

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, May 18, 1999.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.B.

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) (Leader of the House)

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

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Hon. G. W. PAYNE (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources)

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform)

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc. (Parliamentary Secretary, to the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH

Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.A. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc. (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, May 11, 1999.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, May 11, 1999, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report that I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements for the months of September and October 1998 as prepared by the Accountant General.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

Final Appropriation (1998/99) Bill, 1999. Rt. Hon.

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

READING OF BILLS

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

Final Appropriation (1998/99) Bill, 1999.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government would wish to pay tribute to the passing of the mother of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central later during today's sitting. I therefore ask that this item be deferred until later in today's sitting.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 40, 42(5) 43 and 44 be suspended for the balance of today's Sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 1 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225 OF LAND AT LANCASTER, WATERHALL, WATERHALL TENANTRY AND APES HILL PLANTATION, ST. JAMES

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, it has been revealed that the demand for new house construction has been increasing over the years with an annual demand averaging some 1200 units per year and the housing stock actually growing at about 900 units per year. While the middle and upper middle class income groups have been

fairly well catered for within the system, the lower middle and lower income groups continue to be disadvantaged.

This Government, Sir, is committed to providing adequate shelter for all Barbadians by the year 2000. This Government will focus its direct efforts on accommodating those who are marginally able or in some cases unable to function in the market.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution seeks to vest 5 parcels of land in the Deanes Town area in the National Housing Corporation. Parliamentary approval is hereby sought to vest the lands of Lancaster, Waterhall and Waterhall Tenantry, St. James to the National Housing Corporation.

Lancaster, St. James has two parcels of 1.682 hectares and 1.491 hectares or approximately some 7.9 acres of land. They constitute part of the Lancaster Plantation which is owned by Carrington Estates Limited and lie south to a number of houses which had to be relocated following the construction of the Highway 2A Road. The lands are quite suitable for housing not only because of their geographical characteristics but because the existing settlement to the north would complement any housing development on these lands since the existing roads, water and electrical facilities could easily be extended for this new development.

Waterhall Terrace, St. James - this parcel of land was formerly owned by Mr. C. O. Williams and measures some 14.00 hectares or 35.3 acres. It comprises a series of pastures and is in close proximity to Waterhall Tenantry and other lands of Arrow Limited which are earmarked for housing development. The land is quite suitable for housing since- it is not prone to flooding and the development would fit into the existing settlement pattern of that area.

Sir, Waterhall Tenantry, St. James comprises some 6.2 acres of land at Waterhall Plantation and 9.5 acres of land at Apes Hill Plantation. The tenantry currently has as a total of six tenants embracing six lots, two of which are located at Apes Hill. The six tenants, most of whom have been residing on their lots for periods in excess of 50 years have expressed an interest in purchasing their respective lots in accordance with the provisions of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. The landlord was, however, uncooperative and made no efforts to fulfill his obligations under the Act and the Division of Housing pursued the option of having the Registrar of Titles sell the lots to these tenants as provided by the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. In the light of continuing poor co-operation from the landowners, it was considered that compulsory acquisition was the more appropriate option to pursue.

Consequently, the process of acquisition was initiated. The Resolution is to acquire the land as well as a parcel at Lancaster and Waterhall. Waterhall was approved by the

House of Assembly on May 5, 1998. The land was vested in the Crown for publication in the *Official Gazette*. This Resolution has been certified by the Attorney General for introduction into Parliament.

The three areas combined should produce some 472 service lots for sale to persons in the lower income group as well as the tenants at Waterhall Tenantry. The average size of each lot is around 3000 square feet. Survey plans for all the areas are available for inspection by Honourable Members.

With these remarks I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that we are only vesting this said land but it is clear to me that this Parliament has been taken for a ride. The reason why I am saying that is that in 1998 and the years before and the years after, many Resolutions were brought to this Assembly seeking permission of Government to compulsorily acquire lands for housing lots. Every day and ever) night on television you can hear about houses up for sale by National Housing Corporation or houses to be constructed and to be sold by the National Housing Corporation. I want to find out from National Housing Corporation if they are coming to this Parliament and if they are asking us to provide lots to sell to people and then they are going to bed with the private sector to rob the poor people in this country. I want to say why I am saying this, Sir.

These same said pieces of land, 3000 square feet in size, people are allowed to come and build a 2 x 2 house and put it on that same said land and then turn around and ask people for \$80 000. Nowhere in Barbados can a wooden house cost so much money.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, you know what is the problem. People in Barbados understand the trick now and that is: they want money for their land but they are putting a wooden house on it and calling it \$80 000. When you check, 3000 square feet of land now cost more than \$10 a square foot. 11.30a.m.

I am glad that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew walked in, because I am saying today that the Honourable Member has to tell the House whether it was his intention to provide housing lots for the poor people in this country and to allow their brothers and sisters and neighbours to come every Sunday and help to turn concrete to reduce the cost of

those housing lots. Somehow I am under the impression. Sir..

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member. I would be very grateful if you would address the Resolution before the House, You seem to be speaking in a very general manner on certain policies and this Resolution is very clear in what it states. I would be very grateful if you would address the subject of vesting in the National Housing Corporation as we see here in the Resolution.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, Sir, because it also says under this same Resolution, under Section 5 of the Crown Lands for vesting and disposal - the Vesting and Disposal Act, so we also have to be concerned, Sir, about how these same lands will be disposed. Because, the lands are being vested in National Housing Corporation for one thing and they are doing something different. I will be asking you. Sir. to assist me and to make sure that National Housing Corporation would not ask us to come to this Assembly and to vote for lands to be sold as housing lots to poor people and then they turn around and give them to the private sector, then to be charged large sums of money, and deprive the same people that you are saying you are coming to Parliament to give these lands to, from having the right to own a piece of land in this country.

Because, I can tell you. Sir, that if you look at the cost of land by National Housing Corporation now, it is even higher than what the private sector is selling in this country, because they are allowing contractors to fleece poor people by offering them a house, which when you really value the house, Sir, the land is much costlier than the house.

So I have to be concerned and I know, Sir, that you have seen lots in your constituency and I hope they are some, and I hope, Sir, that you will be fighting for those lots to be sold to the people in your constituency and that on those lots you will encourage the neighbours in the constituency to come and help each other, so that every time the floor is to be casted that the neighbours would come and cast that floor and help to reduce the cost.

When we were growing up, Sir, every Sunday in a district, that type of house construction was encouraged. And I see nothing wrong, Sir, why it cannot continue. This belief by this Government that only contractors should be given the right to construct houses is wrong. I am calling on this Parliament to put a stop to it. And that is why I am happy that when I drive through St. Lucy on Sundays, Sir, I am seeing the exact thing that I am asking about now, happening in St. Lucy and I want it to filter down throughout Barbados.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Sir. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that the Government has some ulterior motive in asking contractors to construct houses.

Surely, the point is that if a person determines that he can get assistance from people in his district as happens for example, in St. Thomas and St. Lucy to assist in the construction, the person is free. All the Government is doing is making the land available. We are promoting home ownership. How that home is built and constructed is a matter for the person who has bought the land. The Government cannot dictate who is to do it. If the people get assistance all of that is to their benefit, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to support the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. If when that land, and I believe that is his policy that the land should be sold to the constituents and then they should be free to allow all whom they want to build the houses to build them. I support that too. I support the Honourable Member for St. Thomas' point that the land should be sold to the owners and then they should be free to allow somebody else to build the house if they want to. But, what I am against, Mr. Speaker, is for the Government to get these housing lots and then for them to allocate them to contractors and that is what I am against. And I know the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will agree with me on this, because he understands well how people in rural Barbados operate. And he understands well how people in rural Barbados will help reduce the cost of housing and that is why I am glad that he supports me on this particular matter.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I support him to a point, but he must not assume that my support is absolute. Because, he will recall that were it not for the fact that the Government allowed a series of contractors to build the boxes that were at Cane Garden into proper houses, we would never have had a housing development at Cane Garden. Because that development languished under them, for about eight years.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: At least eight years.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas knows well that especially the people in St. Thomas do not believe in terrace units and they do not believe in people building terrace units for them.

So, I hope, Sir, that when the land at Arch Hall is up for sale that that land will be given to the people of Arch Hall so that they can construct their own homes because that is a closely knit community and I know how those people at Arch Hall operate. I would not expect the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to come in here and support this Resolution when he knows full well that the people of Arch Hall expect to get their housing lots and they expect to help each other in building their homes.

This is a good example of a community that is prepared to reduce the cost of housing and the best way we can reduce the cost of housing to poor people in this country, Sir, is by allowing them the opportunity to go to the Mortgage Finance Company and borrow some of that money if they can still do that. Because, as you are aware, Sir, that the loan limit at the Mortgage Finance Company now is \$250 000 and that appeals to many other people who could afford to borrow money on the Broad Street market, who would now be going there.

So I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that I do not mind supporting any measure to vest land in National Housing Corporation providing that NHC is prepared to do what their Parliament asks them to do. But I would not support any Resolution where we are asked to do one thing and as soon as the Resolution is passed another Government department is doing something quite differently. It attacks this Parliament and I am asking you to protect this Parliament from this type of behaviour. I am a bit worried too, Sir, because I am not too sure, Sir, that we could continue to vest anything in NHC, Sir, because NHC has been given a wide portfolio now. The NHC has been asked now to build every thing, but when you look at the track record of NHC, Sir, you cannot see anything out of the foundation, not even their own headquarters, or not even the complex at Warrens.

