
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION OF 2003-2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 15, 2003.

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(OFFICIAL REPORT) SECOND SESSION
1999 - 2004 HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of
Assembly met at 11:20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, G.C.M. B.A., Dip.
Ed., (Speaker) His Honour J. M. EDGHILL,
J.P., (Deputy Speaker) Hon. Miss M. A.
MOTTLEY LL.B. (Attorney-General and
Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the
House) Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON,
LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition) Hon.
Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K. A., Q.C., LL.B.
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.) Dr. the
Hon. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A.,
M.Sc. (Econ.) Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER,
B.C.H., (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of
Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) Hon. R. C.
EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed.,
LL.B. (Hons.), LEC (Minister of Labour and
Social Security) Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman
of Committees) Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE,
B.A., LL.B., (Minister of Education, Youth
Affairs and Sports) Hon. G. A. CLARKE,
B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Housing and
Lands) Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, (Minister of
Public Works and Transport) Hon. H. F.
LASHLEY, (Minister of Social
Transformation) Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN,
LL.B., (Minister of Commerce, Consumer

Affairs and Business Development) Mr. D. St.
E. KELLMAN Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON,
LL.B. (Minister of Physical Development and
the Environment) Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE,
J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education,
Youth Affairs and Sports) Mr. M. Z.
WILLIAMS Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A. Rev.
J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P.
(Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-
General and Minister of Home Affairs) Mr. D.
T. GILL, B.Sc. Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc.,
M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International
Transport) Hon. A. P. WOOD, J.P., B.Sc.,
M.Sc., M.Phil., (Minister of Agriculture and
Rural Development) Hon. R. R. FARLEY,
B.Sc., J.P., (Minister of Economic
Development, 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, 8th April, 2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes
for the Honourable the House of Assembly for

its meeting of Tuesday, 8th April, 2003, which Minutes have been circulated, be confirmed subject to any omissions, observations and/or observations.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

I beg to second that, Sir.Mr. SPEAKER If there are no corrections or observations, then let these Minutes stand confirmed.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay

1.The Value Added Tax (Refund) Fairholme Pharmacy Incorporated, Order, 2003.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay

1.The Annual Reports of the Barbados National Oil Company Limited for the Years 2000 and 2001.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Public Accounts Committee Bill, 2003.

Hon. R. N. MARSHALL:

I beg to second that.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

Hon. R. N. MARSHALL:

I beg to second that.

ORDER NO. 5

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228 THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT WESTON, IN THE PARISH OF SAINT JAMES IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF REMOVING THE HOUSES LOCATED IN THE WATERCOURSE AT WESTON, ST. JAMES AND OF PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THOSE PERSONS LIVING IN THE SURROUNDING AREA.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Mr. Speaker, the Resolution before this House, seeks to compulsory acquire three parcels of land at Weston, St. James, for the provision of a safe environment, as a result of a flood which took place on August 3rd, 1995. All of us remember that dreadful day when 38 residents, one church, one day nursery, a mini-mart in Doughlin Road and number of other persons in the Speightstown/Holetown areas were affected because of the weather during that time.

Mr. Speaker, we will remember journeying to the west of Barbados to examine what had taken place the evening before, where it was believed that the drainage system in the west of Barbados not only needed to be improved but something had to be done to those residents living in the low-lying areas of the country.

We had carried out a social report after the flood and it was discovered that eight houses and one mini-mart were completely destroyed. One of the destroyed houses was a complete block structure while the remaining were timber. Four of these houses were owner-occupied while the other five were rented. Five of these houses were owned by three persons of middle age, ranging between 40 and 75. In addition, a number of crops were destroyed in the process.

It is also important to note that the persons who were affected were either living in the path of the flood or very near to the coastal areas of Weston. Those persons living in the Speightstown area, although previously were to be relocated, never took place before the last 10 to 12 years. Therefore, Speightstown, Holetown and Weston, up to 1995, were areas that were still prone to flooding and Government felt that something had to be done. After the flood, many of these households found safer grounds at a place called Bakers. In fact, a number of properties were built by the National Housing Corporation to resite and to relocate these families. One relocation was at Gills Road, Speightstown. The other residents felt the flooding was a one-off situation and most of them still remained on that location.

We have done a number of site visits to the area. Many plans were drawn up over the years to relocate some of the residents of Gills Road but many of them prefer to live in the Speightstown area than to go to the other areas of St. Peter or St. James.

I must say that the Ministry of Public Works has done a lot of work to improve the drainage in that area. I understand the blockage that used to be in the hill from the Speightstown area has now been cleared. I also understand that work has been done by the Drainage Unit of the Ministry of Public Works to improve the drainage in the Weston area, Holetown and Speightstown.

We have built a number of houses to relocate families from the flood-prone area of Weston. It is believed that only three remaining parcels of land are to be acquired in order to keep the environment of Weston safe. These three parcels are owned by Loretta Frank, Ralph Griffith and Audrey Cumberbatch. When the survey work was first carried out, we had thought that a fourth parcel was to have been acquired but our final summation is that there is no need for the parcel of land owned by Vera Chase in order to improve this area of Weston.

Mr. Speaker, we are soon going into the rainy season and all efforts must be made, not only by the Government but by the residents themselves, to clear their surroundings and to improve their conditions. There are still low-lying areas in Barbados that are flood-prone and every effort must be made at this time to clean and to improve the drainage system. I know the Ministry of Public Works has been doing a lot of this work but they cannot do all by themselves.

11:25 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

Mr. Speaker, a number of persons across the country are still living in areas not suitable for proper habitation. We have looked at a number of areas in Zone One. In the Waterford area, and a number of persons are still squatting there and when it rains it will cause serious problems.

Mr. Speaker, I know you enquired about relocating these families and a social survey has been carried out a number of years ago and it was revealed that Zone One was not safe for the erection of properties and that persons were living on the water table.

We understand that there is a demand for house spots and that persons like to live in a central area of Barbados but we want to caution persons that before properties are erected that planning permission should be received.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you in your capacity as representative for the area have been appealing to the Ministry to relocate at least five families from the area and this will be done over the next month as land has been found for them because they were there for a long time. I know that these families have dug pit toilets a number of times but each one has flowed over and we have to caution persons living in the Waterford area that it is prone to flooding. There is also flooding taking place in the Belle area and we have to relocate persons to higher grounds.

We know there is a demand for housing and in the Ministry we are trying to provide opportunities for persons to rent and lease land as well as there is a programme for the low income earner where persons can find spots but it is in our interest to protect our water table. Mr. Speaker, a number of persons are taking up three or four spots to rent out and to speculate. It is a bad thing and we want to caution persons against it.

