THE
House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2003-2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, August 05, 2005.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10:15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. Roett, G.C.M., B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker) His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J. P. (Deputy Speaker) 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). Hon. Dame Billie MILLER, D.A., (Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of Labour and Social Security) Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Public Works) Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, (Chairman of Committees) Hon. H. F. LASHLEY, (Minister of Social Transformation) Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment) Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., 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. R. R. FARLEY, B. Sc., J.P. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports) Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports) Mr. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Ed.), J.P. Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S. Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Industry and International Business) Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B., (Hons.) Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Pastor Dale Brathwaite.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, July 26, 2005.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, July 26, 2005, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report to this Honourable House that I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements for the month of March 2005, from the Accountant-General.

PAPERS

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Right Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, I am commanded to lay the following Bills

1.Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Betty Russell) Order, 2005

2.Barbados Economic and Social Report, 2004.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following

1.Shipping (Incentives) (Island Safari (Barbados) Limited) Order, 2005.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the following Bills were read a first time:

1.Roman Catholic Bishop of Bridgetown-Kingstown (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS
ORDER No. 5
RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228 THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT ASHBY AVENUE NO. 3, OISTINS, IN THE PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACCESS ROAD

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, the matter before the House is not at all complicated and I do not imagine that it is the kind of acquisition that would attract much acrimony, or any acrimony at all, though I would not wish to anticipate the Honourable Members on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter which dates back some 22 years when the Crown acquired land at Barnett Land, Welches, Oistins, Christ Church which was the property of Mr. Gordon Barnett for the relocation of persons affected by the Oistins Redevelopment Project. At that time some 29 446 square feet were acquired representing a subdivision of six lots. Lots 1 and 2 were retained by the owner while lots, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were acquired for the Crown for the relocation project.

Mr. Speaker, as a consequence of the relocation and the way the properties were aligned, one of the lots, I think it is lot 3, had no direct road access and in essence became landlocked. Mr. Speaker, if relief is to be given

to the community, it is therefore necessary to acquire a small track of land using Crown lands and this new acquisition to facilitate an access road. Hence, the acquisition today will be 13.6 square metres from Miss Vida Blackman in order to realign the southern boundary of lot 4 to facilitate a ten-foot wide vehicular access to lot 3.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, part of the land being used to accommodate vehicle access is lands owned by the Crown and only a small parcel will be acquired from the landowner, Vida Blackman. With this some facilitation will be effected to give that access and increase comfort to the owner of the lot and direct access to the main road.

Mr. Speaker, one sees this situation in many communities, either because of the ownership of lands or because of feuding families or the way construction has taken place or in fact where there has been Government acquisition of properties, where parcels can become alienated from use, landlocked, therefore making them virtually unsaleable and rendering proper development impossible. In those instances Government is committed to giving necessary access roads, footpaths were necessary, vehicular access and access that would accommodate not only the average car but a service or emergency vehicle.

Sir, there are instances in small communities both in urban and rural Barbados, where although they have access by way of footpaths they do not have vehicular accesses or certainly not the kind of road access and egress that would allow the entry of emergency and service vehicles. Therefore, because of that, many people end up continuing having to use gas from the small bottles rather than buying the larger cylinders because the truck simply cannot get into where they live.

Mr. Speaker, I have a particular instance of that in my constituency where people buy the large gas bottles but every time the men come to deliver, the language is so colourful in the area because of the distance that they have to roll these bottles is so long. Mr. Speaker, in both rural and urban Barbados, there are small footpaths or lines as we call them that people have to walk which are just big enough to accommodate maybe a mother and a child or a person carrying grocery in two hands. This is something that we should start looking at as a matter of deliberate policy to see how these communities could be assisted.

Mr. Speaker, it might be all right to have these kinds of narrow traditional accesses during the dry season but once the rains come that is where the difficulty comes for the community since it is at those times that walking on these footpaths requires that they walk with two pairs of shoes. Sir, getting access when they have their groceries or to bring things in or even to bring friends over also becomes very much a challenge.

House 75 Sequence 3

10:30 a.m.

Friday, August 05, 2005

Continuation of Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD:

Mr. Speaker, this is a long outstanding matter that needs tidying up. The parcel of land is about l50 square feet and has been valued by the Commissioner of Land Tax at $1 464, but as I have indicated to this Honourable House before, this is the sum which is usually given pre-negotiation and then the owner of the land, via his or her attorney-at-law or other agent, would usually negotiate with Government in respect of a final quantum at which the land is

valued. The total amount of land which will result to lot 3, will be a parcel of 6 197.56 square feet.

Sir, as indicated, the matter is not a challenging one, and I would beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, as was indicated by the the Honourable Member for St. James South, it seems like a fairly straightforward matter which certainly involves a very small piece of land, being l3.7 square metres, approximately l40 square feet, but I would certainly want from our side to ensure that the information with which we are served today is, indeed correct insofar as acquiring this piece of land from Ms. Blackman or her heirs or successors, as is the case.

Mr. Speaker, from my knowledge the Ashby Land area is a very densely-populated area and I would not want that this piece of land, however small it is, to create problems for the community in terms from whom the land is being taken. Honourable Members on this side have always expressed concerns about the way in which the Land Acquisition Act is being used and, therefore, I sincerely hope that it is being used here for the very best public purpose. Sir, as I have said, much information was not circulated to us but we have heard the rest of the information from the Honourable Member and we hope that is the case.

The other point I want to raise, and the Honourable Member has alluded to it, is the situation of access to lots is a serious issue, be it remote lots in the rural communities or be it the highly densely-populated areas in the more urban communities. We heard the Honourable Member speak to it. It was my understanding that the precise remit of both the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission was to deal with such issues and, therefore, I would hope that what we are rectifying here in Ashby's Land is indeed becoming more the rarity than the rule. Sir, certainly in my constituency, as well as in the constituencies of other Honourable Members, this issue of access is a serious one.

The Honourable Member mentioned emergency vehicles. There are roads that can barely accommodate an ambulance far less a fire truck, and this obviously is not satisfactory in 2005. Therefore, while we are going along with the Government in this case, we would sincerely hope that although this is being regarded as a trite Resolution, that the gravamen of the point made by the Minister would be recognised by Government, and that the issues of accessibility in urban and rural communities across Barbados will be taken seriously.

Sir, I would sincerely hope that whether it is done directly through the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, through either the Urban Development Commission or the Rural Development Commission, that these situations would be rectified and that what is happening at Ashby's Land can too happen at the other communities across Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we, on this side, are not going to stand in the way of seeing what is a fairly straightforward matter going through and, therefore, I am obliged to you.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on this item and at the outset, I give my fullest support to it.

Sir, this particular issue of the lack of access

and blocked roads are becoming more and more of a problem across Barbados. Therefore, while supporting this move to bring some level of relief to the people in Oistins, I think the time is upon us now, to seek to identify and to understand the many reasons why areas that used to provide thoroughfares for persons living in those respective areas, are no longer providing that easy access.

Sir, you would find in many cases... I suppose the particular reason I am going to identify hits at the heart at how Barbadians are now relating to each other. Honourable Members may not want to stand in this Honourable Chamber and say it, but it is becoming a significant problem the way how some Barbadians are treating to each other, where persons living in small areas for many years, have over time been suffering from a breakdown in relationships.

