

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, March 10, 1998

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 1 1.20 a.m on Friday, March 10, 1998.

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. Sir HENRY FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.

(Hons.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. D. CARTER

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

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

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

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J.P., B.A., Dip. Ed., B.Sc.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

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

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. Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Friday, March 6, 1998.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, those Minutes have not yet been circulated and I beg to move that they be deferred to a future Sitting.

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Mr. SPEAKER: If such be the will of the House, so be it.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Barbados Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 1998-1999 and the Schedule of Personal Emoluments.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Appropriation Bill, 1998 and a Resolution to approve the vesting of land at Fanners St. Thomas, Constant, Cottage and Groves Plantation in St. George to vest those said lands in the National Housing Corporation.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Resolution:

WHEREAS there has been significant economic recovery in Barbados over the past four years:

AND WHEREAS during that period there has been an increase in the rate of inflation in 1997:

AND WHEREAS it is desirable to ensure improvement in the living standards of the working poor and stability in their earnings.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS HOUSE call upon Government to initiate and implement legislation to provide for a minimum wage for all workers in Barbados.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Appropriation Bill, 1998 be read a first time.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of this day's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 3 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT LANCASTER PLANTATION AND BLACKMAN PLANTATION FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this is a Resolution seeking Parliament's approval for the compulsory acquisition of land at Lancaster, St. James and Blackmans in St. Joseph. The acquisition at Lancaster is part of the residential development which is being undertaken by Government in the Deane Town area. It is the first of 2 parcels of land at Lancaster which will be acquired by Government, the first parcel comprising 40 acres and this parcel comprising about 10 acres of land.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have already in this House had a debate with respect to the development which is taking place in that area. The urgency of this particular acquisition is related to the fact that in this area there are a number of persons who have been affected by the amendments to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which was spoken of so frequently in this House, and such persons need to be relocated.

There has also been a number of low-income persons in the St. Andrew and St. James area who are unable to purchase land at the normal \$7 or \$10 per square foot which is being offered on the open market. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who is a landowner in his own right would know the prices that are being charged in these various residential developments.

It is hoped, Mr. Speaker, that in this particular development, when completed, that we would be able to offer the land to the various applicants under \$3 per square foot. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of Government to make this land, together with the other lands which will be acquired, available to persons who would not normally be able to afford a spot to rent. We hope to have a system at the National Housing Corporation after the land has been vested and after it has been developed whereby a person would be granted a particular lot for rent with an option to purchase. That person, when they are ready to purchase the lot, would not necessarily

have to pay any money up front. He or she will enter into a mortgage arrangement with the National Housing Corporation whereby they will pay for the land whatever is the price over a period of time. This is part of a new concept in housing affordability by the National Housing Corporation.

It is hoped that while we would not be able to satisfy all of those persons seeking applications, that this concept will go a long way to alleviate the plight of those persons who are in dire need of a house spot.

The normal requirement whereby a person would have to satisfy that he can make a monthly payment will not be necessary. You have situations whereby people have 3 and 4 children. Some are self employed, some are not immediately working, but they have other means of support, whether it is in the form of relatives subsidising them or persons from overseas. We believe that with this new concept of home ownership that a number of persons will be able to own their homes and will be able to improve their lots from time to time as time goes by.

It is also hoped in this particular area that the necessary recreational facilities will be put in place. This area is close to an area near to Orange Hill which is generally referred to as the Hope Plantation. The Hope Plantation and the Waterhall Plantation are separated by a small gully. It is hoped that we would be able to put a bridge as part of the old Deane Town project linking the two areas of Westmoreland, St. Silas Heights, Orange Hill and Whopping, by a bridge and that the other recreational facilities will be added as part of the enlarged package to make this particular area the type of town centre that we expect it to be.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, this is only the first part of the acquisition of the land at Lancaster. The other part of land we hope to acquire at Lancaster includes a 40-acre parcel of land on which my understanding is that some illegal quarrying is presently taking place.

Mr. Speaker, it is hoped that when the question of illegal quarrying has been sorted out and the acquisition process has been completed that this will supplement the land available to low income earners in this particular area. 11.30a.m.

This area, Mr. Speaker, is also close to Apes Hill. In the Apes Hill area we have already acquired two large parcels of land and on one parcel we will be constructing 50 starter homes. This is Apes Hill to the northern side. Here again it is hoped that with the 100% financing by the

National Housing Corporation it will be possible for low income owners, not only in that area, but in other parts of rural Barbados and those persons from the urban area who would prefer to live in the St. James area, would be able to purchase a home. It is anticipated that when that project has been completed together with the cost of the land these starter homes will range in prices from between \$40 000 to \$60 000.

It is hoped, Mr. Speaker, that on the southern side where there is another 10 acres of land we will also be able to make another 50 lots available following the same process that will be followed at Lancaster whereby the individuals will be given the house spots for rent with an option to purchase and they will not have to pay any money to the National Housing Corporation when they exercise the option. The rents will be very small but any monies paid toward the rental of the particular house spots will go toward the purchase.

The Ministry of Housing in collaboration with the National Housing Corporation has been, as you are very well aware over the past few months, developing a mini land bank. It is hoped that with the cooperation of all Members of Parliament, suitable sites will be identified throughout the island whereby residents in all parts of Barbados will be able to have this facility of being able to rent a house spot and having the option to purchase that lot without the need of having to pay any money on any mortgage or without the need of having to satisfy any bank that they presently possess any particular income.

I would also like to say that this facility will not be available to persons who already own a home. It would only be available to those persons who are in dire need. It is not a situation whereby you will be able to hear that the Government has lots and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West will be able to send his friends to St. Andrew in the expectation that such persons who already own land will be able to get a house spot.

Mr. Speaker, this area is also close to the White Hill area. We have been experiencing difficulty in completing the relocation of those residents in the White Hill area who have been affected by land slippage. Difficulty in the sense that there are a number of things that must be done with these lots after they have been acquired and with the shortage of surveyors which I alluded to earlier, we have not been able to complete the necessary technical work in order for the development to be completed.

Mr. Speaker, it is hoped that those persons who can be accommodated at this particular venue, if there are any spots left, and I am referring to those persons from

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White Hill, will also be able to be accommodated in this whole planning of the house spots in this particular area.

Mr. Speaker, with reference to the land at Blackmans, this is an area of land which is to the north of the Grantley Adams Secondary School. It is also the first part in a two-part acquisition which is being done not only for the purposes of housing but also for recreational facilities and the construction of a civic centre in that particular area.

I must say that I am indeed grateful to the Member of Parliament for St. Joseph who, on a site visit in the particular area after informing the Ministry of the plight of residents in that area, and there is a great need in that area for house spots, was able to identify this particular area as suitable for housing and was able to liaise with the owners of the particular parcels in order to see a completion of this matter.

I know the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is probably a little disappointed, and I can speak for him in that respect, that this particular acquisition has not been completed sooner but here again we faced a number of problems relating to the actual survey, getting the road profiles done and even as I speak there is still some work to be done on the northern side in order to have that acquisition process completed so that we will be able to proceed with the house spots in this area.

It is hoped, Mr. Speaker, that we would be able to accommodate some 300 persons in the St. Joseph area and in this area as well there are a number of persons who have been displaced as a result of the amendments which were made to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, under that amendment there is a commitment on the part of Government to compensate such persons whether it is in the form of a monetary compensation or making a suitable house spot available to them.

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

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to say from the outset that the Government has started to listen to the voices from over this Side but they have not gone far enough. I have said on many occasions on the Floor of this House that it is a waste of time for Government to be taking up land, putting in amenities and charging poor people for

them. It must stop. The same way the Government can give large concessions to rich people in this country, it is about time they realise that amenities like roads, lights, water, *et cetera*, are necessary for poor people when it comes to housing and that they must stop charging poor people. 11.40a.m.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, people should understand that housing development in Barbados, when it comes to poor people is just as important as when people get on a plane and fly here to build a house for \$40 million.

I am going to explain to you why. When a man spends \$40 million on one house, it does not have the same effect if that \$40 million is spent by poor people throughout Barbados because in every area where a poor man builds a house, he has to employ people. If you look at the ratio of employment on a \$40 million investment by poor people, that group of poor people will create more employment within Barbados than one man flying into Barbados and he is able to get concessions etc.

Sir, I have also pointed out to the Minister that it is time that we expand districts and stop taking up agricultural land to be used for housing when there are many districts within Barbados that all you have to do is expand that district by putting roads, water, lights, telephone services, etc. It will cost the Government less to do those things. Yet every Tuesday, we come to this Assembly to take up agricultural land. We have gone to Farmers, we have gone to Constant and now we are at Lancaster. These are good rainfall areas and we have to ask ourselves if there is a deliberate policy in this country to make sure that agriculture is wiped out in this country.

I want to know when it happens what are we going to feed poor people with? Because as you realise, Sir, it is the poor people in this country that depend on agriculture. They depend on agriculture so what are we going to do. Are we going to develop a culture where we are going to import everything that we need to feed our people, Sir? We have other lands that are not suitable for growing agriculture, yet every Tuesday we are coming to this Assembly to take up good agricultural land for housing.

Sir, one would have heard the Minister talking about land at Lancaster and when he was mentioning about what he is going to do with this land at Lancaster, I asked myself one simple question, how come the Minister could come to this Assembly to compulsorily acquire land at Lancaster and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas honestly promised his people four years ago that he would provide land for them at Arch Hall?

I must declare an interest because I am a resident of St. Thomas too and I need a spot and I am calling on my Parliamentary representative, because he promised me four years ago that he will give me some land at Arch Hall next to the Bennetts Plantation. That he would use his power to acquire that land. But something is fishy, Sir.

It is clear tome...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Before the Honourable Member continues his folly, let me just explain that I said in this House, in his presence, within the last three weeks that a Resolution will be coming to Parliament for an acquisition of land at Highway 2A. It is a part of Bennetts Plantation. I explained that it would be the part of the land nearest to what we call the White House at Arch Hall. Sixty house spots are going there, a Fire Station and a playing field. Does he want me to say it again, Sir?

But you cannot get one of the spots, you are not a poor person. You are one of the wealthiest people in this island.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to accept anything in this House until I can see a Resolution in this House telling me that the land at Arch Hall will go to the poor people at Arch Hall who called for it in a church and was promised it, in a church. I will accept that to be so when I see the necessary Resolution coming before this Assembly. I will support the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in doing that.

Sir, I am aware that I heard about that about four years ago and I have not seen anything built yet and two weeks ago, I heard about land at Lancaster and all of a sudden I am seeing a Resolution before this Assembly. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, when he makes a promise, he does everything in his power to make sure that that promise is kept.

I am a bit worried. Why is it that four years ago that promise was made to the people of Arch Hall and it has not been delivered. I also would like to know if the people of Arch Hall will also have a right...

Mr. SPEAKER: Before you make your point. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, please, I would prefer you to address the Resolution before the House and not to anticipate any Resolutions that might come before the House. Let us move on, please.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Four years ago would have been March 1994, Sir. I want to give the House the assurance that I never made that promise in March 1994. He said that four years ago I made that promise, which is March 1994. I was not on this side in March 1994. I came over here in September and it would have to be after September 1994 when I was a Member of Government. I would be grateful if he would apologise.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas knows that I will apologise to him, Sir. That it was not four years ago but it was about four years ago and it was in a church.

Sir, it was more than two years ago. Are you happy, Sir? You know that I will please you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. It was more than two years. It was nearly four years. The Honourable Member said that he was in here in September but he was promising what they were going to do long before he got in here and he was in a church in Arch Hall. I know, Sir, because it is in the record that he told the people in Arch Hall in a church and he knows that I know that. In fact, Sir, I have a letter. He better not get up.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. It was in a church in Arch Hall. That is true, Sir. But not when the Honourable Member was the Minister responsible for Health and was stinking out the people in Arch Hall. It was when the current Minister of Health attended a meeting in Arch Hall at which the Honourable Member, as a resident of St. Thomas, was present, Sir. It has nothing to do with his time.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is true, Mr. Speaker, it was when the Honourable Member for St. James South promised the people of Arch Hall that the landfill will be removed shortly.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order. So that the record can be straight. When the Honourable Member assumed the office of Minister, Sir, I was not responsible for anything at Arch Hall or anywhere. I had stopped being Minister of Health for a very long time. The Honourable Member chooses, as well as his friends, to forget that I was Minister of Foreign Affairs for a substantially long time. There was another gentleman who was Minister of Health.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You see, Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the location of the two areas, and when one realises that Arch Hall is not too far away from Lancaster and when one listens to the Minister and the Minister is telling you that he will be acquiring two parcels of land, one over 10 acres and one over 40 acres, one has to wonder why is the Government acquiring so much land at Lancaster which is not too far away to resite people that when they are finished will have vacant land. One would have to question oneself if that land is not also being required to fulfil the needs of the people at Arch Hall.