There are a number squatter settlements in St. Philip, Rock Hall, the Belle and Waterford area. We have found land at Lead Vale and Coverley in Christ Church and over the next few months this land will be developed to help these people.

I must remind this House that it is not the intention of Government primarily to find land for squatters because other persons have been waiting for a long time who will say that since spots can be found for squatters who have broken the law then some can also be found for those who have been waiting.

I have said before that for every lot which is developed in Barbados, ten people are waiting in line for that lot and Government certainly want to encourage people to own their homes.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke of the self-aided programme which started years ago in Clinketts, St. Lucy where persons were given materials to set up their homes in a logical and lawful manner. Today, a number of persons are taking the situation in their own hands because they want to find their own accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, we want to warn people against squatting on Zone One. People also live on the water table in my constituency at Golden Ridge and we are trying our best to move them. Sir, there is squatting in St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. Philip, St. George, St. Michael and other squatter settlements across Barbados and Government must do something about them.

I recall that some years ago the Government of Trinidad gave squatters' rights to persons but Trinidad has a lot of Crown land and they can afford to do this but with the limited land space of Barbados we have to be careful of encouraging squatter settlements.

11:35 a.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. G.A. CLARKE

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution before the House is really about protecting our environment. I am hopeful that when these properties are fully acquired, there are 3 178.5 square metres of land which is approximately 31 000 square feet of land. I believe that these parcels of land can be used by the Ministry of the Environment through the NCC to be landscaped, beautified and a park can be erected at this site.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to encourage this type of development at this site and I hope that we could do other things in other areas. For example when we relocate the families from the Murphy pasture, we will also want to beautify that area, with a park for children, as the Deputy Prime Minister has reminded us. But we will also relocate those family.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the right thing to do is to acquire these parcels of land so that the Ministry of the Environment can take care of this site. I would also hope that persons do not now use this land for further squatting. So far, noone has squatted on these spots and I hope that it remains that way for a long time. But we need to police, to some extent, the lands that are owned by the Crown. I also believe that owners need to protect their own properties. There are still a number of persons squatting on private properties and we have to watch that.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, Sir, that these lands we are now discussing were already discussed in this House. As you know, these lands came about due to some flooding that occurred in the Weston area, which is commonly known as the "Carew" area now. At the time most of the people were resited to the Bakers area, I made representation on behalf of some other people in that particular area, I must say that I would have to come to the conclusion that I had the support of the MP for the area on that matter because he did not challenge the representation that I put at that time, considering that he is person, I believe, that would have represented the interest of those persons who were disenfranchised at the particular point in time.

I want to say that the area the Honourable Member was speaking of, he mentioned flooding. It is rather interesting, Sir, that in one week, you can get one Minister speaking about flooding and in the other breadth, you can get another minister speaking about drought.

As far as I understand, based on the records, Sir, we need not worry about flooding at this time or in the near future, based on all we have been hearing within the last week, that we are now in a dry spell which might last for many years and that we are now moving from the normal circumstances and we are now creating solutions to problems.

Sir, I said all that to say this, if these lands, as you and I would know, and I agree with the Minister, that those persons who previously lived that and those persons who want to live there, we should protect them from living in this particular area because of the potential flooding.

It tells me, Sir, that we recognise one important fact, that is even though we have a shortfall in rainfall at this point in time, we will be getting some rainfall shortly and, these lands

should not be utilised by the poor people in the area because they would not have the capacity to put in the necessary corrections. If the flooding occurs again, we would not want them to be affected.

We also have to recognise, Sir, that in looking at this, we need to find the problem that caused the flooding in the first place. We either have to decide to have a free flow, or we might have to decide to build a dam in the particular area, so that you would not get a reoccurrence of what happened a couple years ago.

Because, Sir, this can be a very serious matter and we might be protecting 31 000 square feet of land but there are other properties to the north and to the south of this particular piece of land, that we also have to consider.

Those of us who are familiar with the north would understand exactly what we speak of, Sir, but it is also regrettable that the Government did not take the advice given to them such four to five years ago, when I said that, instead of adopting a piecemeal approach to this particular problem, that they needed to look at the total picture to correct the particular problem.

Sir, we also had a problem of flooding, not too far away. As you know this is near to the fire station and a business place in that area on the seaside. Beside the fire station there is a fish market. Beside the other business, there is chattel home belonging to a lady who was trying her best to remain on that spot but the Ministry of Housing and Lands, for some reason, have been giving her a lot of pressure for not being able to remain on that spot.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the Minister said that we have problems with squatting on the water table. He said there is squatting at the Belle and squatting at Waterford. I have been

hearing about this squatting and the need to resite them for many years by previous ministers and also by the current Minister. Sir, I find it extremely difficult for a minister of the Government to come to this Parliament and tell Parliament the particular problems that can occur, if we do not do something about it, but yet, the same Minister cannot come to Parliament and bring proposals to correct the problem.

Sir, I do not want to hear about the problem. Everybody in Barbados knows about the problems. What we want from this Minister, is some solutions to the problems. We also want to hear from this Minister, how he is going to use the land bank to correct these particular problems.

Sir, if we do not do that, we will have a situation in Barbados where our water supply will be now challenged because of the particular problem, the Minister spoke and is so well aware of, Sir.

Sir, I would hate to believe, that the Minister is so aware of these problems and he will continue to allow these problems to occur so that we can find capacity for the new recycling plant that we have in Barbados that is not operating at its full capacity because it needs to distribute the water further afield that where it is not distributing the water.

I hope, Sir, that before this problem is on our doorstep in a big way, and before this problem is used so that somebody else can find an excuse for the recycling plant to get business, and also find an excuse for the desalination plant at Sandy Lane to get business, that we will correct this problem before it gets too far.

Everybody in Barbados knows, Sir, that water supply is very important and we need to protect it. One of the things that we do not want is a situation that can easily be solved by a

Minister, being prolonged and then creating a bigger problem for somebody to get an excuse to implement something they want to implement.

11:45 a.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

We also have to be very careful that we do not push this country, because of a bad housing policy by the Minister, towards a desalination plant, because everybody knows that the cost of desalination is very high. If anyone wants to find out whether that is true or not, they need to speak to the owners of Sandy Lane who would tell them why they need to sell their plant or why, in order to make it a viable operation, they would be seeking to have a right to sell some of that water to the public of Barbados.