Sir, in some families some individuals may own certain sections of the area and when relationships were good, there were no problems with persons traversing other people's land to get to and from their respective domiciles. Sir, this situation is now happening with increasing frequency, where Honourable Members of Parliament get calls from persons about boulders being placed in these persons way, restricting access. In some cases, people stack these boulders in such a uniform manner, that the minimum of daylight is left between them and, therefore, in order to pass, one would have to climb over them. Sir, I am not the only Honourable Member of Parliament who would have been called in the last number of years to attend to such matters.

Sir, I am raising it in this Honourable Chamber so as to send the message to all who had been engaged in such practices and that those who might have been contemplating such practices, for them to desist. Sir, I would like to say that if there are difficulties amongst families in the respective areas, that they could find other ways of dealing with it, instead of going along this route. As I have said, it hits at the heart of a breakdown in the Barbadian society. It is a very unfortunate thing that we have gotten to this stage but there are too many areas where this breakdown in relationships amongst families is now resulting in a situation where, in 'getting back' at a family member, other family members would impeding that person's path by blocking their access.

Mr. Speaker, it may be Ashby's Land today, but I am certain that if the Honourable Member for St. James South had chronicled all the cases that have been brought to the attention of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment about this problem, which is the lack of access, and in circumstances where access was previously provided, we might be surprised to know that there are so many cases, and access might be a problem for other reasons.

H:No.75(4)1040 a.m.

Tuesday, August 5, 2005

Continuation of Hon. A.P. WOOD:

Mr. Speaker, there is also the case in some areas where because owners of the land do not take sufficient care of it, that some areas get overrun with bush, grass and shrubs. Whereas in the previous case it may have been the result of a deliberate act of placing boulders in the way, in this case it might just be as a result of persons not paying close enough attention to keeping their lots and the areas owned by them in a good enough condition and this is becoming a serious problem in Barbados. Sir, again this speaks to where the society is going relative to where it used to be when persons were more disposed to keeping their lots and areas owned by them in good condition.

Mr. Speaker, all of us were beneficiaries of the crash programme for debushing done by Government. When the programme comes to an end and we see how much more work is to be done in area of debushing, the Ministry of Health might need to be more vigilant and more serious ....

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have to find out where you are going because you seem to be moving to another area all together.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I am coming back to the point. Sir, we may have a problem with access occasioned by persons not paying close enough attention to the condition of their land. Those persons responsible for ensuring that areas are kept in a proper condition might have to pursue owners of land kept in such conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I close in support of the item before the Chamber. I want to restate what I said earlier about the need for us to pay close attention to how we relate to each other so as to reduce incidences of the Minister of Housing having to respond to request of this type.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I join in this debate at this particular time aware of what has been said previously. I want to make the point upfront that most of the lands in Barbados, which are landlocked are lands belonging to the masses of people of Barbados. I have no quarrel because I have already said in this Parliament that there should be no landlocked land in Barbados as it relates to the masses of people.

Mr. Speaker, it worries me that about 140 square feet of land has taken six years to be brought before Parliament to be dealt with after the Cabinet decision of 1999. This tells me that there must be some contention over a particular matter like this. I am saying to the Ministry of Housing and Lands that these matters had no right before Parliament. One would have expected that a small matter like this could have been taken care of in-house without being contentious. It is regrettable that this matter had to come before Parliament as we hoped the personnel in the Ministry of Housing and Lands would have been able to wrap this up because of the size of the land being acquired.

Mr. Speaker, on a policy matter. When we look and understand the demographics of how the masses own lands and that in previously years most of the land purchased by the masses in Barbados because they understand the importance of land ownership. They also understood at that time that agriculture meant something to Barbados and to the development of themselves. They understood that ownership of the land was the important thing so it did not matter where the land was located. Sir, in rural Barbados at a time when land is a precious resource in this country, we as a serious Parliament must take decisions in the interest of the masses and make sure that the land is accessible to the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, a house spot in Barbados is like a piece of gold at this time and we have to make sure that people are not forced to National Housing Corporation to get 3 500 square feet of land which has no room for expansion and, if we do not watch ourselves, we will find ourselves developing slums in years to come when, in truth and in fact, we would have had a golden opportunity to make that those families with large numbers would have had an adequate opportunity to gain a piece of land to developmental their families.

Sir, it cannot be about a house spot for a person when you speak about the masses of people in Barbados but about a piece of land for a family. Mr. Speaker, a family cannot be one person but more than one person which means that 3 500 square feet cannot be the adequate size for a family in Barbados. Most families need either one-eighth of an acre of land, one-quarter, one-half or an acre of land or more and they cannot relate to square footage.

Mr. Speaker, I am observing that in Barbados, we are now tying the masses of people in this country to square footage but they do not or cannot understand that language. Sir, we as a serious Parliament in 2005, cannot be relating the masses of people and speaking about square footage. We have to get back to the basics because these people previously understood the word acre.

We have now limited the people of Barbados who need land more than anybody else to square footage and not acres. In other words, we have depreciated the appreciation of the people of Barbados by deflecting from acreage to square footage. Sir, this is a serious social matter and we must understand what is happening in t his country and that we cannot limit the capacity of the masses of people in Barbados.

Mr. President, this might sound like a slight matter to Honourable Members on the other side but I consider it to be a serious matter and I ask of Minister of Housing to reflect on this matter because I know she understands of what I speak. Sir, after hearing this speech, I know that the Honourable Member for St. James South, would reflect on this particular matter and be able to appreciate the point. If the Honourable Member does not reflect on it after my speech today, I would be a disappointed man.

I know P.J. Patterson of Jamaica well and he has always been a productive person.

H75/10:50

Sequence 5

Friday, August 5, 2005

Continuation Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, P.J. Patterson of Jamaica used the social roots for the upliftment of political mobility. I expect the local one to do likewise to remove the square footage and return to acreage.

Sir, the Honourable Member as a Member of the Cabinet, understands and appreciates the point I am making. She can show interest at this particular moment by appreciating the masses of Barbados.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-MCDOWALD: On a point of order. Sir, I would like to invoke the rule for relevance. The rules require that the Honourable Member's speech must be relevant. He has left Ashby Land and has gone to Jamaica and is wandering all over the globe. Sir, bring him back.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am praising the Honourable Member for St. James South. I thought the Honourable Member had the ability to lead the Party, it appears that I am not relevant when I made the particular comment about the Honourable Member for St. James South. There is no better person to understand that than her. Sir, the Honourable Member believes that praising her is not relevant. I beg to withdraw that particular comment, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, may be you were not relevant to her.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad you understand that there is some possibility, that if she does the right thing, to equate herself to P.J. Patterson of Jamaica...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what about Ashby Land?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I have always been there, Sir. The ball might be biting and cutting a little too much for you but you are independent so that would not worry you, Sir.

Sir, any development for access roads, I will support because land that is landlocked in Barbados creates a problem for people, who then depend on Government to do something about it because it is owned by poor people. Once that is the case, we on this side have no problem, because this side has always been pushing to ensure that the masses of people have the right of access to their land.

Sir, the Government has appreciated the point made by this side, that we have no problem supporting this particular matter, providing this is not a piecemeal approach to the matter. I want to hear that this is Government's policy. If it is Government's policy based on by the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party, we have no other choice but to support it. If this is another piecemeal approach practiced by this Government, we will have difficulty supporting it. Sir, we cannot have a situation where there is a particular understanding today but a lack of understanding on other matters.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James South, as you would know, is very quick at bringing matters before Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you cannot say that. I do not know that.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I would love to believe that we both appreciate the point and understand the efficiency of the Honourable Member for St. James South. If you do not, I cannot blame you.

