
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.13 a.m. on Tuesday, May 11, 2004.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, G.C.M. B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour J. M. Edghill, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and the Civil Service)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)
Mr. G. W. PAYNE, LL.B.
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of Labour and Social Security)
Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)
Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Public Works and Transport)
Mr. R. D. MARSHALL (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social Transformation)
Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B.
Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN
Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment)
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)
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)

Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)
Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil., J.P. (Minister of Energy and Public Utilities)
Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. (Edin.), J.P. (Minister of Health)
Mr. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Ed.), J.P.
Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S.
Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance) (Leader of the Opposition)
Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Industry and International Business)
Dr. W. F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS, J.P.
Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were led by Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes for the Meeting held on Tuesday May 4, 2004.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of Tuesday May 4, 2004 be confirmed subject to any observations, corrections, and or omissions.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (George Griffith) Order, 2004.
2. Statutory Boards (Pensions) (Pensionable Offices) Order, 2004.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Annual Report on the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund for the year 2002.
2. Annual Report on the Severance Payment Scheme for the year 2002.
3. Annual Report on the National Insurance Board for the year 2002.
4. Annual Report on the Unemployment Fund for the year 2002.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

Financial Statements of the Gymnasium Limited for the year ended March 31, 2000.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

The International Business (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2004.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the International Business (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2004 be read a first time.

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

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

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am greatly pleased to report that the Replies to Parliamentary Questions

Nos. 12 and 13 asked by the distinguished Honourable Member for Christ Church West are ready.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am advised that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 15 asked by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West on January 13, 2004 is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN
OF PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT QUEEN
STREET, SPEIGHTSTOWN IN THE PARISH
OF ST. PETER IN THIS ISLAND FOR
THE PROVISION OF AN ACCESS
TO THE BEACH

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, let me start by apologising to the House for not being in good voice and for a large amount of sniffing. I am still suffering the after effects of a cold and therefore I am going to be very brief in my introduction of these little Resolutions which we are proposing to do today.

Sir, you would recall that about 18 months ago the Government made a very strong statement on the matter of ensuring that the beaches remain free and accessible to members of the public as part of our heritage and patrimony. In that regard, the Cabinet took a decision that there were a number of locations at which there were difficulties with property owners, some of whom have beachfront properties, and others where the level of development was such that adequate access to the beach was either being impeded in some instances or not provided at all in others.

Mr. Speaker, as one looks across the full length of the West Coast, one notices that there are not many windows to the sea or large beach accesses for public use and so a conscious decision was made as a matter of policy proposed by the Ministry of Physical Development and the Environment as it then was, and then confirmed by the Cabinet that beach accesses would be provided and, where necessary, acquisitions of lands would be done to ensure that the public retains proper access to the beaches.

At St. Peter, a private company, Fort Dignity Limited, has access to parcels of land on which they are carrying out very expensive development which is anticipated will earn substantial foreign exchange for Barbados. However, it was observed by residents of the area that the lands they bought and have attempted to fence in are parts of land that were traditionally used by the public to facilitate public access to the beach.

The residents of the area who felt aggrieved by the development and the extent to which they felt there was an encroachment on their traditional right of access, made entreaties to the Ministry asking the Government to intervene in some way in order to ensure that access to the beach was not cut off or become so grossly inadequate as to be practically impossible for use.

Sir, in that context, officials of the Ministry paid a site visit to the area, spoke to the residents, had the area pointed out to them and satisfied themselves that if the development went along as contemplated, that the community would have been put at a disadvantage. Consistent therefore with the policy that the beachfront remains free and that traditional rights of access are not encroached upon, so that the Barbadian community is not at a disadvantage, and that there are adequate windows to the sea, the Cabinet took a decision that these acquisitions should be done to perpetuate the traditional beach access and the right of way for the community.

Sir, this is a matter that is going to come up time and again and administrations are going to have to deal with it very sensitively because the right to pass is sometimes entrenched in law by established usage over time, and sometimes it is not entrenched in law because the usage period is too short. Access for people in communities develop over a person's land being used as a short cut to a bus stop, to a major highway, to a school or to other community facility.

When development takes place, the rightful owner of the land seeks to build on it thereby cutting off this access. In some instances, the land is sold for residential or commercial development of a high value causing communities to feel aggrieved at seeing the development, which is how one gets the kind of adversarial "We and them" attitude in communities.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the average Barbadian is averse to national development. We understand as a people that there will be growth and that things cannot remain the same, but equally entrenched in the Barbadian psyche, is a knowledge that they must have their traditional rights of access and that they cannot and must not be put at

a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* those who are wealthy who can buy the property to which they had traditional access.

Sir, in balancing the rights and potential of developers and high-valued development, it is important that governments treat these matters with sensitivity and balance the rights of Barbadian citizens whose navel strings are buried here to continue having access to land and to communities particularly when it comes to beachfront access, so that people do not feel alienated and ostracised in the land of their birth.

Sir, I sought to frame it in this context for persons to understand what the Government is seeking to do in this instance. The Government, cognisant of the cries of the community, took a decision that it would compulsorily acquire the land. One knows that when there is a compulsory acquisition, there needs to be payment. There are two properties. The one that belongs to Fort Dignity Limited, the property which caused the traditional Barbadian residential community to become aggrieved, is some 217.2 square metres or just under 3 000 square feet, for those, who like me, are still stuck in the mode of feet and inches.

Sir, just on Saturday a man told me that he has 'O' Level Certificates and I laughed because I have not heard anyone say that in such a long time. He then said, "Miss Thompson, you are laughing at me because I have 'O' Levels, so you know I am an old man". I said to him that I am an old girl too because I have 'O' Levels as well. He then asked me if I did not do CXC's, and I said: "No, that I was before CXC time". So, Sir, I am still in the mode of feet and inches and not square metres, but I know how to do the conversion.

Asides.

10.30 a.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am touched by the kindness of the Honourable Member on the Other Side. I know that he may not be equally kind and generous when he gets up to speak but I accept it now that he is sitting, for what it is worth.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I was making the point that some of us are still very much stuck in the mode of feet and inches and, therefore, I know that it is useful to do the conversion. Therefore, when one sees square metres, one can multiply that by 10 and add an extra for good measure, in order to get a rough approximation. Therefore, 217.2 square metres would equal to approximately 2 500 square feet. This is the land owned by the developers, Fort Dignity Limited.

Mr. Speaker, it has been valued by the Commissioner of Land Tax at \$46 700 and a private Barbadian, Ms. Rita Licorish, whose land area measures 322.2 square metres or approximately 3 500 square feet, has been valued by the Commissioner of Land Tax at \$76 880. Those sums relating to an acquisition of 539.4 square metres are, in essence, the core of the Resolution which is before this Chamber today.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the policy with which I begun my comments, there are other areas in Christ Church, St. James, St. Peter and St. Lucy, which have been identified for acquisition to facilitate beach accesses where none now exists; where they are inadequate; where they became taken up; where there has been a traditional path that is being used by a village; where lands were bought and developed, and where these accesses have become closed out or inaccessible.

It is, therefore, important that as we go about developing further and as our borders are opened up in an era of globalisation and the economy starts to become flooded by people of means who are able to buy beachfront properties, no matter the cost, it is, therefore, the commitment of this Administration that whoever has access to money, it is critical that we ensure that the rights of the average Barbadian remain protected.

Sir, in some instances, given the value of the land, it is not always going to be possible to do outright acquisition as we are doing in this case. It was also part of the decision of the Cabinet at the time that we should, in some instances, have a lease from the landowner, or a licence or that we should go into an arrangement with them where we will agree that the Government will have access to the land for use by the public, in exchange for the landowners being allowed to close it off one day a year to retain their ownership rights. It would, therefore, mean that Government will not own the land but that the public would have a right of access and that Government will do some landscaping.

Sir, a concern was expressed at the time that even in developing a beach access, it is not every site that Government would want to overdevelop, fully landscape or green. While we wish to enhance the appearance of some of the beaches, some of these facilities, and would want to build on some of them, as we are going to do at Browne's Beach and as the National Conservation Commission has done at Worthing, because of the number of Barbadians who use that beach in the morning, there is need for a proper facility where they can store their food, change their clothes, have lockers, showers, *et cetera*, where they would have access to facilities that do not now exist.

As you see, there are many older citizens who use Browne's Beach for their early morning get-together and

baths, who would bring a bucket or a bottle which they would fill with water and wash their feet off by the side of the road or by the Coastal Zone Management Office. We feel the time has come to put proper facilities there.

Mr. Speaker, all of the sites under consideration will not lend themselves to such large-scale development. In some instances, we may not be able to put no more than a tap, where persons can wash their feet. In other instances, we may be able to put down some basic shrubbery to define and to light the area that will constitute the footpath.

In other areas, we may be able to have more complex landscape designs, but there are some where, depending on the location, like Skeetes Bay or Martin's Bay, one would not want to go in and landscape the beaches totally and change the landscape.

One would want to have a pristine beach, one that looks more natural than others, some that would give the feeling of under-development and would have a rustic look, more so than others.

It is also our intention to make sure that we balance the need to landscape and to provide facilities, with an understanding that a rustic landscape in itself has a certain charm and appeal, as against a more fully landscaped area.

Mr. Speaker, those are the issues that bring this Resolution to the Honourable Chamber for consideration today. I would wish to commend it to Honourable Members on Both Sides because, in this instance, I believe that in using the lands of a large development company to provide, to retain and to maintain a community right-of-way to the beach, that we have and are, in fact, doing the right thing, and that it would be worthy of the full support of this Honourable Chamber.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I rise obviously to second this Resolution and to begin by saying that I believe that the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment, might have been unintentionally misleading this Honourable Chamber when she said that she was not speaking in this debate in a fine voice.

Sir, I believe that the Honourable Chamber would have not only heard a speech delivered with great clarity but one that not only represented the specific local issues as they should have been represented but the Honourable Member has spoken very clearly and eloquently to the broader national issues pertaining to the symbolism of this development.

I would, therefore, wish to thank the Honourable Member and also the previous Minister of Housing, Lands

and the Environment, for having put us in a position where the Honourable House can treat to this particular matter today.

Mr. Speaker, the matter concerning Queen Street, Speightstown, in fact, could be symbolic like so many other areas in Barbados where the need for proper balanced development represents themselves. Sir, by proper balanced development, one thinks of the need for us to continue to encourage the implementation of investments that are of major substance economically that could expand the income employment, foreign exchange generating capacity of the country but to do so in a manner that is compatible with the needs of the local community, in a manner that would do as little damage or disruption of the way of life of these communities as the circumstances would allow.

Mr. Speaker, in large countries that proper balancing of development can be difficult. It becomes an even more complex challenge in very small societies, and no matter how complex the need may be to have that proper balance, as we carry forward the need of this country, we must never lose sight of the need to reconcile the two.
10.40 a.m.

This matter is before us precisely because we value on the one part the investment made of a very substantial nature at Fort Dignity, St. Peter that is seeking to optimize the natural attributes of the location near to a beach and major town to press previously unutilised land into an economic use. We greatly value that but also greatly respect the traditional rights of the people who have historically lived in the environs of Queen Street to continue to enjoy access to the beach no matter what may be the nature of the development that takes place around them.

Mr. Speaker, in another sense this reflects something that captures the very best of the Barbadian national personality. There is an essential charm in Barbados that derives from the fact that unlike so many other societies, Barbados has large, physical structures coexisting with the simplest homes.

Sir, the fact that people live cheek by jowl in simple accommodation alongside the most luxurious accommodation would suggest that this is a society where there is harmony in our development. Sir, this is not recent because Barbados has represented itself by the ability of all classes to live in the same environment in a state of harmony. There is no need for us to compartmentalise this society and we must encourage this blending if Barbados is to go forward in a harmonious way.

Mr. Speaker, this a refreshing departure from the way in which matters pertaining to access to the beach in the

parish of St. Peter would have been dealt with by previous administrations. In 1991, immediately after the General Elections, the access that the people in St. Peter would have enjoyed to the beach at Mullins Beach was denied by an arbitrary decision by the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, I am not holding the present members of the Democratic Labour Party responsible for the baggage of the past, but the Chief Town Planner allowed investors to build beyond the highwater mark.

Mr. Speaker, when I speak in terms of balancing the needs of the local community and the desires of large investors, I go back to that bad era of 1991 when Mullins' investors were allowed, over the protest of the Chief Town Planner, to build beyond the highwater mark. It is ironic that some of the people who were party to that Cabinet decision are often now in the forefront of leading marches at Mullins when the Chief Town Planner is now forcing people to comply with proper development requirements.

Sir, this is a refreshing departure from a bad history where St. Peter and its relations to previous Administrations were concerned. In 1991, it was Mullins, by 1993, the access that the people of St. Peter used to enjoy to the land at Heywoods was severely disrupted under circumstances that may warrant its own enquiry.

You will remember that Heywoods was built by the Barbados Labour Party in a manner that allowed people to enjoy access to the beach, but when it was being privatised, there were a series of letters written by the Honourable Member for St. John that will stand out in infamy as the way in which matters relating to development should not be managed.

Sir, access to the beach at Heywoods by the people in St. Peter was being cut off and legitimate issues were being raised by the Chairman, the late Leo Leacock, protesting to the then Minister, the Honourable Member for St. John about the manner in which the deal was being sanctified.

Then there was the famous letter, written by the Honourable Member for St. John to the then Prime Minister, which I have already made a document of this House, urging that the Chairman of the Tourism Investment Incorporated be silenced. Rather than having generous access to the beach at Heywoods, the people in St. Peter were given a little track. Mr. Speaker, that is the sad legacy of the relationship between the Honourable Member for St. John and the matter pertaining to the beach in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to further acquisition, the Minister of Housing was right to see this acquisition as part

of the overall development of Speightstown. There is another piece of land to the north of Speightstown between the playing field and Almond Beach Hotel which, in my view, represents the last remaining area of wetland in this country.

The private owners have been treating to potential private developers to sell this land for a substantial sum but because it is one of the few remaining areas of land on the West Coast of Barbados, by reason of its scarcity, its value is enhanced but it has a value to the country that is greater than its private worth.

It is not only the last remaining piece of land of its nature on the West Coast of Barbados, but I suspect that because it is an area in which waters flows freely, it might be an area of great archeological interest.

It would be a matter of greatest distress for the Honourable Member for St. Peter and I trust to all Barbadians, if this last remaining piece of land on the West Coast of Barbados was to be allowed to be used for commercial development when it lends itself more approximately to be used for the purposes of parkland.

I want to urge the Minister of Housing to press on with negotiations with the private owner to make sure that this piece of land, owned by SAGICOR, through which there is a watercourse, be acquired by the State and be transformed into a park that would be for the benefit of the entire society rather than be transformed into an office complex.

There must be balanced and sensitive development and, certainly, at this time, the sensitivity of our development requires that areas that have that environmental and historical significance be brought into the public domain.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of land at Queens Street butts and abounds lands at Fort Denmark which is owned by the State. Happily, the Sanitation Authority Depot that should never have been located on the beach has now been moved and Fort Denmark is now in a position to be pressed into service to maximise the real value that it offers Barbados.

Sir, Fort Denmark was once the site of a fort that played a very important role in the history of Barbados. I am aware that there are plans by the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. to redevelop Fort Denmark as part of the general initiative to build heritage assets for Speightstown with a view to making it the heritage capital of the country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to use this opportunity, speaking from the Floor of the House on behalf of my constituents, to state that the plans for the rehabilitation and refreshing of Speightstown as an important urban centre could obviously not be finished until such time as Fort Denmark is restored.

The lovely piece of land to the south of Speightstown butting and abounding this piece of land that has been developed by private developers is now brought back and the opportunity for income and employment creation has been attended to.

10.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that issues relating to access to this country are now being discussed with less emotion and more reason. Once again, it gives me the opportunity to underscore that it has never been the intention or will it ever be the intention of this Government to have the beaches in this country privately owned.

There are some Caribbean countries where the private ownership of beaches is not just normal. It is the right of private individuals. We take these things in this country for granted but, for example, in a country like Jamaica that claims to enjoy strong progressive credentials, almost every beach is privately owned. The notion of guaranteeing access to the beaches is not a right enjoyed by the ordinary citizen. People have to pay to traverse beach land in other Caribbean countries.

Sir, I know that has been an emotive issue and Government has respected the point of view of those who would obviously have expressed concern about the beach environment and the threat it could pose to the access of beaches. We listened to their views and we respect them because we understand that they reflect a latent concern that we do not allow the need to develop the resource of the country to be trampled upon something that is precious.