So I am asking the Minister to recognise the point that I am making and to recognise that because of the housing policy that we might have a conflict between the housing policy and the natural resources of Barbados that can damage the natural resources of Barbados and interfere with the way of life that we have been having for so long.

There is no doubt that Barbadians are proud of their drinking water. The last thing on this earth we would want is for a minister, due to a lack of decision, to allow his housing policy, or lack thereof, to interfere with the water supply of Barbados and force us to a stage where we have to beg Sandy Lane to help us to supply the water to the consumers of Barbados.

The same way the Minister knows where the people are squatting in Barbados, he must understand that it is his duty through the

National Housing Corporation or the Ministry of Housing and Lands to provide an adequate amount of land for the citizens of Barbados. The same way that the Minister knew that the plantation owners had a right to supply land to their tenants and that those people living in urban tenancies and the other tenancies in Barbados had a right to provide land for the people they are renting the lands to, the Minister must understand that the Government of Barbados has a social responsibility to provide lots for those persons and not necessarily left it up to the masses of people to provide for the masses.

I want to know from the Minister when he is going to bring a comprehensive plan to this Parliament that will correct the land shortage as it relates to the masses of people of Barbados. The Minister must understand that as long as we have lots available, the demand for houses will decrease because there is a direct relationship between lots and houses. So in order to solve the housing problem of Barbados, he must first solve the land problem as it relates to the masses in Barbados.

If the Minister wants to solve the land and lots solution of Barbados, all he has to do is to advise his counterparts in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to construct 120 roads that are required in St. Lucy and many lots will become available. Not only would lots be available but they would also be able to create employment because when you construct a road in rural Barbados - I have made this point in this Parliament already - you are not constructing a road for houses alone, you are constructing a road to a lot of vacant land which means that once there is a road there is a possibility of additional housing and additional employment. Nobody can challenge that because it is a fact.

We can appreciate that urban Barbados would also need some roads but between 1981

and today there are many roads in urban Barbados that would have been resurfaced about three times, whereas some areas in rural Barbados are still waiting to see one paved road.

What is amazing is that when money, whether it be \$2 million or \$3 million is spent on roads in urban Barbados, it does not necessarily mean that you would see housing construction to match the amount of money. However, when the construction of one road is done, say from Christ Church back to St. Lucy or St. Peter - ignoring the coastlines and leaving out certain areas because they are already spoken for - you can create sometimes as many of 30 or more lots in rural Barbados.

So we have to look at the opportunity cost and the relationship between the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. We have to find out whether we are spending the money allocated to those Ministries in the right way. If I had to give my own opinion, I would say that the Government is spending the money to the best of its ability, but there is a better solution coming from the Opposition because it is quite clear that the Opposition understands exactly what is going on. We understand the social problems as it affects the masses of people in Barbados and we need to do something about that.

The Minister was quite right when he said that it is a good idea to move from vehicles to lands. It is interesting to note that I said sometime in this Parliament that in rural Barbados especially to the north of Barbados that we were always taught that the first thing you do after leaving school and getting a job is to buy a piece of land. That is something that was instill in the people of the north, and if you did not do it, some parents were so good that they use to set aside the money you gave them so that they could buy a piece of land so that

when you were of the right age that land would have been there for you.

I am observing a change now that worries me which goes back again to the Ministry of Public Works. Because of the bad transportation system in the north of the country people are now moving away from buying land and buying a vehicle as their number one priority. That is something that we need to correct because it is a drain on the foreign exchange of Barbados. I know the foreign reserves are high and we tend not to look at that. We need to make sure there is a right match between the land system and the transportation system so that people will not move away from buying land to buying vehicles. I would still like to see the process in place where people after leaving school would buy land, construct a home and after that and there is a possibility that they might be able to buy a car to do so. I do not see why a car must be made the number one priority. It is for Government to make sure that land and housing is the number one priority and not the purchase of a car because when one looks at the uses of the foreign exchange it is clear that the car commits more foreign exchange than the housing and land.

As I said before, we need to look at the opportunity cost of our decisions and Government would have to look at the way they are impacting on the lives of Barbadians and the choices that Barbadians are making because we cannot continue to talk about having a large number of cars on the roads when the transportation system is driving the public towards that direction. We need to talk about the availability of lots so that people can purchase them and we will not have to divert foreign exchange to countries that do not do trade with us. We will put those resources so that they remain in the inner pool where they can create an economic tool within the economy of Barbados that can help one and all.

I hope with those few words that the various minsters would understand that they need to go back to the drawing-board and look again at their approaches to these matters and recognise that they have not found the right solution and that they are not working in the interest of the masses of people in Barbados.

I thank you, Sir.

11:55 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Speaker, Thursday, 3rd August, 1995, will forever remain etched in the memories of the residents of Weston, St. James and, indeed, in the memories of the wider St. James' community. It will remained etched in the memories of the people living in the north of Barbados as a day on which a mini-tragedy had occurred for one family, the Blackman family, from which the late calypsonian "Carew" hailed. It certainly could have been a major tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, the experts view in relation to the events of 3rd August, 1995, would seem to suggest that for years there had been a blockage somewhere a mile or so east of Western and that the force of the torrential rains were such that it knocked out that blockage and the rain water, possibly millions of gallons, came down heavily on the residents of Weston.

Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Minister and Minister of Housing and Lands is today doing, is asking this Honourable House to compulsorily acquire particular parcels of land which have revealed, were parcels of land on which there had been structures in a definite watercourse.

Mr. Speaker, before proceeding, I would like to urge the officers of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Minister to bear in mind that since they are no longer proceeding to acquire the property of Vera Chase, now deceased, that prior to the flood, her son had been successfully conducting a cottage industry on that parcel of land. Therefore, since the Minister and the Ministry now deem it unnecessary to proceed with the acquisition of that parcel of land, I would urge the officers to contact the survivors of the estate of Vera Chase to let them know that particular acquisition would no longer take place. That youngster, Mrs. Chase' son, has lost his cottage industry and for a long time has suffered through not being able to replace his source of income.

Mr. Speaker, were I a journalist, I would say that the matter of the flood at Weston and the matter of the proposed acquisition, bring into sharp focus the whole question of the preparedness of Barbadians for adverse weather.

Mr. Speaker, there are many of us in this country who are constantly 'on the ground' and the one thing that is clear in Barbados when it relates to hurricane preparedness - and every Member of Parliament must know this - is that Barbadians, in their thousands, are timid of damage done by trees.