So I am wondering, Sir, how regularly we are going to come here and vest lands in NHC when NHC cannot deliver. They cannot deliver. How long are we going to continue to waste the taxpayers' money and allowing an entity called the NHC...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...and if you doubt what I am saying, Sir, ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, because recently on a tour, Sir, that Minister in the first week was able to point out to this House and all the Members how the NHC had a lot of time to deliver and they have not been able to deliver. And I expect the acting Minister, now that he has the mandate and he is carrying the papers for that particular corporation that he would deliver the goods and turn around the situation.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House in statements to me which are very misleading, Sir, about the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central going on a tour after he became Minister and making statements to the fact that the National Housing Corporation is not doing what they should be doing. I would like him to withdraw those remarks.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, for me to withdraw those remarks the Honourable Member will have

to tell the House what he said during his tour and what he plans to correct, because it is quite clear to me, Sir, that if this House is to take the advice from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, that National Housing Corporation will be turned around in less than a week, and I support him and that is why I know, Sir, that within the next week we are going to hear some announcements on what NHC will be doing because this Minister has been very active, Sir. 11.40a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please, please, do not let us go down that road. Please let us get back to the Resolution before the House, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have written.

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

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order, Sir. I am making a request to this House that the Honourable Member should withdraw the remarks that he made, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just proceed please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we as a Parliament have to decide when we vote on a particular Resolution, whether that Resolution, if amended, should come back to this Parliament, Sir, or whether we are prepared to vote on a particular matter and then those people who did not vote on that particular Resolution will be able to do something completely different to what was voted in this House.

This is a very serious matter, Sir. This is a matter, Sir, that reflects very much on the Chair and this House. You know, Sir, anything that reflects on the Chair in this House, Sir, I will help you defend.

I do not know, Sir, whether the Attorney General, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would be able to advise the National Housing Corporation of their rights and also be able to let them know. Sir, what is the legal significance of a Resolution in this House being passed in a particular way and that they are not to change it to suit what they consider as policy.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General is not the legal advisor for the National Housing Corporation. It has its own legal advisor, Sir. It is a separate entity in law.

Secondly, Sir, the Honourable Member continues to suggest that acquisitions, the purpose of which is for housing

development, have been carried out and subsequently housing development has not taken place in accordance with the terms of the Resolution. That has not happened under this Government, Sir.

I can assure you that the Honourable Member certainly knows that if an inferior governmental agency operating under its own statute gives to itself powers which it does not have, that an injunction or other remedy can go against that corporation for *ultra vires* actions.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. That is why I always say to people that we can always depend on the Honourable Member for St. Thomas for good legal advice. I am glad that he has pointed out to this House that he might be the legal advisor to the Government and to the Speaker of the House but not to National Housing Corporation, that anything that is done wrong at the NHC he is not responsible for, - and I agree with him - and that the wrongs at NHC should not fall on the Honourable Member's shoulder. I am also grateful for the process that can be used.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am very glad that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has used such strong words of people acting *ultra vires*. I am saying that I hope that the new Minister would not have to come to this Parliament to get any amendment to be able to address the Board at NHC. I am hoping that the new Minister will tell the NHC Board members that when a Resolution is passed in Parliament, that for one thing, they are expected to follow the guidelines of Parliament and that their personal opinions are not important but it is the Resolution of Parliament that makes law and they must follow the same said law that has been passed by Parliament.

I am very grateful and I will always be grateful to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. That is why if the legal advisor for the NHC cannot understand what this Parliament wants, I would advise the legal advisor to write the Attorney General's office, I did not say the Attorney General, and get the proper legal advice pertaining to parliamentary matters, because I believe that department will be able to advise the same said department.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that Government will not come to this Assembly and ask for housing lots to sell to poor people at a reasonable price and then somebody else gets that right to build houses and then the housing lots are sold to those same said poor people at \$10 a square foot. I am saying it is a shame, shame and disgraceful, that poor people are being asked to pay \$10 a square foot by a government department for land. That is all I have to say on this particular matter. Sir.

May 18, 1999

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL: Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to commend the Government as well as the Minister of Housing and Lands for the initiatives being catered to, to address the housing needs of the people of Barbados.

I would also like to thank the Government for continuing with the project which is conceptualized, that is, the housing project in the Briar Hall, Christ Church area, where I have been able to get something like 42 spots for the people in the Christ Church area.

When we first came into office some five years ago, there were over 6 000 applications at the National Housing Corporation for house spots as well as for rental units. At that time, the then Government had virtually abandoned the sites and service project and very few houses were built for the poor people of Barbados.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. The Honourable Member will know that at Husbands, in St. James and at Simmons Road and many others that I can name, Sir, that those sites and service programme were still carried on by the Democratic Labour Party. It is not true for him to say that the Government of the day stopped having service lots, Sir.

I think he needs to say something else but he is mismatching his words, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point.

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL: I do not think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy understood exactly what I said. I said the Government of the day had virtually abandoned its sites and service programme. I did not say that it failed to do anything whatsoever. I said it had virtually abandoned its sites and service programme. This meant that very few spots of land were being given to the poor people of Barbados.

Fortunately, with a change in Government a lot of the housing needs are now being addressed by this present administration. In the last few years, this Government has been able to acquire approximately 400 acres of land and our aim is to make at least 1 000 house spots available to the poor people of Barbados on a yearly basis as well as to build approximately 300 units for the people of Barbados.

I would like to commend the Government and the Ministry very much for those types of initiatives in my constituency where 20 houses are being built now. I am very glad that these houses are being constructed. However, there is only one fault I have about these houses. It is my feeling that the people who are going to be buying these houses may

not be getting enough for their money in that I understand these houses are approximately 640 square feet and they will be sold for something like \$75 000 to \$80 000. I am hoping that the price will be reduced and after talking to the Minister of Housing and also the Prime Minister, I am sure these prices will be reduced somewhat. 11.50a.m.

During the course of the last six months, I have had something like 600 applications for those 42 spots so that shows that housing needs have to be addressed. These applications have been made by the people in the Christ Church area not from people outside of Christ Church. At this stage, I would like to ask the Minister to come and look at a parcel of land which as far as I know belongs to the Kingsland Estates. This land is approximately 50 acres. It is immediately above Hinds Transport Works in Kendal Hill and I think that if this land is acquired, bearing in mind that this plantation owes Government a significant amount of money it is imperative that Government should think in terms of acquiring this 50-odd acres of land. My feeling is that this 50 acres of land would be able to accommodate over 400 families and as long as it can accommodate another 400 families in Christ Church plus the Government is also planning to do some house construction in the Coverley area which is a fairly large parcel of land I think that during the course of the next five years we should be able to a great extent address the needs of Christ Church.

Why I would like this 50-acre parcel of land in the Kingsland area to be acquired by Government and put into housing development is the fact that there are many people in the immediate vicinity in Silver Hill, Vauxhall, Sargeant's Village, Oistins, Kendal Hill and Regency Park who are in dire need of housing.

I believe that people in the vicinity should be able to get these spots because I believe that where possible we should try to get people as near as possible to their roots. It is my feeling that people in the lower half of Christ Church should be able to have access to these spots, bearing in mind that there is a development in Coverley coming shortly which will be able to address the housing needs of people in the above section of Christ Church. So I would say that the Government has been very bold in trying to address the needs of the people in Barbados. We are not only trying to address the housing needs of the poor people but also the middle income, the middle class people of Barbados who need houses.

My feeling is that - and I will go back to the land in Kingsland area - of the first six rows at least one third of that land could be used for low income people from the parish and I am quite sure we should be able to accommodate low income families from the Christ Church area and the rest could be divided to accommodate the people in the middle

class and obviously a few could be given to the people who are willing to build the \$250 000 and \$300 000 homes.

Generally speaking, the Government has done quite well and the Government obviously is attempting to solve our housing problems. I am really looking forward to the Minister touring the Kingsland area as well as other areas in my constituency within the next week so that I can show him several parcels of land which could be used for housing development. Thank you.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am going to use the opportunity to remind the House that we use the double process in relation to lands which the Government acquires because of the provisions of the Crown Lands Vesting Act. Government usually comes into the House, acquires the land and after a certain time it comes back to the House and seeks the House's permission to vest that land in a statutory board. In this case - the National Housing Corporation.

Down through the ages, several of us in this House when on this side and on that Side have adverted to the wastage of parliamentary time, as I call it, which this process requires. What we need to do is to change the legislation; either change the Crown Lands Vesting Act and/or the particular statutory board's act, in this case, the National Housing Corporation Act, to allow the initial acquisition to be done and transfer take place at the same time so that we will not have two bites at the cherry and we will save a good deal of parliamentary time. The amendment is not a difficult one to achieve but since Government has over the past four or five years brought so many acquisitions to the House and so many vesting Resolutions to the House it seems that this is the appropriate time to take such action. What I would respectfully like to suggest to the Minister is that perhaps the Ministry of Housing who benefit more than any other statutory corporation from this process should prepare an appropriate policy paper to give instructions for the Cabinet and then to give instructions to the legal draughts people so that the Attorney General could assist in this regard.

That is one of the things that worry me, Sir, otherwise we will find that we will spend quite a lot of parliamentary time in doing things over and over again which can be done more efficiently. One of the things we have to achieve in the competitive world of the twenty-first century is a higher level of productivity not only from the civil service but from the parliamentarians as a whole.

We must be more efficient in our procedures. I believe that that is one way to achieve efficiency and to save time, administrative and other, and that is why I am using this occasion to suggest and invite the Government to take the suggestion very seriously. It is not a novel suggestion. Other members and I have made it from time to time in this House

over the several years that I have been in this House But as I say, it becomes more pertinent because of the number of occasions that Government has recently been using this procedure.