I would like the Honourable Minister to tell me whether my judgement is wrong in this particular case because it is very important and it is clear to me that those house spots at Lancaster will also be offered to the people of Arch Hall. If I am wrong, I would like the Minister to tell me that I am wrong and I am prepared to give way on that.

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Sir, I will not deal with whether Sandy Lane wants that area or not today, Sir. The Estimates are near and we will deal with housing in a wholesome way. I also want to find out if that particular area stretching from Lancaster to Orange Hill happens to be the domain where the Government has now decided that all of the housing will go in. 11.50a.m.

When one looks at what has been happening, Sir, a considerable amount of land has been acquired in that particular area and what is also dangerous about it, Sir, is that some or most of that land is good agricultural land. It falls in a good rainfall belt and I would have to ask the Minister of Agriculture to tell me if, when all of this land is compulsorily acquired by Government for housing, if we will have enough land to satisfy the agricultural needs in this country or whether some science has developed a new way of producing agricultural produce and we do not necessarily need the amount of land that was previously allocated in the Development Plan for 1994 to 2000.

I would need to find out those answers because it is very important for this country to know where we are going. On one hand we are getting promises in housing and on the other hand we are destroying agriculture and we need to know what is going on in this country. I am not happy about it, Sir, if you are well then you would have to know because I cannot speak for you. I will say, Sir, I am sure that there has got to be somewhere within your constituency where you can find available land that will be suitable for housing.

It is time, Sir, that we look at the map of the land available in Barbados and that we fairly allocate houses within Barbados where they should be allocated. Let me give you an example, Sir. The Minister has stated that he has asked every Member of Parliament to submit to him areas within their constituencies where houses can be built. He has asked me and I have said to him that I am prepared to name more areas within St. Lucy when he is prepared to go to Harrises in St. Lucy and Mt. Poyer in St. Lucy and develop the area that has been approved. It does not make sense, Sir, for me to give more areas within St. Lucy when we have already identified a particular area for years and nothing has been done.

I am not one for promises, Sir. When I see action I follow to suit, Sir, and I am not going to give anybody suitable areas until they utilise the ones they have already. It does not make sense.

The Government of the day is developing a land bank and that land bank is exactly what it is. The land bank is supposed to be for housing but we are not seeing the necessary houses for the poor people.

Last Friday I had to inform this House that we are reaching a stage in Barbados where Government will soon not be able to buy land because every single estate now seems to be up for grabs and I want to ask one single question, Sir. If all the estates are sold what will happen in this country? Will there be enough land to produce food for the poor people and to service the tourist industry? Already, Sir, the farmers are under threat because they do not have water. Sir, it soon will be compounded where we will have a lot of young people who would like to be farmers, they cannot get land, they cannot get water and I ask you, Sir, what are they going to do? How can you encourage youngsters to come off the block and to till their own land and they do not have the land to till? What are we doing as a Government, Sir, to make sure that those young people have something to do in this country?

Mr. Speaker, it is okay to talk, Sir, about selling land to poor people at \$3.00 a square foot and giving 100% mortgages. I have already, Sir, identified a policy in this Assembly which would allow those people to even move faster, Sir. One hundred per cent mortgages on land is nothing big. What they need is enough that they can build their own homes and this thing about allowing them to get mortgages and so on I am not sure that a lot of poor people really want that. What they want is a piece of cheap land so that they can use the additional funds they have in their pockets, Sir, so that every Sunday they can gather their friends together, they can turn some concrete in the road and they can start building their houses as soon as they have enough funds. But the additional expense of going to a bank, Sir, and incurring interest cost, Sir, we have to shield poor people away from that. That is exactly what I am talking about. We need to provide that land at a cost that allows the family to get together, pool their resources, own that land and then take the value of the land, not the cost, to the bank to get the necessary collateral.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Oh, so you do not have to do that as I said, you can just buy the blocks and get your friends to come. That is a usual country thing, Sir. If you pass through St. Lucy any Sunday you will see a group of men turning concrete to help a friend to build a home. That is something we need to encourage again in Barbados in a wider way where one friend allows the other friend to build a home and then the next Sunday or whenever that one is completed they go next door and they do the same thing. That is another way, if we encourage that unity, we can help solve the crime problem in this country. We need to be our brother's keeper and it is very important, Sir, that we need to develop systems that are going to allow communities to get back that image they had previously where instead of having clashes between neighbourhoods, Sir, you would have a particular relationship and it is called home building among friendships, Sir.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have said what I had to say on this matter and I hope that the Government would continue listening. I hope that at the end of the day we do not have many house spots throughout Barbados and we do not have buyers because \$3.00 a square foot is still a high price especially when you consider the amount of money in concessions that are given to people who already have money and do not need money because anybody who has \$100 million or \$200 million in any particular country tells you that they have money and they do not necessarily need that concession. It is the poor man who lives in the villages that needs that concession from Government and I want to see the day, Sir, when the soft loans start flowing to those poor people, Sir, where VAT on housing and housing material will be removed.

I am calling for VAT on housing material to be removed for poor people in this country because that is another cost that poor people cannot afford and if we want to seriously solve the unemployment situation in this country we will make sure we have a housing programme that will allow poor people to build because you will find that the people who cannot find work are those people who live in the villages. They can build their neighbours' homes, Sir.

I have already said in this Assembly, Sir, that if we expand districts what we are doing, Sir, is taking an old area, Sir, putting in the necessary amenities and as soon as you do that, Sir, I can bet you any amount of money that you will see housing going up in that particular district. If you go and develop a new piece of land you are not going to get the same pace, Sir.

Sir, we must stop empowering the Government and empower the people because when you extend the district, Sir, what you are doing, Sir, is developing land that belongs to the people but when you go and compulsorily acquire land what you are doing is acquiring more land for Government and the Government is the owner and not the people. 12.00 noon

Take an area like Hope Road in St. Lucy, Sir, if the Government tomorrow was to go and spend the amount of money they are going to spend at Lancaster, for example, putting down roads and the necessary amenities, I can assure you that as soon as they start cutting the roads, the Town and Country Planning Department will have so many plans in front of them that they will be afraid, and as soon as those plans are approved, the houses will be going up. But when you go and acquire the land at Lancaster, Sir, you are not going to get the same speed in housing as you get at Hope Road, Joes Road or Pie Corner or any area within Barbados, whether it will be in Bonnetts or Bush Hall.

I am saying, Sir, that this Government needs to have a serious housing plan. The one they have at present is faulty and it is not producing. If you want to see the results, Sir,

look at the number of houses that have been built since they have been acquiring all of that land.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, as the last Honourable Member made his contribution he sought to contend that this administration has been embarking on an unenlightened policy of taking agricultural land out of agriculture and putting it to purposes other than agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, the tactic just used by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is a tactic that he uses repeatedly almost every time he talks in here. The hard fact of the situation is that notwithstanding the fact generally speaking that the land space of Barbados because of the island's size is very limited, this administration has nonetheless not embarked on any wholesale policy of taking land out of agriculture to such an extent as to threaten the future of the sector.

I really want to make that point, Mr. Speaker, that if agriculture has problems facing it, the problems that face agriculture have nothing to do with any policy on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party to take land out of agriculture. Of course, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy also said that some time when the Estimates are debated he will look more at this whole question of housing. I too, will use the opportunity during the Estimates debates, Mr. Speaker, both to look at housing and to look at the extent to which, over the last 40 years or so, lands have been taken out of agriculture by whom and what time and such like.

But the hard fact of the situation is that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy ended up contradicting himself. He made reference to the fact, Mr. Speaker, that land was being alienated out of agriculture and yet said that at Harrises and Mt. Poyer, St. Lucy, a place of which I am intimately familiar that there was an acquisition for land for housing and the acquisition has not been pursued and that land is agricultural land.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is true he knows Harrises and Mt. Poyer, but he knows not of the land I speak of, because the land I spoke of is on the hill. This is not agricultural land. So far it has one house, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the land on the hill is behind the residence of the brother to Pizza Man Doc.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again, Sir. The land that is behind the house of the brother

of Pizza Man Doc happens to be agricultural land, but the land I speak of is the land on the hill, not behind the hill.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of any objective arbitrator, I stand on what I say because it appears to me that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not know the area of Mt. Poyer and Harrises.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member on a point of order said that the Honourable Member was misleading the House when he said that the land on the hill was agricultural land. The Honourable Member got back up and said, "I stand by what I said."

Now Sir, the land is either agricultural land or it is not agricultural land. But other Members in here wish to know the facts. The Honourable Member cannot just get up and say, "I stand by what I said" because he obviously was misleading the House, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I was not misleading the House. I am not the kind of person who would set out deliberately to lie. The Honourable Member who just rose on a point of order knows the beach behind North Point very well, but not Harrises or Mt. Poyer. He knows the beach behind the Tides Inn, North Point, very well. It is a place that he frequented 15 to 20 years ago.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member swims there, you mean.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member was a part of a team of peeping Toms and that is what he is speaking of, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The activities of which the Honourable Member engaged in were so notorious and carried out in broad day light, that on a Saturday afternoon at 2.00 p.m. you did not have to peep. You saw him with the naked eye.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could we move on, please?

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the point about it is that the area around Harrises and Mt. Poyer, I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central knows that area very well, is definitely very agricultural, including what I referred to and including what he referred to.

The point I was making, Mr. Speaker, is that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy cannot both argue that land is taken out of agriculture and at the same time refer to a

situation where, if any objective, unbiased person went and viewed what he was referring to, the person would conclude that the place is agricultural.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I said that the land the Government is taking out of agriculture is land in a high rainfall area and you cannot come and equate the land at St. Lucy, even if he wanted to make a point, to the land at Lancaster, at Consett and at Fanners. Because the land in St. Lucy is not in high rainfall areas and that is why the Minister of Agriculture needs now to make sure that the farmers at St. Lucy get the well at Crab Hill so that they can get some water because there is a serious water problem in St. Lucy and not in St. James.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, we would not really proceed very much with the debate if he gets up, and I try to reply to things which he is uttering about which he knows nothing.

Mr. Speaker, even if land is located in a high rainfall area and it is rocky and marginal, it would be useless for agriculture. Let us take a place like Vaocluse Plantation, Mr. Speaker. Vaocluse Plantation which I believe is a category one estate, is located in a high rainfall area, but a significant portion of Vaocluse Plantation is marginal, rocky land. There are parts close to the Hope which I am very familiar with, Mr. Speaker, which are useless for agriculture. Clearly, Deane Town to which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy referred, is useless for agriculture.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir, I never referred to Deane Town as an area that is in a high rainfall area, Sir. I would like that to be taken out of the records.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I never said he said so. What I said is that even if land is marginal and is in a high rainfall area, it would be useless for agriculture, that is the point I am making. I never said what he said that I said.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the point I am making is this. Areas like Deane Town, as it is right now, is an abandoned place; twenty-five years ago, it had residences there. But the people had no roads. They had no utility poles. They had no electricity. They had no running water and Deane Town was a veritable lost village. It happened that a Barbados Labour Party administration resited the residents from Deane Town and put them in the area of Sion Hill. But as conditions in Barbados have improved, Deane Town can be developed now, so long as the resources are found. I believe that the types of resources necessary to develop Deane Town are available to the Honourable Member's Ministry, and Deane Town can be given infrastructures for the first time in its history.