The Honourable Member has been very quick to initiate legislation to this Parliament, which we appreciate. We hope that this is a new approach, based on what has been said by the people of Barbados and the representatives on this side. We understand the importance of this type of legislation before Parliament and its acceptance in the interest of the masses of Barbados, that is why we have been monitoring its progress. Sior, we recognise that the Honourable Member has been able to use legislation in a good way and if acknowledged by the other side, would solve the problem within Cabinet at the present moment.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak briefly on this matter before the Honourable House. It is important for us to note that this particular Resolution has taken a lengthy time, not because of the size but all Resolutions for acquisition must follow a particular procedure. It has nothing to do with whether it is an acre of land, ten acres or a few square metres.

In this particular case, the residents of Ashby Land have been asking for an access road over the years. It is only a very small fraction, triangular in shape, which the Government is seeking to acquire to provide an access road for residents of this small village in Oistin, Christ Church.

Sir, I want to continue from where the last speaker seemed to be suggesting that land

should not be sold by the square foot. In the Western world, surely in Barbados and most Caribbean islands, land has always been sold by the square foot, rod or perch. Today land is sold by square metres. In some African States, land is deemed as a factor of production, which is a gift of God and cannot be sold. Only recently, at a very distinguished Conference, we were told that land should never have been sold and cannot be sold in some African socialist States. I am not sure if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would want us to revert to that situation.

Mr. Speaker, land in Barbados has always been acquired by Government and a policy is there, since we recognise that under the Land Acquisition Act, there is a policy, which the Ministry of Housing and Land follows to the letter of the law.

Over the years, surely in my time, we had many parcels of land that were landlocked. I can think of parcels of land in St. Philip West, the Charnocks area, where boulders were placed in the area and Government had to acquire a parcel of land. I am not sure if the roads have been constructed as yet but that was done in the last term. Almost every parcel of land inside of Highway 1 is a landlocked parcel of land.

Mr. Speaker, in my area there are a number of parcels of land that are landlocked.

Asides

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: I want to make the point that we have a number of parcels of land and I want to alert the Ministry of Housing and Lands that these parcels of land were to be brought before Parliament for a long time. I hope that the officials who are here from the Ministry of Housing and Lands would take note of some of these things.

I can speak of a complete district at Lower Estate that is landlocked. We have been trying to gain access to this land, but the Ministry of Transport cannot build a road unless we have access to the land. We at the Ministry of Public Works have been bombarded to put access road in districts but we cannot proceed. Every time a road is constructed, we have to get permission from the owners.

Years ago, it is true that in some St. Michael districts, roads were built without the consent of the owners; of course, sometimes the owners cannot produce title to the land. I can speak in terms of land in the Carrington Village area and at Peterkins, where we built roads. Very often it takes years before landlords can produce the title for the land.

Sometimes we are asked why is it that we are not paying for land promptly. It is not that the Government would not pay for land but at the Ministry of Public Works we have recognised that parcels of land have been acquired from people or we got permission from those people who felt that they owned the land but could not produce the title.

H75: 11.00 a.m.

Sequence 6

Friday, August 05, 2005

House 75, sequence 07, 11:00 a.m.

Continuation of: Hon. G.A. CLARKE

This is a case in which the Land Acquisition Act had to be used, so as to provide a proper Title to the land at Ashby Avenue. As I said before, we are pushing ahead in providing roads for the residents of Barbados, but wherever possible, we need to acquire land for

these road improvements.

Sir, it is not only in Ashby Land, Highway 1, the Glebe, St. George or Lower Estate where we have a lot of landlocked parcels that roads are supposed to be built, but we are proposing to construct a road from Lower Greys to St. Patrick within the next couple of weeks. This road is a Highway but it has to be improved. We have to be able to widen that road so land has to be provided. This road is very narrow tremendously and two cars cannot past. The Government will have to find the landlords. There may only be two or three plantations in that area.

Mr. Speaker, the same is happening from Groves Corner to Redman Village where, again, for years we have been trying to widen that road but cannot do so because we have to take time to survey these parcels of land, before we can start the road.

I am saying, Sir, that we have a lot of improvements to be done for the people but we recognise that there are hundreds of landlocked parcels of land in Barbados.

There was a time in this country, Mr. Speaker where a landlord would put a chain up across his road and the reason for this is to show that he owns the land and those persons who have been passing over this parcel of land for years that they do not really own the land but the landlord is giving them permission to do so, and we have a lot of parcels like that, Sir.

I have gone on many site visits. The Honourable Member for St. James North took me on a site visit in which a lady in the Road View area had blocked off the road and had put up a fence. All of these things are happening in Barbados but the Government cannot put in roads as we would like because we first need to acquire the land.

Mr. Speaker, every time we put in a road, we go to each landlord or the persons who are rent or occupy the spot. Sir, we find that the people occupying the spot are not really the owners, or they have not paid rent for years and they do not have Title for the land and, very often, we have to get permission from these individuals in order to put in the road.

We will continue, Mr. Speaker, to provide access for residents. In fact, it is part of our Manifesto Pledge to provide access roads for all residential areas and districts and to provide a paved road. Some of these roads are not paved, because we do not have the right of access to these lands.

I also want to alert the House, Mr. Speaker, that we have a number of dangerous junctions across Barbados and we will have to acquire land to improve these junctions. I can think of Prior Park in St. James and the road leading from Queens College to Prior Park. We need to acquire a parcel of land in order to improve that junction.

There is also the 'Y' junction at St. Patrick. Again, visibility has been impeded because of the parcel of land that goes into the road. We can think of other junctions, such as Lears Corner in St. George, where a number of persons have unfortunately died. We are looking to improve that junction, as well as the one at District B and Carmichael.

Sir, across Barbados in every constituency, we can think of a number of parcels of land that must be acquired in order to provide visibility, improved junctions and so on for the residents.

We recognise, Mr. Speaker, that many persons are building nice houses. Recently, I was in a district in Christ Church East and I noticed the beautifully constructed houses just off Parish Land but the roads are very bad and persons have to walk and drive through mud.

A man said to me: “Look at my house. I have a million dollar house and a nice car but I have to go through mud.” These are things that we hear from time to time.

Therefore, we recognise the duty of the Ministry of Public Works. We want to provide roads to people’s homes and we want to ensure that these roads are maintained, but wherever possible, we will have to acquire land but it takes time.

Sir, I would want to say to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that we have never, to date, in this country acquired land, other than by the square foot, the acre or the square meter. I do not know of any other way and until we work out a solution, I guess we will have to continue to do it that way.

I want to say finally, Mr. Speaker, we recognise the problems. The payment for many parcels of land is also a concern to Government. It is true that we have to pay for lands acquired but many persons who believe that they own the land, do not have Title and cannot be paid. Sir, unless you can produce Title showing that you are the owner of the land, then that money is put into the Treasury for years, waiting to pay the person who is the rightful owner of the land.

This is the problem with acquisitions and many people have come to me, including members of the Press and asked why are you not paying for the land that you have acquired for roads.

