to me that the only person in Barbados who understands how to get things done and how to manoeuvre is the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. He knows how to give one and get 5 and he pleases the master well by giving 1 and getting 5. I am sure that St. Andrew has moved from the poorest district in Barbados to the richest in terms of infrastructure.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Urban development has nothing to do with St. John. I have never seen a slum in St. John yet but there is a Resolution in this Assembly dealing with slums. You can imagine the representative for poverty talking about poverty in this society.

The Minister of Poverty, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is coming in here talking about St. John and poverty when he is always begging the Honourable Member for St. Andrew to look after the housing needs. When we in rural Barbados are begging for housing needs we do not beg for hands-out. We beg for people to buy land and get jobs. He comes in here talking about poverty.

You had better come to rural Barbados in the beautiful constituency of St. Lucy and understand how we operate. If St. John has poverty, St. Lucy has poverty too and I know they do not have it at that level.

Mr. SPEAKER: We wouldn't want to get into that now.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am ready for them whenever they are ready. I am saying that I must congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. He knows how to give 1 and get 5.

Thank you very much.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address this Chamber at this stage in this debate. Today is a very happy day for me in many ways. I recall it was not so long ago when the National Democratic Party introduced the concept of 100% mortgages to stimulate housing, especially lower income housing, and that proposal was ridiculed by various people as not being viable. 2.40 p.m.

Even the banks in this country who have but little interest in assisting in the development of lower and middle income housing some of them came out in public and said that 100 per cent mortgages were non-viable. I am saying today, and I am repeating that you will never be able to mobilise the resources within a community to deal effectively with the problem of low income and lower middle income housing unless Government establishes the financial framework whereby 100 per cent mortgages are made available because people can frequently meet the monthly payments but the difficulties often arise in terms of the deposits in relation to those houses.

I am very, very pleased to see that fundamental principle has now been enunciated a second time on the Floor of this House by the Minister of Housing who has no difficulty in accepting the NDP's position. It is to his credit because we have no problem whatsoever in the

Government of the day accepting positions that we take if it is going to be in the long term interest of the country. I have no doubt whatsoever. I have never had any doubt that one of the major barriers to small people being able to help themselves in relation to providing adequate housing for themselves and their children has been the absence of 100 per cent mortgages in this country.

We will sell these ideas one at a time. I have some other ideas relating to the introduction of reversed mortgages at the other end of life which can impact very significantly on the issue of poverty at the other end of life and link it to housing. This is a matter I will discuss with the Minister of Housing in due course because I think he is beginning to get some concept of the dynamics of housing and how it relates to the financing of housing if it is going to be successful.

The second important concept I heard enunciated today has been the concept of taking bold decisions in relation to housing, putting an end to this foolishness of walking around Barbados acquiring land for 6 houses here and 6 houses there and to deal with major developments on which you can draft effective financing and other techniques for the development of housing. I have argued this on the Floor of this House again and again. I have heard the Minister today embrace this kind of policy.

I do not want to get into the Waterhall situation and the Apes Hill situation too much at the moment. I know more about that than anybody else in this House. A former member for St. Joseph from the Barbados Labour Party would know more about that than anybody else. A former member for St. George many years ago would know more about that than anybody else. I myself have visited that area about 20 to 25 years ago in relation to certain developments in that area. I did not get involved. I know a whole lot about the history of that whole area down there and if the opportunity arises where 1 000 house spots can be made available for poor people, and on to that the concept of 100 per cent mortgages can be drafted, then I have no difficulty whatsoever with that.

I want to say this that some of the money which is being spent on land acquisitions, I wonder whether the Minister should not be looking more carefully at those plantations which were heavily indebted to the Barbados National Bank, which are marginal in nature and whether he should not be able to identify 2 or 3 of them around the country which would fulfill 3 needs at one time. First of all, reduce the indebtedness to the successor institution that holds the Barbados National Bank debt, which is taxpayer debt. That is one.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Not the whole plantation, the viable components of it for large developments. Secondly, which will provide for housing on the scale that I am talking about which would attract financing of the nature I am talking about and, thirdly, provide for the development of viable communities.

I think, Sir, it is quite clear to me that we cannot continue with this hodgepodge development with a few houses being drafted on here and there. If you look at the demand for housing, it is evident to me that new communities are going to have to evolve in Barbados over time on land which is best suited for that kind of development. The sheer volume of persons requiring land and homes, and rightly so, indicates that that kind of massive infrastructure is needed over time and the opportunity is there. We can do it.

There is a third mechanism which we can use, that is to look and see where considerable infrastructure has been put in place over the years to satisfy the needs of small numbers of persons in tenancies where, perhaps, a mile of road, 2 miles of road may have been put in to service 12 houses and where you find the Town Planning Department repeatedly objecting to what they call ribbon development which makes no sense in the context of the development of modern Barbados, and to utilise that infrastructure where you have the water, roads, electricity, telephones, they are all there, in order to expedite the process of better housing for poor people in this country.

These are the aspects I am particularly interested in. I am particularly interested in it because, in fact, they have been concepts developed by the National Democratic Party and which have been articulated in this House again and again and find themselves in our Manifestoes, particularly the 100 per cent mortgage system.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is not a problem. We all serve our purposes in the political life of Barbados and what is important is that the ideas are developed in the long-term for the betterment of Barbados. One of the very important things to understand is this that the Leader of the National Democratic Party is no fool. Always remember that.

The next item, Sir, I want to talk about is I think the time has come for us to think in terms of special development areas in relation to the improvement of housing for poor people. What do I mean by special development areas? We have the tenancies freehold legislation. We have other ranges of instruments. We

have special development areas which relate to commercial and industrial development and legislation to deal with that. I am saying that in areas, for example, like Hall's Road, Martindales Road, Bannister Land with which the Honourable Member is very familiar for many years, if these areas are designated special development areas, then we can bring to bear a package of fiscal incentives which would allow people living in those areas to contribute to the improvement of their own homes because it is not only a matter of improving the roads. 2.50 p.m.

I have been very fortunate over the years in St. Michael South Central, Sir. I have managed to get all the roads in my constituency repaired apart from what is happening in Delamare Land and Bannister Land, which was dug up to put down natural gas some years ago and the Minister has given me a firm commitment that he will do something about it this year and I am very grateful for that and I am looking forward to it day after day. It is a minor job really in St. Michael South Central.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: They dug up the road and they would not come back and fix it and they will have to pay the Ministry. It is not a question of who gives what. The point I am making is that the Government has gone into these areas, Sir, and the Government has improved the roads, the water, the telephone, the natural gas and the infrastructure. What is left really is for persons to acquire the land under the tenantry freehold arrangement but not everybody can do that. Some can do it and some cannot do it.

If we had, in Barbados, legislation that could designate these areas as special development areas...

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We do not have it, not in relation to these areas. We have it in parts of Bridgetown and parts of the South Coast and so on.

Anyhow, I am asking the Minister by Order then to designate some of these areas where poor people live as special development areas and put together a package of fiscal incentives.

Let me explain to you, Sir, how this might work in Bank Hall or how it might work in certain parts of St. Michael South Central or any part of the island. It may mean, Sir, that a contractor, if he is repairing a house in that particular area which qualifies for certain fiscal

incentives, he might be able to repair that house at 70% of the cost of a house outside of that area, if you see what I mean. In other words, the same fiscal advantages that would apply to commercial buildings would now apply to poor people as well if these areas are so designated. We can begin that process and grab onto the NDP concepts, which the Government has adopted in terms of 100% mortgage, larger areas of development, special development areas and fiscal incentives within those areas.

What kind of fiscal incentives I am talking about, Sir? It may be possible to say that if a contractor is repairing three houses in a special part of St. Joseph, he might be able to get the permaclad without the taxes on it, the import duties or the stamp duty. He might be able to get a particular type of sink or a particular type of tap. He might be able to get those things and the net result would be not less than a 30% reduction in the cost to the poor person who is improving or repairing their homes.

If we do that, Sir, I believe that we will take care of probably another 30% or 40% of persons living in those areas. Then, of course, you are going to be left with those people who cannot qualify under any of those circumstances either by way of 100% mortgage, by way of special incentives and for these persons you will need an enhanced programme of repair of their homes.

I believe, Sir, if we approach this whole matter in this way, then we can solve the housing problems of Barbados. There is absolutely no need in this country why there should be a shortage of house spots. There is no need why people should be living in dilapidated housing, there is no need why at this time of this century that every house should not have indoor, water borne toilet facilities, there is no need for it. What it needs is the will, it needs the organisation, it needs the packaging of the incentives. Sir, Government does not need to carry the full burden.

Some years ago, Sir, I recalled under a previous Barbados Labour Party Government that legislation was passed in this House, I think it was a budgetary proposal, where if a contractor built two wall houses or more, then they can qualify for a lower rate of corporation tax in relation to that activity. That legislation is still on the statute books of Barbados. I do not know how extensively it is used but what I am saying is that the same kind of legislation can probably be used in relation to people who are building or developing in areas where poor people live so as to get non-Government capital involved in the developmental process.

The principle has already been accepted in budgetary statements in Parliament and in subsequent legislation. I do not think that that particular type of legislation would

deal with the lower income group or the poor man who is probably looking for a wooden house or that kind of thing. The legislation can be extended in order to deal with them so that you will have a total picture.

As I said, Sir, that when you take this kind of thinking and you add this to the asset value of the existing Government stock of housing, you are talking probably over \$1 billion. If it is taking \$100 000 to build a two bedroom unit at today's prices, I am saying that Government's existing stock of housing is probably worth over \$1 billion at today's prices.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: At market cost. At least \$1 billion or more. If you are seriously thinking about creating a financial structure for further housing development where you have an asset of this nature, then you have to make that asset come alive in financial terms and this is what the 100% mortgage should have been doing a long time ago. If it was introduced in 1991 as we suggested, six years later today, you would probably now be talking of a turnover of \$200 million dollars and in another ten or fifteen years you will have a self-perpetuating fund in order to keep generating public housing without having to resort to the taxpayers except for those at the very lowest rung of the income ladder for whom the taxpayers will have an inescapable and very special responsibility.

Sir, how are we going to get this done. I can put the case outside of Parliament or I can put the case to Parliament, but you need a group of people who are prepared to sit down and think through all the components of housing in Barbados with special emphasis in relation to what is happening to poorer groups in this society.

Sir, let me tell you something. It has not gone unnoticed that people are building houses in Barbados today for \$10 million and \$15 million and \$20 million and the guy who is living in a shack down there and cannot get a loan for \$2 000 or \$3 000 in order to have an indoor toilet, it creates a serious psychological problem for him. 3.00 p.m.

He has no problem with a man wanting to spend \$10 million, \$15 million or \$20 million on his house. The Barbadian says that is his business. It would be foolish to spend his money that way but he becomes concerned when his grandmother has to get up in the middle of the night and go out, in the rain and the lightning like last night, to an outdoor toilet. These are things that we need to rectify.

We have a fundamental responsibility and I do not believe that there is any economic reason in Barbados why

this situation should exist and why it cannot be remedied. There is no reason at all why it cannot be remedied and I sincerely hope that the Minister of Housing would spend some of his time thinking of these matters in a more dynamic manner and look at the totality of the situation.

I will tell you this, Sir, you also have to watch some of the advice you are getting in the Ministry of Housing. Let me show you what I call fundamentally bad advice. Some years ago, Sir, and this would affect your constituency too, the home and the grounds where the late Dr. Stuart lived in Tweedside Road was acquired by the Government. There was a promise that the Carrington Village primary school would be resited there. I gather that concept has been abandoned now. You would not believe it, Sir, that in an already highly built up area that there are people in the Ministry of Housing who want to go and use that little space inside there for 5 or 6 houses. It is madness, Sir, where you have hundreds of young people hungry for somewhere to go and play little volleyball, football or something in the evening, vital for the release of their energies, to go and take up little bits of land and mess up in that way with a few houses. It does not make any sense.

We have seen what has happened at Valerie, for example, an area which serves the whole of Brittons Hill, which serves the Pine, which serves Clapham, which serves the Bay Land to some extent. We have seen how part of that has been taken up with housing and things like that. What is going to happen to the young people in the area? What are they going to do between coming home, finishing their homework and going to bed at 11:00 o'clock at night? How are you going to get them tired and exhausted? How are you going to keep them out of crime and difficulty? We do not think about these things and this is why I want to see a housing development that takes all these things into consideration and we do not go on and on, especially in the St. Michael area trying to allocate every single square inch of open land that you can find to housing. It is wrong. People must have space. Young people need opportunities and I will be doing my best to make sure of this.

As a matter of fact, Sir, I am leaving here early this afternoon because I want to go over into Tweedside Road and make it quite clear that I raised this matter in the House today, this matter relating to the mis-utilisation of a key area of land that people badly need in the area. We cannot continue to do it. It is wrong.

I remember the Honourable Member for Christ Church South keeping a lot of noise in this Honourable House years ago when Radcliffe pasture was taken over for housing in Brittons Hill. He was right. But what has happened? Years later there is one piece remaining at

Valerie and the Ministry of Housing has been responsible for that kind of development. It must stop, Sir, if the Minister is serious about this.

I did not like the way he set about the acquisition in Apes Hill because my recollection is ... Anyhow I am not going to get into that because you might get up and then break your promise to me. I think that the little repairs to Delamere Land and Bannister Land are more important than the statement that I am going to make. Not that there is anything dishonest. It is a question of the approach to the particular matter as reported to me whether it was correct or not and I have mentioned this to the Honourable Minister before. So that basically as I see the principles as outlined here, if they are translated into 3 or 4 major projects around Barbados then by the year 2005 which we in the NDP have said should be the year when poverty should be fully eradicated in Barbados it is possible that this could be part of that programme to achieve this.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The programmes that I put in place, the programmes that I suggest...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am a parliamentarian my friend and when ideas emanate from this Parliament and the executive put those ideas in place I think I am doing my job in the station in which the people of Barbados and the electorate have placed me.

Today, Sir, is a very happy day for me. I did not hear the Prime Minister's statement this morning. Regrettably I did not get here on time but I understand that all I need now to do really is withdraw the Resolution which I have before Parliament calling for the appropriate recognition of those who lost their lives in 1937 and so on. So that the Resolution was placed here by the National Democratic Party and the executive has done what it is supposed to do and what is important is that as I say it, I am a parliamentarian. That is the status I enjoy in this country and I enjoy it in two ways, not only enjoy in the sense of being in that position but also with pleasure I serve in this role. If on any one day, Sir, any parliamentarian can come in here and see four major important policy positions which he has espoused, enunciated, articulated over the years put in place then he should be able to go home and feel that he has done a good job as a parliamentarian in this country.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much. When I say go home, I mean go home to Golf Club Road today, I am not talking about leaving Parliament. 3.10 p.m.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Thank you very much for the clarification. But when four things like this happen on one day, Mr. Speaker, it makes me feel that I have been doing my job.

My good friend, there are one or two other things that I really wanted to talk about. I will get back later on to that special development concept. Because, I think that every single constituency in Barbados can benefit from the designation of an area of special development. I also believe, Sir, that it could have significant job generating capacity. I also believe that it could bring onstream a lot of small quantity surveyors, a lot of architects who are not getting the work in the big league. A lot of legitimate small contractors, the ones that would do a contract and really complete the job and do not cost everybody more in the long run. A lot of these people could get a lot of work and a lot of work could be generated within the communities if this thing is done.

Now, within the next few days, Sir, if not earlier I should be launching our Poverty Eradication by the Year 2005 Declaration.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Poverty eradication. Yes, eradication...

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We started with alleviation, the Government has responded and I am happy for that. There is nothing wrong. That is what we should be doing here as legislators 90 percent of our time. We should be making you all snort when you do not perform.

But at the same time we should be generating the ideas both on this side and on the back bench over there to keep the executives. Sir, that is why I have some sympathy with the proposal before the constitution, because really, to the suggestion that the executives should be separate altogether from the whole legislative process and I am not saying that I agree with it, but it certainly would emphasize the role of the parliamentarian and more parliamentarians would begin to understand that they have a role in the genesis and the development of policies in Barbados.

Any sensible government when they hear quality creative ideas emulating from the Floor of the House, then they should go back to the drawing board.

Sir, I am fully seized of what I think is required for housing in Barbados. I am convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that it is well within the realms of possibility and I believe it is a matter of pulling together all those components. I will be looking very critically at that Green Paper to see if I see the kind of thinking and the kind of elements in that Green Paper which could lead to the results which I believe are perfectly within the reaches and within the capacity of this country to achieve in relation to housing.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, there is an obvious border of suspicion in this whole resolution, but I am more concerned with the abuse of the poor when it favours politicians to do so.

There is no doubt at all that there is need for substantial housing of the poor in Barbados. But, first of all we will need to identify who is poor and who is not poor. In a most recent study done for Barbados it was identified that the poverty line of the poor was in the order of \$5 200 or \$5 300 per year, which is less than \$500 per month. Even if we were to multiply that figure by two and give a poor individual in Barbados \$10 000 per year, then we are still looking at just under \$1 000 or \$800 per month.

Now, I wish to say this, because this constant reference to 100 percent mortgages sounds "fairy tale" to me in large measure and I say it because even with 100 percent mortgage at \$75 000 for a ten-year period you are talking about repayment of over \$600 per month.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: ...Almost, depending on the length of the mortgage, of course. So that even when you come to think about providing housing needs for poor people and you begin to address issues surrounding mortgages, it is not simply by way of a provision of 100 percent mortgage that you would alleviate the problems of housing for poor in this country.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of elucidation. I just want to make it clear that I said that there will always be a category of person for whom the taxpayers would have

to provide housing. But there would be a lower income group that could well fall within the category where 100 percent mortgages are feasible.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I got a 100 percent mortgage from a bank yesterday.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am suggesting, Sir, that the issues relating to providing housing for the right group of individuals in this country is less to do with the provision of that and more to do with the provision of a sustainable job for Barbadians and all kinds of Barbadians. In fact at the heart of a poverty alleviation programme in Barbados must be the provision of an adequate job as a first requirement and no government should be permitted to shift their focus from job creation to poverty alleviation on the basis that they are assisting or seeking to assist the most vulnerable groups in the society.

So, job creation is still job number one in this country. Job creation will always be job number one especially in light of the fact that we have a poverty alleviation programme in the making. It is all talk.

The other thing is that the provision of special development areas cannot be the solution. The concept of a special development area can be utilised easily within the business environment because you have a homogeneous objective, or a similar objective across the board to make profit. So you can establish and locate businesses within a particular area and decide on the basis of that area that you can make certain concessions and the like in order to enhance the profitability. But within the context of Barbados there is hardly any area in Barbados where there is a homogeneous grouping. And, therefore to identify Belleplaine or Delamare Land and to suggest that you can say on the basis of location alone that you are capturing the group that you wish to assist is to deny that there is a heterogeneity among these groups.

So you cannot have that. There are people who have wall houses living in those areas. Right next to them they have people with old houses. Next to them they have people with wood houses where you are not too sure where it is. So to identify in any way is to pursue a potentially dangerous path, fanatically where a government can decide on the basis of political patronage that this small area here is a special development area for the purpose of housing needs and you still will not capture the very people who you want to capture within that location.

So that what is more appropriate is that you identify the type of housing which you need to assist and it has to be chattel housing as a first requirement that is the niche you want so it does not matter where the location is. It is unlike business, and to hear constant reference to these fantasies in this Chamber from people who are apparently more concerned with elevating ideas than really looking into the issues deeply, it is really a no-no. It cannot happen. You cannot use the concept of SDA's as proposed by this administration to identify housing needs or the right people for the right housing in Barbados. It will be political misery which you will be entertaining. Visitors are in the business of making profit and that is the focus of any business but to tell me you are going to make concessions on the basis of location is inappropriate within the context of providing housing for poor people. 3.20 p.m.

That, again, needs revisiting and the whole question of physical incentives needs revisiting because even when there was special provision we needed legislation for chattel houses in Barbados, hardly any person used that provision. Whereas people were using it in the wall and the more high-faluting type of housing for repairs and developing. Chattel housing on an annual basis was 200 and 300 houses based on submissions for income tax purposes.