The second point I wish to make on this Resolution is obviously, I am glad to see that the people of Lancaster in St. James and the people in the North in particular will have the opportunity of getting house spots and housing developments. I am deeply conscious of the fact that the Government in its last session of Parliament acquired some 500 acres, roughly, between 400 to 500 acres of land. I have noticed that the Government has started putting in roads and services in various areas in St. James, St. George and in Christ Church in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central who has just spoken. Government has started the process of providing house lots particularly for those persons who are aiming for the first time to own their homes and particularly people who are earning less than \$600 per week. 12.00 noon

I believe that this is extremely necessary. A larger number of our younger people are today moving away from the older traditional approach that those of us who are of my age group would have been more familiar with. One used to remain in one's parent home until you married and sometimes you remained there even after you had been married. Nowadays, we are moving out earlier and, in fact, some parents are encouraging children to go and find their own housing as early as possible. Although the housing stock available in Barbados has increased and improved over the years, there is still a large number of houses required and there is always a backlog particularly for people in the lower socio-economic sector of our population. I believe it is to this group of persons that the Government has directed its housing policy. There are other aspects of the policy where through the Urban Development Commission the Government has been re-acquiring derelict homes and lots and trying to renovate and refurbish these for the senior citizens. Another part of the Government creative policy is the decision to upgrade the urban and suburban tenancies. It is doing this and it has begun to do it effectively through the Urban Development Commission. It has been doing a similar job in the Rural Development Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I am not an unrealistic person to believe that these problems are going to be solved in five or ten years. Sometimes we have to say in a realistic way to our constituents and to the public that you cannot achieve it all in a short space of time, even if we had the financial resources to do so because we are limited as well in human resources particularly at this time when the construction industry appears to be in a boom position and there is a shortage of workers in the industry of steel-benders, masons and carpenters. It will take some time therefore, even if we

had all of the resources to achieve these objectives. I do hope that the Government will continue on its creative path.

I want to speak about some trends too that are disturbing for me in this community. I want to talk a bit about the middle class because very often politicians are hesitant to talk about other than the working class. The middle class is a very important cohesive link in any community. We have been very fortunate that in the last 50 years in particular our middle class has been widening because successive Governments have spent money on education and on health and we have seen the broadening of the middle class and it is much easier for people to move in and along the paths to better health, wealth and better education and I hope better civic responsibilities and duties.

Our middle class is still a new one and it is brittle in many respects. Some of that brittleness manifests itself in how quickly we respond when the middle-class thinks that you are trespassing on any of their privileges. Let me say what is my concern in housing. We are in danger of ruling out the young middle class person from having easy access to buying land. I was concerned that a body on which I happen to be a policy owner and a member found itself selling land at between \$12 to \$15 a square foot and they were people queuing in the morning in order to buy those lots. I have expressed my own strong feeling on this matter. I do not believe that land, even in that area, and in fact recently in the Mount in St. George, should be fetching any \$12 to \$17 a square foot. I believe that we have to stop the land speculators in this country who are about to make quick profits regardless of how they make them in the heights and terraces and have no serious concern for the social cohesion that is necessary for a progressive society such as Barbados. I believe that this Government has a duty not merely to acquire property that is made available to the lower socio-economic group at a reasonable price as we are doing, but as well to make sure that land is available for the new and burgeoning middle class that we ourselves are creating for social cohesion by the education which we are giving them. I believe that the Government can bring the price of land down by making some of this land available for middle income housing and for the middle class in this respect. I feel very deeply on this subject because if we do not do it we will find that that brittle middle class that has not yet, in my view, matured enough to understand all of the vagaries of globalisation and the capital structure of the country, it will mean that that middle class itself may not provide the social cohesion that is necessary.

I am very strongly appealing to the Government to get in bed with some of the pension funds and the mortgagors even if the Government put up the land and do the development so that the young policeman, the young teacher, the young nurse, the young businessman and the young

insurance salesman, that they can afford a house in keeping with their status and that they can move on from there and realise their civic responsibility to pay their taxes including VAT to help themselves and to help their brothers and sisters who have not yet had the opportunity to move along as they have, Sir.

Sir, the other urgency that I see are the urban tenancies. We have not done badly although we have not done all that we should do in the rural tenancies. This Party had the imagination and the strength to negotiate with the plantation owners in order to bring legislation here which was criticised by some other people to acquire the plantations lots. 12.10p.m.

I live in the country, Sir, and I am happy to see that that has improved living conditions in places like Colleton, for instance in the parish in which I live, where people are now changing their houses from what the Right Excellent late Errol Barrow used to describe as 'port manteau' architecture, where you had to take up your bed and walk, into permanent structures and in the process, uplifting the whole communities and themselves. So we have not done badly. That was the Freehold Tenantry Purchase Act.

The country does not remember that in the 1970s, the Labour Party showed that foresight. That land is still being sold at \$.10 per square foot, whether it is in Society where I live, or further up in St. Philip on some of the church lands, or elsewhere. We did it by negotiations, Sir, but we have had to put in roads, water and light and we have not yet completed all of these tenancies, Sir. I would hope that the Government, the Rural Development Commission, and the Minister is himself representing a rural constituency will, during the next five to ten years make sure that the conditions for these people improve and so that they in turn will help themselves to improve their conditions.

But it is equally bad, Sir, for those of us who represent suburban tenancies. I have for instance in Old Navy Road, right next to the Marine Gardens and Navy Gardens, a tenancy that was there for years. We are only now through the Rural Development Commission putting in roads and giving people security of tenure, because we have to remove that area of conflict. People who live in Old Navy Road may feel that only those in Marine Gardens are the people who get attention, Sir.

Likewise, Sir, right next to Rockley Club, we have the whole Worthing View tenancy, the only roads that ever went in there, was when we took over the Government in 1976 and during that period when I was a Minister and when the Labour Party was in power we had put in some roads. But we still have the position, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in that very area, right next to the luxury of Golf Club Road and Club Rockley, where you go and play golf and people pay some thousands of dollars a month, where a three-bedroom

apartment in Rockley is being advertised for sale for \$480 000 and next door to it, the reality is that I have people who still cannot get a proper road. It is only now, Sir, that the Urban Development Commission is attending to that. We cannot allow these disparities to exist before our very eyes unless we take desperate and swift action to redress them. And I do not want to hear from those of us who are better off that the Government should not be doing things like that.

That is what the debate in this country must be about now. How we improve those of our brothers and sisters who are worse off than us, provide the opportunities which those of us who were in that condition have had and have pulled ourselves from and also keep buttressing a middle class to keep social cohesion. The debate must not be on the grounds of race either, and I want to make that absolutely clear, not that we should be hesitant to say where there have been racial inequalities in this island and where they still exist and deal with them. But it would be a mistake to assume that it is only people of one colour who are rich, or that it is only people of one colour that are poor.

I have in my own constituency people of varying colours who know what it is to be poor. And I have in my own constituency people of varying colours who have money and sometimes I have to remind them not to quarrel about the VAT, try to recognise that if they want to keep a Barbados that is cohesive, they must bear some of the burdens too, Sir.

I have always been forthright in politics and that is why I say to the Honourable Minister that I have been able to win seven elections straight, because I talk to people straight. I have no misgivings about this.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: Seven consecutive elections, and, Sir, if God is willing and my constituency is willing and my wife will allow me it would be another seven, but that is the position, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: I have to say these things, Sir. What I want to say about my own constituency, is that I have serious constraints of land and that is why I would commend the Urban Development Commission for the interest it is showing in the suburban tenancies in my area and I would hope that during this period in particular that we can therefore put in the roads that are necessary in places like Eastmonds Land, Old Navy Road, Bynoes Land, up in Forde Road in the various tenancies there. Put in the roads, the water and the light and to help the people with the loans that are promised from the Urban Development Commission up to \$75 000 at 6% interest, that they can in turn help themselves and improve their conditions.

I just want to say to the Minister that there must be consultation. The substantive Minister is not here, Sir. Some of the officials, not all of them, because I have some of the best relations with civil servants and I do not likely criticise them, but, they cannot take decisions sometimes without consulting with the people who are affected by those decisions. And furthermore, Sir, when some of the decisions are being taken, the proper thing to do is to get the view of the Member of Parliament, regardless of what political side he may be.

In my own constituency, I took the last Minister and showed him about 1 1/2 acres of land because we do not have many open spaces, which was Government owned, to change into lots to accommodate people who had gotten urgent notices to move. Sir, before the soil had been turned for the 13 lots, we had something like 35 names of young people in the area, and of those we knew we had to move seven people. So there were only six other remaining lots for the other 28 people.

I was astounded, Sir, to receive a call when I was in Dominica doing a legal case that the National Housing Corporation was building starter homes on seven of the lots. Now I have expressed my views very strongly to the Minister and to the Prime Minister. I do not hesitate. I believe I am a member of a good Government, but we must not have these *casus omissus*. There must be proper consultation and if that consultation does not take place, it will land the Government in trouble and eventually, we will lose the Government.

We must recognise that we have to consult with people. I was calling a press conference to discuss it and I was asked by the Minister and the Prime Minister not to have a press conference and I think that was the right decision. I got a bit up-tight about it. But I am not going, Sir, as a Member of Parliament where my constituency is affected and I do not think any Member of Parliament should be satisfied where his constituency is involved that when changes are being made that impact at that level...

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE:... not that the Honourable Member owns land. Sir, I am not saying that, Sir. I am talking about housing lots.

The point is that the constituency of St. Michael, the constituency of St. Michael West, St. Michael South, Christ Church West, those are constituencies with very few open spaces. I could also call others, St. Michael South Central and St. Michael Central, no open spaces, so that whenever we find a bit of land, we want to keep the people in that area, because their children are going to school at the schools near - The Luther Thorne, or St. Pauls or St. Matthias. Officials must understand that bureaucracy cannot work in such a way that it has no consideration for these matters and common

sense would tell them that they would learn from the Members of Parliament, at least one who has been on the ground for twenty something years and could remember 60% of the names of all the families in the area and could tell them what is genuine and what is not genuine, rather than facing us with the *fait accompli*. 12.20p.m.

I am sorry the substantive Minister is not here. This is not a personal criticism of the Minister of the Government, it is of the system. If the system is to work properly, one must communicate and one must listen and one must listen at the level of the civil service as well as at the level of the Minister and the level of the Member of Parliament. After that, the Government may make a decision based on all of those considerations. But to give us *fait accompli*, Sir, is very, very difficult.

It means now, Sir, that I have to beg my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, to give me at least seven spots up where he is now doing some development because I cannot move these people too far and that need not have been so, Sir.