Sir, in 10 years this Government has already proven its worth. There are those who would have sought to impute that there was some secret arrangement which would allow private beaches in this country. We have been in office long enough for people in Barbados to prove at least two things, one, whether we had a secret plan with the International Monetary Fund to devalue the Barbados dollar and for replications that rest upon the secret deal as replications that are worth the while, or replications that are worthless in their entirety. Sir, this Government has been in office long enough for the public to judge whether we had any thought of allowing private beaches in this country.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it needs to be said that far from allowing private beaches in Barbados, Government's investment programmes, through the Coastal Conservation Project, Phase 2, has, as a component, of not just protecting the beach but establishing a number of new beach accesses and developing them in an aesthetically pleasing way, not only for the benefit of visitors but especially to develop those beach accesses taking into account, predominantly

local community requirements and interests. It is a physical, tangible and an important expression of our determination to continue to protect the quality of life of our people by ensuring that the access to the beaches of this country is a right that the ordinary Barbadian will continue to enjoy without that right being fettered in any arbitrary or improper manner.

I thank the Minister of Housing for treating to this matter in my constituency. She has also spoken in terms of making sure that in other constituencies where there are similar community rights that need to be protected and enhanced, that the Ministry would be keen to do so.

Finally, in relation to Queen Street, this acquisition will be part of a broader programme to fully develop the area. The Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated is now in Speightstown doing some very important work. The canalisation, in the beautification of the Salt Pond, I am sure would be a blessing to the heart of the newest member of my constituency, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. I trust that he too, like the rest of the citizens of our constituency, would now utilise the facility. I embrace the Honourable Member as one of ours, Sir.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated is about to embark on a streetscape project for Queen Street to give it the same kind of aspects as has been done in St. Lawrence Gap. I want to use this occasion to urge tolerance on the part of the local community and I say that deliberately. In a few years time there will be a West Coast Sewerage Project.

The Government is trying to reconcile and rationalise our planning by making sure that when we do the streetscape in Speightstown, that we put in the facilities for the West Coast Sewerage Project so that we do not make a public investment now and then come back later and dig up the area. We are going to have one coherent development.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, whenever there is any development of this nature that has as its core the provision of a major public benefit, there is generally an outcry on the part of those who see the initial inconvenience without seeing the long-term benefit. If I may illustrate.

You will recall that there was a certain gentleman who was better known in this country for "proper pork", who led a very strident criticism when the Black Rock Road was being repaired. It was evident to a blind man that the Black Rock Road was in such total disrepair that it had to be fixed. However, there was this strident criticism, that was obviously not joined by the Honourable Member

for St. Michael West, that the Government was doing a bad thing by fixing the road because it was cutting off access to his business.

Mr. Speaker, I have not heard this gentleman quarrel recently now that the road has been fixed and the business is now enjoying the bounty of public investment. In fact, I think that I heard him speak louder about "proper pork".

Sir, there is a tendency in this country that is best represented in a song by Peter Tosh that everybody wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die. Every time that we have to do something in the country that is going to have a major public benefit, people are encouraged to see the short-term inconvenience without seeing the medium and long-term benefit.

Perhaps there might be a need for us to find a happy medium. It has not been part of the history of this country for compensation to be paid for inconvenience. If we are to open that chapter now, perhaps, on advice we may have to open it, let us open it with careful consideration as to the fiscal consequences. It is obviously a matter of which we are disposed to treat sensitively.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Let us understand that we may have to move in that direction of compensating people for inconvenience. Sir, the Attorney-General just advised me that torts reform all over the world treat it as a legitimate issue but while recognising it as a legitimate issue, we should not allow the criticism about the short-term implications of development to intimidate us, that we do not refrain from doing the necessary things that are required to keep the country on the move, especially in relation to the improvement of our built environment.

Mr. Speaker, I thought I would raise these matters. It is such a refreshing thing that the Honourable Member for St. John no longer has anything to do whatsoever with anything pertaining to St. Peter and his approach to beach accesses, as was exemplified in the cruelty inflicted upon my constituents when Heywoods was being privatised. That is now a part of the dismal ugly past of a former Democratic Labour Party Administration which I know will not be represented in these...

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy should not speak because he is a man who had the opportunity to strike a blow for access for Barbadians to the beach. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy had land on the beach side and he sold it to a man from New York.

Asides.

10.50 a.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Peter is deliberately misleading the House. The records of this House will show that I have only owned two parcels of land in Barbados. One is situated at No. 12 Welches Terrace, St. Thomas and the other at St. Elmo's Terrace in St. Lucy. There is no record to show that this land has been sold to any white man anywhere in Barbados. Therefore, the Honourable Member will have to withdraw those remarks.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I could have been misled and I am prepared to agree, but I was once on an aircraft and a gentleman told me that he is going to take over a piece of property in the Garden in St. James on which was St. Elmo's. Sir, I was so shaken because as you know, I still like to drop in at St. Elmo's in Moon Town. I like to drop in at St. Elmo's in the Garden, St. James...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member again is misleading the House. Sir, because a man has a name of Vernon White, it does not necessarily mean that he is a white man.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is accusing me of an illegal act, which is selling land that I never owned. The Honourable Member for St. James North is quite aware of the owner of that land, who now lives in New York and sold that land to someone who had built townhouses. If the Honourable Member does not represent the facts of his constituency, then he is not deserving to be in his seat or in this Chamber.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I never said the gentleman was white. I know that he did indicate that there is a property in the Garden, St. James which he was going to take over. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy should have spoken to me then, because you know this Party feels that the property in that general environment of John Moore's Shop should not fall into foreign hands.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member would want me to allow him to take over a piece of land that belongs to a person who

looks like me, who is of the same nature of me, Sir, and I could not have condoned him depriving a poor person of land to give to myself.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the symbolism of the point that I am trying to make, eludes the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. Mr. Speaker, the whole point of the debate, as led by the distinguished Minister of Housing and supported by myself, is that there has to be a balancing of our development.

Part of the balancing of the development, Mr. Speaker, must involve young, black Barbadian entrepreneurs who have businesses on beach land in this country, feeling that they too should be able to hold on to their businesses close to the beach, and develop them like anybody else. This is part of the balancing of which I speak.

Sir, perhaps while I may be making a joke with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, there are too many Barbadians who find themselves in that circumstance, where they are operating businesses or have homes close to the beach, and then somebody comes along from abroad and rather than maintain that relationship, they sell and then the Government is blamed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Peter is misleading this House because of the simple reason, Sir, that he is giving the House the impression that a man, by the name of Mr. Vernon White, bought the land from me, now that the land has since passed to a white man for \$3 million that I had something to do with the ownership of the land. I want the records of this House to be cleared, Sir, that I had nothing to do with the ownership of that land, the selling of that land, and who owns it now.

Sir, I would like the Honourable Member to inform this House that he has deliberately misled this House and there is no truth to the charge against me. If he wants to lay a charge against me, he should go further north, as he spoke about St. Elmo's Terrace, and say that those poor people who have land near to the beach have been empowered by me.

This is the type of record the Honourable Member needs to speak about in this House, having an asset and allowing poor people to share in that asset and to improve themselves when he speaks about this Honourable Member from This Side.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for helping me to sustain this debate, and to make the broader general point that I am

sure all Honourable Members on Both Sides will agree to, namely, that we all want to live in a Barbados where St. Elmo's can be located next to the beach but that we can only do so, if the owners of St. Elmo's allow us to help them, and that is the point I am trying to establish in this House today.

The Government can create an environment only, but there are too many instances where people acting in their own private capacity do things upon the basis of a private calculus that leads to a result which does not always coincide with the greater public good.

The balancing of our development really is about bringing the public good and the private good into closer harmony. I am telling the House, Sir, on behalf of all the Honourable Members on This Side that it is not always going to be easy, but to the extent that we can, we are going to make sure that there is that harmony.

Sometimes it would require us having to do things for which people will criticise us. For example, this Government was criticised when we refused to allow a cultural icon like John Moore's Shop or Mapp's Corner Shop at Eagle Hall to be sold to the highest bidder abroad. We feel that we have to say these things, Mr. Speaker, because Barbados is not open to the highest bidder.

Sir, the people at Fort Dignity understand that point very well. They have come to Barbados and made a substantial investment in this country, but their actions would have been of a nature to affect people's traditional rights to enjoy access to the beach in an unfettered way. We have sought to balance the interest of the two, and that is the kind of society in which we want to live.

There will be other instances in which we will have to do these things, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we balance our development properly and we shall do it. I thank the Honourable Member for St. James South for giving us the opportunity in this debate to treat to this local issue, but also to treat to the broader point of balancing national development.

I am obliged to you.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the acquisition of this parcel of land at Queen Street in St. Peter, but it has become very apparent that there is a need for a major debate on the development plan for Barbados. In fact, since 1991 there has been no debate in either House of Parliament on the National Development Plan for Barbados. We had some major amendments in 1998 which cost in

excess of \$2 million to be prepared, and I think the time has come really for the Lower House and the Upper House to be given the opportunity to raise several issues.

There are some practitioners who believe that in the absence of presenting a development plan to the House that you could query the acquisition of lands across Barbados, given that an acquisition would not be in conformity with the National Development Plan.

11.10 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, given the establishment of a Ministry of Environment and the existing Town and Country Planning Act, perhaps there is a need for some degree of harmonisation between the Town and Country Planning Act and the Land Acquisition Act. It is very evident from what was said by the Honourable Member for St. Peter, as well as the Honourable Member for St. James South, that we have come to that delicate stage where there is need for a full-scale debate on this very important pressing issue of development.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is going to become even more apparent when we start to look at the acquisition of lands around Kensington Oval whether or not there is a need for a major debate on the location of our new cricket stadium. It has nothing to do with disagreements on the world pact or the bid, but has to do with the most effective use of our precious land and whether it is not time to be more organised rather than *ad hoc* in the way in which we are treating our limited land space.

We have already expressed our support by way of the magazine to be made public, but I look forward to such a debate because it would give us even greater opportunity to look at several issues pertaining to windows to the sea on both the South Coast and the West Coast of Barbados and it would give us greater opportunity to speak to the overall land utilisation in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, since it is a part of our constitutional requirement, it is only but fitting that some 13 years later that we are given such an opportunity. It has not happened as far as I am aware. I was a Member of both the Upper House and the Lower House since 1994 and I cannot recall any debate on the Development Plan.

Mr. Speaker, the development that is taking place within Speightstown is welcome, but some concerns have been raised by some business persons in the area. The recent construction of the Boardwalk to the north of Speightstown which is the main area of activity has shifted the wave energy to the south to the extent that the waves are now affecting the foundations of some businesses on the seaward side of Speightstown.

While there has not been any major discussion, I think there is need for Government to pay a visit and enquire of the kind of damage that has been done as a result of the shifting of the wave energy occasioned by the building of the new Boardwalk which is really and truly an excellent site, especially for lovers, who can walk along the seaside and observe the sunset at any point in time.

There is substantial merit in the Boardwalk that was placed from the bandstand area to the north towards Almond Beach Hotel, but it has certainly started to create some problems for businesses, especially Fisherman Pub, so there is a need for Government to go and check to see whether or not something can be resolved.

Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult under any circumstance not to agree with the acquisition of a parcel of land that would give Barbadians greater access to the sea. There is no doubt, because I have been spending some time in that area, that the area identified by the Honourable Member for St. Peter has substantial potential for a park. Therefore, I support any initiative by Government to acquire that parcel of land to be developed for the people of Barbados.

In addition, there is obviously a need to improve the level of activity in the Speightstown area. It has good potential. However, I said before in a debate that when you check the information, there has actually been a slowing of the population growth within the northern part of Barbados. While we are seeking to develop Speightstown as a major town in Barbados, we have to be concerned about the lack of population growth within St. Andrew, St. Peter and other parts of the northern districts of Barbados.

Any attempt to develop this area is going to require the availability of parking space because there is nowhere to park on the old Speightstown Road and there is hardly any parking facility on the new road, so to really and truly develop the Speightstown area is going to require consumers to have greater access. The only way that can happen is if persons from other parts of Barbados are able to come to Speightstown, park their cars and increase the potential and the capacity of shopping that could occur in the area.

Mr. Speaker, as a new addition to the northern part of the island, and as a person who has become extremely fond of the area not only because of the quietness but because of the natural environment, the wind and the freshness of the air, it would be remiss of me to do otherwise but to support any effort to further develop this area that I have come to love and appreciate.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to support this acquisition for the lands in St. Peter. I went there and witnessed what many of the residents, especially those living in the Queen Street area, have to go through. Mr. Speaker, a number of complaints were made to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to provide access for those persons living near the beach. Mr. Speaker, for years many of these homes were situated in this area and the residents wanted to know that when the development at Queen's Street was completed that they will have this access.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment has already pointed out, it was Government's decision that we would provide access wherever possible for persons who were denied access or who have found themselves into problems. Over and over again a number of persons who own land sometimes block the pathway of persons who have been traversing these tracks for years and whenever this happens, Government has to come in and provide an acquisition.

I recall something like this happening at Charnocks years ago where we had to go in and unblock a path. I am not sure as yet what has happened with the development at Charnocks but about two years ago we had acquired the land to provide access to those persons, who, through no fault of theirs, were denied access.

11.20 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that Government continues to look at ways to provide access to communities. In the country areas, there are a number of minor roads that are in need of upgrading and, therefore, over the coming years, it is Government's intention to upgrade these facilities.

Sir, through both the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, we have provided a number of accesses to small communities and to help those persons who were living under severe problems in terms of finding ways to get to their homes.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, we have seen developments that have occurred over the past 20 years. Throughout Barbados we are seeing new developments springing up only because of the improved conditions of the roads. Therefore, this Government must feel very proud that decisions have been taken during the 1990s to pass the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act to develop inner Barbados, as well as to revise the amendment to the Act in 1995 when we looked to improve conditions in urban Barbados.

Sir, there is need to continually look at how we could improve and provide access to the wider communities by providing better and wider roads and better sidewalks. Sometimes there are situations where persons practically have to walk in the road, instead of on the sidewalks, which can cause problems.

Mr. Speaker, in this financial year, Government will provide access for a number of persons living in the Green Hill area, where access is now limited. We will try to improve that road corridor, as well as other suburban areas in Carrington's Village, as we have noticed there is a need for access for those persons as well.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years we have provided access to persons living in the Maxwell area. I recall when there were problems in relation to access to beaches. Government had acquired land on the southern end, which has now been developed. We have also looked at areas in St. Peter and in St. James, where there are now open windows to the sea. We will continue to upgrade Browne's Beach. It was this Government that encouraged the open window to the sea at Bay Street. We have also noticed open windows when we had Crown land in St. James near Jordan's Supermarket, Fitts Village.

Mr. Speaker, this is important because as we drive through the country, not only does it lend itself to the freshness, but we see that tourists and residents alike enjoy looking at these windows to the sea, which is important for our development as a people.

Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the Ministry of Public Works that whenever possible, we will try to encourage owners of land to provide these accesses. We have noticed this happening in the areas of St. James and St. Peter, that there are a number of homes off Highway 1 that do not have access.

Sir, years ago, we had started to look at providing access to these persons but we have encountered many problems, including some legal problems. Sometimes these persons own the land and wilfully refuse to allow persons living close by, to traverse their properties. We are hoping that in the future a programme could be put in place in order to help those persons now living off Highway 1.

It is also the intention of the Government that we will not only help to put in roads and services but wherever possible, we will acquire the land from those persons who sometimes do not even have title to such lands. We have noticed that in many cases, that because of historical connections, there are some people who seem to own the

land but, in reality, when a check is made at the Registry, the land is not owned by such persons.

Mr. Speaker, for a number of years, legal battles have continued in the court system where persons are trying to find ownership to lands. For example, in the constituency of Flat Rock, St. George, persons were trying to get access to land through title. The land cannot be subdivided because the rightful owners cannot be found.

We are, therefore, hoping that a decision could be made so that persons could get titles to lands and could get access to their homes. In most of these cases, many of these persons cannot improve their homes because they cannot get titles to their land. I hope that a solution could be found through the acquisition process.

Mr. Speaker, this is in keeping with Government's programme to provide development for many persons living near the sea for many years but who cannot get proper access to and from their homes.

It is also important to note that in the St. Philip area where the rock bluff drops down to the sea, where for years, persons have been using that track to get to the beach, again the owner has complained that persons break the fence down while travelling on his land. I believe that a solution should be found to help those persons who have been travelling in that area because sometimes the owner blocks the path, denying them access to the sea.

Sir, as the Honourable Member has said, there is need where one day a year the owner may put up a chain to show ownership but that it is not in every case where Government can acquire and, therefore, other solutions to providing legal access to persons who want to get to the beaches and to their homes must be found.

I believe this Government has done a lot in terms of helping Barbadians to own homes. We have tried to look at the various avenues and will continue doing so in the interest of providing a better society, one that is based on fairness to persons who are looking to develop themselves.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank this Honourable House for allowing persons like myself to be late, and still not be late. I was privileged to be in the car this morning and was able to follow the debate from these Chambers.
11.30 a.m.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party has been accused of many things which I have not heard being rejected. We can speak in this House about what occurred at Mullins Beach and Heywoods but I have no reason to get into debate about anything pertaining to those matters, if they are correct but the history of this House should be told in a proper way.