More importantly, Sir, the major concern in Barbados as it relates to housing has to do with the ownership of land. There is confusion in my constituency in Brandons, Straker's Tenantry as to who really owns the land. No one has surveyed the area to determine who owns what and no one knows who to pay when the month comes or the year comes as in the case of Strakers and Brandons, \$80 a year for a piece of land which you are not sure where you are really located because there are no boundaries and, in fact, the cost of surveying the area in order to determine where the boundaries would be may exceed the value of the land. So there is no haste to do that.

So a major requirement in housing is first to establish ownership and control of land. Again, just to go into an area and because it is deprived to say we are going to give you concessions to build a house here and there is not keeping in concert with the reality. The reality is that many people who live in these districts, the so-called slums and poor areas, do not even know who to pay rent to when the year comes. No one has clearly established the boundaries so that cannot be seen as the only way forward.

It sounds high-faluting and nice as though the NDP is the only party that thinks about anything and that the 100% mortgage now is a great idea. So the NDP is the

only party now that is capable of thinking through these issues and it comes with all kinds of high-faluting ideas without recognition of some of the difficulties.

There is an odour of suspicion surrounding this debate. It must be the case that the Government acquired land at Apes Hill for housing purposes and is now abandoning the idea but some private enterprise is capable of providing the same type of housing that Government had originally planned to provide.

Is it the case that private enterprise has the same objectives as Government, simply to provide adequate housing stock for the very poor man in this country? Is it the case that all of a sudden there is a conscience within the private sector that says there is no more need for profit? How could it be that this Government is now abandoning this idea but that the private sector finds it fit to provide the same type of housing for low income people in Barbados at the same cost? Will there be the same kind of rent charged or would the value of the asset be the same at the end of the day?

Do you mean there is no difference between the private sector and the public sector all of a sudden? I must say that this country is really coming of age when we can identify no difference at all between the private sector enterprise and the public sector. This is true marriage within St. Andrew, and St. Andrew, with all the talk, is the poorest parish in this country on the basis of population census and on the basis of the most recent evidence provided in the same document that all of a sudden accuses St. John of being the poorest parish. It is not correct to say that. In fact, in St. Andrew alone since 1960 up until the 1990 census there has been a reduction in population of almost 2 500 over the period. St. Andrew has seen a reduction in population, a reduction in housing stock. It has the lowest income *per capita* of all parishes in Barbados.

There is substantial evidence on the basis of latrines, availability of water. The population census makes it clear. So for some consultant who does not understand Barbados to come and put forward evidence in a document suggesting that St. John is the poorest parish in Barbados is missing the mark.

For surveys to be conducted between the month of August and November 1996 and for the consultant to say that Barbados has reached the stage where it is now a service oriented economy and there is now no difference between urban and rural is to misunderstand that the rural parishes - St. Joseph, St. Andrew, St John are more agrarian than they are service oriented. Therefore, to conduct a survey in that period is to deny a whole set of information that has to be brought to bear on any proper analysis of poverty in the area. To have a poverty study

without even having a town hall meeting with individuals, how could a Latin American come to Barbados and cannot write English properly? You read the reports and you often see errors and then not even to consult with the locals, it is pathetic.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am sure you do realise that that is not the substantive motion here. I have given you a lot of latitude. Relate it to the Resolution!

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On the question of housing, Sir, I am suggesting to you that we need to look at several other issues before we can make any grand pronouncements about where we are going, before we say that we are building houses for poor people in Barbados without establishing who are the poor, saying that we are building houses for low income people, we are granting 100% mortgages when at the end of the day we know that even 100% mortgage of \$75 000 or \$100 000 would mean a repayment per month that exceeds the basic income of these individuals.

Who, really, are we fooling? In fact, in suggesting that there is now even greater recognition, because we are shifting houses from the parish of St. Andrew to the parish of St. Thomas even though for political reasons there may be no difference. There is substantial evidence that there is going to be further reduction in the population within this parish of St. Andrew.

Many things must be explained. We must try to understand what are the issues related to St. Andrew and, in fact, in saying so I may be giving great justification to the Honourable Minister for spending even more within the parish of St. Andrew. To suggest and to make it clear that St. Andrew is a troubled parish in terms of the economic indicators and social indicators may lend some support to what we have been witnessing in these Chambers. There is therefore no problem with that but let it not be said for political reasons that there is evidence of it elsewhere, and then we have a whole campaign of abuse in relation to St. John. 3.30 p.m.

Sir, let us begin to understand and let me just repeat a call made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, and, in fact it is a very progressive idea made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. In short, it has to be repeated that Government ought to be charging the value to prospective owners of land without including the amenities and the other provisions and then giving those landowners the opportunity to take to the bank a security which has the market value. You cannot ask for better than that. That is

progressive thinking but to talk consistently of 100 per cent mortgage and believe that it is the wherewithal to solving the problems among low income people is to deny some realities.

There is really nothing wrong with 100 per cent mortgage but let it not be seen as the *sine qua non* for solving all the problems in housing and other things in Barbados and to have constant reference to it without recognising the realities of it. Let me say to you that that must be considered, and let me applaud the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, so far the most progressive idea I have heard in relation to giving an opportunity for economic enfranchisement to the lower income groups in Barbados.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is really a masterpiece of an idea.

The questions therefore surrounding this debate have little to do with where the location is. It has more to do with the suspicion that one should obviously have in understanding why Government would, at this stage, abandon the idea. We would hope, because there is need for housing, and all kinds of housing in Barbados - there is need for housing also within the middle and high income groups in Barbados.

I am not here to cry down the proposal to build houses in Apes Hill. All I am saying is let us not be hoodwinking people into believing that these houses are being built for low income people because we have not yet established truly who are the low income people in Barbados. I repeat, even if that individual earns \$1 500 even to \$2 000 per month, or has income of \$24 000 per year, the 100 per cent mortgage of \$100 000 will still constitute a burden on that individual.

Perhaps, this is the appropriate time to look at income across the household as a basis for assessing the capacity of the household to service loans rather than to look merely at the income of one individual. There is time for other things to be done, that is, when you enter into the contract for a mortgage, should it only be the income of the wife or the husband, or should it be the joint incomes? Could we have a situation in which common law marriage where people have lived together for X amount of years could they not go forward and their incomes be joined together in order to demonstrate their ability to service the existing loan? These are issues we need to look at. These are the kinds of things we need to look at.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I really do not intend to because I must tell you, I repeat and I will end on this note that the next elections in Barbados, to my mind, will be battled on this whole question of providing jobs again but for me housing will constitute a very significant component of the future political direction of Barbados. I do not intend to give my ideas out to this Government for them to use them and then say things. It has been done already in Straker's Tenantry where I proposed that Government charge urban tenants a standard fee and then there would be a subsidy to ensure that the landowner gets his share only to be told, Sir...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The idea of a standard price for tenantry lands is something which was discussed at the Ministry of Housing long before the Honourable Member even thought of contesting a seat for Parliament. He made that suggestion during the election campaign having read the Urban Renewal Programme of the Ministry of Housing.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, I did not intend to think that I am any God. I am no God but I am entitled to a view that could possibly be taking place elsewhere in someone else's mind but it does not deny me the right to put it in public and I happened to put it to the public early enough. So it does not matter where it originated. The fact is that it is a good idea.

At this stage I just wish to say that this Resolution is critical more because of the intention to build low income housing. That is an ideal objective in today's Barbados. What concerns me more is that there is no way, and I repeat, that the private sector can be seeking to achieve the same objective as the public sector in the provision of such houses for Barbadians.

I end by saying that there is a note of suspicion in this whole Resolution where we have had the move towards Government reverting land back to a private sector initiative and perhaps in time the truth will be out.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate and I will not be long in my intervention. But I could not rise to my feet without paying a tribute to the Honourable Member who has just sat down for a very pertinent and a very perceptive speech on the issue that is before us. It is not very often that we address the question of social development in Barbados. This is one of those issues which we should pay some attention to and housing crosses that borderline between the

economic and the social. I think it is very pertinent that it is happening at this particular time.

I wish to remind the House that when this matter first came up for the acquisition of land at Baywoods in St. James, I raised the question as to whether this was the most desirable thing to do and whether we were transferring land from agricultural purposes to housing purposes and why we would want to acquire that particular piece of land. The Minister assured us all then that this was the right policy, it was a new policy, it was a daring policy and even children rushed in where angels feared to tread.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is misleading the House. The comments that were made by him refer to the acquisition at Apes Hill which is the land to the south of that development which is being done right now as I speak. I think that some Honourable Members are confused as to the actual location of this particular parcel of land. You come up Orange Hill going to Apes Hill Plantation, there is a parcel of land on the left hand side and on the right hand side. We have acquired both the left hand side and the right hand side. The right hand side is the land to the north of Plum Tree. That is the golf course area and your comments were directed with respect to that parcel of land. 3.40 p.m.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: We are able now, Sir, to identify it a little better. I really do not know anything about any golf course so I did not talk about any golf course in Apes Hill. Nothing is before us about any golf course in Apes Hill so if there is information to be given to us about a golf course in Apes Hill, I believe that the Minister should explain to us what he is talking about. I am very interested in hearing about this additional golf course that is being contemplated for Apes Hill. I do not know anything about it, Sir.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Obviously in a 'minimalist Government' we cannot approve anything.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could you continue to address the Chair, please.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, I raise this question because we are not on a great divide on the question of providing additional housing across Barbados

for the people of Barbados. We are certainly not against the provision of housing and the acquisition of the appropriate land on which some housing developments may take place but we wish to ensure that there is balanced development in Barbados, that all constituencies get their fair share. Not that the developments are carried out in St. Michael South alone and not in St. George South. Not that that should happen, Sir, but we are both deprived both St. George South and St. Michael South. Apparently if "South" is tacked on to the constituency you get this kind of treatment. We have that particular problem, Sir.

I wish to make the point that there should be no dropping through the cracks in this particular matter and that very important consideration and in-depth consideration should be given to ensure that there is balanced development in the constituency.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I would like to hear myself.

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

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Sir, I know I have the means to evoke this kind of response, because when I speak I do not dwell on the fringes of the issue, I come to the heart of the matter. Particularly when there are emergency situations, it is important for a Government to ensure that there is justice and equity in the expenditure of public funds.

I raise this question, Sir, because there is a lot of talk about poverty. No poverty line has been drawn in Barbados that I am aware of. There is no poverty line and that would address the issue of income poverty. There is poverty of income, Sir. I know that very well.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: There is housing poverty as well. There is health poverty, there are many indices relating to poverty. There is a belief and a talk in terms of how the public debate and discussion is going as though the only poverty you can have is income poverty and that is just not so, Sir. There is poverty in relation to housing.

I wish to draw two examples to this Honourable House. Let me deal with one first relating to the Kings Village area in St. Michael South.

Sometime in 1993 or 1994, 1993 I believe it was, there was some heavy winds and rains in Barbados and trees fell in various parts of Barbados and damaged houses some of them beyond repair. One particular case came to the attention of the Government where a house or two in Kings Village, St. Michael was destroyed beyond repair. The matter was assessed, it came to the Cabinet and the Cabinet sent it back for a recalculation of the damages which should be awarded. Would you believe, Sir, those were in circumstances of emergency, that up to this day no compensation have been paid to the owners of that property.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: In 1993 to 1994, the assessment and everything was going on. You have to be serious about something. It came right up to the Cabinet.

I am asking, Sir, that this particular matter has taken far too long especially when the emergency services were involved because it arose out of emergency situations.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: I cannot draw anything to the attention of the Cabinet because you asked me to send a list of roads to be done and this is almost two years now and we have heard nothing more about that.

Sir, there is another example I wish to draw to the House, in Brittons Hill, arising out of an emergency situation. About three weeks ago, there was a fire which destroyed two houses in Brittons Hill, Misson Gap I believe, Sir.

The families lost their homes and it has been reported to me that one family in particular has been very severely discommoded, Sir.

The National Housing Corporation has so far been unable to assist those unfortunate people with any kind of accommodation. 3.50 p.m.

Something has to be wrong with our provision of assistance particularly at times of emergency, at times of greatest need and in these emergency situations you can move from a position of being poor to be in a position of being exceedingly poor. That is housing poverty, one of the greatest kinds of poverty that you could think of when you are suddenly deprived of a roof over your head.

If you are talking about ideas I believe that the Government and its agency must give consideration to a situation where the persons who are deprived may be able or willing or in a position, if they are able, to have a building constructed on the spot where there has been a fire or other emergency that the National Housing Corporation or the Government might adapt or modify their sites and services programme as it exists and provide those who have been driven into that kind of poverty to enable or assist them in getting a house.

I believe it is something that should be seriously considered and urgently. We do not need a commission on this. A fire occurs, if the person owns the land or if they can get permission to erect something on the land that assistance with a kind of restart home by providing the base and the other basic amenities, I believe that would give the people a start. I think we have to try to be creative in looking, not only at our housing stock but at improving our existing stock, maintaining the stock at its existing levels and also extending that housing stock. So I will support any measure that leads to the improvement of housing and housing conditions in Barbados. I am calling for a balanced approach to this particular problem and I am urging the Minister to pay heed to what is said on these matters. I know he listens, but will he pay heed, Sir?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I hope not to be long on this matter but I must confess that, or should I put it another way, I am certain that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew will confess that it was not necessarily the most propitious decision for him to have opted to proceed with this debate today rather than take the advice of the Opposition to have a debate like this televised because so useful were the contributions including his own contribution this morning that I am certain that the people of Barbados who elected him and all of the other persons who spoke in this debate would have had a much better understanding of the issues relating to housing, had he not been so suspicious of the motives of the opposition and had he agreed that this would have been an appropriate occasion to discuss aspects of housing policy in Barbados. While today may not have been the occasion, the Honourable Member could have agreed to do it next week.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member refers to my being suspicious of the motives of the Opposition. I took no part in the decision with respect to the televising of this debate and I do not know what the Member is referring to when he spoke about my suspicion and I am asking that those remarks be struck from the record.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You are not suspicious of the Opposition? Oh, well. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very glad the Honourable...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is asking that you withdraw those words.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I did not mean anything offensive. I have never met a member of a Government who is not suspicious of an opposition and therefore I cannot imagine why the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, except I assume for the most altruistic of reasons, would make that statement. If he is not suspicious of us then I accept the compliment, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and if he wishes me to withdraw it I say that I am very happy to hear that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has no suspicions about the honesty and the integrity and the decency of members of the opposition and their interest in having a serious housing debate which this particular Resolution has generated. What I will have to add though is what was the rush. We could have done this in another couple of days and as I have said already let the people of Barbados have the opportunity to hear the various perspectives in relation to housing.

I felt that the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was a contribution that would have been deserving of that kind of treatment. That is all I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has missed a golden opportunity and since he has no suspicions about us I want to let the Honourable Member know I have suspicions about the Government. I have suspicions. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has suspicions. This connection between the golf course at Apes Hill and returning of this land into the hands of the developer of the golf course or the potential developer of the potential golf course is something that needs to be discussed.

Now, until the Honourable Member had quite clearly demonstrated that there was some proximity and perhaps even some greater connection between this particular measure and a golf course which would be constructed in the area, the Opposition would not even have raised such a matter but thankfully the debate took place and thankfully we can now say that as the debate continues and as the Honourable Member answered the points of order we were able to see directly the connection between this Resolution and the returning of this land into the hands of the owner who is a construction magnate and developer and a very successful one at that and the development of a golf course on lands very close to this area. 4.00 p.m.

One thing that would alleviate our suspicions and I would sit down and would not speak any more if the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would get up and remove that suspicion. I want the Honourable Member for St. Andrew to undertake that he will ensure that this

land which is being returned to the owner and developer is used for low income housing and is not used to put up villas or other kinds of luxury houses which would relate to the golf course.

If the Honourable Member will say that, I will take my seat and say that all of my suspicions have been alleviated in this particular debate. If he gives that undertaking and if he also goes on to say that he is willing to ensure that the developer uses that land only for the construction of low income housing in Barbados and that whatever developments take place on that land will have nothing to do with the development of any golf course and that he can say that emphatically, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would take my seat. But the Honourable Member cannot say that, and he must go into these things with his eyes open and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew must not allow others to bull rush him and prod him and push him into taking decisions which consolidate the interest of certain people in this country and deprive those who are most in need of having more and more opportunities. So I am worried about that aspect of this particular exercise.

I will now leave that alone. The debate was not televised and we will have other opportunities over the coming months to revisit this issue. Because, clearly we were right when it first came here, we are right again to be suspicious of the Government now and I will say, that despite whatever intentions the Government may have that our view that there is a connection between the returning of this land to the developer and the building of that golf course is correct.

The Democratic Labour Party did promote the development of luxury housing in Barbados and there can be no doubt about it, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that throughout the history of this country and particularly in hard economic times we have had to sometimes make our resources available for others to come and develop them. Either because we do not have the resources and in some cases the expertise here to do it or because we needed to intensify the level of investment in the economy and we have never backed away from that position. Whenever those projects were approved, they were approved on the basis of the benefit which would accrue to this country.

But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to reiterate a point that I had to make recently to the Barbadian private sector. When you take a 30-year-old youngster, who has a degree who cannot get land from the National Housing Corporation, or for that matter for anybody else, to construct their house on in Barbados, because of the impact of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, or because of the unavailability of land for whatever reason. He is locked

into arrangement for example where he may be required to remain resident in the tenantry in which, as I say, all of the economic resources around him have nothing to do with him. Had nothing to do with his parents or grandparents or he had to continue to reside in a NHC unit in the Farm, where we saw a lot of young people who finished with university degrees looking for new opportunities and could not find them, and on a Sunday afternoon they can take a trip to parts of Barbados and see developments taking place for which there are tax concessions; for which national resources and the land of Barbados is being made available to people who may never have visited this country and no efforts are being made to provide new opportunities for housing; or inadequate efforts are being made to provide new opportunities for housing for those young Barbadians; then we are going to head into serious storms in this country.

That is the concern, every Saturday in St. John, every Saturday in the Glebe in St. George the Honourable Member for St. George North has to see a large number of people who cannot find land for housing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, every Saturday, I send somebody. Sometimes I send more than one person to the Chief Housing Officer at the National Housing Corporation. Invariably I indicate to the Chief Housing Officer in the letter that the person already has a chattel house dismantled and is waiting to be reassembled on a lot and all that happens is that a note is made in some file, interviews take place and those people see the house that they invested in rotting, being propped up against somebody's house.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that has to be of major concern to us. Much worst than that is the emergency situation which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South talked about. I will give you an example. A truck ran off the road recently in Church View in St. John, a Hinds Transport truck, destroyed a house and no assistance has been or will be forthcoming from the National Housing Corporation. There is no where that you can send the residents of that property in the event, for example, that the insurance company does not agree to settle the claim which could be one of the potential problems which may arise. These are poor persons, the mother works at Kendal Plantation as a labourer and the daughter may be at university. What is it that for 20 years you can be raising these same problems on both sides of the House which cannot be given the kind of attention that is necessary?

Last year in the rainy season a tree fell on a house in Rose Gate and the Government put up the occupants in a unit in Church Village. I was very happy for that. Eventually the young lady who was living in her own house, on her own lot, could not continue to pay the

rent, she was finding great strain. She had to move back into the damaged house to survive and CERO published in the newspaper that there had been damage to that house and nothing had been done to date to assist her in alleviating her plight. So she now goes to the bank to borrow some money to fix the house and finds out that the mortgage payments to repair the house are more than the rent that she would have been paying to remain in the Government unit at Church Village in St. Philip. So, it is more of a burden for her to move back into her own house.

These kinds of things need to be addressed because they form part and parcel of the same kind of problems.

The question of fire victims. You had a fire in Coach Hill the other day, nine people they moved next door. The National Housing Corporation cannot do anything about it. They cannot find anywhere for them to stay. So, right now you have something like 15 people living in one house with two bedrooms.