I am going to support this Resolution, Mr. Speaker, but I want to also reflect on some of the things the Honourable Member from St. Lucy said, if he would permit me to continue my contribution the way I permitted him. As he spoke, I did not jump up every five minutes trying to correct the inadequacies. I listened to him in peace and I believe he should really permit me to speak in peace.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy knows that I am here to guide him as much as I attempted to guide him in 1970-1971 when he sat at the back of Form 2¹ at the Coleridge and Parry School and boys like Jefferson Phillips and others in front of him were progressing and it was difficult to penetrate his head. It was extremely difficult then and it is still difficult now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. At that point and time the Honourable Member was not capable of teaching anyone.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, if he did not claim parliamentary privilege it would have been a slander of sorts, because the fellow, Jefferson Phillips who sat in front of him did Spanish with him and now has a double degree in Spanish.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, the Honourable Member let us get back to the Resolution and let us move on, please.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, he would not even permit me to say that right now his brother Randolph comes to class with me every week and was at my place Saturday night, sitting at my table. 12.10p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, I submit that as jovial as the past remark may have been it has no place in the records of the House and I invite Your Honour to have those remarks removed from the record. I think the fact that a member's brother goes to another member for whatever reason forms no part of the Resolution and I humbly so recommend.

Mr. SPEAKER: Could we please proceed.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy also sought to question in his speech the wisdom of a policy of 100% mortgages. And the point is that in a situation where a poor person is seeking to build a house, the fellow might find it reasonably easy to find a deposit on the land, but then he has to contemplate the whole question of building. The reality of the situation, Mr. Speaker, is that for a large number of people in Barbados the situation in which

100% mortgages do not exist has brought some hardship. Some people have found it very hard to comply with the deposit requirements of many financial institutions.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, there are financial institutions that ask for 10%, but some insurance companies ask for higher than 10% which means that if a youngster is insured with a given insurance company and he is seeking a mortgage from an insurance company the insurance company tells him that he has to find 25% of the equity. That fellow's plans to proceed are frustrated because he has to stop in his tracks because of not being able to meet a conditionality imposed by an institution to which he ironically contributes.

A lot of life insurance businesses in Barbados if they are honest would tell you that their whole survival rests on the premium income earned out of poor people who buy policies with them. Now how can a poor fellow buy a policy with an insurance company? Suppose it was a poor fellow called "Mackie", for example, or a poor fellow called "Gold-Tooth", and this poor fellow has been throwing, as we say in the country, money into premiums to the insurance company for years.

As far as the insurance company is concerned, it is earning premium income. The insurance company might invest and make more out of that income than this fellow will ever get on his dividends. If the fellow goes to the insurance company seeking to borrow to build he might need \$ 120 000 but they tell him that he must have 25% of the equity. The fellow is a poor working-class fellow working for \$1800 or \$1900 a month. He cannot qualify.

We are saying that a policy of 100% mortgages which I am sure is not a policy that stands in isolation on this side of the House only - I am sure there are wiser members in this House, not only on this side, who also share that view. That policy will go a long way towards alleviating the kinds of hardship...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of elucidation. I really did not intervene on the controversy over truth and untruth between other Honourable Members, but I just wanted to declare that the policy of 100% mortgages has been a policy advocated by the National Democratic Party at its foundation in 1989 and ridiculed by others in this country when the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central was advocating that policy, when he was with us and was given special responsibility to advocate that policy in 1991.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I seem to believe that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is still advocating the policy although his circumstances have changed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central might be sitting over there, but he is still with them.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, even when the sea is divided, great minds think alike. Suppose we made an argument that wisdom started and ended with those in favour of 100% mortgages being deemed wise and those who were not in favour being deemed otherwise, then clearly the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would be deemed otherwise and unwise in the process, because he was attacking a policy which enlightenment really commends.

If we are going to make any progress in housing in Barbados we have to stop the politicking. The question of housing in Barbados has been a problem for years.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House to give the impression that I have attacked 100% mortgages without understanding what I said. I said the important thing is to allow poor people to get land at a cheap cost so that they can use the surplus to build their homes.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I know that he even mentioned in this year 1998 that he had problems with land being made available at \$3 a square foot, but the Honourable Member for St. Lucy never made any statement in favour of anything being at \$3 a square foot. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew suggested that in certain instances he was contemplating a policy where certain people who are poor could get land at no more than \$2.50 a square foot, if I heard the Honourable Member for St. Andrew correctly.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy did in fact say something to that effect, that people should be allowed to get land at reasonable costs.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is again misleading the House. You know, Sir, that I have said on many occasions on the Floor of this House that the Honourable Member is saying that I said that land should be sold to the people of Barbados at \$3 per square foot...

Mr. SPEAKER: State your point of order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is what I am doing, Sir. He has stated that I have said that land should be sold to people at \$3 a square foot. I oppose that, Sir. I have said that land that is owned by the Government should only be sold to poor people at the cost they paid for it.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member was not as coherent then in his principal speech as

he is now in his so-called points of order. The best thing he said in his whole contribution was that land should be made available to people at reasonable cost. He said so. He actually said that land should be made available at reasonable cost but he was also critical of our policy against a background where the Honourable Member for St. Andrew can be correctly described as having set about to embark on a policy by which a land bank is being developed.

I am not going to play politics on this, Mr. Speaker, the reality of the situation when we took this administration in 1994 was that there was an incessant unending demand for house spots and also an incessant never ending demand for state sponsored housing.

The reality of the situation, Mr. Speaker, is that at 1994 we were in no position even to meet V₅th of the demand because irrespective of what had transpired before the reality was that we could not meet that demand. I cannot say precisely how many people are looking for house spots today or precisely how many people are looking for NHC style terrace units but what I do know is that any Member of Parliament who has a constituency would tell you that the numbers of people approaching the MPs for house spots and housing, equates or sometimes might be higher than the number of people asking for work and for employment.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has to be commended. He is making an attempt to develop a land bank. He is slipping in here through this Resolution nothing fewer than 10 acres. I am assured that close by at Lancaster on the western portion of Lancaster some 40 acres are going to be made available in the foreseeable future.

As I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I do not see any attempt to alienate lands out of agriculture for housing in a situation where what is being done is unwarranted. I do not see any long-term prejudice or anything that is so grave affecting the future of Barbados or what the Honourable Member is doing today, as to feel that agriculture in Barbados is under threat.

I think that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has to be commended at the efforts to build up chunks of land under the control of the State in circumstances where many a poor man, many a poor woman, who is in need of house spots and of housing does not go on the open market looking to buy property on the open market. 12.20p.m.

They turn to the State. The poor man often turns to the State in a situation where he has been told that

the State is run by political organisations that are socialist in their orientation or are on the side of the poor.

When the poor man has any expectation in Barbados, very often the first thing that occurs to him is to turn to the State. I do not blame the poor man for doing so because if he hears us talking about socialism, whether democratic socialism or other forms of socialism, if he has been hearing us say that we exist as politicians to assist poor people, then he would be justified in approaching us for help.

I commend the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, Mr. Speaker, in bringing this. It is unfortunate that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy entirely misunderstood everything he was saying. I invite the Honourable Member to go to Harrises and Mt. Poyer. It is a beautiful green light. It is about 100 yards south of a blue bus in an open field. When you know how to locate that green light and at what point in the morning it goes off then you know Harrises and Mt. Poyer.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the debate so far and there has been so much cross talk that I have found it very difficult to detect the policy trends being articulated. What is abundantly clear to me now and has been abundantly clear to me for a long time is that there are a lot of people in Barbados who do not qualify for welfare homes, who cannot afford to buy land and build houses on the open market in Barbados, and that the State has a responsibility to intervene in that situation and deal with the problem on a massive scale. All that is happening year after year is that the problem becomes bigger and bigger and more and more people are demanding access to land and houses that are simply not there.

I have repeatedly said that I am not in agreement with a policy that has been pursued for many years in this country, of locating house spots for three or four houses, half a dozen houses, spend a whole lot of money developing them and putting houses on those spots. Very often all it does is that it utilises what little space is available for the cultural development of various communities.

I have advocated and said again and again that Government has to take advantage of economies of scale in dealing with the solution to housing for these people. It means acquiring large tracks of land. It means getting into the business of getting the utilities in those areas as cheaply as possible and that generally means, in terms of land development, keeping the Water Authority and MTW as far away from it as possible and try and get it developed at the most economic cost.

Government owns a lot of estates in Barbados. They have been losing money for donkey years and I do not see any reason why some of these estates cannot be used for mixed housing and residual agricultural development as far as I am concerned. People cannot live in trees. People cannot live in gullies and eventually Barbados is going to have to seed whatever land is needed for the primary purpose of meeting the social needs of its people for houses.

Now, Sir, when you look to the area now of financing of the housing, for many years I have said, and we put it into a policy situation some time ago, that these people will never ever be able to own the land and the house unless they have access to 100% financing. When we came up with that policy in 1989, the commercial houses, all sorts of people criticised it.

I am very glad to see that the present Administration has adopted it and articulated the policy. There is nothing wrong with that. They have come into office and have seen the need and if they wish to respond to it and, as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has pointed out, that neither under the old law or under the new laws is there any copyright relating to policies of a political party or manifestoes, and if a political party is serious about what it is doing, if it articulates a policy and that policy is put in place by the Government of the day then the party should be happy that it has made a contribution to the development of Barbados and we see it in this light. There is no point trying to obfuscate the issue or trying to pretend that it was not a policy articulated by the National Democratic Party. It does not make any sense. If it is a good policy, implement it. It is as simple and straightforward as all that. There is no need to be barefaced about it or apologetic about it to anybody.

It is a good policy. It is a sound policy and the only policy that is applicable if you are going to deal with those people who cannot acquire land and build homes on the market, or who do not qualify for welfare housing. In other words, there are some people who can help themselves but they need the stimulus of ownership of the land in order to borrow and things like that, that whole wide area there.

Therefore, Sir, that has been our policy. Again, if my advice was taken three years ago and Government had gone in there and said their aim for five years is to provide 10 000 house spots, that is the kind of ball-park you need. It is that big idea you need to embrace and set about doing it and then apply concepts of the economies of scale toward that particular type of development. Unless you do that, Sir, we are not going to get anywhere. We would have been debating this 10 years ago and we would be

debating the same kinds of issues in here 10 years from now, monkeying around with buying a couple of acres here, half an acre here, three acres here and putting a few houses here and there. All that does in the long run is just picking at the problem, not even dealing with it.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We have to find the land. As we made it quite clear, the reality is that people have to live in houses, and if you have to seed some agricultural land for housing for poor people, I have no problem with that, none whatsoever.

I further say that Government was forced over the years to take over a lot of the uneconomic agricultural estates in Barbados. Government owns those lands. Government has lost more and more money over the years on those estates. I see nothing wrong with committing one or two of them to massive housing development for the poor or almost akin to building a new town in Barbados. That is what you really need and that is the reality. You are talking about 10 000 houses just to deal with the demand out there.

Now, how is this going to be paid for? One mechanism is 100% mortgages but Government has to recognise that housing is such a fundamental right of all Barbadians that you are going to have a situation where you will be obligated to find means almost of giving the people their house spots in some instances. 12.30p.m.

There is nothing wrong with that. In some instances you may have to enter into an arrangement where when you really look at what money it cost you and what you will get back from the individual over time. It is virtually a kind of a gift that you are making in order that that person can get title to the land to allow them to be able to borrow against the very land to put up a house. What you lose on one side, you gain on the other side. Because you do not have to provide housing for rental for that particular family and that family has been given a start in life in our capitalist system where they have acquired an asset, helped by the Government of Barbados. They can then push off from there and further develop their homes and use the asset probably to help with the education of their children and various other things.

Sir, it is a critical area that goes far beyond shelter. It goes towards the fundamental economics of the family and the economics of the country. Sir, what is very important is that if people spend \$100 million in a year on low-cost housing, the impact that that has on jobs is maximum, the impact it has on foreign exchange losses is

minimal. Let me explain what I am talking about. When the poor man builds a house for \$50 000 or \$70 000, very little foreign exchange cost is involved and it is a mistake to think that that type of house involves significant foreign exchange. It involves less foreign exchange, Sir, than one bathroom in some of the luxury homes in Barbados because it is the finishes that have the significant borrowing exchange implication, not the cement, not the labour, not that aspect of the housing which constitutes over 95% of what a poor man could put in his house when he builds it.