Sir, even if it is only a few square feet of land, it has to be paid. One of my colleagues in this House wrote to me about a dear friend of mine at Rock Hall, St. George, where a small parcel of land has been acquired. It is only a very small parcel of land but as I said, we have to pay for it and this is the problem we have, in terms of proving ownership.

Mr. Speaker, the money remains in the Treasury for years, although we know they will get interest, if persons cannot provide proof of ownership. We will work with the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the landlords and the residents, in order to provide roads but in every constituency, we have the same problem and we want to identify these owners of land to be acquired for road improvement.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member St. James North.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, there are many curiosities about the pattern of land tenure and occupation in Barbados and some Honourable Members who have already spoken in this debate, made reference to some of these curiosities.

House 75, sequence 07, 11:1014

Friday, August 05, 2005

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

I regret that the late Sir Harold Bernard St. John is not here because he not only took a very close interest in land law from a lawyer’s perspective but was also interested in the extent to which there was such a thing called policy relative to land. He often brought particular dimensions to debates here when it came to the question of use of land.

Mr. Speaker, you will permit me to make an observation based on the last point which the Honourable Member for St. George North raised. The Honourable Member for St. George North raised the very interesting point that Government sometimes on an acquisition finds

it difficult to establish the bona fides of ownership, which contributes to the problem. We have had in the history of Barbados persons seeing open land, and imagining that they have some type of right to the land, they would assert a type of possessory title, put people in occupation and in the absence of planning permission, unplanned settlements are put down. This is one of the reasons some parcels of land in Barbados are landlocked.

Picture, Mr. Speaker, a man seeing open land anywhere in Barbados. He can prove that years ago his great-grandfather who migrated to England used to be in charge of the land. He puts nine, ten or eleven people as his tenants not having shown that he has paper title to the property. The tenants pay him rent. He has installed the tenants without any permission from the Chief Town Planner. The tenants blocked accesses and in recent times have been even blocking watercourses. There then arises an issue where somebody comes forward to suggest that their original access is either cut off or there is no access. Then, it is not impossible, someone can find a piece of paper that points to an ancient right of way that must have existed 40 years before, which is not in line with what to the eye is the most obvious right of way.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy made a point, which is reflected in a land law book called "Real Property and Real People", which states that when land is landlocked, it loses its value and its marketability is compromised.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, would have confronted in his constituency lines of chattel houses occupying lands sometimes with either very poor accesses or no accesses. As a Member of Parliament he then gets a question put to him as to who is responsible for the development, because Members of Parliament have to know who really is the owner and who is responsible for this development.

Mr. Speaker, we are faced with a situation where there is a substantial amount of landlocked land in Barbados. This means that the value of that property is compromised. At the same time it would have happened down through the ages that those asserting possessory titles of landlocked areas have put people in occupation. What now compounds the problem in the year 2005, is that since this thing, something called squatting, that was unbeknown to our culture is happening now the problem gets even greater. There was a time when there was no such thing as squatting in Barbados. Immediately after 1838, in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana, there was the phenomenon of squatting, so much so that they set their Limitation and Prescription periods at long periods of time.

Mr. Speaker, because squatting was not familiar in Barbados our Limitation and Prescription Act, did lay down originally, before a recent practice direction of the court, that if you occupy contrary to somebody else, after ten years, you could apply for title. The reason we only had the ten-year limitation in the Barbadian scenario was because squatting was very much unbeknown to us.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation now where people, and some of these people will naturally justify their actions, are putting up structures without planning permission. I think that the Chief Town Planner when he does get a chance to go around this country sometimes wonder how 30 and 35 chattel houses are put down anyhow presenting problems of access. I know of many parts of Barbados where this problem is very real. All of us as Members of Parliament do come under pressure when we are approached by constituents who want a road that is big enough to accommodate an ambulance and a fire truck to their settlement.

Mr. Speaker, where you have people asserting possessory title and putting down tenants, you get a lot of problems. First of all, that person with the possessory title is often guilty of not clearly mapping out for the occupants what is their real square footage. In an era where we have a lot of tenantries, most tenants including those who want freehold title will tell you that by the time they come to it there are uncertainties based on the neighbour saying, 'man you taking up a foot of my land or somebody saying, man you are encroaching here.'

In an era where I believe both parties are connected to seeing tenants under the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, get freehold title, a lot of surveyors would tell you that they are threatened when they go to these sites. I know of many cases where somebody has occupied, let us say, 800 square foot of space for the house and then assumes that there was another 200 or 300 square feet for the yard, but there were no surveyors irons put down mapping out the true extent and now you get the problem. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, where those who invoke possessory title put people in occupation sometimes they do so mainly to get the rent without looking at the broader community interest. That is why one Honourable Member mentioned one of the problems that existed at Charnocks. Mr. Speaker, in an era where increasingly more native Barbadians are getting very zealous of their property rights, we now see the phenomenon of chains being put up all over Barbados because there is an old-fashioned thing in the law that if a man called Keith can be shown to have a title inferior to yours, whatever your status, Keith's title is inferior to yours.

Mr. Speaker, it has happened that people have paid rent to the wrong landlord in Barbados for five and six years and then in doing so were more or less conceding that the person to whom they were paying rent had a superior title. Now if you pay rent to somebody repeatedly, the person who receives the rent can say, in that you have been paying them as landlord, that they have superior title.

Mr. Speaker, there is a case called Cooper versus Phipps where a tenant who had rented land tried to convert an informal arrangement into a formal arrangement with the landlord. The tenant decided to go to a lawyer, the landlord went to one, and when they did searches, the tenant was renting land that was lawfully his, so you get these types of irregularities, and that is not impossible in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, if they were two sisters called Jones and one migrated to England and left the other here and the one in England was receiving rents from the one here and then unfortunately dies, what is there to stop the sister here from saying, well she was my sister, I 'gine do a thing' with those tenants who are renting from her, so as to ensure that the tenants do not have greater title than the sister.

Mr. Speaker, I used to take tremendous pleasure in listening to the former Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the late Sir Harold Bernard St. John. This land at Ashby Avenue clearly represents a scenario where away from a road a piece of land is inaccessible.

House 75 Sequence 8

11:20 a.m.

Friday, August 05, 2005

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, we have a legal mechanism by

which, for public purpose, we can do an acquisition to take a small strip of land and develop it. Sir, I would never be critical of the surveyors and conveyancers of this world. It is often a conveyancer's nightmare when he goes to do a conveyance and then recognises that the land that is about to be conveyed, has never had a right of way or that, in some cases, there were rights of way or easements, which were either removed or taken away.

Mr. President, I support the Resolution. As a matter of fact, it will be a good thing on the part of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, to identify those lands in Barbados, which innocent people would like to access but cannot do so legally, because of what I will call unfortunate encumbrances, which prevent clear, free and easy access to land.

Sir, there are some lands in St. Philip and urban Barbados, and these cases would be very serious in urban Barbados because of the tenantry system, a system that had its origins in informal arrangements. As an example, there may be persons who want a house spot, who would have gone to a someone who appears to be able to provide that spot lawfully. They do not ask him about his title deeds. They feel good that they can get a piece of land and then years after, all sorts of sequelae arise that show that there have been unnecessary complications.

Sir, my call would be for the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, as Government's principal property manager, to identify those parcels of land. It is not beyond us to be able to identify and to know who owns each parcel of land but I think the time has come that whether those lands are in St. Michael, St. Philip, St. Thomas, or other parts of rural Barbados, that we identify those lands that should be accessed and that we do so from the perspective of public policy considerations.