Now, we talk about these things all the time, Mr. Speaker, Sir. How is it then that the Ministry of Housing could find it convenient to give back land, after coming here week after week, the Minister says that we must identify land for low income housing and now this week the Government is giving back land to a developer? A developer who has never been known in the history of his involvement in construction in this country, has never been known to construct low cost or low income housing. 4.10 p.m.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is saying that the Government is giving back land to a developer. The Government is not giving back land to anybody. The land was acquired for a particular purpose and that acquisition is being abandoned. We are not giving back any land. The land goes back to the owner of the land.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I do not own the land. Nobody like me or anybody in here owns it. The land is owned by the largest construction magnate in Barbados, a man who wants to put up a golf course within 440 yards of where the land is and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew obviously does not understand the land acquisition process.

If you go through the steps of acquiring the land and then abandon it, the law says it must revert to its original owner. That must mean that you are essentially giving it back to the owner. The purpose for which it was acquired was low income housing and if the original owner happens

to be a developer at the same time that is just a coincidence. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is suffering from precisely the problem which I said he was suffering from. He will not open his eyes and see what is lurking in the dark corners and it is because of that that we continually have a problem in this country where certain people are always being seen to receive the benefits.

I have not seen the abandonment of an acquisition in the past 10 years that I have been in this Chamber. I cannot think of any abandonment of any acquisition since I have been in this Chamber for 10 years that relates...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. I did two abandonments, Mr. Speaker, since I was Minister of Housing.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am going to repeat. I cannot think of an abandonment of an acquisition in the 10 years that I have been in the House which in the circumstances a piece of land has been taken away from somebody who is in private sector construction, the owner is essentially in private sector construction and you acquire his land for low income housing and then give it back to him on the pretext that the same kind of activity which Government was going to undertake he is going to undertake on that piece of land.

It has been notorious in the history of this country that the private sector will not get involved in low income housing. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South drilled that into my ears over the past 10 years as a Member of Parliament. In fact, there was a debate in this House in which it was pointed out that the closest to low cost housing that they came to was the project at West Terrace in St. James which involved the National Housing Corporation and private sector builders. Even then, at the end of the day many of those builders were complaining that the margins which they got -on the construction of those houses was not sufficient.

Now somebody is going to try to pull the wool over the eyes of this Parliament, that giving back land to the owner from whom it was going to be acquired, who happens to be a major construction company in Barbados that has never been involved in low cost construction of houses, that he will suddenly be involved in it when he has a golf course 440 yards away under planning.

We would have to be idiots to accept that. I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew must remove the wool or whatever else it is that is clouding his vision and get real about what this Resolution is about. That is why perhaps a televised debate would have assisted him.

The Government did not want the public to know that he was giving back this land to that developer. They did not want the public to know the relationship between this land and the golf course in Apes Hill and that is why we had all of this foolishness today in which the Government wanted to rush this matter Item No. 7 on the Order Paper to the No. 1 item which we will be debating in here today. That explains the rush and Mr. Speaker it is not ending here. I can tell you on behalf of the Members on this side that the matter does not end here.

I will wait for the Honourable Member for St. Andrew to give us the undertaking which I have asked for. I hope that he can give them. He can rest assured that the Democratic Labour Party will be monitoring this situation very carefully and television or no television the public has to know about this. It is another one of those examples of the Barbados Labour Party in action.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in this House on many occasions on the importance of a land use policy being created in Barbados based upon a very careful examination of a number of uses for land based also upon the necessity for recognition that there are competing needs for land in Barbados.

We in Barbados should have a position that land that is best suitable for agriculture should be kept in agriculture. Land that is endowed with the capacity to produce water should not be used for a purpose which is inconsistent with the preservation of our water resources. With respect to other land it should be classified so as to ensure that the environment is protected and also that the best economic use of land is obtained.

We have to understand also that there is a necessity for housing in this country. We have over 90 000 acres of land in Barbados as I understand it and there is sufficient land in Barbados - I am excluding the gullies - for our housing needs which can be utilised, marginal land and land which is not constrained by the factors I have spoken of.

What we have is a lot of *ad hocism* in the utilisation of our land here in Barbados. I have spoken of this for the last 25 years. I have been a bitter critic of some decisions that are taken in relation to change of use in Barbados. Most of those as one looks at it historically occurred in the period of the 70s when the Democratic Labour Party was in office and its main aim seems to have been at that time to subdivide as much land as possible for special interest purchasers. That is a matter of history.

When this particular Resolution came down originally I made a speech in which I reiterated these principles. I am

not surprised now that mature consideration has taken place that there has been a decision to change the acquisition and that the abandonment has taken place. My understanding of the position originally was that the land was suitable for grassland development and objection was being taken at that time on the grounds that by using it for this purpose when there was other available land that you would be breaking the fundamental rule that you would be taking this land from agriculture and putting it into housing when you had other options.

I remember making a speech and warning that we should go back to our first principles. 4.20 p.m.

Now I am hearing from the Other Side that there is another purpose. Now, I do not know where the Other Side could get that from because my understanding is that this land by being converted back to the original purpose. There is, as I understand it, no guarantee that the purpose for which the Government was able to use it that the private sector would be able to use it. As I understand it, the fact that the Government abandoned it does not in any way, and I am going to watch this very carefully, interfere with the normal planning purposes. You know what the Town Planner always says that the Government is exempt from the planning law but no private party is exempt from the planning law.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because when the Honourable Minister spoke he mentioned that Eastern Development would be taking part in the development of this said land. As you know, Sir, Eastern Development belongs to Mr. Michael Cozier who develops land for houses.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I do not know how I could be misleading the House. I could only be misleading the House if my understanding of the law is wrong. I am saying the fact that the Government buys the land for a purpose that the Government is exempt from planning permission but that when it is reverted the original owner is bound by the Town Planning law. I am telling you my understanding of the law.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: But what am I to deal with? I am not lawless like you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. What the Honourable Member is saying seems a bit confusing. If the Government has acquired the land as agricultural land, which is what I understand it to be,

and acquired it for the purpose of low-cost housing, when it reverts, it reverts to its original status as agricultural land. The Minister has indicated that the land is reverting to the owner for the same type of development to take place on the land which the Government had intended to carry out on the land, and that is the point.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I do not know how many points the Honourable Member is making because I heard the Honourable Member just make a point in here that we were going through a hypocritical exercise because in truth and in fact this land was wanted for golf course development. That is what the Honourable Member said, so I do not know.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I am making precisely the same point that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is making that the Government cannot determine what the owner of the land is going to do with the land. I am betting that land is not going to be used for any low-cost housing because of the other developments which are taking place on the site. That is the simple fact of the matter.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: As I understand it, the Honourable Member is saying that he has no objection to the land being used for low-cost development but that he has the strongest objection to the land being used for golf course development.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. That is not what I am saying. I am saying that unless the Government's policy that it needs land for low-cost housing has also been abandoned, that there can be no basis to return that land to the owner unless there is a guarantee that the land will be used for low-cost housing and the Minister cannot give that guarantee.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: The point of the matter is that I do not know that the Minister is the Minister of Town Planning in Barbados.

Aside.

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew said there are two different parcels of land. The parcel of land to the left of the road is for the golf course and the one on the right, 400 yards away, is for housing development. We want to know whether or not this land which is being returned to the original owner will be used for its original purpose, that is for low income housing. Apparently there is now

contention that the Town and Country Planning can, in fact, reverse the land and put it back to agriculture. That is questionable and debatable.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, nothing that has been said has affected the validity of the point that I made and it is very simple that the Government having abandoned this acquisition, the land reverts to the owner. The owner has to comply with all the laws relating to change of use.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: No. I am not mixing up anybody. As I understand it, the Minister made it very clear that the intention was for the purpose of resiting the residents of St. Andrew from a particular area, that those residents have raised grave objections to being resited so far from their original community that they have found an alternative parcel of land at Farmers which is very near to where White Hill is and therefore in the circumstances it is not needed for that purpose.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. The Honourable Member, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is misleading this House. He said earlier, and he is basing his argument on the speech he made when this land was first acquired. I am looking at that debate and I do not see his name anywhere in this debate.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is November 28, 1995.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not using it. I am saying you said you spoke in that particular debate and you did not. I am saying I cannot allow this lawlessness to continue in this Assembly, Sir:

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Sir, the Honourable Member would know that if there is one thing when acquisitions come up in here I consistently make the point that there should be an open transparent policy with respect to land use in Barbados.

All I am trying to say, Sir, is that the suggestion, - I am dealing with the suggestions on the Other Side because the other side is linking the obvious claim that

this Resolution is a sham. They are saying that in truth and in fact this land is being allowed to be reverted because it is wanted for golf course use. That is what they are saying. They said so openly. The speech of the Honourable Member for St. John made that abundantly clear.

My position is I just want it to be clearly understood for the record that where the Government acquires land for a specific purpose that the Government is empowered, because the Town and Country Planning Act does not apply to Government to use that land for purposes which a normal owner would not be allowed to use it without specific planning permission in that regard.

I am making it abundantly clear, and my understanding of the position of this land when it is reverted to the owner is that the normal planning process will have to be undertaken by the owner and only those uses to which the Town Planner specifically permits the application to approve, the land can be used for. That is the straight position of it.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this debate to put a few things straight. I want to say first of all that I support the abandonment of this acquisition, the reason for this being that Government must always be the facilitator. Government cannot at all times carry out the construction of houses especially when the private sector is involved. Here we have a situation where the owners of this particular site had asked Government on a previous occasion for approval for this subdivision. 4.30 p.m.

When we sought to acquire this land, we were told subsequently to this that the private sector grouping had asked for this subdivision and therefore since Government was constructing low income housing and the private sector involvement were planning to do the same, Government felt it necessary to allow the private sector involvement to construct their low income houses.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. He is giving the impression, that the information that he is now saying, that they knew after the fact, but that was not true. The facts are Sir, that the developer always wanted the parcel of land to do the same said thing Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: That is the point I am making, Sir. It is for low income construction. We must be truthful to the facts. The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that the Town Planning permission specifically states that approval had been granted for low income construction. There are no luxury villas as the Member for St. John was suggesting.

The permission that was granted for this particular subdivision is specifically for low income housing, there are no luxury villas. The House must be told that this particular site is completely different from the site that the owners had approved for a golf course.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The designation which the Town Planner applies to change of use is residential, commercial, agricultural or whatever and the plan that you send in, you are necessarily bound by that. If it says residential you can decide to subsequently change the layout to accommodate luxury villas or anything else. I have never heard of any situation in which the Town Planner...

Asides

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You can go back and once it is already residential an applicant would have a valid cause to say that they wish to use that, as long as it is residential, for low income or luxury villas. There is nothing that binds the individual to keep it to low income. If, however, it was an economic classification, like agriculture, commercial or residential then you could take that kind of position. What the Honourable Member is saying really cannot make sense.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I understand from a very reliable source that the size lots at this development is 3 000 to 4 000 square feet of land. That is the size that the Town Planner has used for low income housing. Luxury villas will not be used on this site. The Members must not distort the facts. I think the Member for St. Lucy must not mislead his leader.

The Honourable Member for St. John knows that in 1990 the owners of that land had applied for permission for a golf course. They know about this. Actually, Mr. Speaker, in 1990 the owners of the land had applied for a golf course at the same time as the one for Westmoreland, Kingsland and about four others. I understand that Westmoreland was given permission and Sandy Lane was given permission at the time along with a number of concessions.

I understand that the most lucrative concession ever given to any previous developer was under the last administration.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I do not know who was the Minister at the time but it is a fact and the Member for St. Lucy comes in here and pretends that he is more righteous for the small man and his leader just said a minute ago that the DLP promoted the construction of luxury villas.

This site is being used for low income housing. It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that the present developers, Eastern Land Development Limited, has constructed about 15 low income houses in St. George South under the Mount Hill. That same company has constructed about 15 to 20 low income houses in St. George South and they are now erecting about 40 to 50 low income houses in the constituency of St. Michael North East. It is a fact that this company is building low income houses.

The Minister today was at pains to point out, Mr. Speaker, that it is a policy of Government to facilitate private developers. So far, Mr. Speaker, we have had applications from a number of private developers in Barbados as well as private developers abroad. The Minister pointed out today that a Canadian firm has approached us to build over 1 000 low income houses and land must be provided.

Mr. Speaker, members have spoken about the fact that there is a strong demand for housing in this country. This is a fact. For example, the records show that in 1994 to 1995 over 1 176 applicants applied to purchase house lots; in 1995/96 there were 1 639 applicants and the list went up. In 1997 there were 2 687 applicants to purchase land but over that three-year period, if you look at those figures one would see that over 5 000 persons applied to purchase land but only 811 persons actually purchased land. Land has to be found and the need is crucial.

On the other hand, when you look at persons who were able to obtain rental land, you will find that over a four-year period less than 300 persons actually got the opportunity to rent the land. In 1993, 507 persons applied to rent land in the St. Michael area, only 60 persons got help; in 1994, 662 persons applied and only 54 got help. The figure shows that in 1996/97, 637 persons applied to rent spots and only 52 actually got spots. The number is increasing for those persons who actually want to own and rent a spot in this country but we cannot supply the needs and therefore the acquisition process is important.

The records also show that the Minister since coming to office has acquired more than 120 acres of land for low income housing and it is not in one parish. For example, St. Lucy has land, St. John has land, Christ Church has land but...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. George North is misleading this Assembly, Sir. Based on the statistics of the number of house lots approved for rental and for sale, and the amount of land, compulsorily acquired, it is clear, Sir, that the amount of land that has been compulsorily acquired for low income housing has not been going to the people that it

was acquired for and that is a serious breach, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order, really.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I have made the point that the Honourable Minister of Housing has acquired to date and we have in the pipeline, plans for more than 120 acres of land. 4.40 p.m.

The point must be mentioned here, Mr. Speaker, that the process of actually putting those ...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. You said that the Honourable Minister acquired 120 acres of land?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Yes.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Well, could you tell us whether he has built 120 houses?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The process of acquisition has been completed but when land has been acquired then services have to be put in, roads, electricity, water and the other services so that the process takes long. I am well aware, and as the Honourable Member for St. John has made the point, a number of people come to us on a weekly basis asking for land but they cannot buy land. Honourable Members must understand this. The process takes long.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George North has misled this House, Sir. He said that the Government has acquired land in St. Lucy so I would like him to point out to me where in St. Lucy they have acquired land.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I said, Mr. Speaker, that we have acquired possibly 120 acres of land. The National Housing Corporation has a lot of land in St. Lucy and in Christ Church. We have not acquired anything in St. Lucy or Christ Church. We have land. It has to be developed. This will cost money and Government is planning to put in the services and we have to acquire the land.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that low income housing is a priority and we are treating it seriously but at the same time Members must bear in mind that the Government policy is not necessarily to build all the houses themselves, to create all the services themselves. We have private sector persons and construction companies who want to be involved in housing. They want to put in the roads and they can do it faster than Government. In fact we have a developer who is asking Government for land and they are willing to put in the roads, the electricity and so on and this is faster than Government because it takes time and they have the finance to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I believe Members should support this because I can categorically say that low income housing will be developed at the site nearest to the Buccaneer in Baywoods. They are not luxury villas. It is completely different from the site at the golf course. If the proposed golf course which started in 1990 should come back on stream it has nothing to do with this particular site.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise because I am very familiar with the anguish of many people who are looking for low cost housing, who are looking for house spots and who are looking for government housing units. At the same time I am aware that land is being required for other purposes and I will address the specific area in my constituency.

Now, the problem of land remains a problem for us. Those of us who know of numerous people who keep coming to us all the time and who cannot get a house spot should know that there is a need for land to be acquired for house spots.

The Resolution under consideration is alerting us to the fact that this land is being returned to the original owner because the original owner desires to develop housing. I do not see low income housing in the addendum to the Resolution but I am being advised that this is low income housing. I will not doubt the Minister nor the Parliamentary Secretary but I would wish that the housing that is made available would be the kind of housing which the poor people of Barbados would be able to afford.

I know in these days timber houses cost a lot of money. I am made to understand some of these houses are costing up to \$50 000 and \$60 000 and they are telling me that it is cheaper to build a wall house than a board house. I cannot really comment on the technical details of what a low cost house would be in this day and age. Whatever it is I would want it to be the kind of house which the average poor person, possibly a person working for \$1 000 or less would be able to afford. There are too many of these people who do not have any house to go to. They live with their families and they want to get out or they live in substandard conditions. They cannot get a housing unit nor can they get a house spot.

I am made to understand that over the past year 52 house spots were made available and then in another year another 54 house spots were made available. There are hundreds of people who apply for these particular house spots. My problem is how are you going to allocate these few house spots for so many people. I am yet to discover one person in Christ Church East who has been a beneficiary of any of these house spots or any of these housing units.

My mind begins to wonder from time to time on what kind of system can be put in place to ensure that there is some transparency in the allocation of this nation's resources whether it comes to being a house spot, whether it is a housing unit or whether it is a job. I believe that government and finance is about allocation of resources. I learnt this many, many years ago and I believe that when we are looking at the state we should look at the fair allocation of resources. It is also difficult to do that but there should be some system in place so that the average person knows if he is eligible or not otherwise it leads to frustration and one lives in hope and the MP lives in hope as well because he knows no way by which he can guarantee a person a house spot, a housing unit or any such of these valuable resources which are in scarce supply and which some people have greater access to than others.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also wish to address the matter of allocation of land to such institutions as churches. There seems to be a policy, Sir, not in the Ministry of Housing, the Minister is an honourable man. There seems to be a policy in the National Housing Corporation which seems to suggest that house spots or land is not for the allocation of churches in distress. I have spoken in Parliament about this matter of a church called the Ark of Safety which lies beside the road and has been there for months now. I got the assurance from the Minister of Housing who is an honourable man that this matter would be speedily addressed. But, Sir, I have not gotten the same assurance from the management of the National Housing Corporation who has been giving the people of the church a run around, who have attempted to give the MP a round around and I have told them straight that they will not give me any run around because if I had to come back to Parliament to speak about it, I will. If I have to speak about it on national television, I will. If I have to go by Kings Corner to speak on it, I will because I cannot stand as a representative of a constituency and see a church which houses upwards to 90 people at any one time beside the road. The day I have to stand and not say a word I may as well finish with the job. I told them I would speak and that same evening I attempted to call the Minister but he had left his office already because I was putting him on alert that this matter would not rest until the management of the National Housing Corporation understands that this is a religious country and consideration has to be given to those religious people.

People are talking about how bad youth is so we should look at preserving institutions which serve to protect our moral integrity and there is no reason why a church should be given the run around week after week and being told that they have to check with Town and Country Planning, they cannot find this, this spot is for somebody and this spot is for somebody else. It is highly untenable unless we are reaching a stage where we have

anti-God people who believe that you do not look after a church and the day we reach this stage and the day we allow that to happen we may as well pack up. And while we are talking about the youth we have to address these issues and we have to make sure that institutions are put in place for their moral upliftment. 4.50 p.m.

I am putting Members of Parliament on alert that this kind of attitude has to be stamped out where people are being given the run around especially when the management of key institutions in this country...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. I was made aware about this matter yesterday afternoon. I spoke to the management of the National Housing Corporation who has given me the assurance that they are now seeking Town Planning permission to erect the Church within the residential area. I understand they cannot erect a Church within a residential area and they are asking for permission for the Church.

Asides.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am making the point that we have to set the example. The Minister gave me the assurance and if the problem of understanding what this community is all about and the linkages between religious institutions and the home and church, if that is not understood by the management of these organisations then the Ministers have to make them understand what this is all about. It has to reflect the thinking of the Barbadian society who respects such institutions.

We are addressing the issue of availability of land which is a scarce supply whether it is for a householder or whether it is for a Church which is playing a key role in the community. This is the issue-and one has to understand that in underpinning decisions on resource allocation there has to be considerations of what reflects the key cost of the society and this is the point I am making.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think I have said enough on that but the issue of allocation of land where the Government is concerned and also allocation of units needs to be seriously addressed. We come time after time and address these matters but until anyone dares to put a system in place to deal with it, it will continue to frustrate government after government and it will continue to frustrate parliamentarian after parliamentarian as we know quite well this is the burning issue we have.

I went out there a few minutes ago to call my office and somebody called to say they applied for a house since

1978. We are the people who have to hear these things day after day and cannot give a justifiable response. These matters lie at the whims and fancies of management within the National Housing Corporation or whoever else feels to intervene in the process. These are the kinds of issues that I wish to address.