Sir, I do not see what the reluctance is. I do not see what the problem is. Let us find the money, let us mobilise the rest of the society to get involved in providing these house spots and providing the money by way of bonds which allow the small man to participate in the exercise. If you have to raise \$100 million or \$200 million, there are enough small people out there with savings in the bank today earning 4% that is taxable who will be happy to get 6% or 7% that is not taxable by way of bonds over time.

In other words, what I am saying is that it a Government's responsibility and it is also a societal responsibility. What is required is a vision, what is required is a concept, what is required is a major project that is easily identifiable and that can, over the next five years, be at this point, and ten years at that point, fifteen years at that point, if you are going to deal with this problem. If not, in ten years time, it would not be 10 000 spots you are looking for but it will be 20 000 spots and you would have gone on during this period believing that you are contributing to the problem but not really contributing to the problem.

Sir, the concept of Government providing assistance almost at a level of a virtual give-away in some instances, in nothing new. If you go back to the records of the National Housing Corporation and its predecessor in the 1950s, you will see that there are a lot of people in Barbados who own houses today and their first loan came from the Housing Authority. After many years, the Housing Authority never collected that money and they converted it into grants. I bet you did not know that.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Well, it may be known but it is nothing new that I am advocating. That was to meet a tremendous need at the time to get the process started. The need now is that great. I do not know why you are bothering to start off renting the people the land. What are you going to rent them for? If you allocate the spot, let them start paying towards owning the spot. Later on you can enter some formal arrangement where they can get

title to the land even if it means giving the 100% mortgage for the land and building. Link the two together, what they pay towards it from the very beginning then will go towards the purchase of the new one.

Sir, there is no need to get into any rental arrangement. Whatever money they are paying, from day one, they are contributing towards the ownership of the house spot and the Government through its various agencies will implement a policy of 100% mortgage so that somewhere along the line, these people will be able to acquire house spots and land.

The other point, Sir. I think that the Ministry of Housing needs to streamline its policy in relation to the cost of house spots and in relation to lands vested in the National Housing Corporation. This business of looking at the market price of the land, looking at what is the land tax price of the land and this kind of thing can create a big problem in relation to what the National Housing Corporation tells people they have to pay for the land and what is Government's policy.

Government's policy should be, in my view, certainly in the urban area no more than \$2.50 per square foot. The National Housing Corporation should be told that they should not send out letters to anybody offering them land at a price in excess of \$2.50 per square foot. I understand that that is the amount which the Urban Commission and the Rural Commission are prepared to contribute in lending or helping people to purchase homes. So that there is some coordination of the financial policy between the various agencies of Government.

There is no point if you are going to help people to deal with the housing problem, forcing them to pay an unnecessary amount of money for the land and then they do not have the resources to build the house.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, we know he is a very well-off person. His thinking might be a little different. In other words, his thinking may be that if you acquire the land for \$100 000 instead of \$10 000 that he can then go and get a mortgage for \$800 000. That kind of thinking applies to a certain class in the society. It does not apply at this level. At this level, the bank is going to be looking (1) at ownership and (2) what cash the person has available and the earnings and stability of employment and so.

Sir, I do not wish to occupy the crease for much longer. I just want to deal with those three simple concepts. Firstly, the mass availability of house spots to meet the existing

demand and past 'pent-up' demand. Secondly, financing and making use of the economies of scales in dealing with these larger entities for development. Thirdly, the concept of 100% mortgage for land and house and fourthly, that the Government should not be embarrassed or worried in any way if some aspects of its financing in terms of rates of interest or length of loan or whatever, really in fact amounts to a grant or a contribution by way of grant to families who qualify to own those particular properties. 12.40p.m.

I believe, Sir, that that mix would go a long way in helping the housing problem make a major contribution to the unemployment problems and also a significant contribution to the overall goal of the eradication of poverty in this country. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not going to oppose this acquisition and what I have to say is governed more by what has been said than by anything else.

The Honourable Member for St. James North in his presentation ended by saying, I am not going to play politics with this and he went on to indicate what the position was in 1994.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that as members of this House of Assembly we, over the last number of years, have been holding out to the people of this country an understanding that there is land coming their way. We have, I submit, been misleading the ordinary people of this country. The Honourable Members on that side are able to make their comments no doubt from a position of honesty but the fact is, Mr. Speaker, if we examine all of the second reading speeches made in this House perhaps in the last 10 years whenever land was going to be acquired you will find that essentially the same points have been made. You will find, Sir, that a number of ordinary people who come to their MPs looking, as the Honourable Member for St. James North said, approaching MPs for house spots and land to buy, those persons have been led to believe that it is only a matter of time before they get the opportunity to get either:

(a) a house spot, or

(b) a piece of land to buy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James North said that we are in the process of creating a land bank but the truth is that the Government owns more land in Barbados than anybody else. In fact the Government does not know how much land it owns, does not know where the land is.

The Honourable Member is saying from his seat that in his time when he was Prime Minister that they created a special post. That is true. During my time in the Government, Sir, we had a Minister who was a professional surveyor, who was Minister of Housing, and I heard every professional language you can speak of about how we were going to do cadastre surveys.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I am not discussing what he did or what he did not do but I am saying, Sir, we have a property manager in the Ministry of Housing and in the National Housing Corporation. Sir, the people of this country had every reason to believe that large amounts of land were being acquired so that their quest for land could be satisfied.

Then we heard that the problem was one of financing and then we had a lot of discussion in this country about 100% mortgages. Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, most people have been led to believe that 100% mortgage is like buying a sweet bread. Most people in this country are given to feel that getting a piece of land would become as easy as renting a house. The truth is, the Honourable Member, the present Minister responsible for lands is a well educated land lawyer, Sir. The Honourable Member knows more about land law than most people.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is being suggested that I am slandering him, Sir, but it is a fact, Sir. The Honourable Member ought, in his position as Minister to indicate what are the implications of conveying a piece of land from "A" to "B". What is involved, because people in this country do not get that information.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is saying he is going to do it on a television programme. Well do it on a television programme. Do it on a call in programme, but for heaven's sake let us stop misleading people into believing that the National Housing Corporation has capacity at the moment to give them house spots, to give them land, to sell them land.

Mr. Speaker, week after week after week constituents come to see you. You send them to the National Housing Corporation. You tell them if they wish to buy a piece of land they have a better chance because there is no land to rent. You have to be on the telephone calling a Parliamentary

Secretary or a Minister begging them to ease up some money to give them a chance to get a piece of land. Seven hundred people waiting for one spot. Young people who are emerging for the first time and that is the real danger, Sir. It is not the people who are middle aged, it is that there is no hope for young people who are moving out from within their family situation to own a property.

We talk about the poor. We talk about the working poor. They are among the most honest people in this country. There is a pristine honesty about Barbadian poor people in which anyone could successfully lend them money. It certainly has been my experience, Sir, that you can lend them money if they are in pursuit of something like a house spot or a house, in the certain knowledge that they will repay. It might take a little long, Sir, but they always repay. And they will save money to buy a property if they can see clearly how they might purchase the property but time after time after time record after record, House debate after House debate, we are giving people to believe that it is only a matter of time before this land is available to them and they have people who have been waiting years and still they wait.

Sir, the Honourable Member presides over National Housing Corporation which recently said that it has applications since 1979 that have not yet been processed. 12.50p.m.

Mr. Speaker that is not good governance and I am not now putting the blame on the Honourable Member, he was not Minister in 1970. What I am saying is that we have a collective responsibility to iron out this problem. I submit that ironing out the problem is not a matter of acquisition of more land until we get the issue of how we are going to deal with it straightened out. As I have said, Sir, if we take the acquisitions in this House only from the period since the Honourable Member has been Minister, 1994, you will see that we have had myriad acquisitions in this House. If we take the speeches that have been made we will see that we had essentially the same point being made.

The Honourable Member said that a previous Barbados Labour Party Government moved the people out of Deane Town because the services could not be taken to Deane Town and now this Barbados Labour Party Government feels able to bring the people back to Deane Town because the services have now been provided. That same Government will, of course, say that when the Democratic Labour Party was in office that nothing was done. So I do not know how the services would have been brought back to Deane Town. They must have been brought by the St. Lucia Labour Party who must have done something on the people's behalf, because to hear the Honourable Members tell it, the Democratic Labour Party did nothing.

But, they are now saying that they could make Deane Town a town. But, we must not try to fool the people. We cannot fool them. One of the reasons why Governments get thrown out is because they keep believing that the people are stupid.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, that is my view of why we were thrown out. If you wish to ask that question that is why you were thrown out and that is why you were thrown out the time before and that is why you will be thrown out this time as well.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West knows why he stays where he is and why I stay where I am, because we do not fool our people. You cannot fool the people. You can tell them that you are going to give them 100% mortgages, you can tell them that you are putting the machinery in place, but the people who go to the National Housing Corporation every two weeks, and you know what they say? They say that they get turned around, turned around and turned around. That is what they tell me and I believe that is what they tell Honourable Members in their constituency office that they are getting turned around, because people tell them to come back the next two weeks.

I know I speak for Honourable Members over there who cannot say what I am saying and over here too. That is what they tell them at the National Housing Corporation instead of telling them, "listen, we do not have any houses and are not likely to have any in the foreseeable future," rather "come back next week," "come back two weeks from now." So the people go to the National Housing Corporation and furthermore they have been given to believe that if they go to the MP, the MP could call somebody and get it. Not my constituents, Sir.

I tell my constituents up-front that I have not gotten a house for a person whether I was in the Government or out, for a very long time, so I cannot promise you a house. That is what I tell mine. But they tell me that they go up to the National Housing Corporation and they get turned around, turned around and turned around. I am quoting, Sir.

It will not be acceptable to go on giving the impression that when we get this land bank in place, which we are now putting in place that things will be all right in the morning, because the Honourable Member will cease to be Minister of Lands and Housing at some point. The Honourable Member here says, "soon" he might know something, but he will cease. The new Minister coming in will have to check the wicket out.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I do not know if there is going to be a Cabinet shuffle, but you are going to stop being Minister responsible for this, not long from now. The new Minister will have to come in and take guard As a matter of fact, he might have to change the Board, because the compatibility of that Board and him, might not be the same as the compatibility with this Board and him. When he is taking guard, Mr. Speaker, you know who will be out there waiting in the bleachers? Your constituents and mine, Sir. The same people who were told last week and week before, will be told four weeks or four months or whatever, "well you know, Sir, there is a new dispensation, so you got to wait now and see how things are going" and in the meantime,*it is, "turn around, turn around, turn around."

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that any Government can satisfy the demand. I am not saying even that the present administration is inefficient. What I am saying is that we are not giving proper information to the public about the reality of the situation. We are allowing people to feel that there is hope when in truth, none exist.

If, Mr. Speaker, it seems that I am gloomy about this issue, it is because bitter experience tells me to be gloomy. There is a small development in President Kennedy Drive, Thomas Gap, it was mooted when the last Barbados Labour Party was in office. It was a project that was designed to increase and improve poverty and to take small areas of tenancies and transform them into a much more amenable and liveable environment for the people who existed there.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: We picked it up in 1986. Between 1986 and 1998, Sir, twelve years that project has been festering and the people who live in that area can only be described as poor people. They could not possibly be described as anything other than poor people. The project is going on and that is 12 years. I am not sure and I am not even complaining, Sir, because something is happening. So if that is only a project to put in a few services, straighten up some plots and convey the lots to persons who were already living on them and that has taken 12 years, can you imagine how long it is going to take before we have the appropriate land bank to begin the process which the Honourable Member with some facility described today?

All I am suggesting, Sir, is that the Honourable Member should give us and the public, a realistic perception of what to expect. Tell us that no land will be available for two or three years while you put the house in order. I wish to be able to tell my constituents

something sensible. I am sure Honourable Members on both sides would wish to be able to tell their constituents something sensible.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who can speak more eloquently for himself than I can, had a tenantry and we had a by-election and within a short time, six or seven different groups descended upon Pineland Tenantry and told them in essence that within a very short time, they will be able to acquire the land. It is now two years and I think the fervour has died down.