I cannot understand why the Government, who claims to be in the interest of the masses of people, can speak about Heywoods and Mullins but not about Port St. Charles. Sir, Port St. Charles was nothing to do with the Democratic Labour Party because when the Bill was passed in this Chamber in 1996, the Democratic Labour Party did not form the Government at that time. It would be interesting to read that debate because only two persons spoke then, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, who is now the Chief Justice of Barbados, and myself.

Sir, on that occasion, I warned this House that it was not fair to the people of St. Peter or St. Lucy for more than one acre of beach access to be taken from the people of St. Lucy and St. Peter and replaced by less than 100 feet of land to the north. Those who understand the north would know that particular beach has a reef near it which creates a hindrance to those who want to swim in that area.

Mr. Speaker, everybody should understand that what occurs in St. Peter is as important as what occurs in St. Lucy because it affects the people of both parishes. There is no reason for us to criticise each other about development for the north of Barbados because this development is as much the right of the Prime Minister of Barbados as it is the right of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Sir, whatever occurs for St. Peter in a positive way will also impact on the people of St. Lucy and *vice versa*. This is why I will support any development for St. Peter because I am also supporting development for the people of St. Lucy as well.

Mr. Speaker, it was not the Democratic Labour Party that took away the best beach in the north of the island from the people in that area. There is no doubt that the beach which runs from Almond Beach to the north to Mr. Oliver Hind's house is one of the best beaches in Barbados. There is also no doubt that the people of the north have been deprived of that privilege and have been limited in their access. Sir, I am not saying that development should not occur, but I am only trying to bring some balance in here today.

It is wrong for the Barbados Labour Party to give the impression that the Democratic Labour Party deprived the people of the north, that they are holy and have not done the

same. If I plead guilty on this matter on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party prior to 1994, the Prime Minister of Barbados would also have to plead guilty on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party from 1994 until now because the beach at Port St. Charles was accessible to the people of St. Lucy and St. Peter.

Sir, we are back at square one and now that this has occurred, we now need to formulate a policy in the interest of the people of Barbados and stop the politics. It is clear that we are playing politics on an issue in which we need to come together as reasonable men with experience in politics and put a policy decision before this Parliament so that the wrongs which occurred previously would not occur again.

I am on record in this House saying that the important thing in Barbados is not the ability to own beach land but the ability to have access to the beach. Sir, I go unchallenged on that particular issue. I would not recommend any poor person in Barbados to own land on the beach and keep it because there is a high cost attached to owning land on the beach. I am not saying that if you own land on the beach and there is a buffer to protect you that you should sell it, but when you own land directly on the beach, the maintenance is extremely high.

For example, a friend of mine owns property at Cove Bay and to keep the house looking reasonably well, he has to paint it every year. Can you imagine a poor person owning that property and every year having to spend large sums of money to maintain it?

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is misleading the House. He is giving the impression that when Port St. Charles was built, there was no access to the beach. It is totally false because there is access to the beach on the southern end. Secondly, he must tell the House whether or not he believes that poor people should own land and whether they should sell that land to rich foreigners.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, it is regrettable that some people come to this House and listen but cannot repeat a single line correctly when they want to challenge you.

Mr. Speaker, on the point of Port St. Charles, I said that over one mile of beach was exchanged for 100 feet but the Honourable Member for St. George North did not hear that. He is also saying that I said that poor people should not own land on the beach but I never said that because in order for them to sell the land, they must first own it. I simply said that when poor people own land, they must look at the opportunity cost of having that land.

Sir, poor people cannot continue to own land on the beach because the Government of the day has made owning land on the beach a liability for poor people because of the high land taxes.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is a fact that if you have a lot and somebody builds high value properties around it, the value of your lot would also increase. However, there is a mechanism built into the land tax system that allows you to appeal against the imposition of tax at the high value.

Sir, many poor black Barbadians caught by this, appeal to the Commissioner of Land Tax for relief of land taxes and get it. The notion that black Barbadians or small property owners cannot own beach front property because of high taxes is very false.

Further, many chattel houses would fall within the value of properties of \$125 000 which are no longer subject to tax so the Honourable Member is really misleading the House.

11.40 a.m.

Sir, what the Honourable Member needs to say is that while in Barbados we complain about foreigners, white people, non nationals and big businesses buying up land, there are black people like us who are selling to them. It is the poor black people on the beach front who...

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, nobody can tell an individual who to sell land to. Sir, what is ridiculous, if that is wrong for an individual to sell land, the crime is committed when it is aided and abetted by Government. If you are saying that poor people should not sell land, then Government accommodates them by giving them all kinds of concessions in order for them to sell, then the crime cannot be committed by the person selling the land. The crime has to be committed by the person accommodating the sale and that happens to be Government.

Sir, special development, waivers and so on. Sir, from 1994 you will see them.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and seeking to give innocent members of the public the

impression that the creation of concessions act as an impetus or catalyst for persons to buy land from poor people. It operates the other way around. People see the land, buy it and then seek the development concessions the same way the Democratic Labour Party did at Royal Westmoreland.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: If that is true and if the Honourable Member for St. James South is saying that the concessions are not healthy to development, then I am saying that we need to bring every concession to this Parliament and let us abolish them. The Honourable Member is saying that the investors do not need the concessions and that the Barbados Labour Party brought an investment climate to this Parliament that was needed by foreign investors.

Mr. Speaker, the Property Transfer Tax that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew and myself have been complaining about is one that works in the interest of foreign investors. Therefore, when the Honourable Member says that there is nothing to be shown, the Honourable Member for St. James South is misleading the House by giving the impression that the Property Transfer Tax does not work in the interest of foreign investors.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James South said that those things do not work in the interest of foreign investors.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I said in this Honourable House that there are too many Honourable Members on the Government's Side who can only debate what they see and that is why whenever they get up to speak they quote from Shakespeare and they cannot expand on what Shakespeare said.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member does not have to be committed to a written document to expand on anything. Learning is about expansion and I cannot come to this Parliament and be tied to a document that is four or five lines and I am expected to speak on that without speaking on other matters that are relevant to the debate and that is exactly what I am doing today.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: It sounds as if you are trying to convince yourself.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, Sir. I am trying to convince the person who is pointing at the land acquisition Bill that is before me, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We have to understand that Speightstown has always been seen as the second town of Barbados. A few weeks ago, I wrote in a column in the *Barbados Advocate* and pointed out that based on what is happening in Barbados causes me to be worried. It is clear to me that this Government seems not to have the interest of the investors in the north of Barbados at heart and they have given up the right to Speightstown and have transferred it to Warrens.

Sir, I have been calling on this Government for a long time to relocate some of its offices to Speightstown and this could not happen. However, this Government could not build its largest complex in Warrens when I was asking the Government to do likewise in the north of the island. The excuse was given by the Minister of Housing, the Honourable Member for St. James South, that no land was available in Speightstown for such a project.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a lot of foolishness in this Honourable House this morning. When I say foolishness, I mean that it does not relate to what I know. Sir, it does not reflect on the Chair, so please do not take what I said as anything negative.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I heard that there is no space available for offices or parking space in Speightstown. Last night while I was watching television, the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated said that they are very good at reclaiming land to create parking space in Bridgetown and buildings for Government.

Sir, am I to believe that this Government is so intent on concentrating on urban Barbados that they do not think about rural Barbados? It is clear to me that there is a policy of this Government to develop Bridgetown and ignore the rural areas.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Instead of locating the new complex for cricket to the north of Barbados, there are removing all the commercial buildings and residences from the area close to Kensington Oval and relocating them all across Barbados and this is a lack of foresight.

In addition to that, the Government of St. Lucia recognising that the Government of Barbados does not have any foresight, submitted a bid for World Cup Cricket and asked Barbados to tag along.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: St. Lucia, who we used to employ...

Mr. SPEAKER: What has that got to do with beach access?

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am getting there. It is in my head.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, along with the beach access that we have, we need to reclaim some land in the north of the island the same way that we are able to successfully claim land in urban Barbados. In order for us to develop a proper car park in the north of the island, we have to reclaim some land in the area of the old public bath in Speightstown. Mr. Speaker, there will no longer be the excuse that people are shopping at Warrens because there is ample parking space and none at Speightstown.

Sir, when this Government is being judged, it will be judged on the fact that they had the opportunity to develop this country and that they refused to do so. Mr. Speaker, since the 1950s and 1960s, there was no other administration that had the opportunity to develop this country and did not take the opportunity to do so. This Administration had the opportunity to develop a second hospital, seaport, airport and a cricket complex and did nothing about it even though they had the money to do so.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South walks around Barbados saying how well tourism did this year. 11.50 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, please. I know you said it is in your head but it is not clear to us, and you are really irrelevant now, please.

I am suggesting to you to get back to the Resolution please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will ease the coin to protect you, Sir, and make it softer.

Sir, based on what I am saying, Speightstown and the north of Barbados, with proper beach access, lend to development for community tourism at such a level that no one would understand. This is why, if we do not have the proper access and the reclaiming of land in Speightstown in the right way, the people from areas such as Boscobel and in Pie Corner, will not lend themselves to community tourism which did well for us during the cricket season.

If we did not have the community tourism because of beach access, we would not have been able to count the numbers that we had. I am calling on the Government, because of beach access, Sir, to tell me what percentage community tourism delivered during the cricket season, especially the last Test Match.

I do not want those figures from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. I want them from the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. I would believe his figures on this particular matter because I know he understands the contribution of community tourism to Barbados and the importance of beach access to make community tourism the gem.

I am saying, Sir, everything that the Prime Minister will bring for the development of the north of Barbados, I will support. I cannot support him when he tends to lay the blame only on the Democratic Labour Party, but his Administration is just as guilty of allowing Port St. Charles the same concessions.

Then, Sir, what the Honourable Member might say and I might agree that in order to cut the channel into Port St. Charles, *et cetera*, to enhance the property down there, maybe, you had to give up some beach. If that is the argument, I cannot fault him, but in the same breath, you cannot have your cake and believe that the other person cannot have theirs. Sir, fairness is what I am calling for in debating.

Sir, I am saying that the Democratic Labour Party has a proud record in enhancing the lives of the masses of people of Barbados, and I am proud to speak on their behalf. I know the history of it and whenever I hear anybody challenging the Democratic Labour Party, once they are wrong, I will speak on behalf of that great political Party of which I know its history. It is the only Party I have ever had affiliation with, and from the age of 13...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I do not mind being expelled. They even tried to expel Jesus Christ, so who am I? I do not need to be recognised by anyone. Sir, once I go to sleep at nights and get up feeling happy, I am a happy man,

so the Honourable Member must also remember when she speaks about expelling that nobody ever had the authority to fire me yet.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Anyhow, I will protect your back. As you know, I have always protected you.

I want to also say something else. I am proud of the Prime Minister for the confidence he has in his Minister of Housing, and I hold the whole Government responsible for whatever occurs within the Ministry of Housing. I heard it from no other person but the Prime Minister, who happens to be the chief Minister, that he is happy with the way the Minister of Housing is functioning. It means that the policy of the Minister is the policy of the Government.

Sir, the Port St. Charles Development Bill which was the biggest, most important and controversial debate in this House had two speakers, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. Nobody else felt it was their business to speak on behalf of the people of St. Peter.

On correction, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter got up on a point of order to interrupt the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for saying that they were depriving his constituents and my constituents from having beach access and that is the only place I have seen him speak in this particular debate and that was on a point of order. Then, the Honourable Member for St. Peter got up on a point of elucidation and his argument was, on that particular point that the developers were nourishing the beach to make it better, Sir, and that my argument that the beach was limited, that they would have corrected it.

In other words, the Honourable Member did not say that I was misleading the House. He acknowledged that the developers were interfering with something that occurred previously. His excuse was, Sir, that the developers would have made wrong right. I guess the Democratic Labour Party would have argued that when they put in the subsidiary road to the north of Almond Beach that they were doing likewise also.

I am saying, Sir, it is equal that the Democratic Labour Party seems to have a relationship with Almond Beach, and the Barbados Labour Party has a relationship with Port St. Charles. Am I to believe that the Barbados Labour Party is saying that they can choose the friends for the Democratic Labour Party but they have their right to choose their own friends and give the concessions to whomever they feel like, but when it is done by the Democratic Labour Party, it is wrong?

I thought Governments operate in the interest of people. If they are saying that what we did at Almond Beach was wrong, then I could clearly state that they had to be doubly wrong when they did what occurred at Port St. Charles. For the simple reason, they would have accused us of committing a crime and they walked in and double committed the same crime.

Sir, let us put this behind us and look at the way forward. The way forward must be that every person in Barbados who wants, should have beach access. Also, as from today, the Government will agree with what I have been saying all the time, that the Government takes control of those lands which allow beach access, so that the total population of Barbados will be able to have beach access, especially now we are speaking so much about community tourism.

Sir, in order for community tourism to continue to contribute, you must have beach access. You have heard me on many occasions trying to impress on this Government, and you have heard the Minister of Tourism asking me what community tourism I speak of, Sir. It is true that you have been privileged to be in here again to hear him reverse himself, as he normally does, whenever it relates to me.

Sir, everybody in Barbados knows that the tourism policy that gave growth was not the tourism policy formulated by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, but the one copied from me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think that you are really taking the intelligence of this Chamber for granted, that you could presume that you can just, without meaning, slip words into your statements and then tell us that it is...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, that is a serious charge.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am trying to get some relevance to your speech, please. You have four minutes to conclude please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your ruling, and if you said you cannot get relevance, I will abide with that, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No. I will not interfere with Mr. Speaker. If Mr. Speaker says he cannot get relevance, I will not challenge him. Nobody should challenge Mr. Speaker on anything. I will abide with your ruling.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Have you concluded, Sir? Order please. Please, please, order please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, we also have to be very careful. I support the Prime Minister on his view as it relates to the wetlands in St. Peter. I also think it is very wrong to give the impression that those lands could easily be developed into commercial usage. If so, it tells me that we have no guidelines for development.

I am saying to the Prime Minister that if he wants that land to remain as it is, or to be enhanced from an environmental point of view, he will get support from this end because I understand very well of what he speaks. 12.00 noon.

I find it very hard to believe that anyone could have given planning permission to the owner of that land to do what the Prime Minister spoke about. Mr. Speaker, this shows that we not only need to have a proper land use policy in this country but that the development plans for Barbados need to be brought before this Parliament and be discussed.

We can no longer hold back on those plans coming before Parliament because until we discuss them and are able to put them in their proper perspective, some wrongs might occur that we would not be able to correct when the plans finally get before Parliament. Sir, the Prime Minister is duty-bound to make sure that those plans come before Parliament so that persons like him and I can protect Barbados from certain acts which he spoke of earlier in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, there is an impression that the Barbados Labour Party looks after the interest of the country and the Democratic Labour Party does the opposite. I have presented my case to you and I am asking the jury, the public of Barbados, and not the judge, to submit their verdict for you to hand down the ruling.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a brief intervention in the debate of this Resolution. I wholeheartedly support this particular land acquisition and I would want to begin by saying that my knowledge of the matter goes back to a time prior to May of last year.

Mr. Speaker, Schooner Bay, also called "Fort Denmark", is a significant real estate development on the north-west coast of Barbados. I believe that the Member of Parliament for the particular constituency would be pleased that such a high-end and attractive development would

grace his constituency. I understand that it won an international award for its design, however, the matter at hand is the Resolution.

Sir, I believe the way in which this acquisition was done is a clear indicator of the model that should be used when it comes to trying to balance competing interests between the public and a private sector entity. How do you balance the interest of the populace with the interest of a big business is essentially one of the biggest challenges any Government would have.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment quite succinctly set out the history of the issue. Sir, from my personal knowledge, the developers were always of the view that it was important that they be sensitive to the interest of the people.

In fact, so willing were they to cooperate with the Government, they actually proposed that rather than going through the longer process of an acquisition, they were willing to engage with the Government by way of private treaty so that the relevant documentation could be executed very swiftly and results in a resolution of the matter.

Sir, I think this is an important signal for all businesses, particularly what people might describe as big businesses, to recognise that there must be a spirit of collaboration between Government, business and the interest of the public in such a way as to result in the advancement of everyone's particular cause. I am aware that the developers at Schooner Bay have worked well with the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment to resolve any issues.

They have also cooperated with the Government in relation to the removal of the Sanitation Authority. I believe they have also expressed an interest at working with the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated in trying to restore what the Honourable Prime Minister refers to as "Fort Denmark".

Mr. Speaker, I see this Resolution as being the cap of an issue that could have been contentious. We know the kind of contention that was publicly fought out in relation to Mullins Beach. Sir, where we have a private sector that is sensitive to the needs of our communities, sensitive to the importance of respecting hereditary or heritage rights and sensitive to the fact that businesses only operate within a peaceful and harmonious environment, then we are able to treat to these kinds of problems in a way that reduces what a famous lawyer would have called friction and waste.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Resolution, when taken hand in hand with the development plans that are scheduled

for Fort Denmark, and the importance of the whole historical area of Speightstown are taken into account, we would see the emergence of a people-friendly community that respects and elevates the importance of our cultural and geographical heritage.