Mr. Chairman, there are often unfortunate occurrences where the wrong person blocks an access, because sometimes when people are zealous of their rights, they do not mind going overboard, so long as it means the person against whom there are certain rights, becomes secondary to them, but we have to do something to make sure that all lots of land are accessible and according to what the Honourable Member has said, that their marketability is ensured. Sir, if one has a piece of land, however how big or small and it cannot be assessed, then, in a real sense, such land has no real value.

Mr. Speaker, I take pride both in supporting this Resolution and in making this small and modest contribution to this debate.

I thank you.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a very short intervention and to say at the outset that I support this Resolution, from the point of view that it is indeed an action that would lead to an improvement in the amenities in the particular area. It would also allow for the residents to be able to have the type of services delivered to them in a more timely and efficient manner.

Mr. Speaker, I think to speak to land acquisition with respect to the provision of roads for land which is landlociked in Barbados, and that for the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, the Government's principal manager of lands to come to a policy position and to appreciate the extent of the problem, one needs to look at the historical developments that would have led to these types of situations in Barbados. Sir, one can go back to the 1940s, 1950s and l960s, where the Town and Country Planning Department or the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, would not have had the type of

mechanisms, or the surveillance capacities, to have effectively allowed for the type of register to be developed in Barbados, where these types of problems existed.

Mr. Speaker, this is important because development is a process. Therefore, the period of time in Barbados prior to the Tenantries Control and Development Act and the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, having been passed in this Honourable Chamber, the development with respect to housing and lands was done in a very ad hoc manner and, as a result, the sites and services implementation were also done in an ad hoc manner.

Sir, because of that, it would mean that when you had a piece of land, whether it was rented that would ultimately become yours by purchase, you found yourself in a situation where you had no effective access to a road. That is how most of the developments in Barbados would have occurred. It is a recent phenomenon where Town and Country Planning Department, would have been able to provide the type of control of infrastructure to solve this particular problem.

Sir, this is a major problem in my constituency and I think it necessary for the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment and the Town and Country Planning Department, to start looking at surveying and holding registries of this particular type of problem. I think that those areas should be identified, so that they can systematically deal with them in a more proactive way. I think they should not wait until a problem arises, then to attempt to deal with it because sooner or later, that problem would have to be dealt with. Therefore, it is best to understand the dynamics of the situation and attempt to deal with it proactively.

Mr. Chairman, I would hope that there would be persons who would go into the various constituencies or persons who would compile reports regarding this type of problem, so that there can be some form of record of where these situations exist. I have several of them in the constituency of St. Philip West, and I know how difficulty it must be living in an area where an ambulance cannot easily access that area or where effective services cannot be delivered. I believe very strongly that if we are to truly develop our particular districts, that those types of amenities are essential to the development of Barbados.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution has already garnered the support of the Opposition Democratic Labour Party, but I thought I should say a few words on this Resolution because I am familiar with the total Ashby Land area. It is good that this kind of access is being provided for those residents in that area, who have been landlocked for some period of time. Sir, most of this land was private tenantry, coming out of the hands of Dr. Ashby and his associated family and most of it has been turned over to the resident under the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, where they have bought the land at $2.50 per square foot.

Mr. Speaker, Oistins is continuing to be an emerging focal point in the southern part of Barbados, not only for the citizens of that area but for those persons who want to venture to that part of the world. Therefore, this acquisition would help add to the total feeling in the wider area.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the sentiments expressed by most of those who have spoken thus far relative to the creation of more accessibility for persons across the length and breadth of Barbados. Sir, while we work in creating access for those persons who have to trod across dirt, mud and inaccessible areas, we are also allowing areas, where there were

previous access, to deteriorate quite substantially.

H:No.75(9)1130 a.m.

Tuesday, August 5, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R.D. JONES:

Sir, one only has to look at places like Gall Hill No. 1, as it leads into Church Hill Road and Windy Ridge in Christ Church, it is in a terrible shape. Sir, the Honourable Member Christ Church West Central is quite familiar with that area since we share common boundaries in relation to that area. Sir, Rockville Road in Kingsland Crescent, one would be amazed at the quality of accessibility there. I see the Honourable Member for Christ Church East smiling because, occasionally, he exists his apartment and walk through that area but I do not know how he makes it. He seems to have feet that have shocks to deal with the road. Sir, in these built-up areas the quality of roads is something to be amazed up. It is not only a question of putting in new roads and new access point but looking at the infrastructure of existing road facilities and seeing what can be done to maintain those existing roads.

Mr. Speaker, maintenance of our road structure seems to be a problem in Barbados and one that the Ministry of Transport and Works have to seriously get a grip of. We heard talk about these issues over and over and there has been some work but it is important that there is a more progressive and accelerated visiting of these particular roads for persons who live in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North, in his lucid fashion, spoke to many of these issues relative to disputes arising out of persons who historically had access. I am familiar with such a situation where neigbours existed on lands that were landlocked but now there are changing faces. Sir, persons in the 40s and 50s gave access to the neighbours but in 2005 these situations no longer obtain. This is where the state as a leadership and management mechanism has to seriously look at putting in access roads to these land-locked areas and this would cause disputes to dissipate and help the potential for violence to be eliminated among the citizens of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, it is importance that we address these issues. I want to see that we do not only indulge in verbal exercise but that we actually put in place all those systems and actions to bring about this change. The Honourable Member for St. James North spoke about the visibility as you traverse one road on to the other. I have spoken ad nauseam to such an issue at Bannatyne Gardens as one exists the Balls/Newton Road and it still remains a problem after all these years. I do not know when it would be remedied but again, I make the call for things like this to be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, this is a simple Resolution which has the full and wholehearted support of this side but we need to have both the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Ministry of Transport and Works, and all the institutions and organisations of the State, actually bend their backs and ensure that these things are done quite speedily.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James South will now wind up.

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Sir, a number of persons have spoken in this matter. I think there has been an interesting, cultural, heritage discussion. It is true that we

are living in a changing Barbados and the matter of community access is assuming greater importance as community relations change. In my introductory comments, I made some remarks about an area that has been blocked off by a landowner to the disadvantage of persons who live in the gap, which previously they could access prior to his blocking it.

Mr. Speaker, I have another interesting situation in my constituency, speaking to this whole matter of community access and how Government needs to intervene to create roads, whether vehicular or pedestrian access. Sir, in communities where relationships change because the quality of life and the comfort of a whole village can be disturbed by a changing family relationship. In fact, Sir, in this situation, in a village in my constituency, there were two 'big men' in the village who owned several parcels of lands which they daughters, sons and families occupied and several other neighbours had to traverse the lands of these two persons to access their homes. When the patriarchs of the families who controlled the village and their families with an iron fist, there was no difficulty with people accessing land but once the patriarchs died and the relationship in the community was not as homogenous as it was and became more individualistic with family feuds and so, trouble appeared. In the end, children who had lived in England for many years came back with a different cultural approach and perception and blocked off what had been traditional community accesses and making it impossible for people to get into their homes which bordered on the brink of community warfare, morning, noon and night causing people to pull 'collins' and use bad words in defence of what they perceived as a traditional right access.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members are right that this takes place all over Barbados. I raised it deliberately about the importance of community access and state intervention in assisting communities to regulate their affairs. The Honourable Member for the city says all the time that the paling has been an instrument of social cohesion demarking people's property ownership and, therefore, stopping many a dispute. Sir, people have a way of moving your line marks in the dead of night, chopping down a fence and quarreling over no more than 12 inches of land. You wonder how 12 inches of land could create such acrimony.