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, on this issue of the land, I believe that if Government had acquired land from some person and sees no need to use it and cares to give it back to them, that is fine because it belongs to the person in the first place.

But, likewise, Sir, I would wish that the person will be guided by the conscience that says that poor people deserve to have a place to abide in too.

Thank you.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will be two minutes, Sir. I am trying to appreciate the arguments in the debate because I am seeking some clarification, Sir.

As I understand this particular problem, we have this piece of land here, four hectares which the Government acquired and in 1996 said in the statutory instrument we are acquiring this piece of land from the owner, Williams Farms, for housing. Sometime between then and now, C. O. Williams Farms, Ltd., the original owners to whom no compensation has been paid, said, "look, you want to do low income housing but we as the private sector want to do a similar project". Government says to them, "well, we give you back the land, get along with the project."

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. Because he is giving the impression that Government was not aware when they compulsorily acquired the land that the developers wanted the land for housing also.

They knew from then, Sir, so I cannot allow him to go down that course, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not know that, Sir. The Minister was more conversant with the inner details of the matter than I am. I am not mixed up. I am trying to clarify my head. As I have it, the Crown acquired the land for housing purposes from the original owner. The original owner then made a proposition to the Government that they would do a similar project as Government had in mind. On reflection, Government said that it would give back

the land, to go ahead and get on with the project, providing you use the land for the original purpose that is for housing development of a low income. If that is so, what can there be a quarrel about? So what is the problem? 5.00 p.m.

The answer seems to me would be as Errol Barrow used to say: the answer is blowing in the wind. The truth will come out I would expect within a year, because we would know within a year whether the private sector owners to whom the land has been handed back are going to build low cost housing or not. If they do not, then there is an argument. I would assume from what the Minister said...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, the Minister gave the assurance to the House in his opening speech that there will be houses built of 1, 2 and 3-bedrooms and at a price range between \$50 000 and \$75 000. I do not believe that it is arguable any more that in 1997 you can in fact build or have built a house much cheaper than that. Personally, I would like to see Government emphasis more in the area of sites and services, acquisition of land, installation of services and allow people to get on with their own building. I know in St. Thomas we have very industrious people. One can see on weekends a house being built in a particular area and the residents of that area and friends would come and help. Some drinks are laid on, some rice and stew, and everybody must sit and the house goes up. It is built far more quickly and more cheaply than if you get one of these fancy developers to build the house for you.

For the first time, in October last year, I went to the western Caribbean and to Curacao. I was very impressed with some of the housing developments that I saw in Curacao. I never had the experience before. It was explained to me that it was part of the culture of the Dutch that they do a similar thing. People from districts would get together and build the houses on a cooperative basis. I am told it is done in Africa. I have very little experience of Africa.

I know that in rural Barbados and as I said just now, in St. Thomas, I have seen it several times.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: By and large the tenancies. I feel that we should be making consciously a decision to have land particularly in rural Barbados available for house spots so that rural people can do their

own thing and build their own houses according to specifications. There is no problem with that because there is Town Planning permission. They will put them up quickly. That is why I am saying that the Government has agreed now that we have pushed down the old District D police station at Rock Hall. We have cleared the site, razed it and the National Housing Corporation is now to put in the roads and the water. We are going to have 16 spots there. I am recommending to Government.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I hope in that project at District D - Cabinet has not decided anything yet but I would suggest that they allow the "tenants", for want of a better word, purchase of the spots at District D to purchase those spots on an instalment basis, on easy credit terms.

It is a part of the National Housing Corporation legislation that the sale of land which is owned by the Corporation has to be approved by the Ministry. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, I think, was a member of the National Housing Corporation Board and he would know that in developments even though they did not do too many in his time, National Housing used to make a recommendation to the Minister that the land be sold at a particular price and the Minister would then approve or otherwise deal with it.

At one time the National Housing Corporation had a commercial arm which, for example, developed the lots at Oxnards, West Terrace, Husbands Heights and so on. As far as possible in those days, certainly when I was chairman and subsequently, the aim was to recover the cost of installation of roads and services in the ultimate sale price.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of elucidation. The last policy of National Housing Corporation, especially land at Husbands, was that that land would be sold to people of the higher income bracket so that the income received would subsidise the land that you would sell to poor people. That is the housing development that was done by the private sector. The other side of that land...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are out of order now. You are making a speech now.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: A good point, Sir. That has always been sold. In some of the more lavish developments like Husbands Heights where you were charging because of the fantastic view that people had. The price per square foot was higher than the average lot somewhere else. One would subsidise the other.

I do not think that is the point. The point should be whether as a matter of principle or policy Government, in putting in services, should include in its development cost an element of subsidy. However, I believe that the poor in rural Barbados should be given an opportunity to own and, therefore, special terms should be worked out to facilitate that ownership and if it means that they pay a small down payment of \$500 and then \$20 or \$30 a month, something manageable should be done rather than invite them to look for... Suppose the price of the lot is \$8 000, rather than ask them to pay \$6 000 or \$7 000 up front. 5.10 p.m.

I hope the Ministry will look at this having regard to location and the ability of the potential owners to pay either lump sum or instalment. I recommend they be given a long time to pay on the never-never for land just as they would for an appliance in town. I feel that would be a contribution by Government that would be appreciated by the poor of Barbados.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Green Paper on Housing, as I indicated earlier, would be laid in Parliament before the end of the day. A Resolution on the Green Paper, after we have got the ideas from Honourable Members on that side will certainly be discussed. I believe at that point the Honourable Leader of the Opposition will probably make representation that the debate be televised.

We would not have a situation where the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would be contradicting himself by saying that he is not giving ideas to the Government but, at the same time, he is saying that the idea of a standard purchase price in the tenancies in St. Michael was his idea. That is a contradiction. I would plead with him to give us the benefit of his ideas because we do not see this problem in housing as a problem of the Democratic Labour Party, or the Barbados Labour Party. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is not here so I assume we do not have to refer to his party.

I would certainly beseech members to let us have their comments. The situation in housing is certainly a lot more serious than I thought when I came into the Ministry. A number of members, including some of the members on this side, have aired their views pertaining to the problems they have encountered when they go to the National Housing Corporation and they have been, indeed, very harsh on the National Housing Corporation.

It would seem to me that members would expect that the National Housing Corporation would be able to pluck a house out of nowhere whenever there is a house fire or a national disaster. We must face facts. There are only

about 6 houses that become available every month and we have a waiting list in excess of 500.

I am not saying there might not be the exceptional case when you might be cornered by a Member of Parliament who might know someone that might be inconvenienced as a result of some disaster or for some other reason and that person might not be let through the back door, but that is the exceptional case rather than the rule. We have a serious situation at the National Housing Corporation. This is why we are coming with these series of acquisitions in order to ensure that we alleviate some of the pressure that is placed at the doorsteps of the National Housing Corporation.

The question of terraced units, everybody wants to have a terraced unit. Almost every day you have about 10 requests for a terraced unit. We believe that if, in keeping with our Manifesto, we could go around the length and breadth of Barbados and acquire spots on the borders of existing villages in addition to that large acquisition where we could make house spots available to everybody, we would certainly be able to alleviate the housing situation in Barbados. We are making an effort but what we are starting to do is a drop in the bucket.

It would not be in my place to blame the last administration or any previous administration or to say that the Barbados Labour Party did more in housing than the Democratic Labour Party although it is a fact that the Barbados Labour Party did more. If the process we have embarked on is continued by the next Barbados Labour Party administration, or the next Democratic Labour Party administration, hopefully in 10 years¹ time we would be able to arrest the situation.

This foolishness about being suspicious about an acquisition and blaming an innocent landowner who believes that Government is unfailing him by acquiring almost all of his land - whenever there is an acquisition it is an acquisition from C. O. Williams Farms. It is unfair and unreasonable. I can understand how he will feel when he hears the Press reports on this debate after Government has repeatedly been coming for acquisition for his land to hear that for just a little 4 acres of land that we are giving him preferential treatment.

I think Members should be very careful in the way they slant debates of this nature because the Press must report what is said and when these slants are given people feel very uncomfortable. I know how the owners of C. O. Williams Farms will be feeling if they have the impression that the wrong slant is being given to this acquisition.

This land was acquired in good faith by Government, as I had indicated. We had pressures from persons who

were dislocated as a result of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, as I said, persons who were dislocated as a result of certain natural calamities like landslides. We have found land which happens to be more suitable. It so happens that by coincidence the landowner is in association with a company that could do practically the same thing we had embarked on at this location.

We have acquired other lands almost to the tune of 100 acres from the same landowner for our housing programme so it is unfair to say that he is getting any special treatment and that we should be suspicious of this acquisition. I do not know what the Honourable Member for St. John would want me to do when he talks about an undertaking but as a lawyer he should know what an undertaking is. I can only give somebody an undertaking for myself in circumstances like these. While I believe I can say or I am almost 99 per cent sure that this land will be used for low income housing, I cannot give him the type of undertaking he wants. I would advise him to monitor this particular acquisition. I do not have to monitor it because it is in my constituency and I will see it at least almost every week. I would find it hard to believe that the land in an abandonment for low income housing is utilised for another purpose.

I think a lot of Members on that Side who contributed to the debate spoke out of ignorance as it relates to the actual location of the land. Four hundred and forty yards, a quarter mile can be close if it adjoins a particular parcel of land but when there are a number of houses and a number of corners in between, a number of trees in between, it is a lot further than if in some cases it was 2 miles and the lands were adjoining. The location of the area, as I had indicated where the landowner or interest close to the landowner had applied for a golf course is far removed from this location.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want, as I said, to spend too much time on this matter because the opportunity will be given for Members when we debate the Green Paper on Housing. Hopefully, at the next Sitting when we come to deal with the Urban Development Commission Bill we will address the type of problems the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West alluded to. Here again I would urge him to lend us his ideas because if you have a good idea I am not going to say I am not going to take your idea simply because you are a member of the Opposition. I need the ideas. 5.20 p.m.

I want to touch on the point with respect to the National Housing Corporation and the question with respect to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East who did allude to certain concerns about a parcel of land for a church in Christ Church.

The National Housing Corporation, when land is acquired for a particular purpose and someone wants to use the land for another purpose, it is obvious that there must be a change of use. It makes no sense being given to a particular organisation or a particular individual for another purpose, knowing that there is a possibility that the permission might not be given from the Town and Country Planning Department. I would not want to, on the Floor of the House, to be critical of the Town and Country Planning Department but I must say that it would certainly be helpful if a lot of the decisions coming out of that department could be done a little bit more speedily. I gave the Honourable Member the assurance but I would urge him to liaise with the Town Planning Department, if that organisation has not yet made application to the Chief Town Planner, he should do so with haste.

I would, however, caution him with respect to a church, the Chief Town Planner is normally concerned about parking space and there are other considerations that might not make this particular area suitable for a church. Normally the amount of lots which the area for a church will take up will be about five lots. I have given him my assurance that I will co-operate with him and if I can be of any assistance in facilitating the process, I certainly will.

The Honourable Member for St. John and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South did speak of these emergency situations and as I said, we need to have land available as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South said. He just gave an excellent idea that the National Housing Corporation can be organised in such a way that when there is a fire you can actually go with a custom built house and put it on land but the fact remains that we do not have the land. We do not have the land to do this and this is something we could probably think about when we get the land available and if we proceed with this series of acquisitions both the small acquisitions and what is referred to as the '*ad hoc*' acquisition and we need the large ones like the Deane Town Project. If we could keep on this path between now and after the year 2000, I am sure that with a population of 250 000, we would be able to address the housing situation in Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West speaks about allowing persons to go on land and utilising rents that have been paid towards the cost of the land. But I would even go a little further and say that we should be in a situation where, when a person wants to have a piece of land, you could earmark certain lots for these people, they could go on the land and rent the land and then when they are ready to buy, they can buy whenever they want. There should be situations whereby depending on the means of the person that Government should be able to vest land in certain individuals. These are matters that would have to be thought out very, very carefully

because whenever you make this type of concession, they are certain individuals in our midst who take advantage of it.

You have a situation at the National Housing Corporation and it is becoming very, very difficult for the N.H.C. to monitor, maybe they do not have the staff to do it, but you have about 100 tenants who have rented their units out to other persons, including non-nationals and they are living elsewhere. This is a situation that we have to monitor. The thing about it is that whenever someone comes close to arresting a situation like that you normally would have someone in certain high positions to make sure that this particular individual is not touched. You have got to be very, very careful about implementing a policy whereby you actually give the land away to low income people.

The question of 'balanced development'¹. I like this talk about 'balanced development'¹. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is talking about 'balanced development'¹, the Honourable Member for St. George South is speaking about the fact that he cannot get many roads in his constituency repaired and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is boasting that all the roads in his constituency have been repaired. The Honourable Member for St. John is complaining but I do not know what he is complaining about because if there is a report which states that St. Andrew is the poorest parish, I do not have anything to fear. I do not know why the Honourable Member for St. John is worried about the authenticity of this report about St. John being the poorest parish. He should feel good about that.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I have not questioned the authenticity of the report, I have never said that I am worried by the report. I do not know what the Honourable Member is talking about. I did not even refer to the report in my speech. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West dealt with the report. If you want to read the report and come to your own conclusions you can, but have no fear, I have no problem representing the constituency I represent, I will continue to represent it and the more barbs you throw at the people of St. John and the less you do, their time will come.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member for St. John does not understand what I meant when I was referring to the fact that I see nothing wrong with persons saying that St. Andrew is the poorest parish or that St. John is the poorest parish.

My comments might have reflected certain comments that he probably made outside of the House but all I am

saying is that I see nothing wrong with that. I am not uncomfortable with St. Andrew being the poorest parish because the Honourable Member for St. Michael South was talking about 'balanced development'¹ and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central could speak about all the roads in his constituency being developed. So he cannot talk when I have the opportunity then to repair all of the road in St. John. If I were the representative for St. John I would make sure that all of the development is put in place in St. John. It is true that if I had the opportunity to do and I did not do it that I would feel embarrassed. I do not know if this is the reason why the Honourable Member has probably in another place taken issue with the report.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that Members would not reflect negatively...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. For the record let me say that I agree wholeheartedly with what the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said. I have never took issue with any report and I do not propose to. When the Honourable Member starts the housing project in Clifton Hall, I will be grateful; when the road from Foster Hall is passable again which is a major artery in Barbados that has been down for two years without any intervention from the Ministry of Public Works, I will be grateful. Why can't you do those things and solve problems.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you have made your point of order, please. The Honourable Member could you proceed to wind up, please and do not let us go down that line please.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I will proceed to wind up but the Honourable Member did allude to the roads in St. John. I just want the Honourable Member to understand that this is not just a debate about St. John but he mentioned the fact of non-repair of certain roads.

There are certain roads that are in a state of disrepair in St. Andrew that have not been fixed as yet and everything takes time. The road that he is referring to is an important link to that part of Barbados and certainly when funds become available, that problem will be addressed. The housing development at Clifton Hall, I gave him the assurance since 1995 that that problem will be addressed. We have prioritised the various developments and we have finally got to it, as a matter of fact, I think that very early in the year instructions were given and the contracts have been signed and if that development has not yet started it is just that there is a lot of construction activity going on in Barbados which we did not see a few years ago and the contractors are busy on other projects. 5.30 p.m.

I must commend the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for what I would consider an excellent presentation, one of the few good presentations he has made in this House. He has made a number of points except, like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West he is laying claim to being the inventor of 100% mortgages but I would welcome any other ideas that he might wish to give us.

He had me concerned though when he did indicate an intervention by the Ministry of Housing with respect to the Tweedside Road area. I know that the Government is interested in building a number of houses in the Tweedside area. This is for the relocation of persons who would be affected by the Bridgetown By-pass Project.

I myself being a country boy am not very familiar with the community environment in the Tweedside area and I certainly will visit the area myself to ensure that we are not building in an area which can accommodate the type of community activity that he is speaking about but it brings us, Mr. Speaker, to the same point that we were talking about with respect to these acquisitions. There is very little land in the St. Michael area that could be acquired for housing. Mr. Speaker, you would know yourself, that when the Ministry of Housing invited Members of Parliament to identify areas that even you, yourself, could not find much land for this purpose and one of the parcels that you have identified for other purposes is on the Order Paper here today. If we, Mr. Speaker, could have these acquisitions in areas where land is available and the Members of Parliament in St. Michael North West and St. Michael South could encourage their constituents to go to St. Andrew, Orange Hill and those places where house spots will be available we would have a resolution of the housing problems. But there is this feeling that if you belong to one constituency that you must remain in the constituency. When we have the Deane Town project completed we are talking about 1000 lots. I would welcome 500 persons from St. Michael North West and 500 persons from St. Michael South. This would remedy the housing situation but these Members of Parliament feel that when they have to do a relocation that the relocation must be in their constituency. That is nonsense.

I particularly like the point made by the Member for St. Michael South Central about the question of the special development area. This is all part of the plan for the Deane Town project, a special development area where certain incentives will be given to contractors and other persons in the area. This is all part of the plan for Deane Town. When you talk about Deane Town there are two things about Deane Town that you have to understand with respect to this connotation about a town. 5.40 p.m.

It is a town in context of a settlement. It is not that anybody is creating any town in Orange Hill. Persons must be relocated. They have to go somewhere. You have to find some place for them and you have a settlement. It is a settlement. You have the community facilities, you have your churches, you have your Day Care Centres, Mr. Speaker, you have certain commercial centres within that and that is a town within that context.

But what is more important especially to the people on the borders of Orange Hill, this particular area to all people in St. James was known as Deane Town from way back. As far back as I can remember. That was the name of the district. It was Deane Town. People always used to say there are five towns from the time I went to school. I always heard there are five towns in Barbados. Oistins, Speightstown, Hometown, Bridgetown and Deane Town. So if in ten years time the Deane Town is a reality, Mr. Speaker, maybe the people who live in Orange Hill had a little bit of foresight then.

The mention by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central about the ribbon type development is also a good one. This is one of the types of development that I have certainly encouraged since I was in the Ministry. It is supported by the officials in the Ministry of Housing. But again, you have a town planning problem.

Town Planning, I do not know if they apply a little bit more theory than other town planners elsewhere, but they have had a problem in some areas with respect to this type of development. We are making provision for that type of development in Claybury in St. John, Woodland in St. George South, and Forty Acres. This type of development is where you have actually put in all the facilities, you put in a road, you have a plantation and canes on both sides of the road and you are putting in the development.

We are advocating that Government acquire the land on both sides of the road. You do not have to do anything. I certainly would welcome any suggestion by any member with respect to this type of development.

In closing I would just repeat what I said earlier that Members who live in constituencies in St. Michael would encourage their constituents to come to other areas where land is available because we would like to make land available for all Barbadians. There is very little land in St. Michael and certainly I would like to see a lot more activity where the available land is, and that includes the parish of St. Lucy.

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

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission we will now revert to Papers, please.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS (*Resumed*)

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay the Green Paper on Housing.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to think that the Green Paper on Housing might be something which In the not too distant future, we might debate possibly in conjunction with the Urban Development Commission Bill or if not, on its own. It is a considerable paper.

I beg to move that we revert to Government Business, Sir, and that we move to Order No. 6.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (*Resumed*)

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT BUSH HALL MAIN ROAD, ST. MICHAEL

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this is the Resolution for the acquisition of land at Bush Hall Main Road for housing development. I think that most of the comments which are pertinent to this resolution have already been made. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I did indicate to Members of Parliament to identify lands for housing development and also I know that the Minister of Sports had also indicated that he would like to have Members specify areas for community purposes as well.

I must apologise to you, Mr. Speaker, for the lateness of this Resolution, seeing that you are the parliamentary representative for this constituency. But there were a number of teething problems initially. We did not want to do the acquisition without the cooperation of the owner of the property and when that was sorted out, we also had a few delays at the Lands and Surveys Department. All matters pertaining to this acquisition have now been sorted out. Your application dates back to September 1994 and I believe that you would be happy to note that it has reached this stage. We are hopeful that it would not take as long to do the relevant works on the land as they have taken for this resolution to come to Parliament.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not want to do as the Honourable Member did and involve you in this debate because that would be rather unfortunate for the way in which this matter was presented poses great difficulty to me. I am not sure if the Honourable Member wants us to blame you for an application or praise you for making an application. I am not sure what the land is being used for, if it is housing or sports development. I do not know how the National Sports Council gets into it. I, having delivered such a worthy presentation only minutes ago, I do not know what this contribution has generated into.