I also believe that with the cooperation of the private sector, we would see the Fort Denmark site coming back into use not as a fort but as a major historical or major heritage site for this country.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore wish to salute the courage of the Government in making this acquisition. I also wish to salute the individuals involved in the development because at every step of the way they have been sensitive to the need of the people and to the need to respect our social norms and to respect what we value perhaps almost as much as our freedom, that is access to the beach spaces.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I again wish to reiterate my support for this Resolution.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I am going to be uncharacteristic and at the outset say how much I support this particular Resolution, but not necessarily in support of the Honourable Minister and representative for St. James South who brought the particular Resolution, even though for the last hour or so she has been smiling beautifully in this direction, I do not know if it is to capture my attention or the attention of the Honourable Members to my right.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: We would not speak of anatomy at this time.

Mr. Speaker, nevertheless I support this particular Resolution because, as far as I am concerned, it comes at the heart of the attachment of Barbadians to the beaches around them. Island people have a peculiar mentality relative to how they feel and how they relate to that space where they traverse either to bathe, to have picnics, to play beach football or to do all of those many things for which, Mr. Speaker, I am sure you are familiar.
12.10 p.m.

I, therefore, believe that the expressions made by the Honourable Member are relative, not only to the acquisition of that particular piece of land, but to pieces of land across those areas of Barbados which are touched by the sea. Of course, we would have to leave out St. George and St. Thomas but would include Christ Church, St. James, St. Peter and St. Philip, among others.

The Honourable Member for St. George North has spoken to the difficulty which certain residents of St. Philip were having. I believe there are still some difficulties which are being experienced by some of the residents of St. Philip where, what I could refer to as their historical threat across land, is now being denied. I believe there is an emerging legal matter relative to that and so I leave that alone.

Mr. Speaker, some of the historical development behaviour in Barbados has caused me, as a citizen of Barbados, some distress. That distress is imbedded in the fact that I do not believe that as a small country we can be encouraging the kind of opulent development by persons who are non-Barbadian. I want to make that point that I am not one who rejects strangers from our doors but I believe that the need for strangers at our doors must give way to the needs of persons who are born, bred and whose navel strings are buried here in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I am extremely concerned that now we have a pattern of development in Barbados, maybe possibly over the last 15 years, where there is an extravagant amount of opulence, either on our sea coasts or now in the hills of Barbados.

I am extremely concerned that as one looks down on the bad roads, the bushes and the small cottages of traditional Barbadians, that we are not going to have either a certain emerging subservient mentality or an emerging anger as people look up. We have seen in other places where historically, people who have been born on parts of these lands, have been denied so much of the access to the facilities of that country.

Mr. Speaker, some years ago, I travelled to a sister island and was amazed to see a young man travelling up and down the sea, pushing a canoe. I asked why he would not come closer to the beach and was told by the property owners of that all-inclusive property that the beach was private. At that time, I made the remark that could not have happened in Barbados.

Sir, I was proud to have made that statement and would want to continue to be proud in making the statement that there will be no private beaches in Barbados, and that all Barbadians can have access to the beaches. Sir, as I and as those who are genetically connected to me make our journeys through this life, we would want to be able to make that same comment relative to that.

Mr. Speaker, recently, and I am sure that it might have been a slip of the writer's pen, but in the discussion how soon the Barbados Hilton would be opened, the writer made the comment that there is going to be a private beach relative

to that facility. Sir, I do not remember who was the writer but I would want to believe that it was a slip of the writer's pen.

I do not believe that any project with which the Government is associated, that there would, either by omission or commission, make that kind of development in relation to the Barbados Hilton and to Barbados. I noted that and believe that I should put that into the records of this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, the type and pace of development which I spoke to briefly have to be looked at, and we have to be careful. I do not want to be locked out of Barbados' investment in the development of property. I am also seeing a changing Barbadian mentality relative...

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of elucidation. I was not sure how to interrupt because I could not have risen on a point of order.

Sir, I think the assurance needs to be made and arising out of my introductory comments that there would be no private beaches in Barbados, neither is it the intention of the Government, in the way in which the Barbados Hilton is being constructed and developed, to have any private beaches at the Needham's Point location. It is not part of the policy development or structure of that project. It is not our intention to create a private beach there or anywhere else, in any project in which we are involved.

Mr. R. D. JONES: I am thankful for that intervention but I remain a cynic and a sceptic, and though I do not want to be always in that kind of mood, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Mr. Speaker, I was making the point that I am seeing a changing Barbadian mentality relative to the ownership of land in Barbados. There was a time when an individual would own land regardless of wherever it was located and would want to pass that property onto their children, to their grandchildren and down through times. That has now changed in Barbados. Wherever land is, whether it is beach front land, land in the valley or land in the hill, it now has become a tradable commodity in this country.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: I am not saying that there is anything wrong with that. What happens is that as it is traded, it begins to isolate a major segment of the society. It makes those who can channel their dollar richer, pushes the cost of land up, makes others richer and makes those lawyers who have to deal with conveyances and other transactions richer.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Barbados Property Act was passed during 1979/1980. As a result of that piece of legislation, all transactions relating to land must be in writing. It was not to enrich lawyers or to make land a tradable commodity but was for the protection of the very persons who were passing lands from seed to seed.

Mr. Speaker, while passing land from seed to seed was part of the historical experience and culture of Barbados, the reality was that when parents, grandparents or elders in a family dies, there were no documents to show to whom the land was to go, and brothers and sisters and members of the family who were previously living good, would start to fight like cats and dogs and families would break apart over the ownership of land.

Therefore, for the protection of those very individuals, the legislation was passed to ensure that property was passed by way of conveyance or proper documentation to assist persons. It was not done to make land a tradable commodity, to cause the price of land to rise, and to make lawyers any richer than they might be already.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, sometimes our very best intentions could have other results. The substantive point I am making is that as we trade in real estate in Barbados, it is pushing the cost of land up, and I am sure that those persons who are involved in the various transactions are not paid at a fixed fee, regardless of the value of the property but are paid as a percentage of that value of that property. That is a fact and therefore, I believe that I am correct.
12.20 p.m.

Therefore, if you are able to secure a piece of property along the beach front of St. Peter, St. James or Christ Church and sell it for \$1 million, at the end of the day, your work will result in you becoming a millionaire overnight. Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty with that.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The first rule of this debate states that the speech of the Honourable Member must be relevant. I tried very hard to see how the acquisition of land at Queen Street for public access to the beach could allow the Honourable Member to engage into this furore about conveyancing, legal fees and so on. Sir, his discussion is irrelevant to this debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation...

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to touch on the sensitivities of anyone. The Honourable Member for St. James South spoke to the value of these two properties being \$46 700 and \$76 880. The Government of Barbados is compulsorily acquiring these pieces of properties in order to provide access to Barbadians and as a sensible Government, it must involve lawyers because money will be exchanged for services rendered and does not have to do with the sensitivities of anyone. If my good family friend feels sensitive, I apologise because I have known the family for more than 30 years and, therefore, it is not a problem.

Mr. Speaker, ordinary Barbadians have become caught up in gaining riches and I have no problem with it because they have been denied a major part of the stake in the society. Sir, they own a piece of land, someone from overseas offers them a high price and they have the right in a democracy to sell that land. The trickle-down effect is that every Barbadian is seeing their two-by-four properties as a means of enriching themselves and not to pass down to future generations.

I am speaking about the changing of the cultural practices and norms relative to how we perceive ownership and the bequeathing of land over time.

Sir, we cannot hold back the hands of time but I am placing a word of caution. There will come a point in time in Barbados when those of us who consider ourselves average working-class people will not be able to be part of that transaction because those beach front properties would have already moved away from us into the money and trading class.

Mr. Speaker, I have already had the assurance from the Ministry of Housing that there will be no private beaches in Barbados and, even though I am a cynic, I respect the assurance from the Minister and will hold her to those words as a Member of the Cabinet as speaking collectively for all of the other Members of the Cabinet.

I do not want to see a situation where Barbadians become strangers in their own land and where they cannot walk across the road unhindered to gain access to the beach. There are thousands of senior citizens of this country who use the sea as therapeutic exercise every morning at 5 o'clock when Honourable Members of this House might be sleeping after a hard night's work.

I, therefore, want to see this kind of thing continue. I want Barbadians to be able to traverse from all parts to River Bay, Skeetes Bay and Graves End for picnics. I want to see Barbadians continue in their traditional practices. Sir, I do not want to sound extinct in my thinking

but I want to see those things continue which have made us strong and purposeful as a people because when we remove all those things, we have nothing to relate to as a people or nothing to pass on to other generations.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke about harmony in our development. He said that the hovel and the opulent property can exist side by side and that this creates harmony. Mr. Speaker, I see this as a serious conflict and denial because at some time we must be able to elevate the ordinary Barbadian from the condition of his hovel where he or she can be happy and satisfied.

Sir, harmony is not necessarily achieved in the way as espoused by the Honourable Member for St. Peter but comes about when people are satisfied with what the Government is doing that they see themselves reflected in those decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I think we become trapped in language. We speak about houses and beach access for the working class. We speak about housing for middle-class, upper middle-class and the affluent. We have become trapped in language and we construct it in an image that perpetuates a particular vision. Therefore, housing for the working-class must cost \$80 000. We also become trapped in the \$3 million house on the hill and we then create disharmony in the language.
12.30 p.m.

Sir, we understand there are differences in income levels but we have to create within the Barbadian psyche the consciousness that this land not only belongs to us but that the beach front belongs to us as Barbadians and those persons who we invite to our shores. That is the kind of language or tone we have to use to convince our people that all will be well and that we will not necessarily hear the anger and frustration that came from Gabby's song "This beach is mine. I can bathe here anytime".

Mr. Speaker, we will support this Resolution but I urge the Honourable Member who presented this Resolution and the Government to be conscious of the wider reality which we face relative to this point on other issues like this in Barbados.

SUSPENSION

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m. today.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to second that.

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

12.31 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution where several parcels of land are being compulsorily acquired to provide beach access for Barbadians.

However, Mr. Speaker, when one comes to look at the notion of beach front development in Barbados, I believe that how one utilises a compulsory acquisition, and looks at that within the context of beach front development, given that it has sociological, cultural and economic implications to Barbadians, we have to be very careful. I do not think it is a simple matter of whether or not you support only the provision of beach access, but the discussion must be taken into a wider context.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter alluded to the fact that he sees this as an indication of so-called balanced development. He spoke about development that is compatible with the development of the community, and development that does not impede the traditional rights of the people of the community. I am not sure what all of that meant in terms of balanced development. When one looks at what is happening in Barbados with respect to the development of beach front property on the West Coast, the South Coast, and what is proposed to occur on the East Coast, I would want to look at some of these aspects. It sounds like a lot of good fluff, but I am not so sure that the Honourable Member was speaking about the development of Barbados with respect to equity.

Mr. Speaker, in order for us to be coming to the House of Assembly today, and debating a Resolution looking at providing Barbadians with access to their own beaches, is an indication that there has been an aberration, with respect to the development of beach front property in Barbados. In fact, this is an indication that there has been something fundamentally wrong, if we have to come here to provide a Barbadian with a beach access, a track and invariably a single track that one person can travel on, to get access to a beach.

Mr. Speaker, that is why when I sat and listened to the context with respect to balanced development, I am saying that something is fundamentally unbalanced because that

cannot be what it is about, Sir, and even to contemplate that in order to have a beach front development, and you provide a Bajan with a track to the beach that is in anyway enhancing anything for the Barbadian, that is indeed a simple misdemeanour.

I would also want to say from that, it is also an admission that there has been inappropriate Town and Country Planning decisions taken. It must necessarily be in favour of beach front development, and not in favour of development that includes all of the players who live in that particular beach front community, and it will get to that a little later.

I still believe that all Barbadians have the right to have windows to the sea, unimpeded, as part of our cultural heritage. I also believe that having access is also a right, and it is not one that should be given. We are Barbadians and the beach belongs to us. I do not believe there should be any development that should be put in place, and then you have to come back and give Barbadians a right. I am not going to subscribe to that way of thinking.

Mr. Speaker, I want to look very closely at what has happened in Barbados, with respect to the so-called development. If any Honourable Member in this House is comfortable that the West Coast has been developed by non-Barbadians, then something is wrong. If any Honourable Member is comfortable that Barbadians do not own the major parcels of land on the East Coast of Barbados something is wrong.

If any Honourable Member is comfortable that beach front development that occurred on the South Coast, is not development that includes the average Barbadians, then something is also wrong, because the beach front, as well as the agricultural land belongs to Barbados.

I would not be comfortable when I accept that the whole of the West Coast, South Coast and East Coast is now being developed and owned by people who are non-Barbadian. I believe that Barbados is for Barbadians first and any development that occurs in Barbados must not be development that displaces a Barbadian from where he wants to live.

Mr. Speaker, when one speaks about development of beach front property, one has to pay very close attention to the impact that the whole Land Tax structure has on beach front development, which has excluded average Barbadians from being part of beach front development in Barbados.

I heard Honourable Members in here attempt to indicate that there is an appeals process in place, so that if

you believe that you have a little 5 000 square feet piece of land on the West Coast between two big multi-million dollar hotels, and the site value has been so judged as X or Y, that you can go and appeal. That is not acceptable to me. I know of many Barbadians who complained about the high prices of their Land Tax on the West Coast and who are at risk of losing their beach front land in Barbados.

I want to say today that any Honourable Member who wants to bury their heads in the sand, with respect to the significance of such a diabolical situation, should be ashamed of themselves to be called Members of the Cabinet of Barbados.

I would also say that it is necessary that this Government should revisit how to protect those poor people or pensioners who own land on the West Coast and South Coast on the beach, and look at indexing the Land Tax that is paid to the income of the individual, and not to the site valuations, where the individual has no control.

It must be wrong if I have a 5 000 square-foot lot and a man is going to build two hotels next to me, one behind and one in front, and I have not caused the appreciation in value, why should I be penalised for something that a foreigner does in Barbados? I would want this Government to look very closely at trying to protect the land of poor people in Barbados, with respect to these types of developments. Again, I am making one suggestion. Look at how the taxes are indexed. It should not be with respect to site value for those pensioners and other poor people who cannot pay the appreciated values. I know this to be a fact.

I want to raise another concern because this Resolution relates to how we consider development. We have had in Barbados over the last 10 years, significant, special enclave development. We have had many terraces and heights, such as Millennium Heights and other fancy terms which people like to hear, but this is a completely different world to the average Barbadian.

We have a development that is supposed to occur in Church Village, and listen to the logic of the development. We want to develop the area so we must first move the residents from the area to develop it, Sir. Why the residents cannot remain there, and you develop the area to completion? The residents were there first. All of that is development.

Sir, anytime you want to develop an area, primarily, you should find the means to incorporate those residents into that development and not separate them. You should not take them from that spot, and carry them miles away in the rural area, behind God's back.
1.40 p.m.

That is a practice that was tried in Europe. What resulted from that in the 1980s in the United States of America was a separation of their population. If we do not understand that is not what we should be doing, all Barbadians sooner or later would have to live in St. George because there is no beach in St. George. Right now a Barbadian cannot afford to buy a beachfront property in Barbados.

All of the West Coast and the businesses on the West Coast as well as the hotels on the South Coast are already owned by foreigners. The East Coast is being developed but not in any significant way and not by Barbadians. I am aware as well of some developments that are planned for St. Philip.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am trying to make is that those developments are not developments that incorporate the average Barbadian in them. Therefore, Barbadians are not persons who can live on the coasts of Barbados anymore, and would all eventually have to live in St. George.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that is happening, and I would have to relate to this, is that it is partly facilitated by the Property Transfer Tax which affects how beachfront development has been developed in Barbados and how it would be developed in the future.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago people on the West Coast started to make a fuss about the sale of land to foreigners, and I remember there was some bogus Commission...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I should warn you that I was on that Commission.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: That Commission was bogus from the point of view that it was not intended to accomplish what it...

Mr. SPEAKER: I would suggest that you rephrase that statement.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: All right, Sir, I would rephrase it. The point I am going to make is that when average Barbadians were saying that they felt they were being threatened with respect to losing their land on the West Coast, there were Honourable Members on the Other Side who were saying that they were paranoid and schizophrenic, so with scant regard to that and to appease Barbadians who did not understand what was going on at the time, a

Commission was put together to look to see how much land had been transferred to locals as opposed to how much was transferred to foreigners.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, it is not the point of whether you have one or two transactions. I may make one transaction to a white man from Singapore who buys 250 acres of land and I may make another transaction to somebody who only buys 5 000, so it has to be looked at in terms of the total acreage that is lost to development.