There are Members of Parliament who would say that ahead of the hurricane season, they are met with many requests to have trees cut down. Members of Parliament would no doubt be ambivalent because there are instances where the trees requested to be cut down are beautiful. Secondly, because some of the trees are fruit trees. Thirdly, some of the trees are naturally strong.

Mr. Speaker, I want for the benefit of Honourable Members and for this country to

look at the existing legislation in relation to trees preservation. I want to say that though I appreciate the concern that people have of the potential damage that falling trees could have on chattel houses, at the same time, I am against the wanton destruction of trees in this country.

Sir, from time to time, I have been tempted to conclude that I have seen instances where, in panicking over how trees could cause damage to structures, people have sometimes wantonly destroyed them. I do not want to be overly critical. I do appreciate that dependent on the location, age, size of the tree, including other factors such as the force of the winds, people's concern over the potential that could be caused by the wind would be genuine but, at the same time, for environmental and other reasons, I am against the wanton wholesale destruction of trees where such destruction is ill-advised.

Mr. Speaker, in 1981, a Barbados Labour Party Government passed Cap. 397 called the Trees Preservation Act. Section 4(1) says:

“Any person who desires to kill a tree must first

make an application to the Chief Town Planner for a permit to do so.

Section 4(2):

“Every application for permit referred to in subsection (1) must be in the form set out in the Schedule.”

Section (3):

“The Chief Town Planner may, on the receipt of an application under this section, cause such investigations to be made, including an inspection of any land, as he considers

necessary for the purpose of determining the application.”

Mr. Speaker, interestingly, in addition to the powers granted to the Town Planner, Section 9 is also important. There are Honourable Members who, from time to time, would be approached, for the purpose of doing something about overgrown vegetation coming from lots onto roads and highways. Section 9 addresses this by empowering the Chief Town Planner.

Section 9 (l):

“The Chief Town Planner may, for the purpose of preserving or enhancing the amenity of any vacant land, any land on which a new road is to be made or any land abutting upon, adjoining or near a public road, serve on the owner of such land, a notice requiring him, within the time specified in the notice, to

(a) plant or replant a tree of any such size and species and at such place, as is specified in the notice;

(b) provide for the maintenance and protection of any tree;

(c) clear the land of weeds or overgrown grass; or

(d) take such other measures as are reasonably necessary for the purpose.”

Mr. SPEAKER:

Honourable Member. I am a little puzzled here. The Resolution speaks about removing houses. You are not thinking about tree houses, are you?

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Speaker, I was addressing the question of concern of the damage trees could do in bad

weather as had occurred at Weston. The reason why I cited Section 9 is to let Honourable Members know that in instances where they are approached with requests to clear virgins, hedges and roads, there are existing provision where property owners are supposed to clear their own. In any case in bad weather, such overgrown vegetation could complicate matters.

Mr. Speaker, one area in which we are sure that Barbadians fully appreciate the effect of bad weather is in relation to the potential that tree damage could cause.

12:05 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Speaker, in respect of this particular Resolution the Honourable Member for St. George North lamented the fact that a culture hitherto unknown is creeping into Barbados namely, the culture of squatting. Everyone in here knows that in Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad since 1836 there was a culture of squatting in those places but the phenomenon of squatting in Barbados is relatively novel and many squatters do so on land of their choice without reference to the town planner or the law.

The whole question of the proper approach to this Resolution is that it should only be supported on the footing that the acquisition is to facilitate keeping the particular land at Weston open so that there can be no likelihood of a recurrence of the raging floods of August 3, 1995.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that as a consequence of this flood not only did Government respond by resiting persons affected, on Crown lands at Bakers in the parish of St. Peter but in consequence of this particular event one of Government's responses was the establishment of the Drainage Unit.

Mr. Speaker, much as the policy concerning the establishment of the Drainage Unit cannot be faulted because some of us who represent low-lying areas in our individual roles as Members of Parliament would want better and prompt response from this unit, some of us have been disappointed from time to time to get relief from the Drainage Unit as some of the assurances we received did not actually come to pass.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the extent to which Barbadians should prepare themselves for adverse weather. I would like to urge all Barbadians to be fully prepared for hurricanes and storms. I also want to urge Barbadians to recognise how absolutely necessary it is to have proper insurance to protect their life's sacrifices and life's hard earnings from damage overnight by bad weather.

Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest that it is a welcome move to keep that area of land at Weston open so that if there are heavy rains there would not be the problem experienced on August 3, 1995.

I want to re-emphasise how absolutely important it is for the Ministry of Housing to move with speed to let the relevant persons know that this parcel is not going to be acquired so that the family can proceed to use the land. As I said, one of the children used that parcel for a cottage industry and was badly dislocated when his small business was wiped out over night. I do not want any bureaucracy to stand in a way of a letter to the family to assure them that the parcel will not be taken

and the remaining parcels should be left as they are at the moment.

I feel that a lot of flooding is caused by rain not necessarily coming from the area of flooding but from higher up and that we should do our utmost to have all gullies cleared and stop all things that would allow for floods to occur.

We would want the Drainage Unit to come on board, be proactive and do its utmost to address this whole question of flooding in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a contribution to this Resolution before the House. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport is responsible, as you are aware, for rectifying any drainage problems that exists in Barbados.

Over the years we have had problems in certain parts of Barbados with areas prone to flooding. We know that Gills Terrace in St. Peter; Weston, St. James; Holetown, St. James and Risk Road on Highway One are prone to flooding.

Headleys Land in Bank Hall is an area that over the years created many problems for residence living there because the entire Bank Hall area was prone to flooding. We know that water comes from St. Thomas into the St. Michael and recently we have been able to alleviate many of the problems in the Baxters Road areas by building box-drains there to take the water off the road in Baxters Road and parts of New Orleans.

At the same time we are concentrating on doing work at the Kensington New Road area and Murphy's Pasture. A study has been done by BTII who are responsible for doing work at

the Kensington New Road area as well as the James Street area to alleviate the flooding there.

Sir, we know what happened in 1995 when the late calypsonian, Carew lost his life as a result of flooding in the Weston area. The 1996 Storm Water Drainage study made recommendations of how we would set about alleviating problems in areas prone to flooding.

2:15 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

Certain recommendations were made especially for the Speightstown area. If I may make reference to my notes, it is to remove rubbish from the Speightstown area and build more culverts so that all the water will flow out to the sea. Also, we will construct on the bypass road in Speightstown some culverts in that area as well as Round-The-Town in St. Peter. We have built the dam at Sailor Gully and we have built retention ponds in the area in order to hold the water from coming down. I am quite sure the good folk in St. Peter have seen some relief to the problems that were existing there.