Therefore, the Opposition has great difficulty in unravelling how the Honourable Member tried to involve you in a matter. You sent in an application, Sir? Have you applied for land? Are you building a house? I mean it is totally perplexing. If you have an interest in the matter, Sir, I assume certain procedures will be followed. So, what is this that is going on now? I would not want the public to have the wrong impression at the end of this debate and I would like to deliver you from that embarrassment by asking the Honourable Member please, if we can give him ten minutes more, clarify it. Because what was just said, if I were interpreting it for the newspaper which is what the Honourable Member has great concern about, what the journalists write in the newspaper, I would like it clarified. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Andrew needs to be a bit more expansive because I am not worried about what the construction magnates think. They can employ public relations specialists. I do not worry about them. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew worries about them, but I do not. I worry about this Chamber and I worry about you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I would not say why I am worried about you. I think you worry about yourself too and therefore I would want the Honourable Member to clarify the matter. That is all I am asking for, I am not adding or detracting from the debate, but I think some clarity is necessary.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would just want to say to the House that I am totally in support of this resolution. As the Honourable Minister has pointed

out since September 1994 you have been asking for a housing development within your constituency. I must say...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I believe that the standards of this House need to be observed. Members cannot involve you in a debate in this way. This is wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could I ask the Honourable Member to put it in a different way, please?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Precisely. It must not be done like that. It will cause embarrassment to the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe it is clear that it is the Speaker's constituency. Please, let us hear the Honourable Member. Please, please.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, since 1994 we recognised that there was an acute shortage of house spots within St. Michael Central. Mr. Speaker, I have visited almost all the constituencies in St. Michael with their representatives and the Honourable Speaker happens to be the representative of this particular constituency and we have visited this particular area and the representative of this area has earmarked this particular site which I must tell Honourable Members is situated in the Bank Hall area north of the Howard Supermarket. It is situated between the Bank Hall Main Road and First Avenue Park Road. It is indeed an ideal location since it is also among other major settlements like, Maynards Land, Snagg Land and Clements Land. But, Mr. Speaker, I have heard a programme quite recently where a member of the public said that Speakers do not get anything in their constituencies done.

This is an example of a Speaker who has been performing in his constituency. A Speaker who recognised that there is an acute shortage of house spots and I must say that I have been with Mr. Speaker on numerous occasions when he had to help a number of people in his constituency on urban matters in terms of housing.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: On a point of order. This is really not the way in which these matters are discussed in Parliament. Let me say what it will do, Sir.

If something is said which the Opposition does not agree with, you will come into the debate and be attacked when that is not really our intention. I hope you will repeat your advice to the Honourable Member and let him put it in a different way. We understand the constituency, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I believe you are allowed to refer to the representative for St. Michael Central.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of St. Michael Central a lot of work has been done by the representative in assuring and helping his constituents. For example, I am aware that another acquisition will be done not too far from now in which we would hope that playing facilities will be provided. All of these developments have taken place because the representative for that particular constituency has gone beyond the call of duty to help those persons in this constituency. 5.50 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. There is a rule in this House which says that you cannot read speeches and the Honourable Member is reading directly from a speech. It was hand delivered to him.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe the Honourable Member does not want to miss anything.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, this particular constituency is in dire need of help in terms of housing. We have carried out a survey and recognised that not only in this particular constituency but throughout St. Michael there has been a shortage of house spots and units for rental. On this particular site National Housing Corporation has looked at it and, as I said before, it is about 33 000 square feet of land and I believe Honourable Members will have a chance when we debate the Urban Development Commission to look at settlements of this nature where you have small developments taking place.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it would be used for high rise terraced units. I am advised that it will accommodate at least 20 or so terraced units and from all reports members of that particular community have welcomed this type of development because it is in keeping with the programmes that the Government has put forward.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I must say I am not aware of what the Member is saying because I am also an English teacher.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe that if there are two English teachers, the two of them should at least get the verb right.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: This particular development will transform this particular area in the coming years. I am aware that there are a number of applicants at the National Housing Corporation for units of this type. This

Resolution has come a far way and we are hoping that over the next couple of months that we can put plans in place so that we can see the culmination of this particular housing development.

Thank you.

HIS HONOUR R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Resolution before this House. St. Michael West Central, the constituency I represent, lies adjacent to St. Michael Central the constituency where this piece of land is being acquired by Government.

The constituency, as I said, is one quite similar to that of the constituency of St. Michael West Central in that it is densely populated. It is part of the said St. Michael which bears a problem where there is a lack of land space for housing.

St. Michael Central is fortunate to have the kind of representation it has right now and the people in that area are happy to know that the representation being offered now is one where their needs will be looked after.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that this Land Resolution is for housing. As the Member said, it is for terraced units. I, myself, toured the area a few weeks ago with the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and we looked at some areas in the Hill Road, Bank Hall area. We looked at areas in the Park Road area. We went to Snagg Land area, all in St. Michael Central. We did a complete tour of the area, looking at areas where we can improve the standard of living for the people in St. Michael Central.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House, because he is giving the House the impression that he has some ministerial portfolio and he can visit areas and dish out promises.

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

HIS HONOUR R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, we visited the areas in St. Michael Central, the Waterford area, Snagg Land, parts of Bush Hall, the Hill Road area, Park Road. This particular area that we are talking about is an area where already in place are amenities. The infrastructure is there - lights, water, poles and so on.

This piece of land which is lying idle can hold probably 5 or 6 house spots but, as the Member said, they are more looking at terrace units for the area.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that this kind of infrastructure would add something to the area, especially in the area of housing which so many people in St. Michael Central really require.

At the same time, I want to say that within the same St. Michael Central area, the Hill Road area - I once lived in the Hill Road area - in that particular area where they had the hole we called the "bin" in those days has now been filled in and it is good to see that in that part of St. Michael Central that the facility is there for the young people to play in that area.

Also in the Pasture Road area when we toured there we realised that a lot of that area, again St. Michael Central, that the hole that held garbage is now filled in. Recently I passed and saw some people were using it for some tent meeting.

I can say that we are happy to see that that kind of representation has been offered to St. Michael Central and the kind of plans that are in the pipeline will be continued as we go about not only St. Michael Central but in St. Michael in bringing this kind of infrastructure to the area.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are other areas of St. Michael Central that I saw that I am quite sure that as time goes by the proper infrastructure will be put in place to make St. Michael Central into the constituency that it should be. I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me in dealing with this particular Resolution that there is a particular policy of Government that this side is not aware of. We are hearing in this Resolution where MPs are not looking in their area to see where housing lots can be allocated but they are quite prepared to go in somebody else's constituency...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I believe I would not be wrong if I say that the Chair does not understand that. I believe the points that were being made were that visits were made by the representatives and other members to the constituency.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that any Ministry official who wants to come to my constituency and tour should come and tour with me and not necessarily with another parliamentarian. We are having a situation where somebody is bringing an MP from another constituency to go and tour, to point out to that Ministry official what is wrong with a particular constituency.

I am saying it is an insult to the sitting Member of Parliament where another Member could get up in the House of Assembly and point out issues on behalf of another Member of Parliament. 6.00 p.m.

HIS HONOUR R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not quite understand what the Honourable Member is trying to say. I represent, as I said, the constituency that lies next to St. Michael Central.

Mr. Speaker, firstly, I would say I represent the people of Barbados in general, and the people of St. Michael West Central in particular. I do not see anything wrong with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central being invited to tour any constituency, be it St. John, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, this land lies in St. Michael Central. As far as I understand, it is not St. Michael West Central. I am saying it is regrettable and distasteful for somebody to get up in the House of Assembly and pretend that they are the representative for a particular area when there is somebody quite capable of representing that area.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is really out of place. He is accusing a Member of this House of misleading the House by pretending that he represented an area, in other words, he is a fraud. That is really the basic allegation.

Aside.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I have never pretended I am the Honourable Member though, Sir. I believe the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central in no way made any such pretense or assumption. In the circumstances, I do not think the Honourable Member should, in my humble submission, be allowed to go down that line.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please!

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You see, Mr. Speaker, it is okay. The backbench can gang up against me. I do not mind but when I am making speeches in here and the same Honourable Member can behave like the Speaker and wants to tell me how to behave in this Assembly, it is a different matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: You should concentrate on the Speaker, you know.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You mean I should ignore him? I would take your advice and ignore the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure you said you do not hear asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: As you said, the Speaker does not hear asides so if there is a pretending Speaker I should ignore the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central. There is no need to listen to what he says or what he does. Thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate and to lend my support to the acquisition which is now before this Honourable Chamber. While it does not fall within my constituency, the land being acquired for the purposes of housing, the reality is that the community of Bush Hall lives as a single community, as you are well aware. The difficulties posed in that particular area are that there are very few vacant spots available for housing development.

Indeed, Sir, one of the things I look forward to the establishment of the Urban Development Commission for is the fact that Government has established a policy which will seek to bring back into use a large number of derelict houses that populate that entire traditional district of Bush Hall.

We therefore believe that the step of creating these terraced units at the corner of Bush Hall Main Road and 1st Avenue, Park Road, will be a step in the right direction in ensuring that the pace for the redevelopment of that area would, in fact, be put into position. So that when we start the process of bringing the derelict houses back into position, as well as the fact that we have already launched the pilot project for urbaij renewal in Alleyne's Land, Bush Hall which is on the other side of Bush Hall Main Road, I look forward to a situation that within 3 to 5 years the entire face of that community would be uplifted and will reflect an area that would have undergone serious renewal both in terms of the construction of new units, the rehabilitation of derelict housing and further the provision of adequate amenities and access to the land at reasonable rates for the residents of that area.

We all know, Sir, that the residents of Alleyne's Land in Bush Hall since, some over 5 years ago, received notices to purchase the land at \$5 a square foot and in no way does that \$5 reflect the level of services put in by the landowner since Government assumed the responsibility for the installation of virtually all of the services there. Equally as important as that, Sir, and I believe one other Honourable Member in here referred to this point today, that throughout the whole of St. Michael we have a situation where there are very little known line marks for persons.

Anyone who visits the Criminal Magistrates Court on a regular basis would be aware of the fact that a large reason for a number of the disputes reaching courts today whether for crimes of violence, or crimes of blackguarding, or other such crimes relate to boundary disputes, largely because of the inadequate boundaries drawn in tenancies and the haphazard development of tenancies most of which would have taken place from the early 20th Century on when there would have been an exodus from the country into Bridgetown and when persons took spots almost willy-nilly largely because of the pressure of the overcrowding.

In here today, Sir, the Right Honourable Prime Minister in his Ministerial Statement referred to the comments of the Deane Commission which found that overpopulation in the urban areas of Barbados was a significant problem in the early 20th century. Very often landowners, and not necessarily plantation owners but small black landowners, would allow people to place houses on their land out of an abundance of care so as not to see these people have to live on the streets.

What has happened over the years, Sir, is that there has been a haphazard development in terms of the placement of the houses without reference to appropriate line marks and without reference to proper planning on the part of the Town Planning Department and that has been a great source of personal dispute among persons.

Sir, I look forward, and I am sure that other persons in this Honourable Chamber look forward too, to the day within 3 years, where we can walk through both sides of Bush Hall and be happy with the facelift which would have taken place during this period and be satisfied that we as a Parliament have done our duty in ensuring that we can improve the quality of life of those persons living there.

The extent of the work should not relate only to the construction of new units, as I said, or to the provision of housing, or to the rehabilitation of derelict housing, or even to the surveying and landmarks but also to the question of giving them opportunities for small business enterprise and giving them the potential of continuing to provide for themselves in a way where they would not have to be relying on Government at all times.

I sincerely hope, Sir, that the Honourable Minister of Housing would realize for two reasons that first choice in housing really must go to the people who live in the district in respect of this particular project and the other projects that are coming on board largely because these are people for the most part who have lived in this area for 2 and 3 generations since, as I said, the early 20th century. 6.10 p.m.

There is a funny thing about St. Michael people, Sir, they do not like to move out of St. Michael to acquire housing. So it is no use telling them that there is land in St. Philip or land in St. Lucy or St. Andrew because the majority of them want to remain in St. Michael where they have strong family ties and where, I would venture to suggest, their outlook on life differ slightly from those in the country. There are those who would want to put it in a disparaging way but I do not, Sir. I believe that they have a healthy and vibrant outlook to life, they enjoy life but they also appreciate the convenience of living near to Bridgetown and living near to the area which they have become accustomed to all their life.

With those few words, Sir, I strongly support this Resolution before this Honourable Chamber and on behalf of the people of Bush Hall, all of the people on both sides would wish to register our appreciation to the Minister of Housing and the Parliamentary Secretary for hearing their pleas and for moving expeditiously to ensure that they are provided with outlets for decent houses and that we can all contribute Sir, to the face lift of the area, which is a traditional urban area in Barbados, well known to many of us.

Thank you.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ORDER NO. 5-TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A
RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SALE OF LANDS
UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LAND
VESTING AND DISPOSAL
ACT, CAP. 225

Hon G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this a Resolution to approve the sale of lands under Section 5 in the Crown Land Vesting and Disposal Act Cap. 225 as a result of a decision by Cabinet to dispose of public baths which are not needed for community purposes throughout the island. Those public baths that have been identified by persons within the community whether it be a community group or a solid recommendation from a Member of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, this is a policy which preceded my time. It is nothing new, a number of public baths have been disposed of in this way. In this acquisition, Mr. Speaker, there were 21 tenders for the purchase of these baths. The tenders were examined by the Tenders Committee and in all cases the recommendation of the Tenders Committee was accepted by Cabinet and the recommendation did include the person with the highest tender. I know

the Honourable Member for St. Lucy have difficulty with a sale to the highest tender but I believe that on this occasion seeing that we have two from St. Lucy he would not want to incur the wrath of any of his constituents and he would agree with these acquisitions.

There are five sales:

Rodney DeCoursey Murray, Lammings, St. Joseph, the price as accepted by the Committee - \$ 10 000.

Jo-Anne Jones, Flat Rock, St. George, where the bath was located - \$16 000.

Mr. Ryan Shephard, Pie Corner, St. Lucy - \$11 500.

Mr. John Standard, Josey Hill, St. Lucy - \$4 500.

Sharon Knight, Church Village, St. Philip - \$11 000.

Gregg Thornhill, Wakefield, St. Thomas - \$6 750.

This Resolution pertains to those baths mentioned except the recommendation to Sharon Knight. That will form the subject of a separate Resolution because I suspect that the question of the plans have not been sorted out pertaining to that one.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in the circumstances, I beg to move that this Resolution calling for the sale of these parcels of land on which those public baths are located be passed.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, while the Minister was making his introductory speech on this matter, he said that I am always opposed to their policy about the highest bid but I want to remind this House that matters like these, Sir, would not see a bid from Eastern Land Development. They are not interested in things that Government want to get rid of and dump. This has no commercial value to those developers. To come in here and use side chat that I am always opposed to Government selling off land to the highest bid, I think, Sir, that it must be put in the right perspective. What I am opposed to, Sir, is where Government has land that has better value than these and where they are prepared to sell it to people that have the money and not to people who most need it. These baths were up for sale on many occasions and they actually had to beg people to buy them.

I am challenging the Minister today to tell me if any large company put in a bid for these baths. I can assure this House that they would not have bid on these baths. In

respect to the one in Pie Corner, I have a particular problem, Sir. I am not sure that the owner of the land that the bath now stands on, that that owner has been compensated for the land and I would hope, Sir, that this particular matter be resolved.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the Government has a right to make sure that these titles that they are about to give out to people that the) are in proper order and that the people who own the land should be compensated because I am going to assure you, Sir, that if the owner of the land is not compensated...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, Sir, please. The least that Honourable Members can do is to read the Order Paper. These sales are being effected under Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act. They must have vested in the Crown already, if not the Crown cannot pass title to anybody. This is not a place for casual debate where you can come in here and guess and suppose at something. This is important. These are Crown lands. 6.20 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am glad that the Honourable Member for the City understands that this is important and she has a right, as the Leader of this House, and also as Deputy Prime Minister to make sure that poor people are compensated for their land when it is taken up by the Crown. If you have a problem with that well then tell the House that you are opposed to poor people being compensated for land.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I am on a point of order. That is not the case here. The Honourable Member is setting up a straw man to lick it down. Everybody in here wants people from whom the Crown acquires land to be compensated for it. That is not in question but that is not the case in point.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I must forgive the Honourable Member because the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East just pointed out that the major problem in this country is conflict between people because of landmarks.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, one minute please. I am trying to find the rule relating to relevancy but the Honourable Member, please the Resolution before the House is clearly worded. The explanation has been given and yet you are proceeding down the same line in spite of the explanation, in spite of what is written there. It has been stated that the lands are already vested in

the Crown. This is not a case of taking land from any poor people or anything like that.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am not challenging that the land does not belong to the Crown. You honestly feel, Sir, that when somebody goes and takes possession of the bath at Pie Corner that the previous owner who is not compensated is interested in whether the land had belonged to the Crown or not? The person is now dealing with the person that is in possession and I am trying to protect the interest of the person that is taking possession of this land now. I do not see what is so difficult about this, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member either knows it as a fact or he does not know it that the persons from whom this land was originally acquired by the Crown were not compensated. You really cannot get up in here and speculate on that kind of thing.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying that the people who originally owned the land must be compensated before the titles are passed.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is up to her. If she cannot interpret, that is not my problem.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member. Sorry. I apologise. You know me, I am very decent when it comes to manners. I apologise unlike the others over there.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that they have a right to make sure, Sir, that they do not unnecessarily create personal conflicts. We heard in here today that the major problem in Barbados today is conflict of land issues and it is a fact. All sitting Members of Parliament should know that. People would put up a sign, do not trespass on their land, but yet they want to trespass on yours and that is a normal thing. I am saying that the Government has a right to compensate the previous owners before they create a bigger problem. That is all I am saying. Thank you very much.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution before the House affords me the opportunity to raise ...

Pause.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, have you concluded, Sir?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: No, Sir. Mr. Speaker, this Resolution gives me an opportunity to raise a matter that has been on my mind for some time. I understand the policy here that Government will dispose of these parcels of land in various areas, in Bridgefield, in Lammings, in Rat Rock, Pie Corner, and so forth. Government clearly seems to have embarked on a policy of acquiring land and making it available for housing and for projects for a small developing community.

Not meaning to be offensive in any way I have been wondering for a long time and I refer specifically to the parcel of land situated at Bridgefield, I have been wondering why it has not crossed the mind of the present administration to seek to make available land in this area at Bridgefield which is a fast developing area. It has a school which is being built in an area, housing is going up, contiguous to land that I know is empty to assist in the resiting of the people who are suffering at Arch Hall and Bennetts in St. Thomas. I wondered if it was not possible to trigger the mind of the Government seeing that the people at Arch Hall and Bennetts have been suffering for so long and have been promised compensation. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if to date, after 3 years, those persons have been compensated as yet. In any event, Mr. Speaker, the level of compensation that has been offered to the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts is insignificant and what should have crossed the Government's mind ...

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is reflecting on a vote of this House. The money for the residents of Arch Hall was passed in here by Resolution some months ago.

Aside

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

Order, please.

The Honourable Member, I am not going to allow this Resolution to become a debate about any compensation. Could we focus on the Resolution which is before the House and may I remind you also of Standing Order 28.4.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The point that I was making is that I am not dealing with compensation. I am saying that Government should focus their attention on providing land for persons who have been suffering and in my view have not been adequately compensated. It would have been in their interest, since we are acquiring land, selling land, making land available. I am just saying this has

triggered my mind and I think it is appropriate to at least bring it to some degree of focus that there are people that have been promised compensation that could have been resited to land in Bridgefield - that have been left without being adequately compensated and are still suffering today when part of Government policy could include them by placing them at Bridgefield - which would be not too far away from where they are presently located.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you thinking that these people could have been properly compensated by giving them the bath? 6.30 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am aware that there is a shortage of water in St. Thomas and that there is a problem why water is not being distributed to the people and the people are suffering and need water to bathe in St. Thomas. They are complaining to me that there is a lack of water in St. Thomas.