I know of a man from South Africa who came into Barbados, he is not a farmer, and bought 320 acres of land. Tell me what type of development they could have been thinking of if they are going to allow a man who is not a farmer and not a Barbadian to come into Barbados and buy 320 acres of land?

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this Government two questions that have to do with beachfront development. The Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke to balance development, about development that protects the traditional rights of the community and about development that is compatible with the development of the community.

I want to ask the Honourable Member how would he describe this development. I want him to tell the people of Barbados, not me, why it is that beachfront property that was owned by the Crown is being sold by private treaty to certain specific individuals with political links.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is not only misleading the House, but he is imputing that we are selling land by private treaty to political associates, which is not true, and the Honourable Member cannot be allowed to make those assertions.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, what is important here is that a debate is not an exercise in a high court where you have a prosecutor and a defence where they are bringing counter situations with evidence. I must be able in a debate to move from a phenomenon-logical position which is the observational and come from that via inference, rather right or wrong. That is what the debate is about.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. While he can use that approach at the street corner, under the street light and maybe even outside his medical office, the reality is that this House is governed by specific rules. Those rules indicate that you cannot impute wrongdoings to the Other Side, and where you put certain things on the Table, they must be covered by the supporting evidence.

If the Honourable Member seeks to make an assertion by framing it as a question, the implication of which is that the Government has done wrong, then he is in breach of the rules of the House. That is, in fact, the approach that he has used to put something on the record. Therefore, if he is not going to bring evidence to support his assertion, those remarks would have to be expunged from the record because the imputation of improper impropriety is clear.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, if I could give you a little advice, I would like to suggest to you that instead of being so dogmatic about your assertion, maybe you could rephrase it because, according to the Rules of this House, the Chair can ask you to produce the evidence that you have for coming to such a conclusion.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, as far as I am aware, I must be allowed to ask questions in this Honourable House. A question cannot be imputing anything. A question is simply a question. It has an interpretation of A or B.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not exactly true because there is something called a rhetorical question where the answer is clearly implied. Anyhow, do not let us get into that. I must remind you however that you are straying a bit far from the actual Resolution and I am just asking you to try to connect what you are saying with the Resolution, please.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I take your advice. If it is that we are looking at the development of beachfront land and if we are saying that we must develop that land and provide an opportunity for Barbadians to move unimpeded to the beach, I am simply saying that when Government has the opportunity to take beachfront land and make that land available without coming to Parliament, because Government owns the land, I want to find out if it is Government's policy to sell beachfront land in Barbados by private treaty. That is not an unfair question.

By extension I also want to find out who owns the land on Lower Broad Street which was once the old fish market. 1.50 p.m.

I want the Government to tell the people of Barbados who owns the beachfront land in Oistins, which was

formerly the Christ Church District Hospital and if it still belongs to the Government.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Well, you tell the public, do not tell me. Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I was not forced to resign.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day in Barbados when Barbadians can only access the beaches via tracks. Sir, when I was a boy, there were so many open windows to the sea that I would have never believed that it would now be reduced to a one-path track through a densely populated area with overgrown bushes. I have experienced that on the track going down to Batts Rock, St. Michael.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Again the Honourable Member is misleading this House. Historically and culturally, those lands were taken up and people had to go through tracks. We had to acquire land from private sources to provide access and, therefore, it is not true to say that historically these lands were not developed. They were always developed and the Honourable Member knows this.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I will still say that it is a sad day in Barbados when Barbadians are reduced to tracks to get to the beaches of Barbados.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: You are from St. George. It is a sad day in Barbados when that is the position. Sir, it is even sadder when we have to come to the Honourable House to give Barbadians a track, and not only a track but the right to go to the beach via that track. I say that is a sad day in Barbados.

Sir, I would hope that the Government would bring the same fervour for the acquisition of land for St. Philip for the poor people to build houses on. I would want this Government to bring the same fervour for acquiring land and for playing fields for the people of St. Philip.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not go into those, please.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, it is a matter of bringing the same level of eagerness. It is part of development. It may not be economical development but it could be sociological development.

Sir, when I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter speaking to balanced development when it relates to beachfront development, I am confused because what kind of balanced development is that for the average person in Barbados? Sir, I do not know what it is.

Sir, there are some individuals who take these matters rather lightly and seem to believe that when we could come to this Honourable House to do the business for the people of this country, and that we could come in here and could debate a Resolution which says that Government will acquire this land for development, but that in order to accommodate persons, persons must be able to have a track to the beach.

If individuals would honestly believe that is what could be accepted as balanced development, then something is wrong. It is not what it is for me.

Sir, I have seen too many special enclaves being developed in Barbados, and we know all of them. I do not believe that is what development should be but it should necessarily incorporate the masses of the people in the process and in the finished product.

Sir, as a result of that, it goes without saying that the type of development that we are expected to see, for example, at Church Village, should not occur simply by taking individuals from the area and carrying them behind the Devil's back. Those individuals should be incorporated into the development as part of the development strategy to make sure that we do not develop an "us" and "them" syndrome in Barbados.

Sir, we are already going down that road. I have seen it happening in Europe and in the United States of America. I would not want to see in Barbados the day when our beachfront land becomes a concrete jungle. That is the direction in which we are going with the level of development because we have individuals who do not understand the significance of the beachfront. Those individuals are bounded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dictate that says land should become an economic value. That does not have a cultural clause to it and, therefore, I am not bounded by it. I would argue very strongly that we should maintain...

Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to intervene but I cannot sit here and allow the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, while he is getting to the height of his exuberance and continues to ramble far and wide, to make a most ridiculous statement in which he is stating explicitly that this Government is bounded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dictates which speak to allowing land to fetch its highest bidder.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Member for St. Philip West should be made to withdraw those remarks. They are most unfortunate. There should be no place in this Honourable House for persons to stand and to make such statements. Sir, at no time was I made aware, or was this Government told that there should be such a policy being practised pertaining to the land.

Mr. Speaker, that remark should be struck from the records of this Honourable House.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Member seems not to be in sync with what has been the advice via the various consultations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and if it is my interpretation...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, this Honourable House is always governed by facts and by what is the stated truth. I believe if you want to bring an assertion or a statement that was made, there should be some proof of it. As a new Honourable Member, and I give advice to you, you should have some kind of fact as to the Paper of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which was presented. Obviously a statement like that cannot be accepted by this Honourable House unless the Honourable Member has those facts.

I will suggest to you that you cannot go down that line, and this is advice to all Honourable Members on both Sides. I have found recently that Honourable Members do and very often make some very wild allegations. I think it is about time that we start having proof of many of these allegations, proof which must be presented to this Honourable House.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, if that is Your Honour's ruling, Your Honour can rest assured that I will bring the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) Investment Sector Loan document to the House on the next Session. I will, therefore, withdraw the statement at this time.

Sir, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) Investment Sector Loan document is already a document of this House, but if that is Your Honour's ruling, I take it.

Mr. Speaker, I will go on to say that this type of innuendo and subterfuge serves no essential purpose as far as I am concerned.
2.00 p.m.

I am simply saying that beachfront development is occurring at a rate that threatens windows to the sea. It makes our beachfront a concrete jungle like Miami, undermines our cultural heritage and relationship with the sea and later on, this will have profound implications.

Sir, we must understand that real estate development is cyclical, that there will be times of bust and boom, and if for one moment we believe that we can build up real estate into the fancy heights and terraces and that it will always be good, we are not understanding the reality of economic parameters.

I caution that when it comes to the beachfront that they should not be so quick to use up the investment that is crucial to the cultural heritage of all Barbadians.

Sir, I thank you.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to join other Members on This Side with sensible contributions in this particular debate. First, I want to compliment the Minister and Government on this initiative which is intended to protect the patrimony and heritage of Barbados and its people. In my opinion, it speaks to a right that is a fundamental plank of our national development, access to our beaches.

Sir, beach access has over time been a fundamental part of our development and access to the beach is considered by Barbadians to be a right relative to national development. This initiative is akin to many of the other Acts put in place by this Government relative to protecting the patrimony and heritage of Barbadian people.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke about keeping John Moore's shop in the hands of Barbadians and these initiatives show why this Government will continue to fight for the rights of people in areas that other Parties would not have seen as fundamental to our development but this Party has ensured that they stay in the hands of Barbadians and are protected for the continued development of our people.

Sir, beach access has tourism implications. We grew up in this country being able to go to the same beach as visitors. This mingling and mixing has become a fundamental part of how our tourism industry has developed over the years and this lends to a feeling of security and community tourism that is important for the development of the industry in Barbados.

Sir, whether at Graves End, Enterprise or Accra Beach, over time, Barbadians have built a tourism industry where there has been intermingling and mixing. This has not been

so in other jurisdictions and has led in many instances to feelings of non-security and not the type of community tourism we have been able to develop in Barbados.

Sir, to give the impression that this Government has been party in some way to what the Honourable Member for St. Philip West described as unbalanced development and that beachfront development on the West Coast of Barbados has been put into the hands of expatriates and sold into the hands of the highest bidder, is to mislead this House and the public of Barbados relative to what has happened in development on the West Coast and South Coast.

Sir, as far as I know, most of the beachfront land between the Barbados Port Incorporated and Harrison's Point in St. Lucy is not owned by expatriates or not under tourism development. I speak boldly to say that most of that land belongs to Barbadians and not expatriates. If you took a walk going north along the West Coast beginning at the Barbados Port Incorporated to Harrison's Point, you would recognise that a lot of the tourism development along that coast preceded this Administration.

Sir, if you travel north you will find the following: the Shallow Draft, an open window to the sea, the Spring Garden development, Brighton which is an open window to the sea, houses of Barbadians, Paradise which used to be a hotel now owned by an expatriate company and Batts Rock is for the ordinary use of Barbadians. If you keep going north into Prospect and Fitts Village there are open windows to the sea except for the Escape Hotel.

In Paynes Bay there is an open stretch of land and beach by the bridge for Barbadians. If you keep on travelling north, except for the Tamarind Beach Hotel, there are number of hotels and villa development. Then there is the Sandy Lane Hotel and Almond Beach Hotel, a public company and the Regency Hotel which is locally owned and then there is Chefette Restaurant. Sir, none of these lands are under tourism development and the majority of them are not owned by expatriates.

Sir, to send a message to Barbadians that this Government is party to making beachfront property available to people at a rate that threatens the patrimony of Barbadians is to send the wrong message. It is totally and diametrically opposed to what this Government has been seeking to institute in its time in office.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who looks at these initiatives put in place over time will recognise that this Government has been encouraging inland tourism development for the first time in Barbados and making concessions and benefits available to persons interested in inland tourism

development. Sir, this speaks to taking our tourism development off the beach as well as ensuring that there are windows to the sea and that the patrimony and heritage is reserved for Barbadians.

Sir, under the Urban Rehabilitation programme and the Special Development Area legislation speak to a Government that is more than interested in maintaining those open windows to the sea and beachfront access for Barbadians while encouraging our tourism development to move at a rate that ensure that there is a certain level of socio-economic development with which Barbadians and future generations can live.

2.10 p.m.

There is no proof that this Government is party to any level of construction on the West Coast that takes away access to beach and beachfront property by Barbadians. I categorically dismiss any assertion that this Government is seeking in anyway to take away that patrimony from Barbadian people.

Sir, the area of Speightstown has now become fundamentally important to the development of Barbados and Barbadians through the tourism industry. This property has been identified and we can compulsorily acquire those parcels of land to ensure that we have a development in harmony so that we can have a level of tourism and economic development without taking away from the social side of the development of our people which is, in itself, laudable.

In Speightstown, the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated programme speaks to the development of the Boardwalk, the Salt Pond drainage, the street-scape programme and the construction of a public car park. The Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated also referred to the infrastructure that is necessary for wider tourism investment and development. We have embarked on a programme that seeks to create an environment outside of the beach area and every initiative that has been put in place speaks to that.

I believe that the development of Barbados is important. It is also important that we endorse the Government's programmes. It is important to understand that we hold on to our patrimony. If a man or woman has beachfront land and he/she believes they can get a large sum of money that he/she would not get for the sale of that land, speaks a lot to how our people are educated to believe in their own patrimony and culture.

Sir, do you believe that a man or woman who lives on the beachfront property and who has an opportunity to sell that land is not going to use that opportunity to move forward in terms of dollars and cents? It speaks to a wider

issue. It speaks to educating our people about their patrimony, culture and what belongs to us Barbadians.

Sir, making someone believe that this Government is opening up the floodgates so that everyone can come in is not true. There has been no change in the policy regarding how people reside in Barbados. Nobody likes to hear the grandstanding. The Opposition has to tell us what the alternatives are regarding how Barbadians should develop over time.

Sir, if you are saying that outside of the Alien Landholding legislation, I want to know how we can stop a man or woman who has a beachfront property from selling it, outside of compulsorily acquiring it.

Sir, in a country with limited land space and resources, the only tangible resource that you have for your social and economic development, particularly in a tourism environment, speaks to the use of that land.

I believe we have been doing our best through legislative initiatives and administrative arrangements to ensure that land is kept in the hands of Barbadians. The areas on the West and South Coasts which are already developed by hotels or villas, this Administration has ensured that the windows to the sea and access to beaches are maintained within the limits of the Law. If a man or woman in Barbados has beachfront land and they are offered the right price, you can bet that 99 per cent of the time they will sell the land.

Sir, I make the point that education and consciousness is at the centre of encouraging Barbadians to hold on to that particular patrimony and culture. I believe that the environment integrity of the beachfront property also speaks to our further tourism development and the sustainability of our tourism over time.

Therefore, like the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, I would not like to see our beachfront being overrun by concrete and all the other things that would not only destroy the landscape but the beach and water.

Sir, what we have done with the South Coast Sewerage Project we are going to do with the West Coast Sewerage Project and this speaks to the environmental integrity that is necessary for sustainable tourism.

I believe this Government has proved that we can ensure the integrity of the environment. I also believe that by the action taken today to compulsorily acquire this land, is a move in the right direction and it will continue to protect, not only the environmental integrity of the beach and beachfront property, but also the wider idea of protecting the patrimony and culture of the people of Barbados.

Sir, I want to give my full endorsement to this action and to encourage the Minister and all of us in Government to continue on this path. Sir, although Honourable Members agree with the Bill, they got up and made some ridiculous assertions.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a partisan issue. We have agreed that certain parcels of land on the beachfront need to be kept as open windows to the sea and access to the beaches. Both Sides agreed that there will be no private beaches in Barbados and we have always agreed to that. I do not understand what the argument is about. Sir, to come here and make people believe that this Administration by some diabolical means, I think that was the language that was used, is trying to sell away the patrimony of Barbadians to expatriates is nonsense and I dismiss it.

Sir, we have agreed that this is the way we need to go and there is no need for an argument. However, the Democratic Labour Party comes here to this Honourable House with the same thing every time.

I give my endorsement to the Honourable Minister. I think that we are on the right path in ensuring that the patrimony and culture of Barbadians are protected.

I am obliged to you, Sir.
2.20 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I hope to be very short, but I am rising to assist the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, because I noted that in his presentation, he wanted us to be black and white in what we say. We either agree or disagree. If we agree, we should say nothing, just that we agree. If we disagree, then that is the only occasion in which we are entitled to offer criticism, whether constructive or otherwise.

I would say to please the Honourable Member for Michael South. I disagree.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You want me to say, with the Bill? I disagree with the Bill. I disagree with what the Honourable Member said.

Sir, I did not hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter's presentation, but prior to lunch, it seems that he can often be disoriented, Mr. Speaker, so I am glad that his energies of energy would have increased after lunch, and I hope that he would have come back in here and recognised that he is the Prime Minister of Barbados, and he has been in office for long enough to transform the entire social, economic and physical landscape of Barbados.

He has had the resources to do it, he has had the legislation behind him, he has had the largest majorities in the history of this country, he is supposed to be, by their recognising, the most outstanding leader in the Caribbean, perhaps even in the world.

Yet, the Honourable Members on That Side seem to have difficulty with the fact that the people of Barbados, the country that he rules, feel that their patrimony has been dissipated by this Government. Sir, this has nothing to do with us on This Side but with the reality of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, let us start with the Barbados Labour Party. What is the most revolutionary, brilliant and outstanding piece of legislation that the Barbados Labour Party passed, in relation to land rights in this country? What is it that we hear in here every time? The Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. They say it is the most revolutionary, the most brilliant, changed the relationship of the people of this country to land resources in this country. Sir, what is the definition, of this Act that was supposed to empower the vast majority of Barbadians? It excludes all of the land on the foreshore in this country.

Sir, when I was young and living in Fitts Village, right where those facilities in Paynes Bay were built, those were tenancies. We did homework on the beach. The Spencer family lived on the beach at Fitts Village. Jordan's Supermarket was not on that side of the road, but it was on the other side. The rum shop was on the beach and there was a tenancy of about 20 houses.