We have spent \$3.7 million to alleviate the problem in the Speightstown area. Also, we have cleaned some water courses in a place called Sweet Home in the north and this has helped to alleviate the problem that existed there.

The Risk Road has a problem where the water comes from the hill and we know that we have to do some work there. At Weston, we built some new drains and replaced some culverts across the road. That seems to be

working and we have spent some \$250 000 there to help the situation.

Sir, we have built a dam on the hill at Hometown. We have looked at the Blowers Quarry and this is owned by Rayside. We had discussions with Rayside to do some work in that area and a total of \$1.325 million have been spent in that particular area in trying to alleviate the problem of the water coming down from the St. Thomas area by St. Thomas Parish Church into the Hometown area.

Also, the Seaview Gully discharges water into Sunset Crest as well as the Molyneux Gully when we have a discharge of heavy rain that comes down as far as Almond Beach on the west coast area. We have been cleaning the existing wells and we are continuing to clean gullies in the area.

Sir, just to give an update on what is happening in other areas. I would like to say that in addition to the Hometown area we have done some work at the Orange Hill water course. Rayside Construction Company spent \$198 000 in the area and the company has done some work, but they have found that when they started the work that National Petroleum Corporation had a line there and they were not prepared to go through there at the time to interfere with the line. They have put things on hold in that particular area.

Now at Headleys Land in the Bank Hall area we have found that it is prone to flooding for many years as well as Advent Avenue. As soon as a little rain fell in the past, we found that the houses were all flooded out. The Ministry has spent \$3.5 million in canalizing the whole area. We have built a very large canal in the area. We did not have to relocate any houses from the area but we had to acquire just one property next to the Globe Cinema. We were able to cut a canal under the ground and run that water right through to the Constitution River into the

sea. As I said, it took about \$3.5 million to do work in that area. Last year we had some rain and we found that the people living in the area were satisfied since they were not having

flooding anymore. We did it in different phases. We did the canal at Headleys Land and we also did the portion from Headleys Land right across Roebuck Street out to the sea.

Sir, we are now concentrating on the area going to Advent Avenue. We get complaints from people about the area concerning the water backing up. When the Drainage Unit from the Ministry went in and investigated these things, they have found that a lot of people in the community are responsible for creating the problem. I believe that a community is a place where people should be able to help themselves. We have people who throw out old chairs and beds and all kinds of garbage in the area. The last thing people complained about was that the water was backing up. When the Drainage Unit went in, they found two chairs and an old mattress clogging the small drain at Advent Avenue. When they removed these things, the water gushed right out and went its way out to the sea. Sir, we are asking people living in these areas to try and help themselves.

Another problem we have found that is existing in the Headleys Land area also in parts of St. Michael such as Carrington Village is that over the years people used to have what was called a soak-away in their backyard where water would run into this soak-away. But now that people are living on the roadside they are taking a long piece of pipe and running it along the house. This kitchen water contains grease and after a while the grease clogs up the well and then we find that the well cannot suck. Also, the water gets into the road under the barbergreen and then it digs up the barbergreen.

Sir, we do have a problem with people

running the water onto the road. It is against the law for people to do that and it is a problem for the Ministry of Health. The Public Health Inspectors should be monitoring the situation and advising people not to have their service water running onto the highway.

As I said, for this year we will be looking to continue at the Headleys Land area to make sure that the Advent Avenue area is completed in order to take the water that runs from Bank Hall across Empire Playing Field. This water will come right down and go into the wharf.

The Drainage Unit of the Ministry of Transport and Works is responsible for this work. We also sink wells during this time of the year. Right now we will be getting ready to give out contracts to 12 contractors who do work for the Ministry every year. The Ministry knows what price it is going to pay but the contractors are given contracts to make sure that they clean existing wells and gullies. When the rainy season comes, we will be well prepared.

As I said, there are areas that are prone to flooding and people will call the depot and say that the water is not going into the well. When we went and looked, we found probably two plastic bags or paper bags at the mouth of the well from the corn curls that the children eat. All that was called for was for someone to go and take a stick and move that obstruction from the well.

Sir, people have to use community effort in order to help themselves. We know that the Drainage Unit is there to look after the wells but there are things that we should not depend on the Ministry.

With those few words, I do support the Resolution.

I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank the Honourable Members for their contributions.

With those remarks, I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

I beg to second that, Sir.

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

**ORDER NO. 7 - RESOLUTION TO
APPROVE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF
THE LAND
ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228, A
COMPULSORY
ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF
PARCELS OF
LAND SITUATED AT WORKHALL,
HOPELAND AND
MARCHFIELD IN THE PARISH OF
SAINT PHILIP
IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC
PURPOSE OF
PROVIDING HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT.**

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Mr. Speaker, this particular

Resolution is to acquire three parcels of land

in the

parish of St. Philip. They are situated at Marchfield,

Workhall and Hopeland. These parcels comprise 1.273

hectares at Workhall, 0.853 hectares and 19.402 square metres of land. These parcels of land will be used as infillings. They are not large parcels of land. In fact, when I went to Workhall, St. Philip, I found that it is a parcel of land which is inside of a community with houses on all four corners. Government readily agreed to acquire this parcel of land in order to increase the density of houses in that particular location.

Sir, the other parcel of land at Marchfield is to the eastern end of the Six Roads area. Again, this parcel of land is very much situated in a residential area and it is suitable for housing as well.

12:25 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. G.A. CLARKE

Sir, the parcel at Hopeland forms part of the Rices development which was previously acquired by this Parliament. These three parcels of land will add to the parcels that previously acquired at Rices, for the low income houses in the parish.

These acquisition, Mr. Speaker, started in 1999 and it has taken this long time because of the surveying work and other legal work that had to be done in the process. We are hoping in the near future, to bring to Parliament a number of other acquisitions that are in the process. I have spoken of these to Honourable Members because it taken long, since we have

also to get Town and Country Planning permission, it has to go through the various stages of acquisition. They are here and we are hopeful that we can vest these land in the National Housing Corporation so that the plans can start for the subdivision of these parcels.