Mr. Speaker, I think the insurance companies have not been dishonest in their dealings with the people from whom they take premiums. It is just that the people have not been trained how to examine people who bring them gifts.

1.00p.m.

If the people were trained on how to examine Greeks coming with gifts, then Honourable Members on that side would not be able to say that the insurance companies have misled the population.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West is a director of an insurance company and for a very long time. I have never heard him articulating an enlightened position on what the insurance company is going to do for poor people because they are not interested in poor people.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: ... I am not saying you have never done. I am saying I have never heard. You did not hear what went before. I am not attacking you. I am saying you are a director of an insurance company and I am saying that insurance companies are not interested in poor people because poor people cannot pay any premiums. Insurance companies are interested in people who are working who can pay premiums and who, by paying premiums, will keep them in milk. That is their interest.

I hear there is a consultant now who is around the country giving advice on investment and on another occasion I will deal with that.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have made my point. Taking account of the time I will stop here, Sir, but I reiterate that it is about time that the people be given sufficient information so that when they go to the agency responsible for distribution of land that they will not have to get as they put it "turn around, turn around, turn around". Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is now 6 minutes after 1 o'clock and I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 2.15 p.m.

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

The question that the sitting be suspended until 2.15 in the afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr.

SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West in his contribution would have this Parliament believe that Government has been holding out, that there are a number of lots to be given to tenants or to persons interested in purchasing house spots. Mr. Speaker, even though Government already owns large tracts of land, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has indicated, it is not all of the land that is owned by Government that is suitable for house spots.

Mr. Speaker, in giving the impression that Government has been holding out from the inception one must understand that, as I have indicated repeatedly in this House, the mere fact that you have identified land as suitable for acquisition for residential purposes does not necessarily mean that the houses can be placed there almost immediately.

This administration certainly embarked since September 1994 on the process whereby large tracts of land identified by the Division of Housing and with the assistance of parliamentary representatives have been acquired for housing purposes. Mr. Speaker, when you identify the land the technical people are still left to do their work. We have a shortage of land surveyors. It is sometimes difficult for the land surveyors, in situations where the plans for the surrounding lots are not available, to do their work.

There are occasions when it has taken over 6 months to even get properties plotted. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the problems surrounding land ownership are problems which we normally like to sort out so that at least the land owner can be told of the Government's intention in the whole process.

The question of the town planning process takes a lot of time and, as I said already, the road profiles are going

out to tender for the roads. Even after you have completed the whole development issue in time to go further and put up terrace units, it calls for a different tender process.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at our manifesto you would note that we did not indicate that we would put houses all over Barbados. We indicated in our manifesto that we would make it a lot easier for persons who do not own a home to own a home, persons who wanted land to rent to be able to rent house spots a lot easier and if they wanted to purchase to be able to purchase house spots a lot easier. The emphasis was on sites and services. The emphasis was on transfer of ownership, putting the various services within existing villages, which we have done since September 1994, namely, the roads, telephone, electricity and what have you.

Mr. Speaker, this is an extension of that process. So when you listen to Honourable Members on that side speaking about Government continually coming to this House and acquiring land and yet they cannot see any house spots and at the same time talking about the need for Government to have enough land that a number of people - one member even quoted as many as 10 000 to be accommodated - I think that one must conclude that they are embarrassed by the initiative which has been taken by this administration since September 1994 in that we have moved to do the same things that they have been talking about.

What more can you expect when one looks at this Resolution and one looks at what is intended?

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has been speaking about 100% mortgages which the Barbados Labour Party has always addressed and we are speaking of a situation in these acquisitions whereby house spots would be available for persons to rent with an option to purchase and they will not be required to pay a single cent to the National Housing Corporation after allocation. Any monies paid towards the rent will go towards the cost of the land. What more can you expect? 2.25 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaks to the question of having the cost of the services being the only cost that the purchaser should be paying and when you look at the intention of this administration with respect to the purchase of those house spots, it is even less than that because the cost of putting in these services in these various developments has increased tremendously.

We have had a development when one took into consideration just the cost of the land, then the cost of putting in the services, the price came to \$4.50 per square foot. Government, through the National Housing

Corporation, then sold that land to the tenant at under \$3 per square foot, so with our new policy of making these lots available and then making sure that they are rented to tenants at affordable prices, at least we are doing even more than what the Opposition has been speaking about.

Mr. Speaker, it is hoped that we would be able with the acquisition of these various house spots to make housing more affordable to a large section of the Barbadian populace whereby low income persons will be able to own a house spot and be given the opportunity before they purchase, if they are not in a position to purchase it, at least to rent it until they can do so.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaks to land being acquired only in certain areas in St. James but obviously he speaks so often that he seems to forget that we have dealt with areas all over Barbados. There are areas like Bush Hall, with which you are very familiar, Cottage, Fanners, Groves, Constant, Six Men's, Mt. Brevitor, Lower Burneys, Haggatt Hall. There are other areas like Mt. Poyer and Coverley in Christ Church that have already been acquired. We are concentrating on the areas where there is need and areas which have not been acquired.

Mr. Speaker, it is hoped that with this acquisition, we will be able to alleviate the problems which have been experienced by unfortunate tenants as a result of the amendments to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, as I said. We are hoping that low income persons would be able to have the opportunity of renting or owning a house spot. We are also hoping that those persons who have been affected by the ravages of nature whether it be areas in the City or Weston that have been affected by flooding or in the case of people in the White Hill area that have consistently been affected by land slippage, that we would be able to assist them.

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

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

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

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
LEASE OF LAND AT BRANDONS, ST. MICHAEL,
TO COLIN SEALE FOR THE OPERATION
OF A BAR AND RESTAURANT

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution pertains to the lease of 486.1 square metres of land at

Brandons, St. Michael to Mr. Colin Scale. It is a matter which preceded our time and has only now reached this stage.

In 1992 the tenant, Mr. Scale, was granted a temporary licence to set up a mobile canteen at Brandons, St. Michael, subject to certain terms and conditions at a nominal rental. The National Conservation Commission continued to collect this fee up to the period ending July 1995. Mr. Scale has done some improvements to the structure since then and he has obtained the relevant planning permission for the development of the site and is now seeking permission to finalise the lease.

The lease which has been agreed with the Ministry is for a period of nine years at a rental of \$2 400 per annum. The rent will be reviewed every three years. Mr. Seale will be responsible for the payment of land taxes, utilities and other outgoings arising out of his use of the premises and all costs associated with the maintenance of the premises and access thereto.

Mr. Speaker, it is now proposed in accordance with the provisions of section 5 of the Crown Lands Act, Cap. 225 to seek the approval of Parliament to lease this land to Mr. Seale.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to fully support this Resolution and to say just a few words, and more importantly to say that I think this project does seem to be in concert with the concept outlined for the area, the Brandons Development Project proposed in the last by-election. So far from what I have seen, the restaurant is expanding in a way that it is going to utilise the demands of the cruise ship passengers.

In fact, if you pass there now you will see that there are quite a few beach activities being offered at the site. In many instances I would think that is the way this area can be best utilised. It is a lovely stretch of beach in a bay almost... and I can see within the next couple of years even greater use being made of Brandons beach. However, there are just a few things that will need to be done. 2.35 p.m.

There is a canal which runs right up in the Black Rock area which comes right away down and off-loads its debris at Brandons. So far the canal has not been kept in the most sanitary of conditions. Therefore, while we are going to be

encouraging the development of this project, it may be in the interest of the Ministry of Health to look at this particular canal because it is causing some problems for the residents of Brandons. It has been raised outside of Parliament but as you can well respect, whenever the representative makes representation on behalf of North West constituents, there is a nemesis who is ever present and no matter what you do at the respective Ministries, he is always adequately informed as to what representation is being made and as a consequence he is always present at the time of execution.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member has called the name Mark Williams and you are not supposed to call people's names in this House.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, I said nemesis. The most substantive point is that whenever representation is sought on behalf of the residents of North West, somehow by some magical wand, he is adequately informed.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am not sure that he is always on the job but he has very good insider information as to what is taking place.

I am making representation for that. Of course, the area of Brandons stands to benefit from any business development but there are also some social needs that should be attended to in the immediate area, especially the development of natural gas for residents of the area. One can well respect that the development along economic lines cannot proceed in the area without the necessary social amenities.

Therefore, while we may be seeking to encourage investors to invest in the Brandons area, especially along the beach front, I am asking that the commensurate growth in social amenities in the area be provided for the residents. In this regard, I am suggesting that Government, along with seeking to attract investors in that area and providing the necessary concessions and whatever to accommodate them that similar accommodation be given to the constituents of St. Michael North West, especially those in Brandons. I am pleading for consideration to be given to the provision of natural gas as a first requirement for the residents of Brandons.

We were promised during the last by-election an annual affair for the youngsters in the area. So far, no initiative has been put in place to guarantee the continued social activity of that magnitude in North West, especially in the Brandons area since 1996.

The acquisition has to do with accommodating investments in the area and all that I am saying is that it cannot be the case that the economic and financial needs of the area are being attended to and the social needs are neglected. I am asking for that particular initiative to be reinstated and that the useful thing that has to be done should be done. That is, that one should fulfill any promise that was made during the by-election period.

There is also the area on the other side of the road, not on the beach side of the road, which accommodates a playing facility - a football ground. Let me just thank the National Sports Council for having recently cleared the area of a whole set of garbage and so far since that time the area has been cut.

I had made all kinds of representation and I was informed by the Chairman that something would be done and it was done. But more importantly, on the day that he went with his team of representatives from the National Sports Council, unfortunately, I was not invited for the taking of the picture which was carried in the Nation News the following week although I had made representation in the form of a letter as well as verbal representation to the National Sports Council for the cutting of the pasture to be done. That is also important in ensuring that any business activity which takes places on the beach front can take place in a secured area and one that is particularly safe.

Therefore, there has to be some correlation between the maintenance of the Farm area and the Brandons area and particularly the pasture which is presently used during the Crop Over Festival in order for us to guarantee the safety of the users of that area. Not only locals but visitors alike.

Again, on behalf of the people in the area, I am asking for such provisions to be put in place to guarantee the safety, not only of the residents but any prospective users of the businesses surrounding the Brandons area.

Definitely, during the Crop Over period when the area is heavily used, we are thinking in terms of ensuring that residents of Brandons which adjoins the Spring Garden Highway should be entitled to some of the economic benefits of Kadooment. I see no reason why thousands of people should frequent that area at that point in time without the corresponding benefits accruing to the residents of Brandons.

Hopefully, with the assistance of businesses in the area as well as any other businesses from whom we can tap some resources, we will be able to provide this coming Crop Over, opportunities for the locals in the Brandons area to make

economic use of the Kadooment festival. That again, is in the pipeline for the residents. We have made certain approaches to guarantee this but we are now not only asking the locals but we are also seeking to invite the 'would-be' investors into the area to make very good use of the beach front property which presently exists.

There is no doubt that there are some other concerns but these are a little higher up, just about a couple of metres above the existing property, especially as it relates to safety in that area. Safety from the point of view of the presence of a whole set of oil tankers, the Barbados Light & Power itself and the potential damage that can be done in the area which could impact upon businesses, that is, in terms of any emergency that could possibly visit them at an unfortunate time.

I would also seek to invite any prospective investor in the area to look very carefully at a plan for emergency purposes in terms of access and getting out of that area since there is only one way out and one way in, that is via the Brightons Road. Any 'would-be' investor or businessman should also give very careful consideration to an emergency plan in the event that something unfortunate happens in that area. As I said, there is only one way in and one way out. That would have to be taken into consideration in terms of putting plans in place for 'would-be' investors in the area.

Given that this area is just to the north of the special developments area, I do not know if they can be a call for small business people to be encouraged to establish more permanent structures along the Spring Garden Highway particularly as it relates to the potential cruise ship market that exists in abundance. Indeed, if the BTA does realise its dream, within the next two years we should have a million such cruise ship passengers from whom we can expect to generate some economic benefits for the area. 2.45 p.m.