In those days the vast majority of poor people who lived in tenancies in Barbados, were pushed onto the foreshore because that was not where the economic value in land was. The plantation owners were interested in sugar and agriculture, so those people who could not find land to build luxury houses in the centre of Barbados were fighting the Government about cutting up agricultural land. They were forced onto the periphery, from Bridgetown to St. Lucy, on the coast. This brilliant revolutionary piece of legislation did not empower any of them. In fact, it expressly excluded them from ownership.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There were only two tenancies? You mean plantation tenancies. Get your definition right. I never said plantation tenancies. This Act deals not only with plantation tenancies, it deals with any area of land in Barbados on which there were more than five lots for sale. That is a non-point and you should know better.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You cannot defend that, but this is the most revolutionary piece of legislation. I sit in this Chamber, Sir, this is now almost 20 years, and I have listened to these presentations time after time. It seems as though people become less imbued with a sense that they can be powerful to do something on behalf of the people of Barbados.

This is why you get that weak knee jelly from the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, while your language at best cannot be described as inappropriate, yet at the same time I would not want it to have the slightest inclination of being insulting.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I was not referring to you, Sir. If you take it as an insult, I withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would not want it to appear.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No, Sir, I would never accuse you of being weak-kneed or jellyfish.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is the Leader of the Government that came into office with a pledge to right all of the wrongs that the Democratic Labour Party had inflicted on the people of this country. One of them, he said, was Heywoods.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You can say that they were many. If you want to say that, I can say it with you, and they were many. You want to hear that? How many of them would you place in your priority list?

The Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter is the M.P. for St. Peter. Heywoods was in St. Peter. His big cry has been about Heywoods, consistently, despite the fact that the Democratic Labour Party ensured that the purchasers of Heywoods built a car park. I did not listen at all, but somebody told me, regrettably, I admit.

Sir, two car parks were built on either side of the hotel and arrangements were made to give people better facilities. All they had previously was a track running in front of the hotel, but we made them put in car parks, and changing facilities as part of the deal.

The Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter is used to distorting the record in relation to Heywoods. He is entitled to do that, but I say that he had 11 years to right that, if it

was wrong. He had 11 years to destroy the impression that the patrimony of Barbadians is being taken away. This Government could have zoned land in Barbados. It could have declared that certain areas of land in this country could never be sold to foreign interest and I have asked for that on the East Coast of Barbados consistently.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There was no mad rush then. You say that the building boom started under you. Why would you argue that a Government ran the country into the ground, had no investment, no building boom, nobody buying land, should zone land? Why zone it? You said nothing was happening. You said we did nothing for the country. Everything was happening under you. It is only under you that all the land was being sold.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Honourable Members on That Side are completely amazing. We were supposed to zone land, when the economy, according to them, ran into the ground. Zone it for what? There is no need to zone it.

The building boom that was supposed to last for three decades started under this Government, apparently. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that he could sustain a building boom. How are you sustaining all the tilers and carpenters in St. George and St. John who are not working? You are importing people to replace them, so you are sustaining other countries in the Caribbean. When the boom was going and they pushed their prices up for labour, they were not entitled to the benefits of the boom.

At least in Trinidad the oil workers got the benefits of the boom. At least in the 60s some of the sugar workers got the benefits of the boom, but for the first time in the history of Barbados you had a building boom and workers were being cursed, because they were increasing their labour rates to get a little more out of the boom and now they are not working. You are going to tell me this is an economic formula for success? I am completely sick of it.
2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael South wants to hear that I disagree, then I disagree. This legislation did not empower the people who were living on beaches, or the poor people that are living on tenancies in this country.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Honourable Member for St. George North, which beach in St. George had a tenantry on it?

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, keep quiet and give other people a chance who know what is going on. Prospect had a tenantry. Fitts Village had a tenantry. Paynes Bay had a tenantry. You can go right up the coast. There were parts of Sandy Lane north of the Sandy Lane Woods where there was a tenantry.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Not Bennetts! Sir, I would not let the former Minister of Housing, who should know better, distract me.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has had a flip-flop policy. Zoning had been recommended. I am still saying that we can create an entire industry of beach houses and have some inland tourism on the East Coast in this country. It would provide jobs for my constituents and for the people in St. Joseph. In the 1958 Democratic Labour Party Manifesto beach houses for workers in this country were being proposed. The land is there. The Government owns the whole of Bath.

The Government is in discussion with the Codrington Trust concerning the land at Consett. There is land at Glenburnie that belongs to the Williams family, and then there is right up the East Coast of Barbados. This Government needs to select some areas and zone them so that they cannot be sold to foreign interest, because a lot of the land we have parted with has been parted with forever. It would be exchanged outside of Barbados and people will simply sell shares in the company that owns the land.

The Government cannot afford to acquire that land now. Does one know the kind of price the Government would have to pay if it really wanted to go and acquire land on the West Coast in some of those areas cited by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South? Do they know what the value for a strip of that land could potentially be? Do they know what the real cost to Government would be?

The Government is caught in the jaws of a dilemma. Land prices have risen so dramatically on the West Coast that Government cannot afford to provide a large number of beach accesses, so they need to admit that and move on and stop talking rubbish about windows to the sea. What windows to the sea?

They should compare the windows to the sea they have now in Barbados to what existed only 15 years ago. What is a window to the sea in Barbados now is what is left of several other windows to the sea that existed previously? You can go to the Cayman Islands and drive for miles without seeing a single house. Even on that seven miles stretch they have a public beach that is about half of a mile long with beach facilities. It is one of the most beautiful beaches in the country.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about zoning land. There are areas of land in Barbados that can be zoned in that way that they would never be lost to the patrimony of this country, but they may need to compensate the people. There are virgin woodlands in Barbados that also need to be protected, but the Government has to be more proactive.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. James South talking about a lot of these things but they are not going to give her the resources to do it, so she can talk like most of the other Ministers but she is not going to get the resources to do it. However, it needs to be done if we are to protect our children's future which is the point that is being made.

Honourable Members on That Side see that as a partisan negative point, but I would assume that all of us have an interest in our children growing up in a Barbados where they have access to and control over the key resources, that is what the whole process of development in our society is about. Now, it seems as though the Government cannot even say they agree with the people who are saying so because some of the comments may be coming from over here but the vast majority of the people who complain about that is not from over here, it is the people who live in Barbados as a whole who are expressing that particular concern and it needs to be addressed. The Government is building a straw man.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the large number of water sports operators – this is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South should be talking about – who can barely find a piece of land on which to haul up a jet ski or a boat at night or to access the sea, who have to take home their equipment or rent equipment to take it home. These are men who own only one jet ski.

These water sports operators are forced to converge in specific areas if they want to access tourists because many of the hotels do not encourage the tourists off the boats to use their facilities to pass in and out, so they can only go to certain areas on the West Coast to access the tourists that the taxi drivers bring down to the West Coast.

The Minister of Tourism and International Transport should be addressing that in order to give them more access. Those are the people we should be concerned about, if not, what is tourism about? Is tourism only about buildings, rooms and the quality of dinners in the hotels?

The Minister of Tourism and International Transport should be saying that they know that the guys with the jet skis have a problem, that there is an additional cost to their business, they often cannot access somewhere to haul up their boats, they need somewhere where the tourists can come and access these facilities, so what plans do we have for that?

Mr. Speaker, the vendors in Barbados, despite all the talk from this Government about its commitment to poor people, still feel the pinch on the beaches in Barbados. Everybody who walks the beach in this country whether they are hair braiders or have a brief case in their hands is viewed as a potential criminal or harasser in Barbados. That is a fact.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If the Minister of Tourism and International Transport does not focus on that, he would destroy the tourism industry too.

There are also other beach workers and tourism workers in this country some of whom have been in the industry for years, who the Minister needs to protect, so it is land, the lifestyle and the opportunities of those Barbadians to survive in a modern tourism industry which I think is very important. If the Government is happy with its policy and thinks it has done a great job, so be it.

I cannot tell them that the average Barbadian feels that this Government has done enough to protect the patrimony of Barbadians. It has not done enough to help workers in the tourism sector in Barbados. It has not done enough to provide more access to beaches in this country and if we continue on this trend Barbadians would feel that the tourism industry has absolutely nothing to do with them and we could as well not debate it in this House of Assembly.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, even though the debate has been contentious, I truly enjoyed it. A number of very interesting points were raised and I would wish to respond to some of them. However, for the information of the House, let me start by giving the areas at which the Government, by way of Cabinet's approval, has decided that beach accesses would be developed. They are

Fitts Village an area north of what was formerly Cyprus Shop and Paradise near the Esso Gas Station.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West referred to that area as an overgrown track when he spoke about Batts Rock. I lived in the area of Batts Rock all my teenage and adult life and the reality is that Batts Rock has always had two entrances, a pedestrian access and a vehicular access.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the pedestrian access from time to time becomes overgrown, depending on whether or not it is the rainy season, but the truth is that a lot of development has gone on at Batts Rock beach. It is perhaps one of the best developed beaches and one of the most widely used by locals.

Sir, some of the development started, and I freely admit it, under the Democratic Labour Party when the then Honourable Member for St. James South was the Honourable Member of Parliament and Minister of the Environment, and it has continued.

Mr. Speaker, an area near Cobblers Cove Hotel, St. Peter; an area near Gibbs, the area at Maycock's Bay, an area at Fryer's Well, at Cherry Tree Hill, an area north of the Speightstown Bus Terminal, at Coves Bay, St. Lucy, at Archer's Bay, at Ragged Point, St. Philip, at Broadley, St. John and at Hackelton, St. John, were the areas that were approved by the Cabinet for development into public accesses and public rights-of-way and for the development of beach facilities.

Mr. Speaker, in respect of the development of beaches, the Government at this time is undertaking the coastal infrastructural programme, worth \$24.2 million, and involves the development of an area from Rockley, Christ Church to the Drill Hall, the Garrison; headland protection at Woman's Bay, Silver Sands; restoration and enhancement of the Crane Beach, St. Philip, which has suffered very badly from beach erosion; resurfacing of the headland and construction of a walkway; revetment of the deteriorating beach area; Hometown improvement in the area where Chefette is located, going north and south of Chefette, Hometown; Welches Beach, Christ Church, where I believe some work has already started; the improvement and irrigation of the Hometown Beach lagoon; restoration work at Walkers Savannah, St. Andrew, and at Bay Street, the demolition and replacement of the old hospital jetty.

Sir, many young people dive, fish, and engage in aqua sports off that particular area and, therefore, we believe that not only should the jetty at Bay Street be demolished, because it is and has been in an unsafe state for some considerable time, but that it should be redeveloped.

At Tent Bay, St. Joseph, there will be a boat access and slipway. Those are the components of the Coastal Infrastructural Programme, which would cost the Government of Barbados \$24.2 million, of which \$17.2 million is funded by way of a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and \$7 million which is Government financed.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the Honourable House the remainder of that information, and in the time remaining, I would wish to turn to some of the points that have been made by Honourable Members on both Sides.

Mr. Speaker, some Honourable Members have made some very good political speeches, while some had the nature of comments intended to titillate but not having accuracy of information in each instance. I want to speak in particular to a subject about which I feel very strongly which was raised by Honourable Members on both Sides. I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael South has spoken to it, which deals with the matter of the ownership of beachfront property and the sale of land to non-nationals.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a commission – not a bogus one – but a properly constituted commission of this Parliament, served by Honourable Members of both Sides, which, at the end of the day, showed that much of the land that is owned by overseas persons, is not owned by non-Barbadians but by Barbadians who are living outside of Barbados.

These are persons who have migrated to England, Canada and elsewhere, who have bought land with the intention of returning home on retirement, or with the intention of passing it onto their children or grandchildren. There are others, while not intending on returning but who still feel that they must have physical and emotional connection to Barbados, and have sought to own a piece of the rock.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that over the last 15 years, and not over the last 10 years, that beachfront properties have assumed a far greater financial value than ever before in the history of Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South was right when he took us on that walk down the coast and pointed out how many properties that were owned by locals, including some hotels and restaurants which are owned by Barbadians and not necessarily by foreigners.

Mr. Speaker, it cannot be denied that in the last 15 years, a number of properties in Barbados, particularly beachfront properties, have exchanged hands at spectacular prices, and prices that would exclude a majority of Barbadians from ownership of these properties in the future.

Therefore, I find the suggestion by the Honourable Member for St. John about zoning to be a very interesting one, but what we are coming up against, in my view, is not a problem of who buys, but a problem of who sells.

Sir, as a political directorate, and I am including the Opposition in this, because both Sides would be affected by the problem, what we have to fight against is the question that goes back to the Right Honourable Errol Barrow: “What mirror image does one have of oneself?” Can one, as a black Barbadian who was born into poverty, not seeing oneself as owning a piece of beachfront land and passing it onto one’s children and grandchildren?

Sir, the reality is that many Barbadians do not have that vision of themselves, therefore, when someone says that one has 20 000 square feet and would be paid \$50 per square foot for it, it sounds like a lot of money to that person, and that person catches at that money, failing to recognise that they are letting go of their birthright in the process.

Mr. Speaker, the people who are buying these beachfront lands are not ambushing Barbadians. They are not holding them at gunpoint. They are not beating them up nor threatening to burn their houses down. They are simply walking up to them and handing them cheques with a lot of zeroes on them, and the owners of these lands cannot wait to get out of their houses.

Sir, that is the reality, therefore, the problem is not one of who buys but one of who sells and we have to educate our people to understand the value of a piece of land. Mr. Speaker, a friend of my sister had a beautiful beachfront property, approximately 15 000 square feet of prime West Coast land with a chattel house on it.

She wanted to improve her circumstances and someone came along and offered her \$90 000 for it. This sounded like a lot of money to her and, therefore, she could not wait to be rid of the land. Sir, before the ink was fully dried on the title deeds, somebody else was selling that same piece of land for \$4 million.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, an attorney-at-law should have advised her that \$90 000 is not much money. Sir, not only that, when I found out about it, it was too late. I walked away and cried at the thought that yet another black Barbadian had snatched at what appeared to be a lot of money and had sold her birthright, her ownership to a prime piece of the gold coast. Sir, we have to start, not cursing the buyers but educating the vendors who are the people who look like us, who do not value what they own.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a matter to be cursing Government about. It is something about which we should be speaking to our constituents. Therefore, I am not telling my constituents that when they own a piece of beachfront land and the maintenance is high, that they must get rid of it, like the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is suggesting. I am telling them to hold onto it because having that land in their hands, whether it appears to them or not, they are holding millions of dollars and that people like them and me will always own the beachfront of Barbados.

2.50 p.m.

As a political directorate, let us not quarrel with who buys because they are not using dishonest means to buy but to those who sell, educate them about what they are selling and the value of what they have. Sir, we have to understand the dynamics of the situation and deal with our people because we are the ones selling what we own for "next-kin-to-nothing" because once it passes to an expatriate, it is not coming back to us because it is a one-way passage.

Sir, this is a matter about which I feel passionate because representing a constituency which has many chattel houses on the coast, I knew the value of these chattel houses and when people spoke to me about offers which they received, I advised them not to sell. Sir, not all of them listened to me because, at the end of the day, I could not pay their bills. We have to understand the social issue, change and thinking we are coming up against.

Sir, criticism has been made about Government's policy but Barbados has not gone the road of economic citizenship where other countries have gone and both Administrations must be credited for not having pursued that option, even though it was opened to them.

On the point of harmonisation of the Land Acquisition Act and the Town Planning Act, I have to differ from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West because a development plan comes out every 10 years and there must be some degree of flexibility by the policy director. If you legislate all of the approaches and speak to harmonisation, then you do not have the flexibility to make a development decision.

The Prime Minister makes the point very well that by a town planning decision, Sandy Lane was intended to remain in agriculture and that by ministerial discretion, Sandy Lane was taken out of agriculture, put into tourism development and we can see the benefits from that. Had the development plan been followed slavishly, as an economy, we could not have received the benefits from Sandy Lane which we have received. I would urge the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West to rethink his position about harmonising the development plan and town planning legislation because we want to have that degree of flexibility.

Sir, I disagree with Honourable Members on the Other Side who made the point that hovels must not exist next to mansions. It has been my experience to witness a form of development in the rest of the Caribbean where people have gated communities. It is that sense of exclusion that creates social barriers and the feeling that there are persons who are made to feel better in your society than you are where you are excluded from the ownership of property when they can get. I do not want to call any particular Caribbean country but there are myriad examples of this.

In Barbados, we have benefitted from the fact that next to highbrow properties, chattel houses can exist and the owner of the chattel house can say "Good Morning" to the owner of the big house and people live in some degree of harmony. We must not seek to move from that kind of development toward closed enclaves where the rich live and the average Barbadians cannot get access to. The danger of that is that even the middle class or well-to-do Barbadian will find himself or herself locked out of these prestigious enclaves and we must resist that.

Sir, issues were raised about the ownership of the fish market at Bay Street and the Christ Church District Hospital. As far as I am aware, these properties are still under the ownership of the Government of Barbados and in that regard, the taxpayers of Barbados.