I would hope, Sir, that both the National Housing Corporation officials who took that decision, I do not even think it was done by the Ministry, would begin to listen because the next time I have to speak, I hope there would not be a second time on such a matter, it would be in a more critical manner and not merely by way of a warning, Sir.

I came in here to represent first Christ Church West and the people of this country and that I intend to do for as long as I am in here. Sir, I am not pandering to them but sometimes you have to say to the same people that they have a responsibility to themselves, but to the genuine ones who really want to do things I believe that they cannot speak for themselves so I will speak for them, Sir.

I believe that the Government has a proper housing policy, Sir. There will be mistakes made from time to time and luckily, Sir, we are led by a captain, a Prime Minister, who is not too big to apologize if he feels that we have made a genuine mistake. I hope the example that he sets in this respect will filter down through to the Ministers and through to all of us here in Parliament and will also filter down in the civil service and in the society at large, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: I would say that the philosophy that should guide the Honourable Member as it should guide me is that humility is the greatest wisdom we can achieve. Humility is endless.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Members on this Side who spoke on this Resolution and 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.

ORDER NO. 2 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225 OF LAND AND THE BUILDINGS THEREON AT CULLODEN ROAD, SAINT MICHAEL

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution before the House seeks permission to vest some 3001.2 square metres of land at Culloden Road, St. Michael, the former site of the old Lands and Surveys building on Culloden Road, in the National Housing Corporation.

In 1996, Sir, it became evident that this building at Culloden Road was in a very bad state of disrepair and in May that year, officials from the then Ministry of Transport and Works and Housing as well as the Lands and Surveys Department visited the site and made a decision to determine the extent of the repairs.

It was agreed that immediate attention was needed on the building and the works were begun on the building but at the onset it was found that a lot more work was needed than was really found out at the start. It was at that time that they decided that they will abandon the work on the building.

Given the state of the building, it was felt that Government should not incur any further expenditure on it. Having regard to a policy decision that used and obsolete buildings should be vested in the National Housing Corporation so that the corporation can dispose of such properties and use the proceeds to facilitate the developmental thrust. Cabinet took a decision that the building should be vested in the National Housing Corporation.

It should be noted that the property was acquired by private treaty in 1971 from the East Caribbean Conference of Seventh Day Adventist Churches.

Subsequent to the Cabinet decision to vest this property, a Draft Resolution was prepared and certified by the Attorney General to be in order for induction into Parliament.

With these remarks, I beg that this Resolution do now pass

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion and to say, Mr. Speaker, that the lands which are the subject of the matter before the House are lands which are contiguous to the site where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs now stands. It is on that corner on the Ernest Deighton Mottley Roundabout where the Lands and Surveys Department used to be.

It is my understanding that the National Insurance Board is interested in the acquisition of those lands. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the Sir Frank Walcott Building is a building which is either vested in - I am not sure, maybe the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is in a better position to say - the management of the National Insurance Board.

Mr. Speaker, you will be aware, as indeed all Barbadians are, that there has been tremendous change of use along Collymore Road. We see it happening now along Belleville, Pine Road and Culloden Road which when I was a child was highly urban residential, hardly suburban. People could and did walk to town from those distances.

Now, we have seen particularly that the offshore financial service sector, and indeed the commercial sector on the whole in Barbados, has converted that part of urban Barbados into commercial activity. Therefore, it is not surprising, that the National Insurance Board would see the wisdom of investing in more office real estate and commercial real estate there. We have known in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for several years now that the private sector was more than willing to pay very handsomely for that site.

Part of the difficulty for us in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is that the Ministry has long outgrown the premises. Indeed, it is in severe need of rewiring which is a costly undertaking. But I have a care for the staff with whom I work and who works with me. We have had more than one electrical fire there. There are times of the day every day when we have to turn off the electricity either on a whole floor or part of a floor including where I work so that the overload would not bring us into the danger zone. 12.30p.m.

What I have proposed, Sir - I have spoken to the Minister of Housing on this. In fact, I have walked it with him. I have spoken to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who chairs the National Insurance Board. I have spoken to the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister about it. In that entire area which all used to be lands of an estate known as "Culloden" from which Culloden Road took its name, what used to be known as "Culloden Farm," the first

official residence of a Prime Minister in Barbados, is now in a great state of disrepair. It has been severely bastardised as well with bits and pieces added on here, there and everywhere.

I am of the view that Culloden Farm, being the first ever official residence of a Prime Minister in Barbados, needs to be restored to its former glory, and it can be so restored. There are photographs. Indeed, there is an excellent painting as well of Culloden Farm in its better days. It is sitting now in an environment of a number of Government offices and private sector offices as well. The British High Commission is within the precincts and a number of nicely designed and landscaped premises.

I believe the Government should restore Culloden Farm and it should become a protocol house. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Barbados is perhaps the only Ministry of Foreign Affairs that I know of that does not have a protocol house or protocol premises within it. Protocol means that when the Prime Minister, or myself, or any Minister for that matter have to meet high level people, or meet our counterparts this is where that could happen. When diplomats call upon you, and that is part of the function of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this is where it can be done. When important documents have to be signed, when people have to be entertained this is how it is done. In fact, in some countries it is residential. I have stayed in more than one protocol house both before and since I have been a Minister of Foreign Affairs.

What I am suggesting is that we should restore it to its former glory including the gardens surrounding it, and there are some beautiful trees in there, make it a protocol house and then custom-build a four or five storey Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade which would go no higher than the mahogany and the black willow trees. You do not know how much beautiful land is in there, Mr. Speaker. You would have to walk it to see. The land on which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs now stands and that spot could together be a significant piece of real estate in which the National Insurance Board could invest.

In all of the circumstances I am more than pleased to give support to the Resolution before the House because I believe this could well be the beginning of that restoration and further expansion as a complex of Government offices which now occupy what used to be, nine years before our time, an estate called Culloden.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, one would appreciate that the land value in this particular area would be high. One would recognise that the National Housing Corporation knowing that Government has properties in the

area of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also the National Insurance Department, one would wonder why the NHC would have attempted to waste the taxpayers' money trying to repair a building and then leave that building in disrepair.

I would like to find out from the Acting Minister of Housing, Sir, how much money was spent on this particular property, what advice was sought before the money was spent, and also what advice was given to the NHC's Board by the Minister, or whether these instructions were given by the Board to the management because I would like to know who gave the instructions to spend this money on a property that we today cannot see the outturns of. That is all I have to say, Sir.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this Resolution before the House. I would like to preface my statement by saying that St. Michael, as far as I am concerned, is one big constituency divided into 11 polling districts and whatever obtains in one part more often than not obtains in the other part. For sure the scarcity of land, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West intimated in his address, in St. Michael is such a common feature.

This location, the area which is being considered right now, the Culloden area, is fairly close to the St. Michael South Central constituency which I have the honour to represent. Even in terms of proper playing facilities, the St. Michael constituencies are starved.

Sir, with respect to housing, it is even worse because on any day you could find people coming from adjoining constituencies when they fail to be successful in finding a spot, or getting a house or a unit to rent, when they are not successful in the constituency where they reside they will come to the neighbouring constituency and speak with the representative. You know that, Sir, because you represent one such constituency. They will leave the central and try their luck in the south central, or in the east, or in the north. This only goes to show how desperate people are for places to live.

Now, it must be said, particularly by the newer Members of Parliament like myself, that Government has done all in its power within the past five years to make sure that these housing woes are being addressed and met.

Not so long ago, Sir, we came to this Chamber and legislated the Mortgage Insurance Act which sought 100 per cent insurance and Sir, as you remember, it was 90 per cent of the appraised value. The new Act has sought permission to insure up to 100 per cent and not only that, but with an increased appraised value of \$250 000.

Sir, we know that over the past 4½ years this Administration has been able to supply just over 500 acres of land to the NHC for development. Not only, that, Sir, but the amount of funds now at the disposal of that Corporation to improve the housing lot of Barbadians stands at some \$50 million. Sir, the Housing Credit Fund alone, some \$40 million in resources of which \$30 million are interest free. 12.40p.m.

Sir, it must be said in no uncertain terms that Government has supplied the Corporation with all the necessary tools and all that is left, although it may sound a bit simplistic, is for the Corporation to get ahead and put things in place to strengthen the institution and I would like to remark to the acting Minister however he can persuade or influence the substantive Minister upon his return to have some degree of overhauling within the Corporation so that the rate at which things are done and the efficiency with which things are done could be a lot more improved.

We speak time and time again about public sector reform. Sir, there are things like these which are required, the conveyancing, the actual surveying of lands. It is not easy for someone desperately in need of a house to hear Government has acquired X hectares of land for housing purposes in St. Michael South or St. Michael East or West, or what have you, and then to have to wait some two years to hear that that land is now being surveyed. Sir, it sends a message of tardiness. It conjures some degree of frustration to the point that people throw their hands in the air and say that is just another statement. Something tells me that within the Corporation there is great need for the legal department to come to scratch, to come up to the level of those departments in private organisations which are involved in the same type of work, that is, lands, building of houses and rental of houses. If that is the problem within the Corporation then identify it and put in place all the necessary framework to be able to deliver at a much more speedy rate.

Sir, I know for a fact that this falls under the Urban Development and that is another Commission that has done very well and one may need to look at how that Commission does things and copy a few things from the Urban Development Commission. I know for a fact that Halls Land Tenantry the holdup right now is about surveying of the land. All the other things have been done, the social survey etc. except the physical surveying of the land and at times you are not sure who is going to do it, if Housing and Lands is going to do it or if Urban Development Commission will be doing it or if the landlord will be doing it.