So again in light of the developments that will occur in tourism and especially in relation to the potential that Sandals could bring to the area I am hoping that perhaps Government can give further consideration to establishing some form of concession, by the Urban Development Commission for small businesses within the immediate area of Brandons.

There is substantial potential as one can recognise from the establishment of Sandals which we await very anxiously. Indeed if it does not happen we stand to lose substantially in the area of the immediate environs of Paradise or Sandals of which Brandons comprises or is part

of that entire area stretching from the top by Esso Gas Station down to Exxon by Mount Gay, so I am hoping. I hear several things are being stated publicly as to whether we are still going to get the Sandals Resort in Barbados but certainly I do look forward as the representative for St. Michael North West to the coming of Sandals to ensure substantial job creation within that area which would impact one of the main benefits of the Paradise Hotel and therefore in a very special way Sandals Resort can contribute to alleviating poverty within the North West Constituency.

I am hoping and wishing and praying that such does occur in the interest of the residents and constituents of North West. In short then I would like also to suggest that the project which presently exists at the Farm, the UNDP Joint/Government Project can in fact be effectively utilised to produce products which can be sold in that area just on the Brandons Beach front, again tapping the cruise ship market. I can see no reason why certain arts and craft, mahogany and otherwise cannot be made at the project just about half a kilometre away and that the beach front property which is adjacent to the same property, why that area cannot be utilised with some kiosks to ensure that there is an outlet for the produce or the products being made at the project in Deacons Farm.

I can see that so far with this initiative in place, with Government giving expression to the need to promote businesses within this immediate area of Brandons that certainly there can be some spin off effects for the residents of Brandons and certainly in the Farm area in particular.

On that score, as I said at the opening I support the Resolution and I also look forward to greater initiatives which can ensure not only the economic and financial development of the area but the social amenities which need to be upgraded especially within the coming year.

Sir, I wish to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to this Resolution but more importantly to speak to some of the immediate needs of the constituents of Brandons area.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you to be able to speak on this Resolution and I want to say from the outset that I support it. The main reason why I support a Resolution like this, Sir, is that as you would know I have a strong belief that it is time in this country that the small man gets a stake of prime land in this country. That is, this land happens to be beach land along with the land at Holetown where there is another small man operating a restaurant also.

I need to go a step further, Sir, and that is, in 1992 Mr. Scale was given permission by the Democratic Labour Party to put his restaurant on that location. Earlier on another small man was given permission to put a restaurant in Holetown on the beach which was really an unknown thing because there is a belief in this country that only certain types of people can have businesses along that beach area. And I am glad to see that the Democratic Labour Party has started a policy which is now being followed by the Barbados Labour Party to make sure that the small man in this country has a stake. But I am calling on this Government to go a step further because there is also a negative side to a Resolution like this and that is a lease is given and every year that the lease is up it is contentious. That is you replace one small man with another and I think the time is right that land like this be sold to small people so that they would not have to compete among themselves for that small piece of land. I am calling on Government to go a step further and sell this land to the people who are prepared to invest in putting up buildings on that particular piece of land because, Sir, if this policy is implemented there are a lot of people who would like to put up structures in the River Bay area and also at Cove Bay but they are not prepared to lease land, build up a clientele, then for somebody who happens to be a Minister to decide that the lease is up and they have to go and it is given to somebody else.

We had a good example of this, Sir. We have seen it happen on the East Coast and at other areas in Barbados where small people are made to compete among themselves for one lot of land without encouraging the small man to go next door and set up another property where he can buy that same property. We can build a particular small business sector instead of having to ask them to compete among themselves.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am saying this Resolution needs to go a step further. It needs to be in a situation that instead of Government leasing the land that the land is sold to the person who shows an interest and who is prepared to develop the area. We must admit, Sir, that this piece of land, if it is allowed to continue like this that somebody will come and bring a \$100 million proposal which attracts Government in times of difficulty and the small man would not be allowed to get this piece of land.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to protect the small man by making sure that land like this is not leased but sold. The land must be sold with certain conditions because I am aware that sometimes land is sold when a price is offered which happens to be the right price. I have a problem with that. Because Governments cannot continue to do something in the interest of the small man and then

that thing the Government is doing for the small man is passed on to the same people whom we are trying to keep the rights from. 2.55 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not prepared, certainly in supplying licences or not, but I am saying that as much as I support the small people in this country, they must understand that when Government set about to put policies in place for them, they must be prepared to go along with the Government and not take the rights that are given to them and then turn around and sell them to the same people they are trying to protect them from. I am saying that in this country, people must understand when the Government is doing good things for them and the first fast dollar is not what you catch at.

We will be wasting our time, Sir, if we come here and we set up good ideas and implement good policies then for those same policies to go alongside the road and somebody who did not sweat in the fields of Barbados, then to come and take over those things. Somebody said the Mini buses and the ZRs.

Another good example that poor people must understand, if I am to continue to advocate for precedence for them, that they must appreciate what is being said and done in this Parliament and they must run, grab them and hold on to them. Not get them and then fritter them away, because we as Parliamentarians cannot come in here and do that type of work, then to see things back the same old road, because it is frustrating.

I am saying, Sir, that the Government of the day must change the policy about leasing these pieces of land to poor people and sell them the same way that they can sell land to Eastern Land Developments and people like them, they must be prepared to sell them to the poor people.

I am saying that shortly I would like to hear that land in River Bay is up for grabs, Sir, and that interested small business people who are prepared to develop that area, they are prepared to buy that land. I am against this policy that whenever you want to have something constructive, you have to apply to the NCC and you have to go through all types of red tape. I do not think that poor people should need to do that. I feel that whenever you have a policy you should write to the NCC, outline your policy and commonsense should prevail. There is not time for political leverage.

You take a situation in this country, Sir, where these areas are the same areas that the "all inclusive tourists"

frequent and if you want to cut into the tourism industry you have to apply to a Board, and by the time they approve what you want to do, the tourist season is finished. I am saying that there is no need for that. We have to find an easier way, Sir, when a guy in St. Lucy who wants to use River Bay to set up a business taking people on tours that he should be free to go to River Bay, Sir, set up a road kiosk and guide tours along the River Bay area and as you would know, Sir, it would be a beautiful site to behold.

There is nothing wrong with my people in St. Lucy tapping into the tourist industry because they cannot go on the beaches on the west coast anymore. They cannot go to the hoteliers down there any more because when you call some of the hotels they tell you, they have x number of rooms and you could leave your wallet in the safe. So, my people in St. Lucy have to find another way now, Sir, how to tap into the tourist industry and I feel that the best way they can tap into the tourist industry is using areas like River Bay, Maycocks Bay, Stroud Bay and Cove Bay where they can set up their own businesses and they can attract people.

The White Paper as it stands, Sir, does not permit them. I am sure that my people in St. Lucy are prepared to allow people from St. Michael Central to come and share the booths with them too. So I would expect your support on this particular matter and all those who feel it is a good idea. I am prepared to tell my people that they cannot keep it for themselves. But they must support this one, because the same thing that is happening at Brandons can be done in St. Lucy, Sir, so this is a policy statement now, Brandons is the base and we are branching from there.

I am saying, Sir, that they need to come back to the drawing board and they need to dictate a clear policy.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: There is no need to dictate it, it has already been dictated for them. All they need to do now is to implement it. They are fortunate. They have been having so many ideas coming from this Side. Sometimes I wonder, Sir, why it is so difficult for them to manage.

Thank you very much, Sir.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a small intervention here. Mr. Colin Scale, who is the proprietor of this business at Brandons has been a businessman for some years. Mr. Seale, early in the pioneer days of the wrought iron business had a shop at the Bank Hall area, Sir. That is the area very near to where

I used to live. After that he got involved also in the real estate business.

Mr. Scale, in the late 1980s, early 1990s, set up the business in the Brandons area and has been catering not only to many of the cruise ship people, but locals alike. Even on weekends and at night, Sir, you can find entertainment there for some people, especially people of the middle-aged group, like myself, would mostly go to this area for the kind of entertainment that he offers down there. That is why I would say that he is doing his job not only to tourists, but to locals as well and I can support him.

What I would like to see happen in the area, Sir, when you pass the same Brandons area going in a northerly direction during the rainy season, we have a lot of problems in that area with drainage. Over on the other side which also houses the Industrial Estate with the cabinet making stores and so on, that too is a problem when it rains. I would like the authorities who are responsible for that department to try and take care of that position there.

Also on the other side of the road, by the pasture, many times one can pass there and see the amount of aluminum garbage of some type that someone left there and it is always burning. It could be a hazard at times to people and that is the area that I would like the Environmental Department to look into also.

By and large, Sir, I do support this Resolution for the land to be leased to Mr. Scale.

I thank you.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution. Sir, I know that there may be a lot of hope for this business, but I want to address the challenges which may be associated with having a business such as this on that beach.

Sir, in Barbados when you are dealing with the tourist business, especially with cruise tourism, there are certain inherent problems. While the Brandons Beach is a good beach for that, one would notice that over the years tourists from the cruise ships tendered toward Paradise and there were a lot of complaints about the excessive use of Paradise and it became a nuisance to the normal paying visitors who stayed at Paradise Hotel in those days.

My understanding is, Sir, that there has been a drift toward the Hilton Hotel and I believe in some regards to the Carlisle Bay Centre. I believe most of us would know that the Carlisle Bay Centre, which was set up to cater to this kind of business went through a very lean period, because

despite a lot of marketing efforts the tourists did not gravitate toward that venue.

It is a deep-rooted problem, Sir, in the distribution section of the tourist business. There is no secret, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I would like you to address the Resolution before the House, please?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Sir, I am addressing the Resolution and I am addressing it in the context, where I am quite familiar with the property and I have also done my little bit to ensure that that property got business. When I organised the Nation Fund Walk I proposed that it finished right on Brandons Beach so that the people participating in that event could get breakfast at Mr. Colin Scale's business.

I also had discussions with him, Sir, in which he pointed out that there were difficulties in attracting the visitors from cruise ships to his business which would have been an integral part of his success. So I am making the point, Sir, that since the beach lies in the ideal location for that kind of business, we need also to assess and seriously address the hindrances to the success of businesses like that, simply because these people do not have direct access to those people who control the network within the tourist sector. In essence, Sir, if you do not have access to those ground tour operators, you can have the best ideas in the world, you are not going to get those people coming to you. If you do not have access to the big businesses in the cruise business, you can have all the best ideas in the world, the tourist are not coming to your business. 3.05p.m.

So I am saying that businesses like these need in some cases to have in addition to giving them leases, some government intervention or something which would allow the people involved in the distribution of tourism to understand that they have a moral responsibility, to assist businesses in terms of packaging them within their own package of services which they offer to the tourists that come to Barbados.

I also know that the taximen are very resistant to carrying tourists to short destinations. They say they are not getting any fares for these short distances and I am familiar with this because when I tried to organise a tourist event for the Tourist Board some years ago and I went into the Port to talk with these taximen - this event was supposed to be at the Esplanade - they said no, it was too short a distance; that they need something like Farley Hill that if they get a long route then they could get a piece of change.

Sir, we need to look at packaging these things in a way that you can pass along these routes so that at

the same time the taximen will get a piece of change if you include other venues around Barbados. I am making a point that we need to organise these tourist services in such a way that the small man has a chance. You can have all the dreams in the world but if you do not have access to that critical network you cannot make any money.

The experience of Carlisle Bay proves that and the concerns of Mr. Scale himself having spoken to him about getting the tourists to use his venue proves that we need to look seriously at the organisation of tourism and the network that hinders small businesses of this nature.

I want to make the point also that while I support that kind of activity there there is a similar beach just like that that a lot of tourists are using - Miami Beach, we call it, at Enterprise. I know further down the road we have Oistins Fish Fry but that beach is perhaps the best beach in Barbados.

I believe that we could have some day-time entertainment on Miami Beach. But we have a big problem at Miami Beach. If you barely turn on your radio too hard there is a certain lady up there who will come and say turn it down, and if you do not turn it down, well, help you, the police are coming.