Sir, with those words, I wish to thank all Honourable Members for their contribution and the wide-ranging discussion we have had. This matter has been on the Order Paper for a long time but we have debated it at the right time. Since there was no other business today, we had time to dedicate ourselves to a discussion of the specific issues as well as the broader social issues.

I close by repeating the philosophy and policy of this Government, that we will not allow private beaches in Barbados, that we will seek wherever possible to ensure that appropriate beach accesses are created and that the public has full use and access to the beaches of Barbados.

With those words, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: We will now have Question Time. I am instructed to deal with Questions 12 and 13 asked by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Question to the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Civil Service:

Will the Minister state if there are any plans in his Ministry to designate Tweedside Road a special development area in order to promote the general renewal and development of that area and thereby assist small businesses?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, if the Member would so oblige, I would like to give one combined answer to his questions. And the answer to Question 13 is the same.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have also asked Question 13?

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: To ask the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Civil Service:

Will the Minister state if there are any plans to designate Highway 7 and its environs and the area of the Garrison right up to the area of Oistins a special development area?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the answers to Questions 12 and 13 are as follows: The Special Development Areas Act will be amended to include Nelson Street, James Street, Roebuck Street and Baxters Road in the first instance. The Minister will give consideration to specific identified areas where it is clear that the concessions will promote the general renewal and development of the areas.
2.59 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Would the Minister please state whether in his opinion the Special Development Areas legislation has fulfilled its mandate as originally intended when passed through this Parliament?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, the contribution to the gross output of Barbados and the indirect contribution to the revenue of Barbados from activities in the Special Development Areas, Speightstown, St. Lawrence Gap and Carlisle Bay has been grossly in excess of the tax revenue foregone and it is the Ministry of Finance's considered judgement that on balance, the therapeutic rehabilitative effects of the Special Development Areas legislation has been extraordinary as a stimulus to the economic activity and provides the basis upon which the Ministry of Finance is disposed to the possibility of having other areas designated as special development areas.

Mr. Speaker, one disappointment is that the parish of St. John, for which special development concessions apply,

has never benefitted by reason of refusal of the Honourable Member for St. John to be seriously engaged in any activity that can use special development concessions.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: I want to ask the Minister if the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has made any representation to him in support of special development in the area of Tweedside Road.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the answer is "No". There has been no request from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for Tweedside Road nor for any other area in the constituency of St. Michael South Central to be designated as a special development area. Notwithstanding the inertia of the Honourable Member, he can be absolutely assured that the good people of St. Michael South Central will receive every benefit within the ability of the Government to confer such benefits from the general revenues of the country. Despite his lack of attention to their needs, they will be the beneficiaries of the same kind of developmental efforts as the rest of Barbados.

Asides.

Question 15:

Dr. W. F. DUGUID:

"Will the Minister state when work will commence at Flint Hall on the new school to house the pupils of the Carrington Primary and Erdiston Primary Schools?"

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the answer to Question 15 as posed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West: Work on the amalgamated Carrington and Erdiston Primary Schools at Flint Hall, St. Michael is scheduled to start in mid-January, 2005.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, would the Honourable Minister please state what was the justification for the amalgamation of the two schools as opposed to the repairing of the two individual schools?

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is the view of the Ministry of Education that all of the children of our nation are to be provided, as far as possible, with similar exceptional conditions for their schooling. Today all of our schools are required to provide not only for the education of our children but for their physical development through the provision of sporting facilities within the school compound as well as their health and safety.

The conditions of the Carrington Primary are such as we would not want to continue to use that facility for the future. We at the Ministry have been receiving, since 1994

representation from Senator and then Member of Parliament David Gill, concerning the conditions of the Carrington and Erdiston Primary Schools. The investigation by the Ministry of Education revealed that the Member was, in fact, correct in his concern.

For example, there is no playing field at Carrington Primary School which is surrounded by three roads and it is a wooden building. Erdiston Primary School is overcrowded, the conditions are cramped and the learning environment is not ideal. Again, there is a shortage of playing facilities.

The new school is estimated to cost \$5.6 million and will consist of a two-storey main block of 26 classrooms, two staff rooms, computer room, parking area, administration offices, playing field and a modern pavilion for the children of that constituency.

Sir, there will be a dawn of a new day for St. Michael Central when we will be amalgamating two schools which have tended to cater to children from different sociological backgrounds. I look forward to the commencement of the work on this school and the lifting of the conditions under which the people in St. Michael Central and St. Michael South Central conduct their teaching and learning.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Sir, I would like to know if the Minister can say if the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central made any effort to reach the Ministry in connection with this long awaited construction of a school. I would like the Minister to tell this Chamber what kind of representation he had from the Honourable Member.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, my perusal of the files does not reveal any correspondence from the current Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. In spite of that, we are committed to vigorously pursue the construction of this school and improving the condition of the children in that constituency, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Will the Minister of Education give the House the assurance that the financial resources to be spent on Carrington Primary and Erdiston Primary Schools are spent more efficiently and expeditiously than at the St. Leonard's Boys' School?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, a Supplementary Question must follow the rules as laid out in the context of questions and that is not an unacceptable question. If the Minister so desires, he can go ahead and answer.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the answer is certainly one which this Government, having recognised that there were matters of concern at St. Leonard's Boys' School,

this Government, through its Ministry of Finance, has requested the Auditor General to conduct a special audit to ensure full conformity with the Financial Rules.

We will exercise the same level of financial prudence and probity. Hopefully it will not be required, but if we suspect that there needs to be a special audit conducted on any project in this Government's term, we will do that. We will continue the very high standard of financial management which will have been exercised in all of Government's projects.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Will the Minister agree that this is a matter gravely to be deplored that there was absolutely no programme for remedial work at primary schools between the period 1986 and 1994? Will the Minister further agree that the enormous programme that now has to be undertaken to correct for those years of great deficiency is a programme that runs the Government into millions of dollars, and will the Minister give the Honourable House as to the many millions of dollars that are needed to correct for the lack of effort for the period 1984 to 1994, Sir?

3.10 p.m.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is quite right. There was no programme in existence prior to 1994 for neither the ongoing maintenance nor the rehabilitation of the 103 government-owned schools, 23 of which are secondary schools. It fell to this Government, Sir, through the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to devise such a programme for the rehabilitation and repair of our schools.

We have committed, Sir, some \$400 million for the complete refurbishment of our schools over a period of time, including the utilisation of technology to enhance our education in Barbados. I am pleased to say, Sir, already 32 schools have been completely refurbished with new plumbing, electrical and structural works. There is a completely new environment which is distinctly different from what existed between the period of 1986 to 1994. We look forward to pressing on with this project to complete that work which has been started, so we are one-third along the way there.

Mr. SPEAKER: If it is the desire of the House, that is the end of our Supplementaries, but if the House so desires that more questions can be asked, then please proceed.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, please.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House can do anything it so desires. Is this the will of the House that we want, on this important question, to hear a few more Supplementary Questions?

Mr. R. D. JONES: Can the Minister please state what will be done to create a harmonious blending of the two staffs when the schools are amalgamated, recognising that there has been a historical trend where the two schools have been amalgamated to have some divisional problems?

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the process of amalgamation of schools is one which is well known to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry has very recently amalgamated St. Simon's, St. Savior's and St. Andrew's Primary Schools, not only into one physical location, but into one cohesive unit for the teaching of our children.

Several other amalgamations have been effected. As has been the case, Sir, there will be joint meetings of staff prior to the physical amalgamation. There will be a unification of systems and there will be every effort made to ensure, not only that the methods used in both schools are similar, but that the personnel functioning in those schools are given every opportunity to get to know each other, prior to the amalgamation.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask the Minister a few questions. He answered my first question, related to the involvement with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. I now want to ask the Minister to what extent the Honourable Member for the constituency for St. Michael East was involved in this new venture?

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was most vigorous and virile in his representation to the Ministry, in requesting and expressing his concern about the plight of the students, particularly at the Carrington Primary. He has and he has been most persistent and most strident in his efforts to have the work on the new Erdiston/Carrington School started at Flint Hall, in order to ensure that the children of St. Michael East, some of whom attend these two schools, will benefit from the improved conditions.

I believe, Sir, the Honourable Member is also very pleased that this school will be along the same stretch of road as an institution known as the Israel Lovell Foundation, and that there are plans for great collaboration, including the use of the facilities at this new Erdiston/Carrington Primary School after school hours, by persons of the Israel Lovell Foundation.

Indeed, Sir, within the core curriculum of the school for this strong community-based organisation called the Israel

Lovell Foundation which is one of the repositories and protectors of our heritage to be used in the school, and to have a very strong relationship with the students of the school, as they seek to pursue an education programme which is strongly rooted in the Barbadian tradition and culture.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Would the Minister please state if he has as yet responded to the Barbados Union of Teachers, and the teachers of the two schools, particularly Carrington which has long requested of the Ministry what will be done, relative to the refurbishment of these schools?

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: The Barbados Union of Teachers has been made very much aware of the plans for the new Erdiston/Carrington Primary School. In fact, Sir, from the beginning, the Barbados Union of Teachers was involved in the approval of the concept because, Sir, before we go to the detailed work of preparing drawings for submission to the Town Planning Department, we get the sign-off of the teachers.

In fact, Sir, it was the Barbados Union of Teachers and the teachers of the school that would have met and agreed to the amalgamation of the schools at the new location, rather than the repair of the separate two primary schools. They continue to be very much involved in the process.

Indeed, Sir, I must salute the Barbados Union of Teachers for the stance it has taken, for its spirit of cooperation, and its maturity and understanding in several areas. First of all, Sir, for fully cooperating the new concepts of all the schools that we have amalgamated, for the forbearance that the Union and its members have shown during the periods of construction and in transition. Also, Sir, for the great work which they have done in helping to mold the new character of the amalgamated institution, once that is done. I want to salute the Barbados Union of Teachers.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, as regards matters pertaining to the amalgamation of these two schools, and primary education in general, would the Minister please confirm that there has been a general salutary air of improvement in the relationship between the Ministry and Unions, and a higher level of maturity expressed on behalf of members of the Union, particularly since May 22, 2003 and as a result of the departure from the Union of certain of its principal officers?

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have been at the Ministry since 22nd of May last year, and I note that those officers of the Union with whom I have had to treat have been very pleasant, professional, and exceptional educators.

In fact, Sir, I am duty bound to commend the present President of the Barbados Union of Teachers who not only is a strong advocate for the rights of teachers, but as a professional educator herself, has been the head of the Teacher Appraisal Process. Ms. Best has been the head of the Teacher Appraisal Project. She has gone overseas and has done work here. She has shown a degree of professionalism which really has done great credit to the teaching profession.

I, for my part have pledged, and I have followed through on my pledge, to be open and available to the Barbados Union of Teachers. We hold meetings every couple of months, notwithstanding other meetings held with officers of my Ministry, but I make myself available to meet with the Union. There is a pleasant aroma that flows through the Ministry, and is associated with the relationship between our two institutions.
3.20 p.m.

I respect their positions when they are strident in representing the interest of their members and they respect our position when we have to uphold the law or other Government policy. Even when we may disagree on an issue, there is mutual respect and understanding of our respective positions and a maturity that generally characterises the relationship between the Ministry and the present executive of the Barbados Union of Teachers.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I am being advised by the former Minister of Education that when the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central was in the Executive of the Barbados Union of Teachers, he was the President, he was the *el numero uno*, and that an equally pleasant aroma and atmosphere pervaded the relationship. However, it would appear that in a reincarnation, he has changed somewhat and not necessarily for the better.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Would the Minister state if this perceived harmony between the Ministry of Education and the Barbados Union of Teachers is as a result of his continued membership of the Barbados Union of Teachers and his once standing as a teacher, where teachers are now interfacing with a once educator?

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: It would be immodest and it would be somewhat invidious for me to want to suggest notwithstanding the urging of the Honourable Member that I have that much to do with the better relationship that flows. All I can say to him is that the Ministry of Education, certainly in this Administration, has been led by able Ministers, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North

East and the previous Honourable Member for St. Philip North, who have been ably assisted by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, and that all of us have been very pleased to bring our own unique skills and perspectives to bear on the relationship.

I believe that the change in the relationship has been more influenced by changes in the Executive of the Barbados Union of Teachers, a process because they have elections annually which may occur more frequently, than a change in the persona of the Minister.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Is the Minister aware that the issue of the Carrington's Primary School is a dated one and that representation was made by Dr. Haynes as far back as the early 1980s to do something about the Carrington's Primary School? Indeed, we are waiting with baited breath to see if something will actually take place.

Is the Minister aware that, while he may not have had letters from the current representative, he has spoken on this issue at least twice on the Floor of this House of Assembly and it is in *Hansard*?

While we are at it, the Honourable Member for St. Peter should be aware that the issue of special development areas was also spoken about on the Floor of this House, but he may have been absent or too intoxicated to be aware of that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. First of all, let us keep it as questions. As you know, there are certain regulations concerning questions. You started out with an issue making a statement relating to Carrington's Primary School. As you know, the Rules clearly state that if you are going to make a statement then you have to, in this case, say what the issue is. However, it seems to be the will of the House to give an answer, so be it.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, for confirming and reminding us that there was no programme for the repairs or rehabilitation of schools between 1986 and 1994 because it has fallen from his lips that the distinguished former representative for St. Michael South Central, Dr. Richard Christopher Haynes, made representation which his Party was unwilling and unable, and the record would show, had no programme and therefore no intention of having any positive response, either for Carrington's Primary School or for Erdiston Primary.

It fell to the responsibility of this kind Administration to not only take care of Erdiston Primary or Carrington's Primary but to take care of both of them. We are happy to discharge that function, and that is the decisive difference between this Administration and the previous Administration.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister agree that there was a question of misplaced priorities for the Democratic Labour Party not to be able to find resources to repair Carrington's Primary School but to find the resources to repair the VIP lounge at the Stadium? Is the Minister in a position to state which company was in a position to do the work to repair the VIP lounge at the Stadium when they could not repair Carrington's Primary School?

Could the Minister state whether the company that received it was the lowest bidder, and would he further state whether there were complaints raised about the quality of the work at the Stadium that would disqualify that company from being able to do work at Carrington's Primary School?

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would be in a better position to give details of that company than I would. I would therefore defer to him to give details of the nature and the name of that company, the scope of the works, whether or not it was the lowest bid, and also what complaints would have been received as a result of the work which was so inexpertly executed.

Sir, it is clear that it would have been a case of mistaken priority to have abandoned the children of Carrington's Primary School to do the VIP lounge at the National Stadium.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Is the Minister aware that the then Director of Sports who approved that work at the Stadium is now the Chief Executive Officer for the oldest political party in Barbados?

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: The Honourable Member would be very much aware that the former Director of Sports would have had no choice and, in fact, it would have been the Board rather than the Director which would have approved. The Honourable Member should know the workings of the Board seeing that he had very close family connections serving on the Board. Indeed, the male in his family who would have immediately preceded him would have been the person who would have served on the board and could perhaps give further and better particulars on that matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that is the end of Question Time, there will be no other supplementary questions, please.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GRANT OF A SUBLEASE UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP 225 TO THE BARBADOS NATIONAL TRUST OF THE BUILDING KNOWN AS “ARLINGTON HOUSE” SITUATE AT SPEIGHTSTOWN IN THE PARISH OF ST. PETER IN THIS ISLAND TO ALLOW THE NATIONAL TRUST TO UNDERTAKE SPECIAL RESTORATION OF THE SAID BUILDING

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER assumed the Chair.
3.30 p.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Resolution before the Honourable House seeks this Honourable Chamber's permission to lease 2 277.9 square metres, approximately 2 800 square feet of land at “Arlington”, Speightstown, St. Peter, to the Barbados National Trust.

Sir, the terms of this lease are:

- (a) That it would expire one day before the head lease, which is a lease to the Government of Barbados;
- (b) That the rent should be a peppercorn one of \$1.00 per annum;
- (c) That the Barbados National Trust will pay all charges for electricity;
- (d) That the Barbados National Trust will be responsible for payment of service charges to cover comprehensive insurance coverage, land taxes and other imposts;
- (e) External security lightings;
- (f) Maintenance of the grounds;
- (g) Parking and other common areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will also be the responsibility of the Barbados National Trust to maintain both the interior and exterior of the building in good and substantial repair and condition.

In the event that the Barbados National Trust should go into voluntary or involuntary liquidation, or otherwise should cease to operate, then the sublease to the Barbados National Trust would be determined and the property would revert to the Crown.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this arises in circumstances where the Barbados National Bank is the owner of the property. The Government of Barbados has a lease from the Barbados National Bank and is now seeking to sublet to the Barbados National Trust for further development.