But, I think that the time has come, if we are serious of removing people because of a persistent problem. We debated in here today the fact that people are resited from White Hill because of a specific problem. So in that context I do not see why there is anything wrong or offensive in arguing that if people are suffering from a problem in a specific area that Government should not look at the possibility of re-siting them in an area that is contiguous to them in St. Thomas or something of that sort.

I do not really see a problem and I am just saying that this has triggered me and I really am anxious for some relief to be brought to the people whom I am referring to because, it seems to be going on and on and on and the mere fact that we cannot now have the landfill at Greenland opened for some time means that...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: How did you get all down there, now?

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker the connection is clear.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right, you proceed.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the landfill at Greenland had been promised about five different opening dates and we still do not know when it is going to be opened. Three years have elapsed, Mr. Speaker, since this administration promised relief to the people at Arch Hall and Bennetts. This is 1997 and we have no clear indication when the landfill will be opened.

Because we know that the present Minister is totally confused and is not in a position to indicate to the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts when in fact they can expect relief as has been promised by this administration. That is how I got to Greenland, so I was just making the point that there is no clear indication and in light of that, Government must take into account the fact that these people are suffering. Rather than just "willy nilly", to just get rid of a bath, or to come into this House of Assembly to dispose of four or five baths really shows that there is no clear planning within the Government. This is easy work. There is nothing creative or developmental about this. These Resolutions tend to waste time and this country needs to focus on serious macro planning for housing, taking into consideration people who live in areas, that from time to time they will suffer. Maybe, it would be a useful exercise, rather than waste time dealing with these minor sales of a bath or whatever, to let some serious planning go on in the Ministry of Housing. Because, this is a clear indication that there is absolutely no forward planning.

My suggestion is very simple, it can be costed and you can look at it. Government is acquiring a lot of land all over the place and they should make land available to the people who are suffering at Arch Hall and Bennetts.

I will not go on and I am not really trying to be offensive.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I really believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is a serious matter because when we look at the macro planning of a landfill in Barbados, and if we had taken the information available to us by the consultants, we would have seen that it would have made sense to...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please, I am not going to allow that. Please, please, please.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I am just saying, Mr. Speaker, that if the recommendations had been taken where we could have re-sited those people at Bridgefield which is continuous to that area, then we would not be now be at risk where you are going to be spending millions of dollars in mitigating circumstances by placing a landfill at Greenland, when we could in fact be developing and assisting the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts who are presently suffering and need to be compensated.

Mr. SPEAKER: And Bridgefield.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: And Bridgefield. So this point must be taken seriously and Government must understand that they have a responsibility to think of ways how

they can assist the general public or in particular, those districts that are in distress.

Clearly, that is a district that has been in distress, has been disappointed by the present administration and it really should stop and I am asking the Government to look favourably at acquiring some land in the same area in Bridgefield with a view to relieving the stress that those people of Arch Hall and Bennetts are now suffering.

Apart from that, I really have no difficulty in the fact that they are disposing of the baths. This is a normal procedure and if they want to proceed with selling the bath that is fine. But, I thought I would intervene to make that case for the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts do not require the Honourable Member for St. Michael East to make any case for them.

These baths that are the subject of this Resolution were advertised by the Democratic Labour Party's administration on the 26th March, 1990.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: 1990, please. Since 1990. For four years they failed to effect a sale of these baths. So, I cannot have any arguments about these baths. In Bridgefield, Sir, the Bath is located down a narrow alley a little bit wider than this space. There would be no space to carry the 167 households from Arch Hall to there. There is no other land in the immediate environs of Bridgefield that could accommodate the population of Arch Hall and Bennetts.

This is no land that has been passed by the Town Planner at Cane Garden. There is one three-acre lot at Cane Garden which the Government had indicated an interest in for erection of a police station, slightly west and on the opposite side of the road of the playing field.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, just by the plantation house. You know there is an entrance to the plantation. The main entrance to the plantation and then about 30 yards above that there is another entrance and there is a lot right by that entrance on the front road. That is the only lot of three that is available. The other two lots Mr. Morris wants to retain for his children. Above that to the east of that, that land has not been approved for housing by the Town Planner. So there is no land there above Cane Garden anymore.

When you go through the village of Bridgefield, of course you have very good agricultural land on the side opposite Rugby Plantation and next to Ridge Plantation and that brings you to Forty Acres. The Government has just put in a new road on Forty Acres which will open up on either side of that road potentiality for house spots. Maybe, you will be able to get 30 or 40 in there. But, that will require acquisition from the plantations which own the land. I think on one side is Hopewell and the other side is Vauclose.

Now, Sir, it is amazing that the Honourable Member could suggest in 1997 that the solution to the problem at Arch Hall, caused by Mount Stinkeroo is relocation of the entire villages to some other area at Bridgefield. The problems at Arch Hall began in 1988, and for 6 years those people suffered all the problems that the whole of Barbados is aware of - smells, fumes, fires, smoke. Almost every year, 3 to 4 times a year. At no time in the 6 years that the Democratic Labour Party had the responsibility for Mount Stinkeroo between 1988 and 1994 did the Government offer any relocation to any people even to the bad asthmatics. Now he is going to come in 1997 after an agreement has been reached to say that is what we should do. 6.40 p.m.

Now, Sir, money was passed in here, some \$800 000 to compensate the residents of Arch Hall. I was away last week and a story appeared on the front page of the Advocate I am told which has triggered mischief in the mind of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East to say that a resident complained about not receiving the money. That is true. The money is in the accounts of the Sanitation Service Authority.

It has been arranged between- the Minister of Health and myself that we would have tried to pay the persons on a date which unfortunately turned out to be the same day on which the Elsie Payne Complex was opened and I also had another engagement as it transpired, the Inter-governmental Task Force meeting on Drugs in Jamaica. We had to cancel that arrangement. I was away for 3 weeks.

The people of Arch Hall and Bennetts will soon, at a date convenient to the Minister of Health and myself, receive their cheques or whatever from the Sanitation Service Authority.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am going to be there when the people of Arch Hall and Bennetts receive their cheques. I have to be there.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I saw you on television celebrating 10 years in here, last night and the night before. What a wonderful, generous government! On television 2 nights running. You mean that if I go to Arch Hall and make sure those people get their \$6 500 in their hands...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I could also say that on Saturday, May 24, at 8.30 in the morning, a number of officials in the police department, the fire service, the Chief Town Planner himself, representatives of the Ministry of Housing, the parliamentary secretaries and myself did a tour the day before I left, of certain sites in St. Thomas. All of the officials agreed that the site at Cane Garden is ideal for construction of a new police station. We then went from there to Rock Hall the old District D where the contractor was completing the levelling of that area. They pushed down the old police station. As I said earlier, they are going to lay out that in 16 lots for rent and it is up to National Housing Corporation to put in the water, roads and light.

From there we went to Arch Hall and identified a site near Highway 2A which had been recommended by the fire service association and the management of the fire service for a new fire station. Ultimately the aim is to close Weston and build a new facility at Arch Hall so that we will give them easier access into St. Thomas and either side of Highway 2A and down the hill.

We have had a study done by Richard Gill Associates for Barbados residents. That study recommended Arch Hall, an area at Nesfield which is on the border of St. Peter, St. Lucy for another one and one on the south eastern side. Either the Six Roads area or an area at Newton. That is the development plan for the fire service over time.

When we looked at the land at Arch Hall for the fire station we thought it would make sense to acquire some of the land immediately adjoining the village. There is a white house which you cannot miss when you go to Arch Hall. Near to the white house, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The residents want sites and services. It looks like an area between 8¹/₂ to 10 acres. There is a natural cart road which runs down into the village down to Magistrate Greaves' house. Everybody, including the Chief Town Planner, thought that that acquisition would not do violence to agricultural policy. As

the Honourable Member for St. Lucy knows the land along there is not the best producing land. The top soil is an inch and a half and in any event, one is conscious that almost every other year there are bad cane fires in that location and the village of Arch Hall is often threatened because the fire just spreads right through the canes down through the village and the residents really would like that hazard removed.

If we erected a housing unit there that would take that part of the land that is in canes out of canes and remove the danger.

I think what happened is that it was known in the morning that all of us were up there. The cars were parked all along the road and all the officials were there but it was not possible to have any dialogue with the residents that morning because the rain came and we all had to stay in the cars and leave. Then I left Barbados the next day. I believe there has been some ploughing of the land recently and the residents want to know if you are going to acquire, why plough. All of these things will be explained to them in fairly short order.

I thought that I would explain that Government has every intention. In fact I found in my dip yesterday at Home Affairs a list of all persons who are to be compensated. It was sent to me while I was away. I was going through correspondence yesterday from the Ministry of Health. 6.50 p.m.

I gather it has transpired that there are 2 or 3 people who were not included in the survey that have surfaced, but that is not a problem. The fact is it was only the question of having a convenient time for the Minister of Health and myself to be present to compensate the parties.

The final point I wish to make, Sir, is that I think if Honourable Members are true to themselves they will have to admit that since this Government has been responsible for the management of the landfill at Mangrove, there have been few complaints about stench, fumes, vapours and so on from that landfill. The reason has been that the Government has been prepared to do whatever was necessary to ensure that the landfill was properly managed, maintained and supervised. If you speak to the workers up there, as I do from time to time, they will tell you how happy they are that they are now able to get clay and cover material on a regular basis to cover the rubbish as it is dumped, whereas in the bad old days that was a real problem.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading this House, Sir.

The Honourable Member is giving the impression that now that the landfill is getting all the clay from Greenland that you cannot now get a smell from the landfill. I want to assure this House that is not correct. I pass there every morning and there is still a smell coming from the landfill.

I am saying that with the amount of cover material that is coming from Greenland to that landfill you should not be able to get a smell. It appears that the material that should be on the landfill is not now on that landfill. I would like to find out from the member where the material has gone.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I have given you really a lot of latitude. I allowed you to respond to that last question but I think we should curb this now. I really would not like it to continue like this any longer.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will then now revert to Bridgefield, to the bath that has been sold to the two Thornhills. I entirely endorse the sale of the bath.

I think it is not well appreciated that Government has, in addition to all we have talked in earlier debates today, a policy also of divesting itself of derelict properties. When that programme which I think will accelerate under the Urban Development Commission gets going, a lot of derelict buildings will come down which is good for all kinds of reasons. That itself will create vacant lots on which Government can construct units, or sell the lots for persons to put down their own properties. It will help to create what I used to call the land banks, additional land available for housing either for Government use or for private development.

On that note, Sir, I wish to heartily endorse this Resolution and compliment the Minister of Housing for bringing to Parliament this matter that has been languishing for many years under the previous administration.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 7.45 p.m.

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 7.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly. 6.58 p.m.

RESUMPTION Mr. SPEAKER:

This sitting is now resumed.

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY Mr. Chairman:

The House is in Committee of Supply.

ORDER NO. 8-TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A
RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF
\$7400000 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED
FUND TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES
1997-98 AS SHOWN IN SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES NO. 2.

HEAD 34 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AFFAIRS AND CULTURE -
\$3 400000.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not intend to take this Committee very long on this matter. This is a straightforward matter in so far as it relates to only a single item of expenditure and this sum is being asked of this Committee in order to be able to pay off arrears to the Transport Board. The Ministry of Education has a relationship with the Transport Board where we have since before the 1980s been subsidising the cost of what is known as weekly passes and scholar tickets for school students who have recourse to the public transport system.

In truth and in fact, the subsidisation is in excess of 50% of what is required to pay the Transport Board. This is a policy which successive Governments have employed in relation to the provision of transportation for students in the country and one which I believe must continue and to which this Government is certainly committed to continue because the hardship to a number of families particularly where a single mother who may be unemployed, may have three or four children would have to find substantial sums of money in order for the children to be able to attend school.

It is out of the same principle, Sir, that has motivated Government to provide for school meals; to provide also for the provision of text books; and really as part of that realm of policies that separates the provision of education in Barbados from a number of other developing countries, in that we recognise that there is no use having a good educational system if the children are not there to benefit from it. To that extent, we honour our commitment to the Transport Board in this regard.

We have tried, apart from the fact of the subsidy to be able to alleviate, in some measure, the costings due and owing from the Ministry to the Transport Board by the introduction of the partial zoning system particularly since it relates to the fact that the zones are mapped out not only in districts but also according to bus routes so as to ensure that wherever possible a child should not have to take more than one bus to reach school. Therefore the cost of the transportation, both to that child and to the Government through the Ministry of Education would be much reduced.

The figure here, Sir, is for some \$3.4 million and relates back to in excess of some four years. What has happened is that it has accumulated gradually each year and we believe that the time has come to wipe the arrears and to allow the Transport Board to have the opportunity to have the benefit of these sums rather than letting it build up any further. It is difficult to put a figure in the Estimates for this sum because it varies depending on the number of persons travelling and therefore we can never know accurately in any one year what we will have to pay to the Transport Board. You will always have a deficit or credit in relation to the sums being expended. It is not as though it is a definite amount and no more.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that Head 34 stands part.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, we on this side very reluctantly participate in this debate. I believe that I pointed out earlier in today's sitting that it can hardly be good practise for Members of Parliament to be presented with documentation less than 24 hours before the beginning of the sitting. We consider this to be a cynical manipulation...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I take objection to 'cynical manipulation'¹ but at the same time I wish to compliment the Opposition for their co-operation in this matter. All of us have suffered from the lateness of the circulation of the Resolution but I think the Opposition has been very accommodating having

regard to the nature of this Resolution and the fact that we are trying to clear arrears that go back a long time. I just wanted to say that the Government appreciates the co-operation.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You can always bargain on the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to apply the healing balm when reconciliation is necessary. I do not know why the Honourable Member for the City does not accept that a great gesture was just made by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, a gesture which obviously she could not bring herself, with all of the qualities that she possess, to undertake on behalf of the Government. Why does she not just keep quiet and let us accept the generous spirit in which...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition knows that even before this session started today, I made a similar statement to him but I support the Honourable Attorney General that he must withdraw the words 'cynical manipulation'¹.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I have never known the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Honourable Member for the City to share the same intellect or vocabulary. Therefore it would surprise me if the Honourable Member for the City was able to rise or in the event that she is egotistical and lower herself to use exactly the same words which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas used to me just now. I do not know what the exercise is about. I accept the spirit in which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas extended that.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But I always accept nice things from you when you are being nice.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not taking back any words, I never said that you cynically manipulated anything. I am saying that this Parliament is obviously being cynically manipulated. It may be forces beyond you. Because it cannot be fair for members to be served with documentation less than 24 hours before the sitting has begun. Let's end that point because I have made the point already. We participate if only to make this point.

I do not ascribe forecasting powers to any other member of the Cabinet except the Right Honourable Prime Minister, who is not in his seat, and whose contributions to Parliament are noted more by his absence than his presence. This debate deserves his intervention but he has opted not to be here. It deserves it for this reason, Mr. Chairman, that two years ago, we were told that

the Government was forced to clear arrears due to the Transport Board which had been run up, up to that time, in respect of the travel of old age pensioners and school children.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. To correct the Honourable Member, this is the first time, certainly since I have been Minister of Education and since September 1994, that we have ever come to clear arrears for school children. There was one in respect of welfare but not in respect of education.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The point is that the arrears due to the Transport Board according to the Honourable Member for St. Peter were being cleared and we made the assumption, particularly because of the vehemence and the bitterness with which he criticised the Democratic Labour Party that all of the arrears from any source had been Cleared. It therefore surprises us to discover that in fact there was still arrears going back to 1994 which have to be cleared. The Honourable Member for St. Peter's forecasting skills, even in the midst of the international symposium on forecasting have once again to be called into question. 8.00 p.m.

This exercise that we are going through here is another one of those financial farces which government engages in. It improves the books of the Transport Board, a lot of notional figures are conjured up in the minds of not only technocrats but politicians depending on the level of intervention they wish to assist the Transport Board books in looking good.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They tried it with me and I pointed out to the Honourable Member for St. Peter that nobody in Barbados knows exactly what it cost to transport pensioners or police or school children. What happens is that successive Ministers of Transport, and I will wait to hear from my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, have used it as a means of getting a larger subsidy and/or in some cases it would not represent a subsidy in a sense because it is a subsidy from a Ministry so it represents a subsidy in the Ministry's Estimates. In relation to the Board it represents income on the board's financials so it reduces the level of the debt. So depending on how you want to cover up the Transport Board deficit, this nonsensical exercise has been gone through time and time again and I therefore consider that if this was the case that certainly at the time of the Estimates that the Honourable Member for St. Peter who said he had a better way of doing all of these things could have found a way to resolve this issue rather than to cause 3 of his Ministers to be embarrassed in his absence by

bringing a matter like this for which there will never ever be an adequate explanation for why these particular provisions have to be made.

I remember looking in the Estimates yesterday and in 1995/96 provision was made in the Ministry of Community Development for \$1.4 million and the actual expenditure was \$651 000. Anybody reading that would believe that in that fiscal year the Transport Board was paid the sum of \$651 000 which would have represented the travel by pensioners on Transport Board buses. Now in 1997/98 we are being asked to provide in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, is it \$7.4 million, to help the Transport Board look good - figures which are completely bogus.

The figure is not really important. That is the point. That is why you did not have to read that foolishness. The Minister of Transport whom I believe demonstrated or said to us that he would be a no nonsense person, needs to try to unravel this matter, get to the bottom of it and ensure that Parliament is not going through this charade fiscal year after fiscal year providing the opportunity for a misguided Minister of Finance to get up and pillory past Governments and by implication his other predecessors in office, including the Honourable Member for Christ Church South for going through this process.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter, as a matter of trust and faith with the public, needs to be here to explain how this could occur in 1997/98 based on what he said in 1995. That is important because he is a forecaster. He is the only forecaster in this Chamber. He actually forecast the Bauxite price within one cent. He said so on several occasions and therefore he should be able to calculate very simply what the exact requirements would have been for the Transport Board instead of putting Parliament through this exercise which I know is bogus, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South "knows is bogus, the Minister of Education knows is bogus, the Minister of Community Development knows is bogus. He is my parliamentary representative. I have to have at least that faith in him. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew knows it is bogus, I know it is bogus but the Honourable Member for St. Peter, who as I said, went through a lot of song and dance and tried to create a hue and cry about bad fiscal practices and actually gave the impression at one point that old people were going to be stopped from travelling on the buses because the Democratic Labour Party had run up arrears and refused to pay the Transport Board. All of this nonsense goes on.

There is the same problem with the police and cropover and you can go through a long list of what the Honourable Member called creative accounting when there could be a realistic way of making provision both in

the Estimates and also in relation to the Transport Board for letting the public know what the true level of the Transport Board subsidy is. What this then does is float the budget unnecessarily of these Ministries calling for supplementaries three months after the beginning of the fiscal year and make the operations of the Transport Board look more sanitised than they really are and will ever be. That has to be of concern to us. So if we continue with this charade there have been past Ministers of Transport who have been able to say they have operated the Transport Board with no deficit on the basis only of creative accounting. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South would know about that. We have had it in here on several occasions and I do not think we need to continue with that process. As I have said I do not blame anybody on that side. The Honourable Member for St. Peter is in dereliction of his duty as Minister of Finance not to be here to explain why this kind of accounting still persists notwithstanding all that he said in his early days as Minister of Finance and the promise that he held out to the people of Barbados that he was bringing a new level of fiscal order, prudence and discipline and also the skills as a forecaster which would avoid all of these scenarios. Thank you very much.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised at the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. John about the Transport Board. The Transport Board is one of those statutory corporations that suffered from very bad management over the past few years overlapping both previous administrations of both the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party. 8.10 p.m.