I respect the rights of people to live on their properties without disturbance, but I feel that if you are seriously looking at developing tourism we need to look at cooperation between both sides and I see no reason why you cannot during the day-time at least have a little music. Music is the food of love. "If music be the food of love, play on." We have a nice thing there and we cannot play a little piece of music at all. The police are looking to stop you. You have a club that goes out there and you play a little something and the next thing you know somebody come and tap you on your shoulder and tell you you cannot play music there.

I want that to be reviewed, Sir. I know there are laws about abuse and nuisance, but if you are having music at Brandons why cannot you have music at Miami? This is the point I am making. I do not want it to disturb the neighbours, my good friends, but I believe that we have to look at reasonable controls but that the people can have a little music to entertain themselves.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Earlier, Mr. Speaker, I made mention of the rules that one should not refer to a person not in this House by name. Mr. Speaker, it is offensive for a Member of Parliament to make reference to a specific individual not in this House and furthermore the wife of a sitting Member. It is insulting, Mr. Speaker, and

offensive, and I think the Honourable Member should be made to withdraw those remarks. He made clear reference - I am not sure whether you were listening - but he made clear reference to the wife of a sitting Member stopping people from playing music.

Mr. Speaker, he cannot be that offensive. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West heard and the Honourable Member for St. John heard as well.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I have not referred to any specific person by name in this House and I want to make the point, Sir, that if certain people want to put the names of the wives of certain people in the books of this House they can do that but do not call my name.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you proceed orderly, please.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: But do not involve me in that kind of thing, Sir. I called nobody's name. I would not do such a thing. I am discussing a point of principle that music should be played at certain times on Miami Beach and I am saying that in the interest of the people of Christ Church. That is what I am saying.

Brandons is an ideal place for this involvement with the cruise ship industry to have the activities on the beach and I am saying likewise that that is the kind of model that we can use for other beaches along the coast and I am just mentioning Miami as an example. I am making the third point, Sir, that the hindrances to small businesses being able to thrive because they do not have access to the networks, that we as a Government have to do something about that otherwise we are not really tackling the problem of the poor black man or red man or whoever he is, once he is poor, the man that wants to have a piece of the pie.

I am being made to understand that when this Government returns to power it will look after that.

Sir, I also need to make the point in connection with the same thing, the use of the sea and things like the Harbour Master and Bajan Queen being allowed to play music or not to play music. That is something that has to be addressed because we have had complaints from people on the west coast and people on the south coast about these tourist entertainment centres as I call them playing music.

Mr. SPEAKER: What has that to do with the Resolution?

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: It has to do with the Resolution because we are talking about the development of the beach for tourist facility purposes.

Mr. SPEAKER: But we are not talking about that.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: We are talking about that because the business is on the beach.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have given you a lot of latitude. I am suggesting that you stick to the Resolution before the House.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: I am saying, Sir, that this Resolution is a waste of time if we do not understand that a business like that will not make money and he will not be able to pay his lease if we do not have serious policies and procedures put in place to deal with that kind of business. This is the point I am making. Therefore, I have to quote the necessary example and supporting evidence to support my point. I think I have said enough, Sir. Thank you.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew drives a coach and through his own theories of decency and respectability every day. I do not understand him, Sir. I tried to see if I could get him to go on the straight and narrow. Okay. He has signalled that he is repentant.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to join my colleague from St. Michael North West on this acquisition, since part of it falls within my constituency. I am on this beach practically every morning of my life. 3.15p.m.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: It is clear, Sir, that my movements early in the morning have attracted the attention of large numbers of the Honourable Members, including the venerable members.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the same beach?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, Brandons. Your Honour might not be immediately familiar with it because it is a little removed from Hill Road.

I want to make the point, Sir, that the decision to allow the gentleman who is going to be the recipient of this lease and his colleagues to occupy the premises followed a problem which arose in Barbados during the 1986 period where the number of cruise ships coming into the country was increasing relentlessly and the private hotel owners in the country were beginning to feel the strain of the persons

from the cruise ships coming to their properties to enjoy the benefits of the Barbados situation. In my time we sought to find a solution to this in tourism. We recognised there were a number of beaches in Barbados which could accommodate large numbers of tourists but which were not being projected as possibilities.

What we did, Sir, first of all, we built a facility at Brandons Beach. The then Speaker of the House, it was his constituency at the time, and he was able to help in the construction of the facility. That facility has proved to be a real asset to the area. All the facility did was to provide modern conveniences for persons who used the facility but it has always been for those of us who live in the Black Rock area, that area Brandon, Brighton/Batts Rock, without prejudice to Paradise, has always constituted a magnificent beach area for use by the people who live in the area.

When the Spring Garden Highway was constructed, one of the benefits which flowed from that construction was an expanded Brandons Beach which runs from the Flour Mill all the way to what has now become the "hot pot," the area just outside the Rum Refinery and the Light and Power beach, then it goes on to Paradise Beach and then beyond Paradise. Batts Rock Beach is there.

One of the service clubs in Barbados has developed the area in the Batts Rock area. They have done a magnificent job and now we have a stretch of beach that runs literally from the Flour Mill all the way to Batts Rock which provides facilities which are being used effectively by both local people and visitors.

Mr. Speaker, that exercise provides us with an example of how we can develop our country in such a way that it allows the traditional Barbadians to enjoy their heritage without in any way having an impingement from the visitors. And Brandons Beach, Brighton and Batts Rock provide a perfect example of how we can develop in this country.

Recently, those of us from Black Rock and the surrounding areas, we used the beach in the early hours in the morning. Between the hours of 4.30 a.m. and 7.30 a.m. you can find the locals enjoying these facilities fully and completely. By 7.30, 8.00 o'clock most locals, except there is a bank holiday have gone to their work, their play or whatever and the cruise ships come in. They dock between 7.00 a.m. and 8.00 a.m. and then they unleash their people and they are aailable to use the beaches at times when Barbadians g orally have no interest in that.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important we understand that facilities are not designed for tourists. The facilities

have to be designed in the first instance for the Barbadians, the people of Barbados.

My friends, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, St. Michael North Central, St. Michael West Central and those people, we enjoy the facilities of Brandons, Batts Rock and Brighton. We also welcome the visitors who come from their various places on the cruise liners, those who are despatched onto the shores that we are now discussing.

I have one concern which I have voiced privately and which I now voice on this Floor. Mr. Seale, the person who is going to be the beneficiary of this lease is a local businessman. He is in concert with some other Barbadians who sought to develop this area and who had the original idea. I am always very concerned when I see Barbadians having an idea and as soon as they get it to a certain point, because they do not have the financing to carry it to the next stage, they always have to turn it over to people who have not participated in the development, have not participated in the programming but who would become the major beneficiaries of this activity.

I do not wish to put cold water on this particular lease because I am committed to seeing that the Seales and others of this country benefit. But the fact is that it might behove a Government - I am not even going to say "the Government" - to give people like Colin Seale and others who have these kinds of ideas an opportunity to emerge from some of the stranglehold difficulties which our structural arrangements put on them and, therefore, whereas Mr. Seale should be the major beneficiary of this particular lease, my observation suggests that somebody else will be the beneficiaries of this, what in essence, is an *ex post facto* arrangement that we are entering into at the moment.

I am not going to be more specific because to do so would warrant an unnecessary intrusion into an arrangement between the Government and Mr. Seale. I am concerned that people stay on the periphery waiting for something to happen and then like vultures they descend and they are the major beneficiaries of these kind of things which we are going to be doing today. 3.25 p.m.

The Government should have some kind of arrangement by which the Seales of these kind of arrangements can get the real benefit. If the National Insurance or the Income Tax or whichever Division of the Government has a problem for different reasons, I am submitting that Governments of Barbados should have some arrangements by which they can come to the rescue of businessmen, small entrepreneurs who have great ideas but who are not necessarily able to capitalise them fully.

This Brandons Development should be a public development. Public in the sense that others ought to be able to invest in making the Brandons Development as profitable as it can be. Based on the knowledge that I have, I am trying to be as delicate as possible in this matter without interfering with the transaction.

I am very concerned that those - what I choose to call "vultures", can always wait in the wings, fielding in the slips and waiting for the error which is bound to come because we are not able to capitalise as well as we would have been if we had the capital.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is, as has happened in the past, we have entrepreneurs and people with capacity to develop who do not have the capital. They have a view of what can be and they proceed.... I will give you an example and I hope that Your Honour will bear with me.

When I was the Minister responsible for Trading, Industry and Commerce between 1971 and 1976, a certain Mr. Gary Husbands, as he was then known, who is now known as Muhammad Amin Nassar, came to me as Minister with a fantastic idea for development of a particular industry and as Minister responsible, I said, yes that it was a good idea and he then said that he would go to the bank to get the funding. He subsequently reported to me that the funding was not available for whatever reason and so the matter died.

Within six months of that episode, another person came into the Ministry to meet with the Minister with a proposal for development, fully loaded, as they say nowadays in terms of the financing. He had the full financing and in the process of defining the project, it dawned on me that I had heard the project before. I drew to the attention of those who were proposing the project that this idea had in fact, come before the Minister before.

Mr. Speaker, what had happened was that Mr. Husbands, now Mr. Nassar, - that Mr. Nassar's idea which he had taken to a bank in Barbados for financing and on which he had not been approved for financing had been hijacked by somebody. I cannot say the banker, but it seemed to me then that the banker was aware of it. It was hijacked and passed to another set of people who were then able to produce it as an original idea.

Fortunately, I was able at that time between 1971 and 1976 to draw to their attention that it was at the least immoral and that I would have nothing to do with it.

The point that I am making is that it is time for us to make this decision to give the lease to Mr. Seale but I

think that we should seek to give Mr. Scale the assistance that is necessary for him to develop. If he has a problem with another agency in the Government to assist in serving that problem so that he can get the full benefit of the ideas, the intellectual property which he has in relation to this development and reap the benefits of this very important and innovative development at Brandons rather than some persons who are waiting in the wings to come in like gangbusters which is what is happening at the moment.

I have tried, Sir, as best as I can to speak to this matter without in any way impugning the integrity of anybody. I am saying to the Government that we need to be able to provide a net under entrepreneurs of a certain kind. Those entrepreneurs who are black because we have not had a history of assistance for black entrepreneurs. If the Government does not help black entrepreneurs they will get no help.

There is a part in the Bible that says "My help cometh from the Lord". The voice of people is the voice of God and therefore the Government for purposes of entrepreneurship is the Lord. It is in the duty of the Government to assist black entrepreneurs and to allow them to fail sometimes.

Mr. Speaker, in this country, black entrepreneurs are not given an opportunity to fail. White entrepreneurs in Barbados fail over and over and over again and they form whatever it is 1998 Limited or 1994 Limited or 1997 Limited.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, black entrepreneurs have to be given an opportunity to fail and fail again, and fail again and fail again {Otherwise, they will never emerge and become entrepreneurs and become successful business people.

Do not let anybody confuse us that is some special pleading because we have to special plead.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: You do not come from being a farmer or a labourer and become a businessman overnight. If people get 700 and 800 years of opportunities to fail, we have to be given those opportunities too. I feel very strongly about that. I feel so strongly about it, Mr. Speaker, that I do not speak about it often because in this country they have some rules that are set by standards that have nothing to do with entrepreneurship. Standards that have been established in socialisation and those standards are applied to people who are never given an opportunity.

You go to a bank and you want to borrow \$25 000 and they require \$167 000 in security.

Asides.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: And if you are not careful they want you to bring your grandmother's belly and your mother's belly and head. As Errol Barrow used to say, her head and guts as the security.

The result is that many entrepreneurs in Barbados who had good ideas, had to move aside and allow somebody else to take the profits.

This lease is symptomatic. The reality of this lease that we are approving, Sir, is symptomatic. If you go to the spot now and you examine what is happening, you will find that although we are giving this lease *ex post facto*, there is somebody else who will be the beneficiary of this lease.

I am not going to stand in its way because at the end of the day, the name listed here, Colin Scale is the putative beneficiary but the fact is that we should ensure, and I inveigh the Minister to ensure that Mr. Colin Scale gets eventually to be the beneficiary of this lease by whatever means necessary.