Sir, if the surveying is the problem which is one of the problems posed within the National Housing Corporation then it would be a worthwhile suggestion that if the backlog is a little too much, the load is a little too much, then we probably have to look outside and have it done by a private

organisation. Whatever the bottleneck is, it would be wise to do a complete overhauling and restructuring of the Corporation to make sure that after the people's minds and intentions have been so buoyed that they are not allowed to plummet just as easily

So, Sir, I would hope that the acting Minister who has been kept very busy over the past few days takes to heart some of these comments that he has heard so far in this Chamber and to report back and do all within his power for the period albeit short and let us have the National Housing Corporation deliver the goods having been so well equipped with the basic necessities, that is, the land on one hand and the funds on the other hand, unmatched by any other land developer or real estate agent. I thank you.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am going to be brief on this. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, the Deputy Prime Minister, made mention of the fact that the National Insurance Board has expressed an interest in this property. I can confirm that that is so and discussions have been taking place between the representative of the Crown and representatives of the Board for the purchasing of this property.

As you know, Sir, the Department of Lands and Surveys was housed in this property for some time and unfortunately the building fell into a state of disrepair. That disrepair existed for so many years that I am a little surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy raised the question of money spent on it because if it had not been that some money was spent on it, it probably would have fallen down completely. Part of the building is wooden, part is wall and some of the wooden structure was termite ridden and I think it was necessary for any responsible administration to try to make what remained as water tight as possible and presentable so that the questions raised by the Honourable Member was probably raised for genuine information and partly to excite; but I think the obvious answers that I have given are there for him to see.

We have discovered that the tenants in the Sir Frank Walcott Building and ourselves are short of storage space particularly and not only our tenants but people who occupy some of the private sector buildings in the area have also discussed the necessity for extra space particularly for proper storage. We would have hoped that the overall development of that area of Culloden Road and Collymore Rock would have been so tailored that it could remain principally for top class office space,

At present we have a large number of businesses, insurance firms, brokers, high commissions, offshore sector, the National Insurance, the Standards Institution, and an area has been designated for the Forensic Laboratory which is going to be built I think on the southwestern side of the Sir Frank Walcott Building.

Originally we had hoped that that area would have been retained and used for a tennis court since when the Sir Frank Walcott Building was constructed a tennis court was there and an undertaking had been given to restore the tennis court. The National Insurance Board provided the funds and had the plans pretty well advanced when we found that the Ministry of the Attorney General had had other plans for siting the Forensic Laboratory pretty near to the Standards Institute. I think that one of the reasons is to effect economies of scale.

We are still looking for an area to have a tennis court available for the people of St. Michael South not for the officers of the building. The civil servants may be able to use the court as well but principally there was one there being used by constituents of St. Michael South and we want to continue that.

We have given consideration, Mr. Speaker, to negotiate with the Government for the acquisition of Culloden Farm. The best advice that I have is that it is going to cost a considerable amount of money to restore that building to the pristine condition for which it was renowned several years ago. Obviously, Sir, we have an interest in ensuring that buildings in that compound are up to a certain standard. The Sir Frank Walcott Building is one of the best maintained buildings, private sector or public sector, in Barbados. The tenants there are given everything to ensure that the standard is consistent and of a high quality. The National Insurance Board retains the services of cleaners and we even provide toilet paper for all of our tenants so as to get a consistency throughout the building. We have had no difficulty with the payment of rent from the Government's departments. 12.50p.m.

We are deeply conscious that the Government is spending in excess of \$5 million a year on renting premises for various Government offices and for the civil service. We are aware of the fact that the unions representing the civil service wish to ensure that working conditions are up to a high standard because if the working conditions are of a good quality, not only safe but also the air is pure and there is proper maintenance, then the whole atmosphere improves the productivity of the people who work in those buildings.

By and large some of us spend, on an average, eight, if not twelve hours a day sometimes in our office buildings. With that in mind, we have been discussing with the Government's institutions using part of the National Insurance funds for repairing Culloden Farm provided that we can get - I emphasize this - that having spent our money to buy it, when I say our money I mean the people's money, the National Insurance Board fund - having spent our money to buy and repair it that we have a tenancy that is secured to enable us to recoup our investment and to get a reasonable rate of return for the Social Security Fund. The

same will go for this building, the vesting of which is now in this Resolution before the House, Sir.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has suggested to us that we show some interest in the acquisition of the present Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We have been talking about that, Sir. That building has some, so I am advised, reasonably serious problems in any event and that will take some consideration as to whether or not our relationship with the Government in relation to that building will be one of using it by way of investment.

Let me say, Sir, that so far, the guidelines for the investing of the Social Security Funds have designated that we should not get directly involved in real estate. In fact, up to 1994, the actuaries who reported on the Fund recommended that we do not get involved in direct ownership of real estate. That policy was endorsed by successive Ministers of Finance. In the latest actuarial report, however, it is recognised that in Barbados, real estate has provided shelter against inflationary pressures and has, at the same time, provided the possibility of capital accretion. The actuaries have recommended that we could invest somewhere from 0 to 8% of the funds in real estate. Those guidelines have been revised and sent to the Minister for his approval.

We are at present undertaking a joint venture with the Insurance Corporation of Barbados in Roebuck Street in the new building that is going up there and we are going to be doing a joint venture with other pension funds for the provision of a building at part of the old Marine for office space for the United Nations' agencies. The Government of Barbados is required by the agreement signed with the United Nations to provide office space for the various United Nations' agencies. If we are to become a regional headquarters for international institutions, then we have to get into this business. The National Insurance Board together with two or three other agencies, pension funds, insurance companies and banks are at present going forward with that plan. It is a safe investment for us and the rate of return, Mr. Speaker, seems to be very reasonable for us and at the same time would save Government from paying excessive rents to private individuals in the business sector who want to use Government in that way.

Likewise, Sir, we have started discussions with the Ministry of the Attorney General and various other institutions for assisting with the Judicial Centre. I can say no more about that. That will be a matter for the Minister to deal with. Those are the sort of real estate transactions in which we will be interested - one that is secured, one that gets capital accretion, one that brings us our rent being paid regularly and a reasonable rate of return and particularly that provides for the public sector needs rather than private sector business development. We will leave that to the other institutions to achieve.

If I may say, Sir, to the Minister concerned, that we are giving serious consideration not only to this particular area of land but to Culloden Farm as well as the other lands and we hope to maintain the standard of that compound so that it will provide some of the best office space available for the governmental sectors and for the international and regional organisations which may be coming to Barbados.

Subject to that, however, the National Insurance Board in keeping with its mandate and policy guidelines and the actuarial advice, will not be directly involved in real estate development.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those Members who contributed to the debate from both Sides. I do agree that the area, the piece of land at the corner of Culloden Road, the old Lands and Surveys compound, that in keeping with what is happening in that area where construction is concerned where there are insurance companies, banks, offshore companies and so on that development of the nature that the Honourable Member for the City described for her Ministry, that that type of development can take place in that area.

With those 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. 1.00p.m.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.15 p.m. this afternoon.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m. this afternoon was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 1.02p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. We will now revert to obituaries.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, last month the mother of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East

Central, Mrs. Ethelinda Carter died. She had been the mother of two children, Pearl and Duncan and the grandmother of a number of other children, great grandmother of 12 and great great grandmother of four.

She was from a well known family in the Vauxhall area of Christ Church and on behalf of the Government, I would like to officially tender the condolences of the Government to the Honourable Member, Sir. The funeral was on March 31, and on that day I was not in the island and therefore could not attend. I did not know Mrs. Carter, but from what I have heard, she has been an outstanding Barbadian. She lived to a ripe old age of 94 and we are grateful that the Lord allowed her to give us her son who is rendering outstanding service to the Government and indeed to the people of Christ Church East Central in particular.

As I say, Sir, I did not know her and therefore I am not in a position to speak from any close knowledge. I just wish to say on behalf of the Prime Minister, who has asked to be associated with this tribute that we regret very much her passing, but recognise that she has contributed handsomely, particularly to the parish of Christ Church and I tender condolences once again of the Government to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of St. Philip North and indeed on behalf of the sporting community and on my own behalf, I too would like to extend condolences to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central on the passing of his mother, Mrs. Ethelinda Carter.

As you know, Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is also the Chairman of the National Sports Council and this is why I do believe that it is my duty on behalf of the sporting community to extend condolences to him and his family. As you know he is also a sportsman in his own right.

On 31st of March, Sir, when I attended the funeral, of Mrs. Carter, I was able to glean from words spoken by a very powerful female pastor that Mrs. Carter was a Member of her church and that she was very involved in the church in Christ Church, that she was very well respected, Sir, in the district in which she lived and that she was a lady in every respect, very courteous, very well-mannered and all the rest of it. This should not come to us, Sir, as a surprise, because we know exactly those qualities as we can see them manifested in her son the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. I do not think you can want a more polite and more courteous individual and I do believe that those qualities he would have derived from her, very honest, very polite and well-mannered.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure a lot of us on this Side can appreciate the struggle which she had and the effort that she made as was described to us by the Pastor. In many instances, Sir, she reminded me of my own grand, my own mother as being a very down to earth and resourceful person - a lot of people very often describe persons of this kind as the salt of the earth - and very thrifty. And clearly it came over to us from the Pastor too, that she always tried to make ends meet, that she was a lady who raised her animals and cultivated the land and who believe, Mr. Speaker, that it was always her duty to have something in the house for her children and even for others to participate. She was a firm believer, we were told, in things like ground provisions and to her it meant a healthier life and I do believe a longer life, because she lived to the ripe old age of 94 years.

The whole question of what we eat is now becoming quite fashionable but I do believe that people of that generation ate a lot healthier than we do today. It is clear too, Sir, from what we heard that she believed in the whole concept of self-help. She belonged to an era where self-help was the motto and the watchword and where you provided for yourself and you did not expect the state or other persons to provide for you. I do believe that her life is indeed a fitting example which a lot of us will do well to emulate and to follow.

As I said, on behalf of the people of St. Philip North, the sporting community and on my own behalf, I do extend condolences to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, I wish to join the Honourable Leader of the House and the Honourable Member for St. Philip North in expressing our sympathy over the passing of the mother of our good friend the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. And, I want to join with them too, Sir, in putting on record our appreciation of her work here on earth in the contribution that she made.