I would say, Mr. Chairman, that when I came to the Ministry I was appalled at the level of management at the Transport Board. We had to make certain management adjustments at the Transport Board. I believe that when the Honourable Member is speaking about bogus accounting, he would be quite familiar with the bogus accounting that had been the practice with that type of management in those years.

I am satisfied, Mr. Chairman, that with the management team that we have been able to put in place after commissioning a business plan by David Shorey and Company most of the recommendations of which have been implemented, that if there was bogus accounting during the period of the last administration, certainly there has been no bogus accounting since the new management team has taken over.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, that the Honourable Member could...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. In order for him, Sir, to bring a figure in here today, Sir, to account for the amount of money that is owed by other services to the Transport Board, Sir, it would have to be regarded as bogus accounting, because nobody can give you a specific figure that is owed.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, as I said, I am satisfied that with the new management team in place, a lot of the practices which we saw at the Transport Board will be a thing of the past, and I must compliment the new management for the manner in which they have approached the whole question of management at the Transport Board.

The concept of restructuring of the last administration was to send home 600 people. We have a different concept of restructuring.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member made reference to a supplementary which was brought in these Chambers from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Welfare. No such supplementary came. A supplementary came specifically to deal with certain outstanding debts owed to NIS and the Commissioner of Inland Revenue and this was as a result of a number of arrears which were owed to those two government institutions over the years. There are a number of debts which were also inherited by the Transport Board when we took office in 1994. That supplementary was meant to address those arrears.

This Supplementary, together with the supplementary that will follow, the supplementary on Welfare, represent monies which are due to the Transport Board as a result of old age pensioners using the Transport Board buses. It is not true to say that the Transport Board will not be able to give you an accurate figure of the amount of persons using the buses. There is a voucher system. The Transport Board has a record. If you have a person who is a cashier, taking receipts on a daily basis, for example, a person at the Registration Office, a person at the Corporate Registry or some other government department and their records show at the end of the day that they have collected five million dollars and I do not know what else you have to go by to say that they did not collect five million dollars.

So, if you are saying that the figures that the Transport Board gives you are bogus figures with respect to the vouchers, you are saying that the figures which you are given by the cashiers at all the various departments of government are bogus figures as well. And, the Transport Board has made a conscious attempt to tighten up...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member obviously does not

understand a very technical financial argument. If you are calculating the cost of a pensioner travelling on a bus on the same basis as you calculate the cost of an average Barbadian who does not benefit from free travel on the bus, then you are not really calculating the true cost or the value of the service. Therefore, however you do it, these figures are essentially going to be bogus. That is the point I am trying to make. In other words there has never been a fair basis for calculating or a correct financial basis for calculating the true cost. What happens is they count the number of pensioners who get on the bus and they calculate on the basis that those pensioners will be paying at the same rate as other passengers. But other passengers bus fares are subsidised, or the service is subsidised. And talking about the true cost, now, the Honourable Member may not understand that, but this cannot represent it. I do not care what the Honourable Member says in here today. New management or old. This does not represent it.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, if it is meant to represent the economic cost well then it would mean that the actual passenger is not paying the economic cost.

Because, in 1994 the economic cost per passenger was \$2.98 per passenger according to the figures I had at the time, and there was a fare of \$1.50 and that pertained mainly to the longer routes. It meant that the economic cost for the shorter routes was about \$.50 which means that those mini buses and ZRs that operate the shorter routes, they are making a bigger profit than the Transport Board buses that actually have longer routes.

So, I do not see the point. There is no other system that you can measure it by other than the voucher.

Asides.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: They cannot be bogus figures. Bogus has a connotation. These are figures which have been provided by the Transport Board as a result of the voucher presented by the drivers based on the numbers of old age pensioners that have actually used the buses.

With respect to the scholar passes, Mr. Chairman, the actual amount that is paid for the scholar passes is \$15.40 and the actual cost of the scholar pass, 20 trips at \$1.50 when the cost for a normal passenger is \$30.00. So, even these figures represent a massive subsidy by the Transport Board. We are just seeking to collect the monies which are outstanding as a result of these minimum figures that we have here.

If this money is not collected, it is obvious that the Transport Board would not be able to operate. Who would

pay the drivers? In the absence of an increase in bus fares, who would pay? And that is the situation with which the Transport Board is faced at this time.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I did not want to have a long debate on this, but the Honourable Member is entitled to defend the management structure that he has put in place. But I make bold to say that I am not dealing with personalities, that there is nothing that has happened now here in relation to this, there may be other things that have been done that would make a difference. But what is happening today is no different except for the figures, to what has happened in the past. All of it is book entry and the Honourable Member has to understand that. You can either increase the level of a direct subsidy to the Transport Board or you could do all of these other fanciful things like what we are doing today. This has not changed anything about my opinion of the management of the Transport Board.

What I am trying to say to you is, that perhaps you should have spent time doing what we in the end got you to do. Which is to start telling the truth which successive Ministers of the Transport Board were reluctant to do. Because, people always felt that it would result in an increase in bus fares and whenever we raised it, the Barbados Labour Party in its shortsightedness, constantly tried to pillory us over the question of increasing bus fares. Tell the public the truth about what you call the economic cost per passenger, if you want to put it that way, of public transportation in Barbados. But, you do not want to do that. What you want to do is to come in this Chamber and compound the problem, and I did not know you were part of the problem until you just spoke, by causing the Minister of Education and the Minister of Welfare to go through this particular exercise which really said nothing about the management of the finances of the Transport Board. 8.20 p.m.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member is misleading the House as if this is a measure that was brought and the Ministry of Education has not been aware of any increase that they would have to pay or the Ministry of Labour.

Mr. Chairman, at the time of the Estimates there were certain sums that were requested based on the vouchers. The average amount of vouchers in the case of the Welfare Department and the scholar passes in the case of the Ministry of Education the full amount was not given. And over the years, and this goes back to when the Barbados Labour Party came into office, these amounts were always in arrears. This is the first time that an attempt has been made to clear off the arrears due to the Ministry of Education and the Welfare Department.

In attempting to clear off the arrears, we are dealing with the period up to the end of May. It may be necessary to come back later in the year for another supplementary because of the fact that we are trying to deal with a situation which pertains up to September 1994. This is not an exercise that we go through every year. So the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am amazed at what the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is saying. I have been in this Chamber for 10 years. I am probably half his age even though I have had longer in here. He probably feels that he should try to pull wool over my eyes again.

Now the Honourable Member says that the true amount has never been provided in the Estimates. Does he not work out why? Do you think that there is any Minister of Finance worth his salt that would give the Transport Board what it requested on the basis of vouchers? Vouchers do not represent the true cost to the Transport Board of transporting those passengers. I am trying to explain to you that there is more than one way to achieve the same result. You have not done anything new nor has the Minister of Finance. What you have basically done is allow the Transport Board to make you believe that what they are doing now - there is some management technique which represents, I assume, either the true cost of travel or alternatively the cost of travel based on vouchers.

For us to understand truly what changes you have made at the Transport Board either you will have to tell us the cost of transporting the passengers based on economic cost that you just indicated - \$2.89? The long route has come down? You will have to tell me it has come down. That would be efficient management, or you have to tell me there is some other change at that level that has taken place that would represent an improvement in efficiency. None of this speaks to efficiency.

I explained to you this is a charade. The Honourable Member may not want to believe it and may wish to feel that he is doing something big today and I do not wish to reduce that feeling. If you think you have cleared all the arrears for all time and that you have done a wonderful act today, God bless you and the people who are informing you.

What I am trying to say is that any sensible financial analyst who came and looked at this exercise would be as frustrated as I am that this Parliament, despite allocations in the Estimates which would have been based on some scientific and forecasting analysis, despite comments that the failure to clear the previous arrears would have stopped pensioners and school children from travelling on the

buses, that at the end of it all we have now come to get an additional provision of \$7.4 million which the Honourable Member for St. Andrew tells us is great financial management. That would have meant that again successive Ministers of Finance in Barbados and shadow Ministers did not detect this simple transaction which could have been done, the provision of \$7.4 million, as what would suddenly improve the management skills and the management ability and the level of financial prudence at the Transport Board.

Frankly, if you wish to accept that you have done something great today, accept it. I am trying to point out that reality tells me that this exercise is a charade. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, even if it could make the Transport Board look good in terms of financial management it does not do so for the entire Government.

Mr. Minister, you have done a good thing in the Transport Board and you are now capable and able of exacerbating the amount of subsidies for the rest of the year but the Minister of Finance would not have been able to allocate for the overall subsidy allocation for this fiscal year because there is no way that the Ministry of Education could have at the start of the year estimated for subsidies appropriate enough to satisfy the entire course of 1997. What it therefore means is that when you attempt at the Ministry of Transport to make your financial management look good you are then imposing pressure on the Ministry of Education as well as the other Ministries.

You are pulling your portion, the Ministry dips in and it is a putty-clay situation. At the end of the day, this has to do with the Minister of Finance who should have been able since assuming office to correct these kinds of issues because he said at the start of this term that the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance were both incapable of doing adequate forecasting and he lambasted the Central Bank. He went on to criticise the Central Bank in 1995-96 for estimating economic growth at 1.3% and at the end of the year.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is talking about a "he" and I do not know who he is referring to. There are certain courtesies that we extend to members who are not here. I would hope that the "he" he is referring to is the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Michael South but the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Michael South is not in his chair.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The "he" I said was the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister criticised the Central Bank at the time for its inability to forecast adequately

economic growth. Only recently, at the Forecasters' Symposium in Barbados, he turned around and praised the Central Bank and the Ministry for being able to forecast so well. So one is confused as to where the Prime Minister really stands in relation to the capacity of the Central Bank and the Ministry to forecast.

It is amazing that he could have criticised them so bitterly only a year and a half ago and now, because he is in the presence of international forecasters and academics, he is now capable of saying how well the Central Bank has been able to forecast figures in Barbados and invites the private sector who should have been and is supposed to be more efficient than the public sector of Barbados to follow the lead of the Central Bank of Barbados.

At the end of the day you can do whatever you wish here and this comes down to a question of being able to allocate resources at the beginning of the fiscal year. More importantly, this is really at the start of the year and it happened last year too. It happened with the Ministry of Health when it was suggested that we are now newcomers, we have a new Minister and that the Minister would be capable of reducing the overall cost of the Ministry and we had an allocation in the Ministry of Health in 1995 which was \$4 million lower than the previous 1994 figure. 8.30 p.m.

Then we had supplementaries all during the course of 1995 because it was inconsiderate to expect that in the course of one year there could have been such a transformation in management at the QEH as to completely reverse the overall cost and efficiency at that organisation. The same thing is happening here at the Ministry of Transport.

All of a sudden there are gurus in the Ministry of Transport who are capable of making all kinds of forecasts and predictions based on their academic training, I suppose, but it does not work that kind of way. It is not so simple. The financial laws in the public sector simply do not permit that kind of transformation to occur. So regardless of who you hire in the course of one year it cannot be the case that efficiency has ascended to such levels that we can all of a sudden pretend that we know exactly what is transpiring within the Ministry.

All of a sudden these figures become available as if we have had a complete turning around of the situation in Barbados just because of individuals. The same kind of thing we expected at the BTA because of 3 individuals. We have had a completely embarrassing situation at that Authority. It cannot happen that way. Systems have to be put in place at the micro level. Measures have to be put in

place for the clerical workers and computerisation. A whole range of things would have to be done within the Ministries and the various departments of Government for us to be able to achieve that kind of efficiency. So simply a change of personnel at the top does not change the working habits or the work systems of those within the middle and lower echelons. It is not that simple.

Let me make this point that part of this exercise of trimming subsidies under current expenditure in Government has to do with fulfilling the expectations of the international organisations. It is true. We have had since 1992 a system of increasing our so-called efficiency within the public sector and this had to be reflected especially in terms of Government subsidies, subventions and the like.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It was not so under the Democratic Labour Party. I am saying to you that even after 1994 that no attempt has been made whatsoever to reverse that trend. In fact, there were greater attempts on the part of this administration through tighter fiscal prudence. In fact deliberate attempts were made to reduce Government's overall spending on the part of this administration to shore up the foreign reserves of the country, and this is part of the effort.

Overall Government spending was effectively cut and reduced under this administration as a means of keeping tight the fiscal affairs of Government. The major area in which there were demands for such reduction was in the area of subsidies and grants. This was just a continuation of the policy pursued after 1992. These kinds of attempts now are mainly bookkeeping attempts to make people believe that efficiency has now come to the Ministry of Transport, but, it would not assist the overall efficiency within Government, as I pointed out earlier.

I will have to praise the Minister for bringing to account and bringing to book arrears owed to it by other Ministries but for the overall Government system, there is no way that there would be increased efficiency in the overall Government system. It is really just a juggling of figures from one Ministry to another. It looks good, Mr. Minister, for you to be able to fully account...

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am saying that the Minister of Transport must, in fact, be lauded for the efforts being made but it does not increase, and I end on this note, the overall efficiency within Government. Do not mind the issues pertaining to Government and getting the accounts

system into place. It does not in any way increase the overall efficiency within Government.

In fact, it is unfortunate that the Honourable Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister, is not in his seat for us to deal with some of the issues which should be drawn out in this debate. I understand the need to do these kinds of things because there are attempts mainly to please the international organisations more so than to deal with issues pertaining to local management of the financial affairs. On that score I invite you to continue on your merry way but I know only too well that this does not increase the overall efficiency of the Government's financial system.

Thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, we find ourselves this evening in a rather strange position and I need to ask the Honourable Minister a couple of questions. In the Approved Estimates there is an amount for \$2 100 000 coming from the Ministry of Education going to the Ministry of Transport and Works. Also, there is a provision of \$1 400 000 going from...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to note that we are not on Head 39 yet. We are on Head 34.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I am not so sure the Honourable Member is reading from the same document as I. He is saying there is \$2 100 000 going to the Ministry of Transport and Works. I do not see that anywhere on this document.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I want to know, Mr. Chairman, from the Minister of Public Works whether this \$3 400 000 he is requesting from this Assembly is an amount for money that should have been included in the 1996/97 Estimates or whether this amount happens to be an amount for 1997/98. If this belongs to 1996/97, I want to know why we are dealing with it in this year.

I also want to know, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister is now telling us that they have some new accounting system that can tell us how many people will be travelling between April 1, 1997 to March 31, 1998, what system they are using to come to this figure because I am going to tell you why.

We have a particular problem in this country where many people who are accustomed driving and using the public transport are now borrowing money to buy reconditioned cars. I want to know if in their estimates they have taken that into account. I want to know that and that is a serious question because people could bring in 200

cars and in one day's time all are sold. I want to know what effect it will have on the Transport Board and whether the Ministry of Education is approving money to the Transport Board where they have no authority to approve that money. I am saying, Sir, based on these figures, it appears to me that the Ministry of Education is overpaying the Transport Board.

I also want to know, Mr. Chairman, what this subsidy has to do with the loan, and what is the rush? I want to know if it has any effect on the Citibank loan that is coming to the Transport Board. I want to know if the Ministry of Education is getting involved in a system where they are propping up the Transport Board to get a loan from Citibank. I want to know and I want answers this afternoon in here because there is a rush and I want to know what is the rush.

We are now into May/June and already we have this large supplementary in here where the Ministry of Public Works is forcing the Ministry of Education to fork out \$3.4 million. I want to know if this is old money or new money. If it is old money, I want to know why it was not in the last Estimates. If it is new money, I want to know how you can account for it so early. You say it is old money? 8.40 p.m.

I am reliably told by the Minister that it is old money. I am saying that the deficit that we were told about for 1997 is wrong, that they hid figures from this Parliament and all about the economy being so good, now we understand. I have the support of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South on this, I am calling for the accrual system of accounting where Ministers would not be able to hide cost anymore but they would have to budget the cost; where they would not have to wait until they spend money for the cost to be reflected.

It is clear to me, as I said earlier in the Estimates, that we saw it at the Ministry of Health and now we are seeing it at the Ministry of Transport. I cannot any longer take up the Estimates and feel happy that the figures reflected in the Estimates are the true cost incurred by Government. I am not happy anymore because if you are going to tell me that this \$3.4 million relates to last year, something is wrong about cost. I know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is not happy either, he cannot be, after being so consistent in this Assembly. You can see that he is unhappy.

I am saying, Sir, that we need to get back to basics and we have to change the accounting rules in this country to make sure that the accrual system is brought into play in here because we cannot afford to have Ministers telling us that they need \$60 million when in truth and in fact,

they need \$72 million. We cannot afford to have Ministries telling people not to write cheques for bills, etc. when they know that they have already expended the cost. This is a serious thing, Mr. Chairman.

We have a situation today happening at Transport Board and I want to remind you, Sir, that in 1994 the Barbados Labour Party came to this Assembly and said that the Democratic Labour Party was incompetent because they should have been able to forecast cost instead of waiting until near to the 31st March. I am saying that if we waited until the 31st March to forecast cost to put in the Estimates before the end of the year and you have a Government now that is coming after the year to put in a figure, I want to know which Government is incompetent and which Government cannot forecast. This is a serious charge. Hansard will prove that they made those charges against us but we never waited after the financial year to include cost in another year.

Sir, I want you to tell me the true deficit for the year 1996 to 1997 because I am not accepting figures that were given to me previously. I have good evidence that those figures were flawed. I am wondering whether the problem is coming from the Central Bank of Barbados now or the Ministry of Finance. I am saying that I am wondering whether we have the problem at the Central Bank of Barbados or the Ministry of Finance and I feel happy with the figures coming from the Central Bank of Barbados because at least it is run by an Accountant who understands the meaning of accrual accounting. I am happy with the Governor because he understands about accrual accounting.

We have a situation and I do not think it is fair for a young Minister to be dragged into a situation innocently because I honestly believe that when the Honourable Member was asked to pay this figure she honestly believed that it was a fair and correct way.

I am saying, Sir, that if \$3.4 million was for last year and they are now budgeting \$2.1 million, am I to believe that the Transport Board has plans of increasing bus fares? I am saying that I am right in thinking so because in 1996 to 1997 they asked for a subsidy of \$3.4 million and now in 1997 to 1998 they are asking for a subsidy of \$2.1 million. I want the Minister to tell me why the decrease. I want the Minister to tell this Assembly, why the decrease from \$3.4 million to \$2.1 million? Do you have plans to increase bus fares in this country, Sir? How are you going to prop up the finances of the Transport Board, because you have already reduced the finances of the Transport Board by \$1.3 million.

We have good evidence that the finances of the Transport Board will be further reduced because of

Government policy where reconditioned cars are allowed to come into this country at the rate of which they are coming at.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Me, I have no power to stop reconditioned cars from coming but I must point out to the Government the effect of reconditioned cars.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will tell you something, I have no trust in reconditioned cars because I am not even sure of the age of the reconditioned car.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Can you imagine that the Honourable Member for the City is listening to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central. I am surprised because the Speaker does not even listen to him and you are listening to him. The man who wants to represent the Speaker in all ways and you are listening to him.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want people to know that I do not have any cars in the Port. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is in the business of importing cars, I think he should tell the people so. It is obvious, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is creating an impact on the finances of the Transport Board by importing 74 reconditioned cars for himself. I am saying that that is not fair to the Transport Board because if he has 74 cars, it means that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would have to come back to this Assembly for a bigger subsidy.

I want to know, Sir, what is going to be the total subsidy for 1997/98 because this related to 1996/97 and I want to know what are your plans of increasing bus fares on poor people in this country. Let me tell you something, those poor people cannot bear any more punishment because VAT already doing it to them.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am constrained to speak. The differences between the Honourable Members on that Side and the Honourable Members on this Side, Sir, are diverse, are many.

The international lending agencies, the I.M.F., chief among them had so driven the backs of the former Democratic Labour Party administration to the wall that we came into a Government and found that they had agreed, not only to an increase in bus fares but to an increase in rental of Government housing units, user fees at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, increased fees at the Polyclinic and at the Polytechnic and at the Barbados Community College.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. At no time during the last administration was there any agreement whatsoever to do with the increase of bus fares. At no time was there any agreement to increase bus fares. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It never occurred.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. There is a Cabinet decision by the last administration to increase bus fares. They were re-introducing two stages of bus fares, two stages. I can give the Honourable Member a copy of that Cabinet decision. If you were not at Cabinet at that time, say so, but there was a decision. 8.50 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is referring to a paper where a decision was taken in principle to introduce ...