Asides.

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Sir, people would fight over a foot or two of land. You would think this could not make a significant difference but in a place where land is being highly-valued and lands which Barbadians traditionally ascribed no particular value to... We had a lot of chattel houses on the beachfront which no one wanted to buy 10 to 15 years ago. We had land in the heart of rural Barbados with spectacular views that no one was interested in living on and where there was a cluster of six houses in villages where people had magnificent eastern and western views, some people had 180 degree and 270 degree views and a few had 360 degree views. Sir, as persons from outside of Barbados with access to capital recognised the value of our land, our views, our beach quality, the marine environment and the rural environment, persons have found themselves offered spectacular sums of money for what have been traditional chattel houses in the heart of the country or a strip of beach that no one paid any attention to 20 or 25 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, as land has assumed greater value, it has appreciated significantly, people understand that land is capital and persons are willing to fight and stake their property ownership.

Continuation.. Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-MCDOWALD: There is also a lot of what Trinidadians call 'Boball' in relation to their approach to land. For the benefit of the shorthand writers, it should be interpreted in Bajan as a fair amount of trickery relative to land ownership, where people seek to assert property rights by way of squatting or taking over family property to which they are not truly entitled.

Sir, for example, Miss Bishop lives in a village for 20,30 or 50 years and nobody pays any attention to her, but let Miss Bishop becomes hopitalised, and looks as though she might be going home to her Maker soon, all of a sudden friend and family arrives from nowhere. Everybody wants to know that her business is taken care. They would help her to go to the lawyer and would send the lawyer to the hospital and so on. People recognise that the woman has property that they can access. It is becoming an increasing phenomenon in Barbados, where people are preying on our senior citizens to access their pensions and other property rights especially land and housing.

Mr. Speaker, many old people have found themselves disadvantaged by persons who purport to be care givers and caretakers, but who ultimately keeping their eyes on the wallet, however you define wallet in these circumstances. This is part of the culture that this debate has given rise to and I think that we need to be looking at what State intervention methods we need to have to protect the citizen from others. As Bob Marley said, "Man to man is so unjust, we do not know who to trust."

Sir, this raises a wider issue out of this Ashby Land and it is the matter of the use of residual lands. This is an extremely important matter in a place with a scarcity of land. Perhaps, I should not use scarcity because I do not want the public to believe that land is scarce in Barbados but wherever you drive in Barbados you still see a lot of vacant land. In an island of our size, land is finite. It is a finite commodity and there are many competing interest for which land us. Sir, from agriculture, investment, housing, recreation, environmental preservation and a range of competing interest.

There has been a culture in Barbados for the purchase of detached houses for their purchase. It seems to me that we have to look at a system of providing terrace houses, more townhouses and condominium-type accommodation; even in the middle, lower middle and lower income sectors, if we are to maximise our land resources and allow people to have affordable housing and access to land and land ownership.

I do not take the Honourable Member for St. Lucy's point that in a place like Barbados you could give every Barbadian an acre of land. In fact, statistics show that in the context of today, the Barbadian family is 2.5 occupants per household. The incidence of household occupation is reducing considerably. Years ago, you could find throughout Barbados ten people living in a house, several generations. That is a phenomenon limited almost to urban Barbados and certain areas of urban Barbados. It is not infrequent in our community to find single people in house or two people living in a house.

A lot of couples are marrying and choosing not to have children. There are a lot of single career professionals choosing not to have children. Very often husbands and wives start

out with their children and by the time the children are 18, 19 or 20 years old, they are overseas studying, setting up their independent households, or moving out to live in an apartment, because the mother does not like the girlfriend, who is always at the house with all her belly exposed or the father does not like the boyfriend who comes with his hair longer than the daughter and has four rings in his ears. These are the realities of social development in Barbados. Hence, the statistics of Barbados state that the household has moved from an occupation of approximately 3.8 to 2.5 and is showing a further downward trend.

I wish to make the point that people speak loosely about the poor response of the Ministry and the National Housing Corporation to the demand for housing. Our demand for housing is artificial, fueled by people having high disposable income. A lot of people are working and therefore have cash to invest. There are people looking for investment opportunities as well as people who previously remained in their households with their parents, until their late 20s, 30s or got married or went to live with somebody.

A lot of people are now moving out of home by the time they are 21 or 22, so, they are looking for affordable accommodation to rent. Sir, with the low interest rates on mortgages as well as the 100 per cent mortgage facility, it is now possible for people in their early 20s to own property. A lot of these young people who would previously have lived at home with mommy and daddy are looking to own their property, either by way of buying land or buying property in which they can establish themselves.Sir, therefore, it is not uncommon to find a lot of single young people or young couples living in rented accommodation.

Sir, part of the demand for housing we are seeing comes as a result of an economic demand rather than a pure social need. That is not to say that we do not recognise that we have a responsibility to fill the demand. I am simply speaking about it within the phenomenon of the social and economic development.

I was making the point that we have to review the traditional practice of everybody wanting to have a detached house, but to look to see how we can maximise our land resources producing more terrace units for purchase.

Sir, outside of that, I mentioned residual lands. I wish to make the point that residual lands are very important, residual in the context of Government's projects. Very frequently Government will acquire several tracts of land for the construction of a road, or will buy land for the development of a playing field or for another recreational purpose or lands might be acquired to widen a parcel of road or sometimes land is acquired and then it is not used for the purpose for which it was acquired. Therefore, one finds that throughout Barbados and particularly in urban and suburban Barbados Government owns a quarter acre of land here; 15 000 square feet over there; 10 000 there; 4 000 here and 5 000 in another location, all of which are left over from various housing, road, recreational or other Government projects. That land is idle and invariably it becomes bushy, creating nuisances, creating habitats for rodents or for nefarious persons. I asked the Ministry of Housing, to set up a Government Information Service system that would allow us to track all of the Crown lands and to identify all of the idle parcels of land in urban and suburban Barbados, owned by the Crown, and return them to housing development.

Sir, wherever you go, in villages, you will find two parcels of land here, three over there and one behind Miss Jones' house, all of which are lands that can be productively used. If we want to consider the best economic use of our

land, we must not allow it to run to bush. We must make some productive use of it.

Sir, I will give you an example of residual lands, by reference to a site which everybody can recognise. H75: 11.50 a.m.

Sequence 11

Friday, August 05, 2005

House 75, sequence 12, 11:50 a.m.

Continuation of: Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD

Sir, the House will recall that within the last two or three years, considerable road widening and expansion works were done at the Eagle Hall junction. The road was widened so that the junction is made to accommodate more traffic. There are better traffic signals, islands, side walks created to make it safer for pedestrians, disable- friendly facilities were put in, improved drainage works done, and there was also the improvement of the fish market at Eagle Hall.

Sir, arising out of that, the land there which adjoins the Nazarene property, where people sell the best legendary hot fish cakes. This land, and other parcels around there are owned by the Crown.