It is perhaps not widely known that she was really a St. Patrick's woman. She was born in Prichard Hill, one of the sub-districts as it were, in the wider St. Patrick's area way back in 1904 and was educated at the St. Patrick's Primary School. It was not really until about 1940 that she left St. Patrick's and went to reside in Vauxhall where she spent the remainder of her days. So that though I did not personally know her, my parents knew her and my family relations in St. Patrick's and to that extent I have known about her ever since, our good friend the Honourable Member came into public life. 2.30 p.m.

People will recall his mother's days in St. Patrick's and I got to hear of her and to develop a feeling that I have actually met her.

She left St. Patrick's with a fine reputation as a God fearing, hardworking, industrious lady. She took that reputation to Vauxhall and perhaps it was even enhanced there. The adjectives that were always associated with her were hardworking, a keen sense of business, a large sense of thrift, very well mannered and very God fearing.

I think that I need to say a little more about her sense of thrift and her sense of family because when our good friend the Honourable Member was in the United Kingdom between 1965 and 1982 as a dutiful son he sent back money regularly to Barbados to his mom and when he came back to Barbados in 1982, he was provided with all of the money that he had sent to her during that period.

Such was her sense of thrift and such was her concern to set it aside for him because she felt that one day he would need it. Indeed, it was to give him an enormous start to the construction of his house. That is a story that is widely known but I thought I would share it with the Honourable House today.

I was not fortunate to be here on the island at the time of her funeral but I made sure that I was well represented there. I just want to say, Sir, that her life was one of fine examples and she has left us her splendid memory. All those who came into contact with her speak without reservation about her high standing in the two communities in which she had resided in.

I wish to associate myself very firmly with the Resolution before the Honourable House and on my own behalf and that of my family and indeed on behalf of the good people whom I represent in this Assembly, to express again our sympathy over her passing.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like very firmly on the behalf of the people of the Christ Church East to offer our condolences to our colleague, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central on the passing of his mother.

You will be aware, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member and I share a large border between us in terms of how the constituency boundary runs. Perhaps, the St. Patrick's area which is the birthplace of the deceased Mrs. Ethelinda Carter, can be shared between us given the split of the constituencies these days. Certainly throughout my part of that district the way in which she is remembered speaks testimony to her life.

In fact, it should be noted that although she was a member of the Vauxhall Methodist Church which is located in the district in which she resided over many years as you heard from the Honourable Member for St. Joseph that the funeral service was actually held at the St. Patrick's Church

which served a dual purpose. One being the place of her birth but more particularly because it was recognised that the Vauxhall Methodist Church would not have been large enough to accommodate the many friends and well wishers who would have wanted to share in that final moment with her and to participate in the service which was to represent a celebration of her life.

Sir, it was an unusual but touching moment to see an entire church of one denomination and the pastor of that church, the choir and the members transported to another church of another denomination and together both priests and members joining in this particular celebration. During that particular service Mrs. Carter was spoken of with respect, love and affection, by friends, by family, by persons throughout the community which again spoke volumes of the way in which she conducted her life.

In fact, the eulogy as delivered would have indicated that Ethelinda Carter would have been a major contributor to the strength, to the very positive features which we associate with some of the older district in Barbados, in particular St. Patrick's and Vauxhall within the Christ Church area.

In fact, I will venture to say that with the sterling example, with the quality of the life that has been lived, with the quality of service rendered to her family, her community and to mankind generally, that it is no coincidence that districts, such as St. Patrick's and Vauxhall have long been respected for producing very solid citizens who have made sterling contributions in several aspect of national life.

We can look at the St. Patrick's area and look at the range of persons from parliamentarians including generating three Cabinet Ministers - I am advise at a single point in time, Sir - great scholars, members of the civil service, sportsmen, law enforcement officers, businessmen and those civic minded persons are really again products of strong stable communities.

It is in that particular regard that I want to remember the mother of our colleague from Christ Church East Central, Mrs. Ethelinda Carter and to suggest that all of us can take her life work for example as a guide which we can follow. If we can make even but a part of the contribution which she made to the building of her two communities, St. Patrick's and Vauxhall and leave the strength of those communities as a building block on which the next generation can chart its course, then our life work would not have been in vain.

The other lesson which I gather from her life work was that she understood the importance of sacrifice. She sacrificed the pleasures of the current day in order to ensure the security and the well-being of herself and family into the future.

At the end of her journey after ninety-four years, she was happy, content, and satisfied with the contribution which she has been able to make notwithstanding the adverse circumstances and the many obstacles which she would have had to overcome in reaching the particular destination.

It is no wonder that my colleague, a very close political colleague, in the neighbouring constituency of Christ Church East Central is the kind, honest, easygoing, people-oriented person that he is. I am sure that not only has he been influenced by his mother but his mother's work in her two communities has also enabled those communities to continue to produce strong positive persons.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Christ Church East and certainly on my own behalf and that of my family, I associate myself with this Resolution and offer the deepest sympathy and my condolences to the family of the deceased.

I thank you.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to associate myself with this Resolution before the House on the passing of Ethelinda Carter, at the ripe old age of 94.

I never personally met Mrs. Carter, but on sitting next to my colleague, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central on the Backbench, many times I heard him spoke of his mother of what a good person she was to him and his sister, the only two children I think she had. 2.40 p.m.

I understood from him that she worked very hard in her young days to support these two young children she had. She worked hard in the field. She raised animals to send them to school and he always appreciated what good things she did for him.

Sir, I would say that a woman of that age and of small means saw hard times probably during the Depression and the Second World War. As I said, she worked hard. She was in a time when she probably would not have had a refrigerator, even a stove, so she had it hard in those days but she saw it fit that she had to work and support these two young children.

On behalf of my family, on behalf of the good people of St. Michael West Central and on my own behalf, I say to the Member that he can rest assured that his mother had kept the faith, she ran the course and she has gone to have all those treasures that were stored up for her given to her.

I thank you very much.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by Honourable Members so far and to commiserate with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, the village of St. Patrick's in Christ Church has produced many a distinguished and noble son, many a distinguished and noble daughter. It has also produced many people who did not necessarily rise to the top of society but who still in their own inimitable way would have been able to make a contribution to the livelihood of their community and to the nation.

Mr. Speaker, Ethelinda Carter was a person steeped in the principles of Methodism. She worked tirelessly in the Methodist Church and influenced many a person, not only of her own age group but younger people as well. She was a staunch Christian and this particular quality of hers made itself felt by those with whom she came into contact.

I am aware too, Mr. Speaker, that she was a very thrifty person coming up in an era where money was scarce and where people in those days literally had to improvise to be able to provide for their loved ones and for themselves. She nonetheless persevered in her determination to ensure that her family got the very best.

She said to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central that she wanted him to experience a measure of professional security. Perhaps when he enquired what that meant, she told him that from her way of thinking if he could land himself in a Government job then she would be satisfied. Ironically, even though the Honourable Member served in the Public Service as a police officer, I believe she would have been surprised that the Government job he now has is one at a much higher and more metaphysical level than that of clerk in the Waterworks Department.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that from the numbers who attended her funeral, she was a person widely respected in the Christ Church area. It is obvious to me that she would have had tremendous influence on the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central passing on to him those qualities which have made him God-fearing, which have made him humble and which have impelled him into this matter of politics for the desire to serve.

I am impressed, Mr. Speaker, by the qualities which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has and I am sure he would have learnt those qualities way back in time from his mother. I have no difficulty in associating myself with the sentiments expressed by Honourable Members. Thank you.

His Honour J. M. EDGHIL: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to express my condolences to the Honourable Member

for Christ Church East Central as well as to his sister. I first met Ethelinda Carter about five years ago when I was canvassing in the Vauxhall area. At that time she gave me quite a lot of information. She was also very instrumental in letting me know exactly what was going on around her area and that was when she was at the ripe old age of 89.

Ethelinda Carter was born on November 26, 1904 and died on March 26, 1999. She lived 94 years and four months. She was born in the St. Patrick's area. When she was relatively young as a teenager her parents moved her to the Dayrells Hill area. Then when she became an adult she spent almost all of her life in the Vauxhall district so one can easily say that the late Ethelinda Carter was a true Christ Church person.

When she was living in Dayrells Hill as a young person, I was told by an elderly man from that area that she was a very attractive young lady and she had the eyes of many of the young men in that district at that time. I understand that she dressed very well. She wore a lot of lipstick and she was a very well known person in that area.

When she became an adult she moved to the Vauxhall area and that is where she had two children, Pearl as well as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. I would say she has done a very good job in the way she has brought up her children. If the Honourable Member could be used as a reflection of what she has done over the past few decades, I think she has done a very good job in rearing her two children.

I was also made to understand that she was a very thrifty lady who was able to save almost all the money which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central sent back to her when he was living in the United Kingdom. I was also made to understand that when he was only 14 years of age she placed something like 5 shillings as a start and from thereon the Honourable Member was able to increase his savings from time to time.

During the majority of her life she worked as a domestic but she had loved cooking and very often would cook and distribute some of these goodies to the people in the Vauxhall district. She was a real disciplinarian. I understand that she had liked "licking" her children for the slightest thing that they did. I understand that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central was the recipient of quite a lot of blows in those days. Anytime she felt that he was doing something wrong she was always there raring to share some lashes. I must say that his sister did not escape the whip because I understand that she got a bit more than the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. If one has to look back at that, I do not think that one can say that she did anything wrong because the Honourable Member besides being a very disciplined person is a person

who has very good qualities and he is always willing to assist people where possible. Obviously Ethelinda Carter would have made a significant contribution to Christ Church as well as to Barbados in producing someone of the quality of the Honourable Member. 2.50p.m.

She was also very well respected in the Vauxhall area and had many friends and as a result of that the member was able to gain a lot of support which was able to catapult him into the position he is in today.