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Nobody is going to confuse me. I am going to speak very clearly. A paper was taken to Cabinet where a decision was taken to reduce bus fares in Barbados under the \$1.50 barrier and to have a second stage which was marginally above the \$1.50 but that decision was never agreed to be implemented because of the prices and incomes protocol that was in place and Cabinet took a decision at the time to defer any such action until that protocol had come into existence. So it is not fair for the Honourable Member to suggest that there was any decision to increase bus fares and she should tell the entire truth that there was a decision to reduce bus fares in Barbados.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I again repeat. There was a very decision by the last administration to increase bus fares. There is no record of any Cabinet decision to reduce bus fares.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House and I challenge him to produce a Cabinet Paper that says otherwise.

A certain remark made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is documented. There was a proposal to increase fees and introduce new user fees at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and other health institutions in this country. There was the proposal that there would be fees introduced at the Barbados Community College and increased and expanded fees at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic as well and a whole host of other user fees across the social spectrum in this country. The only thing that stopped it was the ballot box. The people in September 1994 said they were not going that route.

Now, the point I want to make is this.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is grossly misleading the House. First of all the people could only have spoken on that issue if they knew about it and it was part of the Honourable Member's case that the people did not even know about it so how could they speak to it if they did not know? She is so convoluting the public record and polluting it with distortions constantly. She went through an election campaign saying that the public did not even know that the Democratic Labour Party had agreed to all of these things and now she is saying they voted against it. How could they vote against what they did not know?

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. John were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I came in here through the same doors that he came through. I have been in here 21 years.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Oh yes, we are all going out. You have just come.

All that shows is that he has no courtesy. A lack of courtesy that he would describe me as a person without honour in here, but that reflects on him not on me.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will not be deflected from my point. The point is that we showed up all of these things to the people of this country and they decided ...

Asides.

Mr. CftAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I do not go there. My office is in Culloden Road.

Mr. Chairman, Sir. This is a terrible lie. He could not get into my boudoir. He could only be guessing.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the point I am making is this. That is the difference between this side and that side. That side was prepared to go the route of the IMF. This side said, no, it will not be the case.

Do you know what this is all about, Mr. Chairman, Sir? This is all about social substance. Let us face the fact. If you are going to have education, primary, secondary and tertiary free at point of delivery in this country, if you are going to have a situation where your school children, your scholars, ride heavily subsidized on the buses, in fact all Barbadians and visitors to Barbados, everyone who rides on the public bus service in this country is subsidised, some more heavily than others. If this is what we say is part of the social capital and this is part of a social investment you are making then you have to pay. The question is now, how do you pay it? In the case before us with the Ministry of Public Works and the Transport Board, do you make a guesstimate at the time of the Estimates which may or may not inflate your particular estimate of expenditure for a particular department, board, ministry or whatever? I have seen it over a period of 15 years, Mr. Chairman, Sir, dealt with in several different ways in this Parliament.

I can remember when you would come in here and you would see as a line item, Education, Welfare, Health, these were called transfers. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South would know about these things too. They would be simply transfers, almost book transfers because it was not taken seriously in those days that money would actually pass and money often did not pass and you would have these book arrears building up from time to time.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Oh yes that used to happen. And what the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is saying is that it is happening now again and you have to decide how you will do it. The Government has to operate. The Government has to be consistent, we would hope, in its financial operations. What are you going to do?

Aside,

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the question is, how are you going to do it? You are not going to have any payments at all then? What we are saying is

that every Ministry of Government has to show a true estimate of its expenditures and of its revenues and all the Minister of Public Works is saying is that in the case of the Transport Board they are struggling for the first time to say this is how it must be done. But it will be done one way or the other. The bottom line of this, Sir, is that the taxpayer of this country pays the bill at the end of the day. 9.00 p.m.

But how the book entries are made will differ from one administration to another. I have seen it happen. I cannot fault the Minister of Public Works because the Transport Board has determined that it will, at least, proceed to keep its books in good order.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: But the point is you are either going to pay subsidies or you are going to tell the taxpayers that they have to pay user fees.

The Democratic Labour Party took a decision for user fees. The Barbados Labour Party has decided that this is a part of the total price that we pay, and that it will go on. It will not end. When this money passes parliament and the Leader of the Opposition has made the point and I agree with him on that point. It is not going to end. It will go on. So, do not let us get in here now and "pompassetting" about "you cannot do this" and "you should not do that" and so on. It is a fact of life. You are either going to pay a subsidy or you are not going to pay one and in this administration we have decided that the subsidy will continue and that there has to be a payment and there has to be some book entries. That is all it is. It will not work any special magic. But what it will allow is for a better system of accounting to be put in place than formerly. And, I do not think you can fault the Minister of Public Works for that either.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I heard such untenable arguments in here, there is no way that the Minister of Community Development or the Minister of Education could calculate to the figure. And, it is not only those Ministries. We have estimates of expenditure which are estimates. They are not guesstimates.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am not criticising it. No, I do not think that the Minister is saying that. I think that I understand the Minister to be saying that using vouchers and a certain methodology that you can arrive at a good approximate figure. That is no different from any other line item in the Estimates, it is only an estimate. But do not

let us be suggesting that you ought not to have this transfer simply because...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, it was implied in what I heard in here tonight, that you must have some movement of monies from one to another. These are not the only Ministries that are involved in these kinds of transfers. There are other departments of government.

If you want to have a function at the Gymnasium, you have to pay. And so many other things...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Man to call you "Malik Boutique" is to call you great praise.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No, no, no, I am not a woman of "ifs" and "buts." When I am cursing you, you know you are getting curse.

Mr. Chairman, that is an aside not meant for your ears. But, that was the point I wanted to make. Do not let us fool ourselves, public transport in Barbados is the subject of a massive subsidy and you are going to pay one way or you are going to pay the other way.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Head 34 stand part.

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

HEAD 39 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS - \$4 000 000

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, this sum of \$4 000 000 is required to pay the arrears for the travel of old aged pensioners and disabled persons on the Transport Board.

This is obviously, Sir, one of the social programmes which we have in place to enable these persons to travel freely on the buses. As was said earlier, Mr. Chairman, it is really impossible at the Estimates stage to put a precise figure on the costings and so come up with something which is exact.

Mr. Chairman, when this system was first drawn to my attention where the Welfare Department is simply the

conduit for this money which is paid to the Transport Board, I remember voicing certain concerns about it. In fact, Sir, I asked the question whether the Welfare Department had photocopies of the vouchers which the Transport Board has, so that we would be able to tally at the Welfare Department the numbers with respect to what the Transport Board had. Or indeed whether it was simply to have two halves of a ticket, where the Transport Board will keep their half and the Welfare Department will keep their half and that the two could tally. But, only to find that successive administrations, and I am not blaming any particular person for it, they have done it all the while and there is no real system in place, where the Welfare Department could say to the Transport Board, "yes, the figure is such and such." I was very uncomfortable with it and I spoke to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transport about it. And, Mr. Chairman, what I can say is that I look forward to the day when this system will be obsolete. I look forward to the day too, when perhaps what Government will have to do is to give to the old aged pensioners, let us say you work out an average, how many times a week an old aged pensioner would travel and you add this sum onto their pensions and so you virtually tell them, "well this is what you have to travel on the bus. If you care to travel, you travel". If you are not travelling then so be it.

Mr. Chairman, as far as I am concerned it would be the fairest way to do it. Because, we have in Barbados, certain routes, Mr. Chairman, where you do not get a Transport Board bus travelling on that particular route. And these old age pensioners and so on, pay the minibus the money. It is not that every single old age pensioner in Barbados benefits from this particular programme. Certain routes do not have the Transport Board buses and they have to pull the money out of their pockets. So, I am saying, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the best system is to have it tacked onto the pensions.

I do not want to delay the House, Mr. Chairman, but as I said the \$4 000 000 is to pay off the arrears and it is a social programme to which this Government is committed. We will do everything, Mr. Chairman to encourage the old aged pensioners and the disabled persons to travel and we will put no obstacle in their way. The Welfare Department will continue to be the conduit until we can find a better system. In so doing, Mr. Chairman, that is my contribution.

I beg to move that the Head stand part.

Thanks very much.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say here that this is not a supplementary. None of the two measures which came under this Head is a

supplementary for the Transport Board. I want to make that very, very clear. Because, I do not want the Honourable Member for St. John, when the supplementary comes for the Transport Board to say that we had a supplementary earlier in the year.

There is a possibility that there will be a supplementary to the Transport Board. The restructuring of the Transport Board envisages a supplementary to cover both the operating costs and certain capital costs. In addition to that there have been a number of outstanding debts due to be paid by the Transport Board that go back to pre-1994 days. 9.10 p.m.

There are also a number of outstanding insurance claims. At the last check to the tune of about \$4 million. The operating subsidy, taking into consideration the fact that the Transport Board will be operating as it is operating now, will probably average about \$9 million over the next 6 years. When you add that to the \$4 million, if you take this year as the year when the first subsidy will be due the Transport Board under the restructuring plan, you are looking at about \$4 million additionally to cover the insurance claims.

We are also looking at the cost attached relative to the rationalisation of the workshop. As you know, we have had some very tough negotiations with the Barbados Workers Union. We have finally agreed to the workers taking over the workshop come the 1st of August. This would involve severance due to those workers that will be severed. Notwithstanding the fact that they will then be employed by the new company to be formed by the workers, we still have to pay them severance which would be approximately \$3 million.

We have interest to pay on the US\$30 million loan for the buses which should arrive in Barbados. Fifty new buses will arrive sometime in September. At our last check it would need an injection of some \$17 million in subsidies to the Transport Board. It is possible that we might not come for the subsidy or we might come for part of that subsidy. We are also looking at the possibility of having a loan and having Government service that loan. This loan would be in addition to the \$30 million which we recently got for the purchase of buses.

I thought I should make that point because the Honourable Member for St. John did confuse the supplementary which came to this House with respect to the payment of certain outstanding debts, the supplementary which has been brought by the Ministry of Education and by Welfare.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to refute the allegation that I mixed up anything.

I relied, and if the Hansard is available, the record will show that I relied only on the statement made by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. He is the one who said that the Democratic Labour Party refused to pay the Transport Board money due for travel by old age pensioners and I remember asking him, if any old age pensioner in Barbados was stopped from travelling on a Transport Board bus. We had that debate in here. I do not wish to dwell on that point. I want to raise a matter with the Minister which is very important and arising out of what he has said today.

The Transport Board has a lot of outstanding claims against it and its former principal insurer has not been able to satisfy those claims. There were quite a few matters I know of in which people of very limited means who did not have the funds to file a writ relied on assurances by that insurance company that they would have settled the matter and the limitation period has passed. In one case, somebody was injured when two buses collided in St. John. They cannot afford the medical report.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am talking about where two buses collided headed to Ashford. The insurance company insured both buses and the person cannot even afford to buy the medical report, and the limitation period has passed.

Clearly, the Transport Board has to be negligent by two buses. Am I to understand that the Transport Board is seeking to expedite and wherever necessary settle those matters which should have been settled by the insurance company which now cannot settle them? That is the first point I want to ask. It would be very unfortunate, and there are quite a few claims, as I said, that I know of, where writs were not filed, based on an undertaking from that insurance company. That insurance company gave those undertakings and very often the people therefore did not bother to go to attorneys. Months later they come after the limitation period is passed and say they want to make a claim.

I think I spoke to the general manager about one and he directed me on that. Maybe there is some improved management techniques in place. I want to know if the Minister is saying that this is going to be likely.

The second point I want to make comes against a background of what the Honourable Member for the City was saying. The Government has not chosen between

different kinds of financing for the Transport Board. What this Government has done is use all of the available mechanisms for financing. The Transport Board has borrowed money. I do not remember how many million dollars - \$8.2 million. Maybe the Act gives it power to borrow. The Transport Board is receiving payments from Ministries which are called subsidies for the Ministry but in relation to the Transport Board it is not a subsidy. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is right about that. It is a direct payment.

In addition to that, as I understand the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, the Transport Board is now going to be coming for a subsidy for its operations. What that means is that when one really looks at it the cost of public transportation in Barbados - and this is what the Honourable Member for the City, without the benefit of any statistics, talked about up in the air - Parliament must discuss the cost of public transportation. It must also discuss the point which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North made. That submission has been made to several Ministers of Community Development from my time. The only reason why we did not implement it is because when you have those voucher systems somebody in the private sector could buy all 7 or 8 vouchers from a pensioner who does not travel on the bus and redeem them at that value. So it is open to abuse.

Therefore, you do not want to introduce a system which creates the potential for even more loopholes and that system would have the potential of creating another cycle of problems for the Transport Board. Let us have that discussion. There is no need for the Honourable Member to talk about increasing bus fares. If you say you are not going to increase the bus fares, fine, but you need to tell the public, including those who do not travel on the bus that they are also going to be paying a substantial price for maintaining the Transport Board in its present state.

Notwithstanding that bus fares have not increased by virtue of Government's taxation, its commitments in terms of borrowing and other factors which impact on its allocation of funds to the total pie of Government expenditure, public transport is going to be a major cost. What the Minister needs to tell us is the true cost of the reforms, the improved management, and what is the direction which he wishes to take as Minister of Transport. If the Minister is saying we are going to do all of these things and never increase bus fares, then say so.

From what the Honourable Member for the City said today it appears as though she is locking the Minister into an arrangement where at the end of the day the taxpayers of Barbados are going to have to bear the full cost, the interest cost of borrowing right down the road, of the

operations of the Transport Board without any compensating arrangements for the Transport Board to have improved cost recovery or whatever. 9.20 p.m.

If that is what the Deputy Prime Minister has bound the Honourable Member to in what she said today, then the Minister needs to open the matter up for debate just as we debated the Severance Payments Scheme. We have debated the issue of welfare. I suppose we will have other debates on that. Let us have that debate on probably transportation because the cost of it, based on what the Minister has alluded to today, I do not know what the figure will be for the subsidy plus the borrowing, plus the cost of settling those insurance claims, many of which...

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, \$70 million in additional financing.

I also want to know what the operational costs are, the total cost, and what is the plan for public transportation. The management has been in place long enough. I will add the management has the skills that it should have presented by now a plan to the Minister for the benefit of this House for the Transport Board. I assume the Minister has such and at an appropriate time I hope he will make it available. So that, as I said, members on this side, and that side, can have the benefit of understanding the cost of public transportation and what it means in terms of Government's commitment. I know the Government dances around on these issues.

A big announcement was made in here by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East about free tertiary education and⁷ I believed her. I still believe her except that she now in some areas, or it is Government's policy, that there should be a cap on the number of people who should benefit from the free tertiary education.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. In respect of the allegation being made by the Honourable Member for St. John, it is very clear that a cap has existed in respect of law for as long as the Law Faculty has been in existence. At various times throughout our history caps have existed in respect of other Faculties.

What the Honourable Member is referring to is, in fact, a cap that exists now in relation to medicine, not because of any inability to pay fees - in fact, it relates to the fact that we universally cannot guarantee persons that they can finish their degree because of the placement for internships which is an essential part to finish a degree.

As a result, up to this morning I had a meeting with all the parents. We have indicated that it is not in relation to fees and if they can find places at other universities where they can be assured they can complete a degree including internship, which is part of the degree, that the Government of Barbados will give them what they would have gotten had they gone to UWI. So it is not a matter relating to access to free tertiary education but simply a matter that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has 600 beds, only 400 of which can be considered for the purposes of a teaching hospital, and until you bring on board other teaching hospitals in the Eastern Caribbean, or until you change the structure of the internship to allow more time to be spent at the Geriatric Hospital or the Polyclinic, then we cannot be able to do that.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am only saying, Mr. Chairman, that my understanding of the free tertiary education as with free public transportation was that there was in a sense universal accessibility as long as you qualified. That was always my understanding. It may be true that in some cases like the law school, as may be relevant in relation to the number of buses . . .

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I will tell you something. This morning when I left I went to my constituency to visit a project which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will be opening on Thursday and I went to pave the way so that there would be no hostility towards him when he comes. I went to Presentation College this morning and on my way there, and then from there between Salisbury and Glebe, if you put 4 additional Transport Board buses on that route they could not have taken the people who were waiting for buses to Bridgetown.

They said there were 2 buses this morning on that route. We are here discussing transportation. I do not catch the bus. I know of nobody in this Chamber who catches it. Those people have the potential to lose their jobs. We have a lot of old talk going on in this Chamber and outside about poverty alleviation. The people who live in those areas are under the greatest threat of losing their jobs, losing sustainable employment because the public transportation system which falls to the responsibility of the Government and in which the Government said they are making it universally available at this cost, is not fulfilling the needs of the people. That is what poverty alleviation is about, not pork barrel handouts.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. This is not so much about poverty alleviation as about how we order our affairs. In Barbados we insist in 1997 that everybody in Barbados, whether it is term time or vacation

time, must move at the same time. Schools, offices, businesses, factories all want to start up at the same time. Everywhere else in the world you stagger it. We have the capacity. We have the capability but everybody wants to move for 9.00 o'clock start-up.

Yerrs ago when I asked schools to volunteer to start earlier, only one school had the courage and does it to this day, that is the St. Michael School. It is a lot of nonsense. The best time of the day in a tropical environment you have children -1 went to school in that, you went to school in that, 2.00 and 3.00 o'clock in the evening with your stomach full of sandwiches and God knows whatever else, "glassies," fudge and all of that junk they ate at lunch time. You are there struggling now to do what?

I grew up in a Barbados where you timetabled gym, games, domestic science and all of those kinds of things in the afternoon. It is folly. That is what we have to be looking at. The answer to that is not to throw more buses at the route but to reorganise the way in which we do business. People will tell you that.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I have heard longer points of orders in here already today. You want to discriminate against me now?

That is the point I am making, Sir, that the answer to that is not to throw more buses. That is not the solution and it cannot be a genuine and a fair criticism, I should say, that the Ministry of Public Works is not seeking to do its job in the best way it can.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I have travelled over the world. I travelled to the major cities as all members here. When I go to London, I travel on the tube. I have to buy an off-peak ticket after 8.3u. Everybody travels between 6.00 and 8.00 and that is London. They have not been able to reorder their affairs yet.

Aside.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Never yet. A chauffeur is a waste of time. You want to get from point A to B in London it is the tube. You get there quickly and there is no problem. It is the same in New York, all over the world, but the point I am trying to raise is discussing public transportation.

I am saying there is a major problem in that there is a large number of people living in rural constituencies who cannot get to work, and the Honourable Member for

Christ Church West knows about it. I suppose he has to bring down some in his car as I did this morning.

There were busloads of people at a bus stop. A bus load was at the Glebe bus stop alone in St. George this morning. Now this is a major concern. We therefore need to have some reaction from the Minister of Transport on the transport policy. The Ministry of Community Development needs to devise a strategy in relation to the transportation of pensioners and persons who are entitled to transport funded by the Welfare Department that is not going to provide another opportunity for abuse of the system, and which will be provided to those persons who are most in need of the opportunity of travelling on public transport.

The voucher system may not work for the simple reason that there are pensioners who have motor cars. There are pensioners who have other means of transport who do not use the bus at all. Let us try to target the benefits for those who really need to use the public transportation.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I am appealing to the Minister of Transport - and he should have done it at the beginning. It is precisely because he did not set out this information that we were not able to gauge what this particular measure was about because we did not know whether this was replacing a subsidy or whether this would have improved the Transport Board's financing so that it would access or draw down on its capital loans. We do not know.

The Minister has to be more forthcoming and he will find that if he is forthcoming and his explanations make sense that the Opposition will give full support, without

debate on some occasions, to the matters which come before this Chamber. So I would like to hear the transport policy, just as we have seen the Green Paper on Housing. What is the strategy the Minister proposes for public transportation in Barbados? 9.30 p.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 39 stands part.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one money Resolution in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be adjourned to Tuesday, July 8, 1997 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

The question that the House be adjourned to Tuesday, July 8, 1997 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 9.35 p.m.

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