This, Mr. Speaker, this will be done over the next quarter and we are hopeful that during this financial year, we can see the construction of houses in the area of Marchfield and Workhall. In fact, the one at Hopeland is part of the joint venture programme and that also should commence during this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, I would also take this opportunity to allow the House to know that we have started the construction of high-rise units in the St. Philip area. The plans have been approved and construction should begin shortly. The road on the eastern part of Marchfield and Six Roads has begun and we are forward to the development of Terrace Units in the Six Roads area. As you are aware, also in the Six Roads area, the Government has earmarked that particular location for a civic centre. You will soon see the development of the Police Station within that area. Already, early last month, I broke ground to signal the start of a new housing development which is being done by the private sector where more than 600 houses will be built in the Six Roads area. So that this particular location is good for residential and commercial activities.

The Government is very excited about this development, since it forms part of a Manifesto pledge which was done in 1994, when we formed the Government. It has taken this time precisely because of the acquisition process. We have acquired about three parcels of land in that area. There was surveying work that had to be done, along with technical and other studies, had to inform this particular development.

I would want also to take this opportunity to state also that in other areas within the St. Philip, for example, Rices, there will be a joint venture programme which would see the development of low income housing as well as the creation of lots. People will be able to build their own homes, as well as buy houses from contractors who have been earmarked by the National Housing Corporation to build the houses for the residents of the area and for those persons who are in need of low income housing.

Within the Christ Church area, which is not too far away, in the Lead Vale, Fairy Valley and Coverley areas, housing development will take place. So that the demand for housing in the St. Philip/Christ Church areas will be met. This has the potential to create a new awareness and renewal of those areas, in particular, Lead Vale, which is now covered with bush. Certainly, we will do a development in that area. I believe that the civic centre which is planned for the area will be used widely because of the nature of the development that is taking place there.

Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the Government to use the Land Acquisition Act to acquire these small areas for in filling and I am very happy the Honourable Member for St. Philip South had earmarked these developments. It has taken long but I am glad that it has finally come to this House for the acquisition process.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Acquisition and to say that my interest in this one, Sir, is to make sure that the interests of the vendors is represented.

As you know, Sir, I have always said that the Land Acquisition Act needs to be amended. That is, I believe that provision should be made in the Land Acquisition Act which states that when land is compulsorily acquired, the vendor has a right to require from the Government land in exchange or money in exchange for the land being purchased.

I do not think, Sir, that the right should remain with the Ministry of Housing and Lands where they are free to go around Barbados and take up land from the masses of people in Barbados and just present a cheque to them. Land is becoming a scarce resource in Barbados and we cannot afford, Sir, to leave that power in the hands of individuals, where they feel they have a right to go across Barbados, take up small portions of land from persons who would have had that land with known persons assigned already assigned to it, that is they are parents who have children and they would like to leave that land for them, but when money is given in exchange, Sir, then that person does not have enough money to go and buy an alternative piece of land to leave for their children.

12:35 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

I am calling on this Parliament to recognise the point that I am making and to protect the interest of the masses in this particular matter.

When you are taking a piece of land from a plantation, that might be one per cent, but in most cases when that land is taken from the masses of people of Barbados, they are taking 100 per cent from that person. We, as a Parliament, cannot behave as if we have the

right to deprive poor people of what they have fought so hard to gain.

I am a strong believer in adding to communities. If the Government feels that they do not need this land to add to communities to provide house spots for other persons, then they should also recognise the rights of the vendors and use the land bank to offer the vendors the opportunity to own a piece of land somewhere else. I do not think it is fair for Government to decide where they want to get land and then at the same time deprive people of having the opportunity to own land in Barbados. The same way that Government is finding lands for persons, they have to recognise that the person who owned the land in the initial stage understood the importance of owning the land. Therefore, they cannot be giving somebody a right and taking it away from someone else at the same time.

I am calling on this Parliament to make sure that the Land Acquisition Act is changed so that we can protect the interest of the vendors because it is clear to me that the interest of those who want land is being represented, but this Government is now seeing those who owned land as a threat. We are seeing it with land and now we are also hearing it as it relates to those people who have the foresight to turn their money into an investment in terms of building homes to rent. We are now hearing that legislation would be coming to Parliament where the Government would want to tell the people or the owners of the land and property how much rent they will be able to charge. I will not support that Bill for the simple reason that it is for Government to provide those social things, not for the individuals to provide them.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

What we are seeing is that the Government is

now depriving the same people that they set about to help in the initial stages. This is a very serious conflict because it seems that we are now limiting the masses of people of Barbados to own only the piece of land that they are living on and that we as a Parliament feel that the masses should not have a right to have an alternative piece of land.

I am saying that the Ministry of Housing and Lands is to provide enough land and enough lots to keep the prices right. The Ministry of Housing and Lands should also provide the number of homes to make sure that there is no scarcity and that there is no great demand so that people can use the price as a factor to increase their rents or the cost at any particular time. It is not for the Government to deprive people, especially at a time when they are now seeing in the world that they have to free up their rights to external forces. At the same time they are freeing up their rights to external forces, they are unfairing their own people.

That cannot be the intention of any proper Government. The intention of any proper Government must be expansion for all without depriving the ones who can least afford to be deprived of that right. Sir, when one looks at certain laws and regulations as they relates to the Town and Country Planning Department, it gives the right to some people to have one house on ten acres of land but if a man has a quarter acre of land, he has a house on it and he rents somebody another piece, it means that you are now saying that the man has no right to have an additional piece of land but another person can have a quarter acre or a whole plantation or many plantations.

If we do not address these problems, we are going to create serious social problems in Barbados because the young people of Barbados are not going to accept this type of foolishness. We cannot use the Land Acquisition Act to deprive people of their

fundamental rights. In some cases there were people who had to give up their land and ended up without any land, that is a fact.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I do not know of any case where persons had to give up their land and because of the Land Acquisition Act, Government compulsorily acquired the land against their wishes.

It is very important to note in the St. Philip case that the Honourable Member is speaking about that the owners of the land asked the Government to acquire the land. The Land Acquisition Act is very specific. If Government is acquiring a person's land, that person has to be adequately compensated and the person can also say whether they want us to acquire the land or not. I am not fundamentally saying that Government will not acquire, but in most cases we do not take land if persons do not want us to take it.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I am very glad for this clarification. The Minister of Housing and Lands has just stated to this House that the Government will never take land from people that do not want to give up it up. I want to enter into the record of the House that the Minister said that in every case where the Government took land, that the landlords of Barbados wanted to sell the land. I am very glad to hear that because it is now my business to go through Barbados whenever I see a land acquisition and find out who are the vendors and if they were willing to sell the land and say to them that in the records of Parliament, the Minister of Housing and Lands has stated that they cannot take land from persons who are not willing to sell the land. I am very glad that the Minister has said that because we are now on

common ground. That is why I am now calling on the Attorney-General of Barbados to make the necessary amendment to the Land Acquisition Act so that this particular problem can be solved and I would not have to get up in here every time and make this particular point. It is now the Government's policy that the vendor is the important person and not the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

12:45 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that if one owns a piece of land and Government wants to compulsorily acquire, it does not mean that it has to be sold to Government because one's wish is more important to themselves and that is the policy of the Minister of Housing and Land. If that is not true, I want the Minister of Housing and Land to rise on a point of order and correct me.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is saying that I am misleading the House, then the Minister has to get up on a point of order and clarify this point.