It is anticipated that the Barbados National Trust will use "Arlington House" as a model restoration project, demonstrating the type of quality restoration which would be expected from other property owners who are given incentives from Government, particularly as it relates to heritage properties, and that it would also allow for the drawings of streets-capes of Speightstown and other lands and streets-capes to be exhibited, particularly for property owners to get a true picture of what a redeveloped Speightstown could and would look like.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt that, certainly, during the course of my lifetime and more recently over the last 10 years, Speightstown has undergone tremendous physical and economic transformation. It has become a thriving city centre, so that there are persons who now opt to go to Speightstown because it has a certain quietness and charm, in the same way that people would, in former years, have opted to have gone to Bridgetown because of the diversity of shops, commodities and other businesses.

In fact, people who live in the north would say that Speightstown boasts of a more salubrious atmosphere and cheaper and better prices than Bridgetown for exactly the same products. The street vendors who generally are from rural stock, still have the warmth of welcoming one to the area and giving a kind word as one passes by. Sir, shopping in Speightstown has a particular appeal and persons from the north would say that they do not bother to come to Bridgetown too often, that Speightstown is now the first option for shopping.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, apart from shopping, there are certain cultural icons, the Fisherman's Pub being one of them and the redevelopment of "Arlington House" by the Barbados National Bank and others, the property that was restored by Major Batson, have again all brought life to Speightstown. The restaurant, Mango Bay On the Sea, is a place for very fine dining. Therefore, Speightstown has become a microcosm of the wider development in Barbados.

Sir, the wider point to which this Resolution speaks is the number of initiatives within the last 10 years, that this Administration has done, to promote cultural heritage and heritage tourism, in fact, an appreciation for Barbadians of things Barbadiana.

Sir, we do not always remember but I would wish to refer to some initiatives that have been taken and to the

development that has taken place with the support of agencies such as the Barbados National Trust, which has partnered with the Government to ensure that our cultural heritage is preserved. There is, for instance, the initiative with the Barbados National Trust to restore the George Washington House, where the President of the United States of America once stayed. That is an important cultural icon.

In the United States of America, the Americans have sought to preserve all of the private properties which were residences of their former Presidents. Therefore, one can go to the Abraham Lincoln's Museum; one can read his speech on a Monument in Washington; one can go to the homes of former Presidents and go through them as one would do a museum and learn, appreciate and become immersed in which major historical events that have taken place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, through its own initiatives and working with the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation (BTII), Government has recently redeveloped the old Town Hall, which had a tremendous place in history and culture of Barbados. In fact, it seems to me that given the importance of the old Marshall Hall, we have to seek to restore that as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, "Arlington House" is a joint venture between the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation (BTII), the Barbados National Bank, the Barbados National Trust, and Government. Therefore, Government has used its satellite agencies as a vehicle for development and as a means of doing financing of projects outside the scope of Government's central budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the redevelopment of Speightstown has taken place through incentives being put in place by the Government, along with the vigorousness of the Honourable Member of Parliament, which was helped by the fact that he is also Prime Minister and therefore people would want to help him to redevelop his constituency in a way that some of us might not be able to get other businessmen to help us with ours. We cannot fault the Honourable Member for St. Peter for that, he has asserted and exerted himself, to ensure that the community that he represents is developed.

Sir, therefore, we have seen a redeveloped Speightstown. In my lifetime, I can see the tremendous social and economic changes and the changes in the landscape. Speightstown has become a bustling centre again, to which people want to go and in which people want to live because some fine residential development has become part of the landscape, including high value tourism development. Sir, old warehouses and derelict properties

have been transformed, using Barbadian traditional architectural styles to redevelop these properties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Tyrol Cot was developed by the Barbados National Trust with the technical assistance of the Government. That was the home of a former Premier of Barbados. Efforts are now being made to ensure that the property of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow will also be preserved in very much the same way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the Garrison, which is a historical focal point, and when one examines the role of military and military garrisons across the Caribbean, whether they were French or British garrisons, these played a tremendous role in helping the conquerors, as they then were, to maintain their Caribbean outposts. There have been many battles fought for these countries at a time when they changed battles rapidly between one nation state and another. There used to be that kind of historical upheaval and it is interesting to see that at the Garrison for instance, the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, the Barbados Defence Force, the Barbados Turf Club, and the Barbados Legions, have sought to develop and to maintain this area, under the guidance of the Garrison Committee. 3.40 p.m.

They have taken the Barbados pavilion which was a derelict but potentially beautiful old building, and transformed it into a beautiful hotel with conference facilities, restaurant, membership club and recreational space.

The Prime Minister recently opened the Armory where there is a display of cannons and other military memorabilia *et cetera* set up by Major Hartland. There are a number of properties which have been bequeathed to the Barbados National Trust for their development and we must commend them for trying to maintain our cultural heritage out of slim resources and seeking to ensure and promote that these cultural icons and traditional architecture have not died nor disappeared off the face of Barbados because this has happened with many traditional Barbadian properties. They have been knocked down and people have put up a lot of glass and modern buildings rather than to preserve the old cultural landscape.

The other initiative being proposed is the redevelopment of the old Screw Dock, the only one of two remaining in the world and certainly the only one in this hemisphere. This is an important initiative because with facilities developed around the Screw Dock and the Pierhead Development to come, that part of Bridgetown will be totally transformed having developed the Boardwalk.

Sir, Government gives certain groups like the Museum and National Trust an annual subvention to help with their

work and promote their activities so that they are not entirely impecunious because much of the money that these organisations use for their developmental work comes from voluntary donations and fund-raising efforts.

The Jewish Synagogue which is the oldest one in the western hemisphere located in Bridgetown, celebrates its 350th Anniversary this year. This property is owned by Government, leased to the Barbados National Trust for use by the Jewish community and is another historical icon.

It is important to note the other developments that have taken place at Speightstown and elsewhere. There is work being done at the Sand Hole to preserve the marine quality and environmental ambience of Speightstown because one cannot have infrastructural development while the natural environment and landscape is not appealing. A lot of attention has been paid to the development and greening communities like aerating the lagoon at Holetown.

Other developments being contemplated are being executed through the National Conservation Commission where the clock house at Queen's Park will be restored with the help of the Barbados National Trust. Also, the old trash house at Queens Park will be the subject of a restoration project.

The National Conservation Commission is working with the National Trust to restore Farley Hill Great House. They will look at the preservation at the ruins, the inclusion of a floor and a soft roof of canvass which is retractable that will allow people to have theatre-type entertainment whether it be shows or dramas. Sir, Farley Hill is presently used for Gospelfest and the Jazz Festival but we want to seek to promote it for greater use for family and related activities, the hosting of concerts and other events. This month there will be a wedding at Farley Hill in the ruins, the reception will be held on the grounds and we hope to use that wedding to promote Farley Hill for uses other than which it is being now used.

Sir, Father Hatch pointed out that at Fitts Village there was some sort of military installation at that location and that cannons and other memorabilia are still *in situ*. The National Conservation Commission is joining with the Barbados National Trust to look at the development of that location as a potential tourism attraction and for use of the people of Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. George North made the point earlier in the day that the majority of the lands next to and at the back of the Good Shepherd Church are owned by Government. Therefore, we have taken the opportunity to develop that area as a window to the sea.

Sir, the development of the marine park which will be in the waters opposite Government Headquarters is a critical development for our cultural heritage. This is the site of some five historical wrecks and coins, bottles and other historic relics which have been found when people have dived this site. It is the most popular dive site in Barbados having as many as 100 000 dives per year. Once the marine park is developed there will be proper usage to ensure that people do not take away the historic relics without Government being in control because these can go out of the country allowing other people to derive benefit from them. 3.50 p.m.

I believe the time has come for us to look at the property development of our lighthouses for tourism sites. There are people who visit the Statue of Liberty, equally, people would come to Barbados and enjoy visiting and some would want to visit them during the day and others by night. We could also have restaurants and other facilities located at the lighthouses, for example shops where souvenirs can be sold. There are several areas that can be done to add to our cultural heritage to earn revenue.

However, we must be able as a people to recognise, identify and appreciate the value of these sites. Sir, too often people would demolish slave huts to build roads rather than adjusting the road so that the value of the slave hut is not lost. Sir, the first free village in Barbados is located at Rock Hall, St. Thomas, and Government is erecting a monument in that area and developing activities that would benefit the community and which commemorate the struggle of those emancipated slaves to establish a free village and to see themselves as the first free black citizens of this country.

Sir, people pass through Rock Hall without knowing its historical significance. They complain about the hill and the winding road but they do not know the value of the slave hut that existed there. They do not understand the cultural value to Barbados of a place called Rock Hall, St. Thomas. Sir, understanding our history, having a knowledge of who we are, putting a value on it and revelling in that history is something the Barbados National Trust has sought for a long time to promote. This is a concept and a deliberate policy approach that this Government sought to promote over the last 10 years and we have seen it as the celebration of an Emancipation Day which reminded us where we came from, the value of freedom and a democracy such as ours.

Sir, we have also seen it in the identification and celebration of heroes, those persons who took Barbados on their backs and help to lift us up. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not to say that the average Barbadian canecutter and coconut vendor have not taken Barbados on their backs and lifted us up, but it is to recognise that there are persons who

have made singular contributions to our development that must be recognised.

Sir, we have reinvigorated Independence celebrations for those who were born in the post-Independence era and do not understand what it meant for people to stand in the rain at the Garrison Savannah to see the Barbados flag being hoisted for the first time; who do not understand the cultural and historical experience out of which we came and how that shaped us. Sir, we are seeking to bring cultural and historical relevance to property development and to the development of various places in Speightstown.

Sir, we are happy to be able to work with the Barbados National Trust to continue the development in St. Peter but really to continue the development in Barbados of what is an important part of our cultural and historical heritage. It not only has revenue-earning potential for tourism but, more importantly, it has relevance for us as a people.

I thank you.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I want to thank the Honourable Minister for Housing, Lands and the Environment for speaking with such great feeling on this matter and for capturing in graphic terms the symbolic significance of the importance of the development that this Honourable House is being called upon to support by this vesting.

May I also thank all those who have worked to restore "Arlington House" such that it is now available as a potentially important asset to help anchor Speightstown's redevelopment as a centre for heritage tourism in Barbados. Perhaps you would allow me to start there.

Sir, an important aspect of our development must be our taking assets created in one time period and pressing them into new services in another time period in a Barbados that is being actively pursued, for example, our old spirit bonds in Bridgetown and elsewhere.

Sir, "Arlington House" was the home of the Speightstown Health Centre. However, when the polyclinic was built, the function of providing health care from that building, went into abeyance. As I speak about "Arlington House", I must suggest that it should become the practice in Government that whenever the use of a public building is terminated, the planning for the removal of that function from that building must be accompanied by equivalent plans to find the best use for the old building.

Sir, this Centre at Speightstown has remained in decay for many years and it reflects what could be the lot of many public buildings, unless we are practising physical development. The Government is pressing to find use for the old Child Care Board and the Welfare Department to prevent them from falling into the path of decay that was the lot of "Arlington House".

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say how grateful we are for the work done by the Barbados National Trust and the private sector who have already spent money to restore this building, not only for the expenditure but the quality of it. We are now living in a country where some of the buildings built by the private sector, and sometimes the Government, seem as though they have been designed by unemployed window-washers, just a mass of glass.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Or they had been designed by, these are Tom Adam's words not mine, "people who put matchboxes together and having put them together they effected a design".

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: It is a very refreshing thing to see the architectural integrity of a more splendid form of design embodied in the restored buildings in Speightstown. The old health centre was a building that had interesting architectural features. It was really an outstanding example of the old Barbadian architectural vernacular and it is a good thing that rather than demolish, the building has been refurbished, but the architectural integrity of the style of building and the style associated with the old health centre have been incorporated and we now have a fine asset in Speightstown.

Sir, the building will be used as an interpretive centre for Speightstown, a place where the history of the town will be on show. Now that the building has been restored, the private sector is working with a large number of people to collect artifacts which would allow people to visit and see the history of Speightstown being showcased at the new "Arlington House". We are now at the stage of seeking to raise funds for this project.

Sir, the Barbados National Trust has been good enough to designate a room in the centre for the gifts that I have received in my capacity as Prime Minister and they would be displayed at "Arlington House" as part of the contribution that St. Peter made to the political development of the country.
4.00 p.m.

I have been carefully collecting them in anticipation of that date soon when I too will also join the ranks of those former Prime Ministers who have items to showcase. This is what the House is going to do, showcase the history of Speightstown and in so doing, take an old health clinic and convert it into a new heritage asset.

It is important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we do have a need to make people want to come to Speightstown, in order for us to justify the expansion in the physical development taking place and to be able to give businesses in Speightstown greater spending power. An interpretive centre for Speightstown on the scale that has been contemplated, Sir, is what I would like to see for all of the major urban areas in Barbados.

For example, it would be a wonderful thing if at Oistins, we could have a recreation of the old Tavern at which the Charter of Barbados that played such an important role in the history of building modern democracy was formed, and as a place where people can go to see something interesting, both as nationals and as visitors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Speightstown is also being redeveloped with an eye to twinning it with other major cities. Before us, was something of little disaster. Speightstown was the place where the Carolinas was settled in the 17th Century and the 18th Century. While it is part of history that we obviously cannot resile from or rewrite, Speightstown cannot in every respect hold itself accountable for what the Carolinas has become.

We therefore found ourselves in a very delicate situation where Speightstown was twinned with Charleston, but when we were hoping to make a visit to Charleston, we found that the confederate flag was still flying over the state capital in Charleston. We cannot deny that there is a relationship between ourselves and the Carolinas but we obviously would have a difficulty in consummating the twinning, once that confederate flag continues to be evident in modern Charleston.

Recently happily, however, Speightstown has been twinned with Redding, which is now one of the more bustling new cities in England. In fact, last week when I was in England, one of the purposes for my going there was to go to Redding to bring that twinning relationship into full existence, by way of an official visit.

It is important that these kinds of twinning relationships are established, because that is one of the means by which one broadens the mass of people who have an interest in the town and hence, a basis can be created for bringing more business to these areas by way of tourism.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, all these things are happening, but I would like to use this occasion to make an appeal for a wider cross-section of the Barbadian public to be involved in the work of the Barbados National Trust. It is an institution that has done tremendous work but has always been operating on the precipice of financial difficulties. For example, they have done tremendous work in the restoration of the Grantley Adams house and Tyrol Cot, but it is not a product that has redounded to the financial profit of the institution and it needs support.

One senses that the work of the Barbados National Trust is carried by a small group of very public-spirited Barbadians, who do a large number of functions, not the least being fund-raising, but it really needs the general support of the public. The Trust is, at present, involved in a large number of important new projects, all of which will help us in Barbados to secure a niche, as a high quality tourism destination that has a number of very important heritage assets to showcase.

In that respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just underscore what the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment has said, that a major new investment by the Barbados National Trust will take the form of the redevelopment of George Washington House. The Government has already acquired the property and vested it in the Trust. We have already given the commitment to the Trust to finance the redevelopment of the property, even if it does not raise private funds on its own.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this House, we often hear strictures being used against the Government about the use of the funds from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. I want to indicate that we have used some of the resources from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund to acquire George Washington House. We have given the Trust further resources to start the construction work, and there is going to be a ground-breaking ceremony for the restoration of the George Washington House, at the end of June.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbados is in the position of being the only country outside of the USA that has a place where the first President of the United States of America slept and that property, redeveloped in its purest setting obviously would be an attraction which a large number of USA visitors would want to see on a visit to Barbados.

It will not obviously in and of itself bring people here but once they are here, the quality of the attraction that one has to offer can help to determine whether or not people will judge the visit to be memorable. The resources the Government is deploying to the assistance of the Trust to redevelop George Washington House, Sir, is a resource that we feel will redound to our tourism profit, and it will be money well spent.

Sir, I want to make the general point, that the Barbados National Trust is doing fantastic work across Barbados, but it really does deserve and require the financial but human support of a broader cross-section of Barbadian citizens.

I want to thank the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment for the attention it has played in bringing these matters to this point where this vesting is going to take place. It will give the Trust now greater security in raising the additional resources to be able to bring the "Arlington House" alive. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the structure of the house exists, but we now have to bring the Interpretive Centre into existence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like, even at this early stage, to offer an invitation to all Members of Parliament that when the Interpretive Centre in Speightstown at the Arlington House is to be reopened, Sir, to join the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West who is a citizen of the constituency, to see how one showcases the history of a town, in the most tasteful and aesthetically pleasing manner.

It is in that context therefore, Sir, that I am very greatly pleased to be associated with this Resolution for vesting. I could only give the House the pledge that the Trust and all of us who are associated with the welfare of the people of St. Peter, will work to make sure that this public property will be put to a use that redounds, not just to the benefit of St. Peter, but to the greater glory of the people of Barbados.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the Rt. Hon. Member for St. Peter for his contribution. I think we really have said it all between the two speeches. I take it, Sir, that this is something that the House generally supports and endorses and I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government's Business for today's Sitting and I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, May 18, 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that this Honourable House be adjourned until Tuesday, May 18, 2004 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
4.09 p.m.

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