I have recently given a directive to the Ministry of Housing that at that location, the Government should develop it and make it attractive for the public. Parking should be put in so that people who are going into Bridgetown and want to use a shuttle service, or during World Cup when people cannot access Kensington but would need to park within close proximity, can park and ride at those particular locations. The borders should be developed with beautiful green-scape and low maintenance shrubs, which would enhance the whole appearance of that junction and upgrade the area.

This is not only for World Cup because there are people who have businesses in that area, like Shaw Shop and Mapp Shop for which there is no adequate parking. Therefore, persons going to those shops can use the parking provided by the Government to go to their favorite watering holes. This is simply an example, Sir, of residual lands owned by the Government which are not now in productive or beneficial use to the community or to any of our citizens.

Therefore, systematically, I have asked the Ministry to identify for me those parcels across urban and suburban Barbados. They should let me know their location and their size, so that we do not always have to develop raw land, bring infrastructural development to it and then sites and services, which take time.

This is part of the delay for the Primary Homes Programme because we did not have ready lands available to start building in large numbers. We had to do two houses here, one house there. Therefore, if we can get these lands, it will allow us to increase the numbers of houses under construction in the Primary Homes Programme, create more housing solutions, take land which is not now in any productive use and put it into active and productive use, and improve things like aesthetics and have a positive health intervention.

Sir, invariably, with these open parcels of land, people pass by in vehicles, particularly public service vehicles and throw out litter, such as cups and other containers, which breed mosquitoes and create health and environmental problems.

Mr. Speaker, with the Primary Homes Programme, one of the things which we are seeking to do is to give support to people who have small businesses. These residual lands are eminently well-suited for the construction of houses by small contractors who are doing one house or two houses or three houses but would not be able to do a project of 10 or 20 houses. It is in communities like these that the construction of houses lends itself to the small builders to whom we will be trying to give opportunity under the Primary Homes Programme.

Sir, I would just like to make a correction. The Honourable Member is not in his seat and I do not like to do it behind his back. I did not seek to take it as a point of order, but the Honourable Member for St. Lucy made the point that this is something that the Ministry of Housing took a long time to do and it should have been tidied up in House. I was not clear why he would have said that when he ought to have known, as one of the longstanding Honourable Members of this House, that lands to be compulsorily acquired, as this is being done, has to be brought before the House. Therefore, this is not something that could have been done by the Ministry privately. It had to come here. I cannot speak to his own clarity at all in making that point.

Sir, those are the two main issues, I think, which arose under the use to which residual lands can be put, as well as the access in communities being blocked at various locations and the importance of the Government seeking to facilitate those persons who are disadvantaged when they become landlocked, either through property ownership or by the deliberate act and intent of some individual asserting or seeking to assert what they consider to be their reasonable property right.

Sir, I believe the matter received full ventilation, on all sides. I am glad there is no acrimony and we have come to a consensus to support it and, therefore, with these words, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Order No. 4. The Honourable Member for St. James South.

ORDER NO. 4

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP.228 THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT MOUNT NO. 1, MOUNT STEPNEY IN THE PARISH OF SAINT PETER IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING A REPEATER STATION FOR THE ROYAL BARBADOS POLICE FORCE.

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, the matter before the Chamber is for the acquisition of 46 454.8 square feet or 4 315.8 square meters of land at Mount No. 1, Mount Stepney, St. Peter for the purpose of constructing a repeater station for the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Sir, at this time, there are three stand-alone repeaters at Castle Grant in St. Joseph, Husbands in St. James and Highgate in St. Michael. It is critical for security purposes that at least one other repeater station should be established, in order to give the police the capacity to have a 360-surveillance purview and to have coverage of the entire island for the surveillance and the transfer of information

between themselves.

It is therefore proposed, Sir, that at the Mount where this land is being required, a repeater station will be established. Once all of the proposed works are completed, there would be five repeater stations, which are needed island wide to give proper coverage of the entire island. These would be linked via a digital microwave system and improved network communications across Barbados for the police stations.

House 75, sequence 12, 12:0014

Friday, August 05, 2005

Continuation of Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD:

The dispatch and control centre with a 50-foot receiving tower will be sited at the Central Police Station. As I understand it, the others will be repeater stations as they are known. Some of the existing repeater facilities would have to be improved but these are already on lands which are owned by the Crown.

Mr. Speaker, it is considered that this location at Mount Stepney, St. Peter, because of its altitude and accessibility, makes it particularly well-suited to the siting of the repeater tower because it would help to give support for the East Coast of Barbados which is now not being adequately covered by surveillance technology owned or controlled by the Police.

Mr. Speaker, permission has been given by the Town Planning Department for the establishment of this repeater station. They have defined the necessary planning criteria essential as a prerequisite for the construction of the tower. Currently, the Police cannot receive information from all over the island.

Mr. Speaker, there are persons who have access to technology which can intercept the signals by the Police. Therefore, in these days there is need for improved technology if our Police are to be kept abreast of what is happening so as to be able to fulfil their roles.

Sir, I do not think that there is much in this Resolution here that would excite negative attention from the House. I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, with his role in the Ministry of Home Affairs, would have access to the details of it. Our role at the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment was simply to provide the land identified, but it is not for us to speak to the technology, the overt or covert operation or to speak in detail to what it is the Police hope to do. Suffice it to say, that this repeater station would enhance the technological and surveillance capacity of the Police, put them on the cutting edge of technology and better equip them to protect us as a country and to provide services and to do their jobs.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER No. 7

RESOLUTION THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVED ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

On the motion of Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the House resolved

itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply.

(a)RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF $5 244 000 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2005-2006 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 2, 2005-2006 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Chairman, this supplementary in the sum of just over $5 million which the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment seeks is to address a matter which has excited tremendous national attention and comment.

Sir, there is a history to this matter that is law, which the former Honourable Member, Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, reminded me when I first came to this House, originated with a Democratic Labour Party administration. Sir, if we are to give the history, pre-1976 a decision was taken to build a sewerage plant at Emmerton, St. Michael. At that time, as I understand it from hearing the history told and reading what is available to me in the file, it was not the preferred site for the sewerage plant, but a decision was taken by a Democratic Labour Party administration that the sewerage plant should go to Emmerton.

Sir, I am only reciting that as part of the history, I am not seeking to comment on the appropriateness of the location because I do not have available to me now the technical information on which the decision would have been based and therefore, without it, I am not prepared to speak speculatively nor in criticism of that decision. Suffice it to say, that a decision was taken that the sewerage plant should go to Emmerton.

House 75 Sequence 13

12:10 p.m.

Friday, August 05, 2005

Continuation of Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD:

Mr. Chairman, at that time I had lived in the City, and in 1976, would have celebrated my 15th birthday in November. We had earlier gone through two or three by-elections and were going into a general election. There was a question of whether an incoming administration, if differently constituted, would have had a sewerage plant located at a different place.

Mr. Chairman, during the course of 1976, I remember attending by-election meetings and eventually the general election meetings in the City. I remember walking from my residence to hear these public meetings, which attracted large crowds. In fact, from all our experience, you would know that whenever there is going to be a change of administration, that you can feel the buzz in the air, particularly as elections come closer, you can tell by the size, the tone and the feel of public meetings, how people are thinking and who, in fact, are shifting their positions. Sir, you would see traditional supporters of one Party or the other, all journeying in great numbers to these public meetings.