I will continue repeating the point that the Minister has said that the vendor is the important person and if the vendor does not want to sell to Government, he does not have to, neither does he have to accept money from Government because he is free to dictate to Government.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

On a point of order. The Honourable Member is deliberately misleading this House. I said the vendor could say that he does not want to sell but I never said that he has a right not to sell to Government. The Land Acquisition Act is very specific. I am saying in the case of Work Hall, that the vendors have agreed to sell but this is not so in every case.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Sir, if there are Ministers who are not sure about the policy within their ministries we should come before Parliament and make the amendment. We need to protect some vendors from the Ministry of Housing and Land. It is clear that this Ministry has a double policy in relation to land acquisition.

The records of this Parliament would show that when Government acquired land in Christ Church East, they had a different policy but when land was acquired outside of Christ Church East, they do not use the policy to which I am always speaking but go back to the policy as it relates to the law of the land.

Therefore, I want to credit the Honourable Member for Christ Church East for understanding good housing policy and making sure that when the Minister of Housing comes to discuss these matters within the Parliamentary group, that he gets the policy right. Sir, I end on that point.

Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to this Resolution. Like the Honourable Member for St. George North, I also acknowledge that it has taken some time for this Resolution to come here and I am quite happy that it has finally reached.

I want to speak to the issue of housing development in St. Philip South. Over the last four years and three months, as the duly elected representative for that constituency, I have seen demands for housing solutions in the constituency grew at an alarming rate and it is to the credit of the Minister of Housing and his staff at the National Housing Corporation, that it has reached this stage.

Mr. Speaker, I am urging them to move with a fair degree of despatch and that what happens from here on, they would proceed at the same pace as what happened from that time until this juncture.

Mr. Speaker, I would be the first person to admit that in terms of housing development that the constituency of St. Philip South, like that of St. James South, has benefited, to some degree, at the level of the provision of houses for middle income persons. Those developments were driven exclusively by the private sector. Over the last four years, three months, we have seen some small developments being established in areas such as Green Point Development, Palace Gardens, just off Belair Main Road and the use of lots already purchased in areas such as Ruby Development, Atlantic Park, Long Bay Development and at Gemswick Gardens. What we have not seen within the last number of years is a very conscious and serious attempt at meeting the housing needs for the low income category.

It is to that category of persons that I want to focus my attention because the solutions which are needed for those persons, solutions which would satisfy the desires of persons who would be the traditional St. Philip persons. We have benefited from the establishment of estate for middle-income earners and have seen a lot of migration taking place within Barbados or the movement of persons within Barbados to the constituency of St. Philip South and St. Philip

North, to take up the opportunities provided for middle income housing.

Sir, while I welcome those persons to the constituency with open arms, I want to keep the traditional St. Philip people in St. Philip. That should be properly attained if the National Housing Corporation and other private sector agencies make the provision of housing for the low income earner a priority.

We saw not too long ago, and it was mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. George North, the ground-breaking ceremony at Emerald Park, Six Roads. I am happy that the plans for that housing project is such that accommodation is being given to low income earners.

I am also happy that the particular project to which I referred, would allow for a reasonable buildup of the housing stock in the St. Philip area to support the commercial activities that take place there. I have been informed that in phrase one of the project, no fewer than 191 housing solutions would be provided. Also, as part of that project, there would be accommodation for 22 commercial establishments, including doctors offices, pharmacies, et cetera, as the constituency requires.

In phrase two which should begin early next year, a further 353 housing solutions should be coming. Once again, it would be a mixed type of development, looking after the interest of the low income and middle income earners.

I am also hearkened by the revelation of the Honourable Member for St. George North, that the project planned for Six Roads, namely the 32 high-rise units planned a number of years ago, should be getting started during this calendar year.

12:55 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Hon. A.P. WOOD:

He indicated that the infrastructural work has started, that the plans have been approved and we look forward to the commencement of the actual construction of those 32 high-rise units.

I want to give some numerical evidence to support the point that there is excessive demand for housing solutions in my constituency because there are numerous applications for land in my office. There are about 500 persons interested in houses and this does not exhaust the list because some persons have already gone to the National Housing Corporation. The list continues to grow and at this juncture we simply require some solutions. Today, I hear that we are drawing closer to the those solutions to meet the needs of this large number of persons in the constituency.

Sir, unlike some constituencies we still have a number of open areas suitable for houses. On a systematic basis we have identified those lands without putting pressure on agriculture and I can assure you that the lands identified in the Resolution are suitably located because houses are already situated around this land.

Sir, in the initial stages I had earmarked this area for a playing field but then commonsense prevailed as across the street there is a private school with a playing field and further across there is King George IV Park with a proper playing field so the obvious solution was to utilise the land in such a way that the character of housing that exists there is maintained.

Sir, I shall use the power that resides in me to

make sure that the land is used for low income earners and to keep the people in Workhall, Jessamy Lane and Ruby Tenantry at home. I am appealing to the Honourable Member for St. George North that these lands should go to the people who have been on the waiting list who live in the area and want to stay in that area so that the character of housing is maintained in the area.

Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on the importance of providing additional housing in the Six Roads area. The Honourable Member for St. George North was correct when he said that in 1976 under a previous Barbados Labour Party administration led by Prime Minister Tom Adams at the time, the area of Six Roads was identified as ripe for the establishment of a town centre. Over the years we have seen practical effect being given to the policies of the Barbados Labour Party in respect of establishing that town centre at Six Roads. We have had additions at the level of commercial establishments but we have not been lucky up to this point with building up the housing stock at Six Cross Roads.

The Six Roads development has about 50 units and this was done between 1986 to 1991 but there was not much action since that time. It is this Government's wish to establish a civic centre in Six Road because 4.71 acres of land has been acquired to house the civic centre. This centre is badly needed in Six Roads and will include the Post Office, the library, the law courts, a fire station and a police station.