I would like at this stage once again to give my condolences to the Honourable Member and I am sure he has been able to stand up very well during the last few weeks of his bereavement. Thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to associate this Honourable Chair with all the sentiments expressed on the passing of the mother of our honourable colleague. On behalf of my constituency, my family and myself, I express our most sincere condolences. This House with acclaim accepts the Resolution of sympathy and so instructs that the appropriate Resolution be sent to the family of the deceased.

As a mark of respect for the passing of the mother of the Honourable Member I now invite this Honourable House to stand with me and observe one minute's silence.

Members stood for one minute's silence.

ORDER NO. 3 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
VESTING OF LAND IN THE NATIONAL
HOUSING CORPORATION AT
DEANES, ST. JAMES

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the matter for consideration is the approval of a Resolution concerning the vesting of 2.737 hectares of land at Deanes, St. James in the National Housing Corporation for the purpose of housing development.

The Resolution to acquire this plot of land was approved by the House of Assembly on June 23, 1998 and by the Senate in August 1998. The land at Deanes is divided into 24 small individual parcels ranging from 201.5 square metres to 2 266.8 square metres in size.

Deanes was an active settlement for several years until the 1980s. At that time, there was very poor vehicular access to this settlement. At the same time, there was no electricity or water in the settlement and the cost of installing these was not economically feasible. In addition to the above, the settlement was small comprising some 13 households. In view of all this, relocation was therefore the most feasible

alternative for achieving a satisfactory standard of living for these households in modern Barbados.

In January 1981, approval was given for relocation of these 13 households many of whom were old pensioners and they were sited in Sion Hill, St. James. Notwithstanding, Deanes offered good potential as an active settlement. It is in this context that a decision was made regarding the acquisition for housing development. Indeed the Deanes Town area has been identified as a centre for special study and development in a draft amendment to the Physical Development Plan. Some 52 lots are being created for low income housing at this site and the necessary infrastructure will be put in place. It has been noted that proposals for Deanes to be complemented by similar plans which are now being made by Arrow Limited.

I would also like to say that at present in the Deanes Town area there are 28 terrace units under construction and another 96 additional terrace units are proposed for this area. The relevant surveyor's plan is available for inspection by the Honourable Members. The Resolution was certified by the Attorney General to be in order for introduction to Parliament.

With these remarks I beg that this Resolution do now pass

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution calls for vesting this same piece of land in the hands of NHC and it is a good example of how Government can compulsorily acquire land or resite people and ten or fifteen years after that the excuse used for resiting the same people can come back to haunt a particular government.

I am saying that anybody who knows this land would tell you that it is one of the best pieces of real estate that you can ever find in Barbados. It has a fantastic view and for any respectable Government the first order of today would be to offer this same piece of land to the families or the relatives of those who once lived or those people who had the right to own it at the particular time.

I am saying that anybody who lives at Sion Hill and who has a right to live in Deanes Town would prefer to go and live at Deanes Town. I do not buy the excuse from the parliamentary representative for St. James North that the people are happy where they live because I am telling you that there is no comparison between the land at Sion Hill and the land at Deanes Town. Anybody in this room, Sir, having a choice to have an opportunity to live in Sion Hill or at Deanes Town would go and accept the right to live at Deanes Town before they live in Sion Hill.

It has a fantastic view and I am calling on the Honourable Member for St. James North to dispute that the

piece of land has a fantastic view. The NHC should offer this piece of land to the relatives of those people who used to live there and want to go back because it is in my opinion the best piece of real estate that you can find anywhere in Barbados now up for sale. The National Housing Corporation must also recognise the value of this land because they are not going to get the opportunity again to own a piece of real estate like this and it must be treated like special real estate. I am calling on this House to understand that we are living in a time where land is becoming a scare commodity and where the land sharks are moving inland and are pushing up the value of the land inland. This House must be serious about how it treats land - especially this piece of land. They must understand that this piece of land is not just a piece of land that you just go and cut and put it there. It is a special piece of land. My opinion is that the residents of that said area were misled at the time because when I went and looked at that piece of land, I was convinced in my own mind, along with other people in the Orange Hill area, that that piece of land should have been developed and instead of moving the people from off that land, the necessary services should have been brought to that particular piece of land. 3.00p.m.

I am saying, Sir, that when one looks at the amount of money that Government spends in developing certain roads in this country that it is no way that this land would have incurred such costs to put a road, lights and the necessary amenities on this piece of land. If I did not know better I would believe that there was a different reason for resiting those people from that particular area. I am calling on the relevant authorities to at least reflect on the decision and to advise the Board of National Housing Corporation to offer that land first to the relatives of those who once owned the land.

I am telling you, Sir, that if this piece of land was to be put on the open market that the line would be much longer and the wait would have been much greater than what we saw at Fort George Heights because it is a better piece of land than what is selling at Fort George Heights. People must understand that you must respect the value of certain pieces of land in this country. People will come and tell you that it was a past plantation tenantry...

Asides,

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, no, no. The importance is that if you go on the same land now today you will still see fruit trees growing on that same land that belong to the past residents. I am saying that this House must understand that the assets of people who worked on plantations must be respected. This piece of land must be regarded as a national treasure and it should not be treated as just a piece of land that you are vesting in the hands of the National Housing Corporation.

I will watch the progress of this particular piece of land because people must understand that with a lot of these lands there is a history to it. You know what amazes me, Sir, is that in Barbados there are so-called historians and historians who speak volumes and they sometimes cannot recognise the importance of certain pieces of land in this country. I am saying, Sir, if there is any land in this country that has historical value, it is the same piece of land.

I thank you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I feel impelled to intervene in this debate to clarify a number of matters which have arisen as a consequence of the contribution which has just been made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Time was, Mr. Speaker, where Deanes Town, St. James, now in the constituency of St. Andrew was very much as the French would say, 'un village perdu' - a lost village. Up to 1980, there was no electricity in Deanes Town. There was no water as far as I could recollect in Deanes Town and the people had to travel inordinately long distances to get water. I do not think there was a Rediffusion set there and bearing in mind the nature and character of the locality as it was, Mr. Speaker, times for those persons were rough.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the total number of native settlers in Deanes Town was fairly small. I do not think that at its maximum, the total number of population for Deanes Town ever went past twenty houses.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: It could have been 15 houses, Mr. Speaker.

What has transpired in recent times is that there has evolved close to Deanes Town, St. Silas Heights and Waterhall Terrace. These new developments have occurred, private sector driven, and have more or less encroached on where Deanes Town is. As these developments have occurred, water is there, light is there or nearby and such like. If you know St. Silas Church, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is referring to a parcel of land west of St. Silas Church and what you will find there, contrasted with what you had in 1980, is a virtual housing revolution in the area. The private sector has initiated housing development and just west of St. Silas Church going south up to Waterhall Plantation, there are now several properties there already built, there is infrastructure there and the effect of this is to have provided infrastructure close to Deanes Town.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, only this morning we went on a leisurely walk through the Sion Hill area and I was

speaking to some Deanes Town people who have been in Sion Hill now more than 15 years and they have adjusted - it is true that unfortunately some of the older people have died out but they have adjusted well, they have integrated in the community and they are able to do what they used to do in Deanes Town which is mainly kitchen garden. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has not kept with the times. His argument is that first choice should be given to the people who used to live there.

I rather apprehend, Mr. Speaker, that the population that would have been there has got even smaller in consequence of the deaths. In any event, many of them live in Sion Hill Terrace No. 2, Sion Hill Terrace No. 1 and Sion Hill Terrace No. 3. The Harrises, the most prominent family from Deanes Town live on the Highway 2A and are doing quite well.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is behaving consistent with a hue and a cry that he has carried around Barbados ever since he entered politics. He has arrogated to himself this thing about his being for the small man and consistent with his feeling that because of his size he must logically be for the small man. He has then said...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. The Honourable Member is giving the impression to the House that because I am small that I must represent the small people and because he is a large man that he must represent big people.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, that is a *non sequitur*. He is saying that because he is small, it follows that he should represent small people and because I am corpulent that I am on the side of those who are corpulent. He actually meant opulent, not corpulent.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has done no scientific or other investigation into the aspirations of the former residents of Deanes Town. I deem it a crude mistake on his part to want to say that simply because people lived in Deanes Town way back in time and had to move that they should move back. Indeed, we are aware, Mr. Speaker, that up to 1980, just before those people moved from Deanes Town they were consulted and they agreed to move. In any case, Mr. Speaker, in those days the cost of taking services to Deanes Town bearing in mind that the developments that have, more or less, come about to Deanes Town had not yet occurred, if one considered the cost, it would have been quite some millions, Mr. Speaker, to serve fifteen houses at the most. So what do you do? We took them from the darkness and put them into light. They have proved excellent residents of Sion Hill and they do not feel in any way uncomfortable being in Sion Hill. The

Honourable Member for St. Lucy might have some other reason that he has not mentioned about his wanting to take them from Sion Hill now because clearly from their political behaviour, they offer no comfort to the Democratic Labour Parry in Sion Hill.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I think that I had to rise on this point to deal with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who sometimes as he moves around gets bits and pieces of information, comes to the House and does not really put over the bits and pieces of information in a discreet or clever manner. 3.10p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, lucky as he is still to be the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, must come and inform this House with accurate information. I do not concur in the view that because people lived there between 1940 and 1980 and that as times have changed, and things have made it now more feasible to develop the area that simply because 15 houses were there way back in time that it should uproot the people from Sion Hill and take them back into Deanes Town.

I do not disagree that there is a panoramic view overlooking the sea from there, but I believe that the Government and the National Housing Corporation are going to be sufficiently wise to ensure that no social segment of Barbados is going to be prejudiced when it comes to permitting them an opportunity to live in Deanes Town.