If it requires a delay of the National Insurance payments based on a different era to allow him to be the beneficiary then we have to develop some mechanism to allow such because, Sir, in the United States and Canada and the United Kingdom and Germany and Japan and the so-called G-7 countries, that is what they do to allow their people to become entrepreneurs and business people and to share in the economic cake. We have to stop the lip service where they are saying people are to participate in the economic cake and then we create the framework that does not allow them to participate because the playing field is not level. Your Honour is fully seized of this. The playing field is not level and then in this Parliament we establish the level. The last Member of this Parliament who tried to talk about the redressing of imbalances he became vilified, not only in the context of a particular issue but in the context of a whole spectrum of black empowerment in this country.

Unless we decide as a Parliament that we are going to take the bull by the horns, unless we decide that we, as a Parliament are going to make the playing field really level then all we will do is give lip service to the concept of a level playing field. 3.35 p.m.

That language is easy. You can easily talk about a level playing field but it is when you get out there to

play that you know if the playing field is level or not. The field looks level sometimes but when you get out there you discover that the wicket is not playing evenly.

The Honourable Member who introduced this legislation knows better than almost anybody else about level playing fields and he knows that a level playing field at Coleridge and Parry is not the same as a level playing field at Harrison College. He that hath ears to hear let him hear. Those Honourable Members who have experience of both playing fields know that a level playing field is not a level playing field. Mr. Speaker the theorem has to be that a level playing field is not a level playing field. I leave that, Sir. That is a theorem.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is laying special claim to his capacity to walk a level playing field I am sure if the Honourable Member speaks he will be able to speak with authority that a level playing field is not a level playing field. But, Mr. Speaker, jollity aside, the point I am making is that we would not oppose this lease. We could not because the Government seeks to give a relatively young Barbadian entrepreneur an opportunity to grow. What we are saying to the Government is that they need to ensure that their very good intention comes to fruition and that somebody else is not the beneficiary of this very good intention.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, those Honourable Members who do not have the joy of walking on this beach at five or six o'clock in the morning, which I enjoy practically every morning, I would like to invite them. There are one or two of them in here, Sir, who need a little assistance in this regard. I think that I would like to invite all Honourable Members, especially the Honourable Member for St. James North, to come out.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: St. James South needs nothing from me. I would like to invite him to come out and participate in this new vigorous approach to health in Barbados. It is a wonderful experience early in the morning.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Especially the "Pot". If they go to the pot that would be helpful. There are some who would not benefit no matter where they go. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew has his own methodology but I think that we should come out and enjoy Brandons. It is a lovely beach. Mr. Speaker, I have not seen you there in recent times and I am suggesting that you should come down. Early in the

morning is better because that is the time when the natives are on the beach. I would like to invite my colleagues from this Side, Sir, but you have to be very careful, they may prefer to be up on the East Coast. They say that they prefer to be at night on the beaches, Sir. The Honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition says he exercises at night on the beaches. Who am I to question that? I think I am going to stop at this point and thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

Sir. HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I would not allow this opportunity to pass because I am one of those who fought a tremendous fight in Barbados at the time when the Governments were under an onslaught by uninformed people about the lack of accesses in Barbados to beach facilities. I say that the people of Barbados, particularly those who live in Bridgetown and in Christ Church, are exceptionally fortunate in the fact that due to activities of successive governments they have in the centre of Bridgetown two of the best beaches one can find anywhere in the world.

If one looks at the physical situation between the Hilton and the Baggage Warehouse and you look from Brandons right down to Batts Rock as described recently here in the speech by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, those are two prime beautiful beaches. One arose, I am told, as a result of the arm of the Deep Water Harbour whereby Carlisle Bay is filling up and the other also arose as a result of an extension to the Harbour in the early 1970s when the Flour Mill site was built and they became more accessible as a result of the activity of the Spring Garden Highway.

So we have these beaches. It is our duty as politicians of whatever political party to ensure that proper plans for the maximum utilisation of these beaches should be drawn up. I am all in favour of that.

It is also our duty to ensure that the people who have the opportunity to exploit the commercial potential of those areas should be people from Barbados. That is the philosophy, Sir, that I feel the Government is following in this area. There are also important considerations that have to be taken into account. The fact that one can carry on activity on the beach does not suspend the Law of Nuisance. The fact that one was given permission by the Government or by the Town Planning Department or by anybody else to carry on an activity does not mean that the Law of Nuisance is suspended and this is a very important consideration. 3.45 p.m

The concept of noise and nuisance is a very very important point. Many countries in the world have attempted to regulate that activity, by way of the

Criminal Law. Indeed within the Caribbean in places such as Jamaica* there has been a special Noise Bill that has been recently passed. I do not know the area, but apparently they have an area called "Negril" which is supposed to have one of the finest beaches in the world and that this area, I only knew it when it was a swamp area in the late 1950s and you could not get access to it. But apparently the activity in "Negril" was of such a nature that they used to be fights breaking out with respect to the playing of reggae or whatever it is. As a result, the Jamaica Government had to pass a law dealing with the level of decibels that you can give off and things of that kind.

The people who have followed these areas, and I have spent a lot of time researching these areas, know that the most draconian laws that you have, are the laws in relation to the laws in Switzerland in which they have a definite, decibel count. Now this matter has now become an integral part of what is called environmental law. The United Nations has certain standards in relation to noise.

I believe myself that in Barbados we have, sooner or later to look up this matter. There are provisions in the existing laws of Barbados, both nuisance laws and also the laws relating to the Highways Act, which prohibits, without the police permission, activity within a certain distance from the public highway. Now these beaches may be sufficiently large that activity can take place without infringing that particular section of the Highways Act. But all the beaches in Barbados are not of that calibre. Therefore, Sir, I would like to caution Honourable Members and the public that it is necessary for us to understand that while we promote the maximum economic activity on beaches in Barbados, it must take place within the context and confinement of the fact that other people have rights too, which have to be respected.

This environmental matter is a matter that I am confident the new environmental study will deal with. Because it arises not only on the beaches, but it also arises in such areas where there is intense activity on the beaches too in St. Lawrence Gap, in which the Law Courts have had to deal with no less than four or five law suits as a result of which injunctions have been ordered against the activity and there is a regime for prohibition after certain hours.

In addition to that, Sir, I think that we must educate our public. I have always been a great advocate of this to understand that activity on the beaches must take place within also the conduct of rule, law and order. The non-use of vulgar and indecent language, because the beach is a public place for the purpose, again, of the Highways Act. Also there are Parks and Beaches Regulations or National Conservation Commission Regulations. So that the utilisation of beaches in Barbados is a matter which would

have to be the subject of regulation, but at the same time it provides a great opportunity for economic activity which, in my opinion, is peculiarly suited to Barbadians.

Now, I have one more point to make in respect to these leases. I agree with Honourable Members who say that you should have a lease.

Aside.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Well, the Honourable Member does not like a lease. I am one of those who believe that a lease is a perfectly good interest in land and that it can be for such a period of time and under such conditions that you can recapture your money.

A thirty-year lease is now regarded as the minimum period for reasonable economic expenditure to take place on the land which is leased.
3.55 p.m.

If you look at Grosvenor Estates in London you will recognise that Grosvenor Estates has been operating as a 50-year lease and a right of renewal. A whole development has taken place. As a matter of fact, the Grosvenor Estates pattern is so successful that Grosvenor Estates itself has set up a consultancy to other estate owners on the development of land under leasehold.

As a matter of fact, the church commissioners in England are bodies that utilise the lease. So all I am saying is that if you understand the economics of the situation you will realise that a 30-year deal is a period that would allow you to recapture your capital expenditure at a rate of 3% depreciation yearly. That means that you are getting up to 90%. Many people tell you that a building 30 years old, certainly some commercial buildings, sometimes needs to be demolished and you will understand that that is going on in Barbados right now because they are saying that some hotels are over 30 years and cannot be adapted to suit modern conditions, computers and things of that kind. Sometimes it is better to demolish them and start afresh.

A 30-year lease is a perfectly good interest in land and I feel that if you really want to cater to Barbadians in this area that they will hardly be likely to have the capital to buy the land and at the same time carry on the capital expenditure for the provision of the building. So a 30-year lease should not be scoffed at.

Now on the question that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West raised with respect to people having to

lease not only in their name and then they in truth and in fact are fronting, or even if they are fronting, they are under economic pressure to have other people as part and parcel of the finance activity. That is an important point.

The covenants in the lease can be such that you cannot assign, sublet, part with possession without the consent of the housing authority and the housing authority can buy and sell in the case of a responsible person not to unreasonably withhold the consent. All of these are techniques and devices but what I would like to see the Government do and we have been trying to get it done even in the 80s is to have a standard pattern of a lease which should be the subject of public discussion and then people would know that if you want to lease from the Government for commercial activity this is the pattern of the lease that you are going to get so that all and sundry would know beforehand. I think that that would do well.

The banks would understand because the banks in Barbados must understand that a good long-term lease, particularly with a right of renewal, is as good as security as a freehold tenure and that is recognised in other countries. So we must therefore get away from the idea that the fact that it is a lease means that it is of no economic significance.

We also have to get away from the fact that people do not use the lease just as a mechanism as a short-term thing because having got the lease it is a semi monopoly situation because everybody cannot get a lease. There will only be a certain minimum number of leases.

This Parliament has debated this before on Gravesend when the first water sports facility was created by the Hilton Hotel. We debated it with Pebbles. We debated it with all of those things. The shorter term you have it means that either the place is going to run down or you have to have some mechanism of ensuring that the successive tenant pays the previous tenant for improvement. So it is a matter that one must think out carefully and I believe that the best mechanism is a good long-term lease with proper covenants. Short-term is trouble.

Nobody is going to expend any money that they cannot recapture in depreciation. They want a sufficiently long period that they can write off their assets over a reasonable time.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, most of the points raised in this debate do not really relate to the actual Resolution at hand however sound they may be, except that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West

reminded me that a Mrt Mark Williams has repeatedly written the Ministry of Public Works about the same matters that he referred to have been fixed in his constituency. I however give him the assurance that that one matter which that same individual wrote me about is related to the canal that the Ministry has been actively looking at the matter and very shortly the Drainage Unit will be despatched to the area in order to deal with it.

I would applaud his interest in the completion of the works at this stage.

I would just like to make one comment with respect to the issue of private beaches. This Government, Mr. Speaker, as you very well know, does not have a policy of approving private beaches anywhere in Barbados. Only last night I had a delegation at my house who were complaining about certain notices that have been placed by a South African land owner at Sandy Lane stating that this beach is a private beach and that no trespassing will be allowed.

I am not very sure whether or not this is accurate but I would like to assure the House that I will be making a tour on Saturday morning with the Minister of Agriculture in whose constituency that beach is located. The Honourable Minister has also drawn to my attention another such violation in his constituency on the beach. I would like Members to be responsible in their comments about these matters because the fact that the Barbados Labour Party Government is presently the Government of the day does not mean that we condone such practices and I believe that members should speak out whenever these things occur.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it may very well be that we may have to look at the Town Planning legislation to ensure that whenever persons want to erect signs on the beach if the regulations do not presently cover such situations to ensure that persons will not be allowed to place signs on the beaches unless it is cleared with the Chief Town Planner and the appropriate Minister.

As a matter of fact, I believe that the regulations should be changed to allow only signs that have been approved by the Minister to be placed on the beaches. It is a very serious situation and I would hope that those signs are removed before the Ministry's team actually visit the area.

Mr. Speaker, with those few brief remarks 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. 4.00p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Government's business for the day. As Honourable Members know, since the Estimates of Expenditure have been laid today, Government proposes to commence the debate on the Estimates next Monday at 10.00 a.m., that is March 16, 1998.

I therefore beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Monday, March 16, 1998 at 10.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Monday, March 16, 1998 at 10.00 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 4.03p.m.

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GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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2. Resolution to approve the vesting of land at Framers, St. Thomas, Constant, Cottage and Groves Plantation, St. George in the National Housing Corporation.

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1. Resolution calling upon Government to establish a minimum wage for workers in Barbados.

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