We have received approval for the establishment of a craft market because there is tremendous talent in craft in the parish of St. Philip and an outlet needs to be located at a conspicuous point for the display and sale of craft. I hope it would not take an inordinately long time for this civic centre to come since it has been spoken about for many years and the process should be advanced in such a way that

in the not too distant future we shall see the civic centre and craft market.

There are a number of commercial entities in Six Roads and land has been approved for housing. The Emerald Park project has started and will be located on the outskirts of the commercial activity in Six Roads. We need to build up the housing stock to give those persons who have invested heavily in those businesses an opportunity to succeed.

We are fortunate to have an economic zone in the parish of St. Philip and I have a duty as the Member of Parliament for St. Philip to make sure that whatever economic potential can be realised from an area like Six Roads is fully realised. With the build up of the housing stock and the addition of the 22 commercial establishments in the Emerald Park project we should see an engendering of economic activity in Six Roads.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give my full support to the Resolution as there is a big need for housing solutions to be provided in the constituency. I recognise that this has taken a while but I welcome it and I want to urge the Honourable Member for St. George North to proceed with speed so that those persons on the waiting list can have their desires met via the provision of housing solutions.

1:05 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. A.P. WOOD

Sir, before I close, I would like to respond to something the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said. It is most unfortunate when,

politicians, whether they are in this Honourable Chamber or they are on the outside, that they jump up, and as the saying goes, 'open their mouths and the story jumps out.' But I am certain that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy knows better than to say that this administration should not, in any way, move to protect the interest of, in some cases, some very poor persons, who have done real harm, in some cases, by some unscrupulous landlords.

I know that he gives the impression, from time to time, that he is not in sync with reality but it cannot be the case that at this stage, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy cannot be saying that the Ministry of Housing via the various organs, should not move to control the rents charged to poor persons, by some unscrupulous landlords who, while they are charging rents that they do not deserve, are not paying any attention whatsoever to the accommodation standards that they are providing.

Sir, if he is going to come in here and say that the Government should sit idly by and allow poor people who rent houses, some of them not even fit for people to be living in, and allow that sort of expectation to take place, I think something is fundamentally wrong with the thought processes of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

I do not think he reasons with his head, but if by chance he does mean it, I think the electorate in St. Lucy will be the best judge of what can happen to him. Sir, before he made that statement, he never struck me as a person who would want to see poor people being exploited in that way. I am all in support for this Minister of Housing in this Ministry of Housing and Lands for moving, whether it is done in a formal way through the establishment of a rent control board or whatever, but something tangible must be done to protect the interests of those persons who, because they are

unable to find alternative accommodation at this time, through a Government institution, something must be done to protect them from the tyranny which, in some cases, is unleashed by some unscrupulous landlords.

I am all for the control of rents. I am all for the insisting that housing standards should be mandated and once that is a clearly thought out, a well-enunciated policy which should be properly monitored. One of the basic rights of an individual is for shelter. In your attempt to have that basic need met, you should not be exploited or disadvantaged because landlords recognise that in this demand/supply situation in housing, it is one that is supply constrained.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy in his excitement, said that the Government and the Ministry of Housing should stay away and let the market forces take charge, he did not say it but that is what he means.

Asides.

Hon. A.P. WOOD:

I will come to that. He said in the meantime, while the Government is trying to providing the housing solutions to exhaust the excessive demand that resides with national housing, the landlord should be allowed to...

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I never said that in the meantime, the Government is providing the solutions. I said, Sir, that the Government should be providing the solutions, so that they would not have to deal with this particular problem.

If they had fully utilised the lots from the land bank, you would not have to pass legislation to correct this problem.

Hon. A.P. WOOD:

Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, if and only if, we were living in an utopian society. That is, if the National Housing Corporation or some other Government agency called by a different name, were able to provide housing solutions like they are coming off a conveyor belt, then there will be no need to interfere with what is happening in that segment of the market to which there are arrangements are established between a private landlord and a tenant.

Sir, to ensure that I would be speaking factual, I requested some information from the Minister of Housing, to respond to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I have learnt that since 1999, the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation, no fewer than 6 000 housing solutions would have been given. Of which 3 000 would be solutions in the form of lots, in the form of actual houses and in the form of houses for purchase and houses for rent.

Sir, in the area of housing solutions, lots, houses for purchase and houses for rent, we had 3 000 since 1999. We have another three thousand loans which I imagine would have gone to help with the repair and general upgrade of privately owned homes.

Sir, we have provided 6 000 since 1999. That would be in four years and a quarter and the Honourable Member for St. George North told me that the demand for housing solutions at the National Housing Corporation alone, is of the order of 5 000. I let the Honourable Member for St. George, however, provide the comparative analysis and he told me what he has been able to do since 1999. He will have to tell this Honourable Chamber now, what they would have done between 1986 and 1994. I know, notwithstanding the size of the land bank

that there is a point beyond which any Government institution cannot provide housing solutions.

I know that is as such as would not allow the National Housing Corporation to provide the housing solutions at the rate the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would want so as to obviate the need for the National Housing Corporation or any other Government agency to get involved in the segment of the housing market which deals with rental by private landlords, so as to bring some order to what is happening there. I know that the National Housing Corporation cannot do it with the best will in the world.

Sir, they cannot get it done and they will always be a need for this Minister of Housing and his team to intervene to protect the interest of those persons, largely poor, who are being exploited by unscrupulous landlords.

Sir, I used this information to make the point that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, I am certain, that he will do a little more thinking before the story jumps out of his mouth in the future, because the statement that he made, could come back to haunt him in the not too distant future.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by once again, by giving my full support to the Resolution. As I said earlier, all the land that has been acquired in St. Philip for housing will serve a very worthy purpose. I have given you statistics to indicate that there is an excessive need for housing solutions in my constituency and I would imagine the same thing exists in St. Philip North.

1:15 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

I have also brought some clarity and elaboration to the issue the Honourable Member for St. Lucy raised and I sincerely hope that he would not repeat statements along similar lines because all he is doing is exposing himself at this point.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Philip South for explaining in a very precise way the housing situation in Barbados. I also want to tell the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that the Ministry of Housing and Lands is currently carrying out studies to look at the demand for housing and also to examine why rents and prices of land have increased so that we can make recommendations to the Cabinet.

We do not want the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to pre-empt us at anytime in our policy, because very soon the Government will be able to enunciate a policy as it relates to the pricing of land and rent control.

With those remarks, I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

I beg to second that.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I beg that this House be now adjourn until Tuesday, April 22, 2003 at 1100 a.m. in the morning.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 22, 2003 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

1:20 p.m.