I think that is a point the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the small man representative, would have wanted to say, that we have taken poor people, small people and put them elsewhere, that we are not taking them back and that we are in the process of putting large people up there.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. I am sure that when the time comes for the development, that preference is likely going to be given to the youngsters who have grown up in Orange Hill, in Lancaster, in Sion Hill too and the surrounding areas. Sir, I am going to support the Resolution. I do not think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is really disagreeing with the Resolution. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is merely 'bringing red herrings across the trail'.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker,

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. James North for his explanation of what happened in the past and what continues to happen in St. James.

I would not have to mention the other red herrings thrown in by the Member from the other Side.

With these remarks, Sir, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 6 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT
HAGGATT HALL, ST. MICHAEL
FOR HOUSING PURPOSES

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the matter for consideration, Sir, is the grant of approval for the proposed acquisition of land at Haggatt Hall, St. Michael for the purpose of housing development.

The subject lands contain 2 223.6 square metres and comprise of Lots 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 of a sub-division plan approved by the Chief Town Planner in 1991 for housing development. These lots were initially vested in the National Housing Corporation. This housing development was conceived to accommodate persons displaced by the provision of the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act and those persons who were relocated from the Zone 1 area at the Belle, St. Michael.

The total area of the housing development comprises 4.868 hectares and provided some 93 house lots. Some time around 1992 the then Minister responsible for housing approved the disposal of these lots to the Deliverance Centre. These were subsequently sold to the Trustees in July 1996 at a price of \$.60 000. The Trustees of the Deliverance Centre subsequently secured the permission of the Chief Town Planner to change the use of the five lots from residential to religious use.

In pursuing this acquisition, the Government is fully aware of the circumstances surrounding the initial sale of the land to the Trustees of the Deliverance Centre. At the same time while this Ministry is supportive of such ancillary uses in residential districts, the current high demand for house spots, coupled with statutory obligations to relocate disenfranchised tenants and the general scarcity of land for housing, led the Ministry to purchase the land back from the Trustees. In doing so, there were initial discussions with Trustees and offers of additional lots for religious purposes in the same area were made by the Government. After a prior initial agreement to the proposals, the Church finally indicated an unwillingness to sell.

It is against this background that in December 1996 the Cabinet of Barbados approved the compulsory acquisition of

these five lots totalling some 2 223.6 square metres for housing purposes. Pursuant to the decision, notices required in accordance with Section 3 of the Land Acquisition Act were published and authorisations required under Section 4, signed. The five lots of land to be acquired totalling 2 223.6 square metres are delineated on the Surveyor Plan No. 949/93. The plan is available for inspection by all Honourable Members of this House.

It should be noted, however, that the Government has recently acquired some 29.5 acres of land at Lower Burney which run very close to these same lots for housing development and the Trustees of the Deliverance Centre have agreed to accept one half acre of land for the construction of a church and related facilities. The Resolution relating to this acquisition has been examined by the Attorney General and certified by him to be in order for consideration by this Honourable House.

With these 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 must admit that this particular Resolution causes me pain. For the simple reason, one would not expect any Government to be in battle with any church over a piece of land...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member please, so as to make sure that we are all clear, I did hear the Honourable Minister say that the Deliverance Centre has agreed to accept an offer of a piece of land in Lower Burney. Is this correct, Mr. Minister?

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you saying then, Mr. Minister that there is no dispute now?

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: There is no dispute, Sir, none whatsoever, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am extremely grateful to you, Mr. Speaker for recognising that there is no dispute now, but that there was a dispute previously.

I want to say, Sir, that in a time when we are going into the 21st Century, Sir, where crime and violence seems to be the main topic on everybody lips ...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You mean both on the increase. ...one would recognise that the Church ...

Asides.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, one would recognise that if we are really to develop the young people in this country, there is a need for the Church to play a role in this country. And, I do not think it is a good example for the young people to see a situation where the Church and the Government are in battle. Sir, we cannot look at what happened in the last stages, Sir, we must look at what happened in the beginning and one must recognise that in the early 1990s there was a particular crime problem in this country. 3.20p.m.

The Democratic Labour Party was in Government at that time and they came up with a housing policy to help solve the particular problem of crime at the time.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, in the early 90s. there was a crime problem. The housing policy then was that any new development must have in it a business centre and a church. I am going to give you some examples, Sir. In Hope Road, St. Lucy, provision was made for the business centre and also for the church. In Six Men's, St. Peter, the same said thing was done and in Haggatt Hall, it was done, Sir.

One would have thought. Sir, that if this policy was accepted in rural Barbados that in urban Barbados there would have been a greater need for this policy. One cannot understand how an enlightened Government cannot recognise the need for a church in a housing development and in areas where to the east, the west, the north, whatever, wherever, there is a particular large settlement of people.

So, clearly, Sir, this location for a church was to teach people because it is obvious that wherever there was a church service the words of the church would have filtered over a large area and people even though they would have been playing and not at church would at least be able to hear the gospel.

But a Government that calls itself an enlightened Government is going to remove a decision like that. I, am and my comrades are surprised that a matter like this was taken to Cabinet to remove a church from an area where it is very important to have that church not recognising that the Attorney General of this country, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is fighting and doing his best to solve the crime problem but at the time he is fighting to solve the crime problem the Cabinet of the day is making decisions to help create problems for the Attorney General.

I cannot understand. Sir, how any enlightened Government cannot understand the wisdom. It is regrettable to hear the Minister now saying that the compromise is to give them land not too far away which was purchased also for housing development. If it is wrong one place, how could it be right the other place. I want a better excuse than that, Sir. I am not accepting, Sir, that the land was taken from the church because it was needed for housing development. I am not accepting that excuse because it is faulty, it has no substance and it cannot stand up in this Parliament, Sir. I want to know the true reason why that church would be moved from that particular location because after hearing the presentation by the acting Minister of Housing today, one can only come to the conclusion that the only problem with the church was the location.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I just want to assure the Honourable Member that even in the absence of the representative of St. Michael South East that in the areas around Haggatt Hall and Chapel Gap are well served with houses of the Divine. There are the St. Barnabas Church, the Antioch Church, a Nazarene Church and a Wesleyan Holiness Church.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is giving the House the impression, that he is speaking on behalf of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, please, I would not accept that as a point of order. Please, he did not say that.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Okay.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, sometimes we have some unfortunate mental inversions that occur during dialogue and unfortunately people relate things in a very unorthodox manner.

I was just trying to give some clarity to the unfortunate view that the communities were not well served with spiritual and religious institutions. Unfortunately, it was totally misunderstood.

However, Sir, since the point was made that initially some consideration was given to the people of the Belle area which falls within my constituency it became an imperative that I enter this debate today. I had my reservations because I am prepared to give the Ministry reasonable time to get its new programme off the ground and I am looking forward to seeing the allocation of those lands in the near future in a very equitable manner.

However, I have a large area in the Zone 1 district and as a consequence the people of St. Michael East are unable

to enjoy some of the different provisions that are made in relation to land and housing. People who lived the Belle area cannot enjoy special mortgage facilities because most of the people who reside in those clustered homes are low-income people and they are mostly tenants. They are unable to enjoy the advocacy that we hear about of developing their homes because of the Zone 1 area again, not only because of their state of poverty but because there are certain restraints in that area in terms of development.

I would expect that any Government with an egalitarian spirit would attempt to find alternative means to redress the difficulties that the people in Zone 1, at the Belle, Licorish Village, Flint Hall, Belle Gully and those areas are experiencing. I happened to be the representative of those people, so I am expecting that some of the difficulties which these people now expressed that they are experiencing there, that they be offered lands through the land acquisition in areas like Haggatt Hall and Lower Burney's and that some form of priority would be given to these people coming out of Zone 1.

It is a simple request. It is not a long speech. I am only trying to appeal to the Minister and all other interested ears in such matters to understand the difficulties which I believe over 3 000 persons are experiencing within that immediate Zone 1 area.

I would expect that we would not witness a development just on the periphery of St. Michael East where middle income houses will be erected and then these people who actually dwell all their lives and give all their blood, sweat and tears on the Belle Plantation and Lower Estates that live in Zone 1 will not have the opportunity to have two or three dozen lots allocated to them. That is all I am asking for.

Since the Zone 1 area has even a greater justification, the people in that area have even a greater justification for having those lots because the Stanley Report clearly indicates that there is a high probability that if those people follow the natural development of having in-borne water toilets in their homes that the probability of excreta filtering through the limestone is likely to pollute the water there at the Belle.

We have two options available to us. Either we put in place a mini sewerage system and channel that discharge out of St. Michael East and out of Zone 1 or we have the other option of giving them the opportunity to have lots in some other location outside the Zone 1 area.

I believe that without having to be expansive or too detailed on this particular matter that the Minister should be made cognisant of the need to give priority to the people of St. Michael East within the Zone 1 area under the circumstances.

I am asking that all ears who are supposed to hear this song and this plea should hear. If they cannot hear, I will have to take some other form of action at a later date in defence of the people to whom I represent. While I am on the Backbench, as a member of the Barbados Labour Party, I am the people's representative of St. Michael East and I will expect them to take that into consideration because first and foremost I have to represent the interest of my constituents.

In making this plea, I do not want you to believe that it is anything caroling or melodious just to be heard for some form of comfort but this representative does not expect any action within the near future. I am a very reasonable person and I will wait patiently but I will also wait within a reasonable time before I take the necessary course of action. 3.30p.m.

So just a warning to a brother, a warning to a parliamentary colleague in this party, or words of advice to my parliamentary colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for listening to me patiently.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to the Honourable Member for St. Michael East that his comments are noted. I would also like to say to him that he works in the Ministry of Social Transformation. He is an adviser to the Minister of Social Transformation and it is under that same Ministry that the Urban Development

Commission falls. It used to be under the Ministry of Housing and Lands that I have the honour of being their Minister for the time being.

I just want to tell the Honourable Member that I would congratulate the Urban Development Commission for the amount of work they do in the urban areas but it is through that same Ministry he can mobilise for anything he wants done in St. Michael East.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Government's Business for the day. I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 8, 1999 at 11.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 8, 1999 at 11.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr, SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 3.35p.m.