Sir, I, like others, journeyed to these meetings to see what was then a young woman, who, having won the by-election in the City, was now about to contest the General Election. In

addition, the fact that the Barbados Labour Party was winning those by-elections in 1976, was, in fact, the harbinger of the general election victory which was going to come.

Mr. Speaker, a commitment was made through funding with the Inter-American Development Bank (Barbados) Ltd., the site of Emmerton having been identified and the loan signed, when the administration changed, the construction of Emmerton continued. That involved the relocation of some of the residents of the area and inspired what, in my view, is one of Barbados's best folk songs, written by Anthony Carter, known as the "Mighty Gabby". Sir, as the Mighty Gabby sang the song, one would get the clear impression that people were being uprooted, that they did not go willingly.

Sir, if one recalls the words of the folk song and the passion behind it, one would recognise the veracity of what I am about to say, which is that while there is now a cry for relocation, at the time people did not want to move from Emmerton. Sir, that is the point. At the time there was a strong community spirit; there were people who engaged in sports and it was a very cohesive community. They had a strong cultural tradition, a strong leadership in the community and strong community leaders. There are people who lived in Emmerton, who have done very well in this country and have risen to prominent positions in Barbados and the Batson's family was one of them.

Mr. Chairman, I worked for some time as a reporter with the Nation Newspaper and have done a lot of research. Emmerton was one of the urban plantations and the land on the urban plantation was occupied, in many instances, not only by people seeking labour in town, but by a number of non-nationals, while looking for work, coming to live in and around the City. This was at a time when methods of transportation were not what they are today, hence a community developed, which turned out to be a very strong vibrant community, who did not want to be uprooted.

Sir, those people who stayed behind in Emmerton were viewed as the lucky ones and the ones who went off to live in Clapham or Wildey, were viewed as the unfortunate ones for having to move. As a matter of fact, people resisted the move and for a long time after moving, quarrelled over the fact that some of them were moved but would have been glad to have stayed.

Mr. Chairman, one saw the development of an interesting phenomenon, that is, as the lands were cleared and people were relocated by Government, squatters came in and took over the vacant lands. Sir, in our social survey of the Emmerton area, 37 per cent of the residents within the area, are, in fact, squatters, but much of that land in the Emmerton area is, in fact, Crown land.

Mr. Chairman, the problem arose that the Sewage facility at Emmerton has not over time been managed in the way that residents were assured that it would have been managed. Those who remained and were happy to have remained, were given the assurance that the system would have been managed in a way that would have made living within close proximity to a plant of this sort, nothing to worry about, and that there would have been rarely, if at all, any bad odour or problems with which they would have to be concerned.

Mr. Chairman, within a relatively short time, subsequent to construction, problems developed that resulted in odours at the site. Part of the problem with the management of that plant did not result from the individual who managed the plant, but from the fact that as we have grown and developed so quickly, the plant was operating in access of the capacity for which it was built.

Mr. Chairman, other Honourable Members will speak to other details regarding this plant. The Honourable Minister for Public Utilities, who has responsibility for the Barbados Water Authority and, therefore, for the management of that plant, will speak about the capacity and about the leverage of septic that is being received.

Mr. Chairman, the first fact is that the plant was being run in excess of its existing capacity. Secondly, there are haulers driving septic trucks into the facility and depositing materials, which the plant was not built to accommodate. The plant uses an oxygen digestion system, which is a natural system, to deal with the sewerage. There are, therefore, some nutrients such as oil, molasses and others, which have found their way into the system, which stop the oxygenation process by blocking or reducing the amount of oxygen that is so necessary for the efficient functioning of the plant.

H:No.75(14)1220 p.m.

Tuesday, August 5, 2005

Continuation of Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD:

There are a number of businesses and facilitate around Bridgetown which can drain directly into the plant. We know from time to time that vehicle oil has been allowed to drain into the system and that some has found it way into the plant without the knowledge or permission of those who operate the facility. We know that molasses has been dumped into the sewerage system and allowed to get into the Lakes Folly Sewerage Facility without permission. Once these materials come into the system through the pipework there is no way of taking them back out of the system and virtually you have to wait until they work their way through the system before the oxygen levels and digestion system can get up. Sir, I am speaking as a lay person, not as an engineer and, therefore, explaining it in language that people would understand.

Mr. Speaker, once that delicate balance of the right amount of oxygen in the system is put off, there will be odours in the area. One can argue whether enough controls have been made of people who supply the system or whether sanctions have been taken against those who dump unlawfully. These are the problems which affect the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant.

Sir, even with the best will in the world, the people at the plant can be doing their job but somebody a mile off, who they cannot see, dumps molasses, oil, or some other substance into the system which would adversely impact the functioning of the system, throw it out of kilter and create problems for them and the residents but they have no control over that.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of this concern, there has been for some time now complaints by resident in respect of relocation for the City. Sir, this House does nor rely on newspapers as its sources but I found some newspapers articles and it is interesting that on December 16, 1987, the then Minister of Health, the Honourable Brandford Taitt, was making comments in this Chamber that he would be coming to the House, with a Supplementary Appropriation to meet the cost of relocating residents and that the work for their relocation within the Ministry was considerably advanced and that residents would soon be relocated.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that in November of last year, pursuant to discussions held by the Cabinet and concerns raised by the residents, a decision was taken that the residents of Emmerton would be relocated. Our next step was to find accommodation for them.

Therefore, the Supplementary before the Chamber today is because, Cabinet, having made a decision in November, having searched of lands within close proximity of the City to try to keep as homogeneous a community as possible, we have identified lands at Barbarees Hill, which this Supplementary for $5, 244 000 is intended to purchase.

There are several parcels of land owned by two separate owners. The first is E.L. Company, which owns five parcels constituting 81,055.6 square feet of land at Barbarees Hill. The other parcel is owned by the Barbados National Bank, constituting of 81,990 square feet of land. Mr. Chairman, we are purchasing the land for $23.00 per square foot, in the case of the Barbados National Bank and in the case of E. L. Limited, we are purchasing the land at $32 per square foot.

Mr. Chairman, private treaties have been negotiated in both instances. We are going the way of private treaty but the Supplementary is being brought before the house for information and for permission to vote the necessary funds since these monies would not have been provided for in the Budget at the beginning of the financial year because we did not know then what size parcel or how much money it would cost, even though we were actively looking for land. Therefore, since this money was not provided for then, it is necessary to do it at this time.

Sir, to identify the precise location, there was some public information in the media. If one goes up Barbarees Hill, it is the land at the right that adjoins Strathclyde Crescent. Sir, it is a large parcel of land, I believe it five acres or thereabout and runs on open lands. When you turn in Strathclyde there are houses on your right hand side. It is all the land which runs form the Barbarees side main road behind the houses on Strathclyde Crescent and going back south from the main. Road.

Sir, we expect that we will move extremely quickly to facilitate the relocation of residents in very much the same way that we have done with the relocation of residents for World Cup where we built quickly at Barbarees Gardens to facilitate the Pickwick location and we will do a similar fast-tracked project for the residents at Barbarees who are moving from Emmerton.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers are to be determined. Sir, the move from Emmerton may have to be phased with those who are worse affected down-wind with those in closet proximity down-wind being moved first and others being moved after that. Sir, if all the persons cannot be accommodated at this location, we would have to look for a separate location to which these persons can go.

H75/12:30

Sequence 15

Friday, August 5, 2005

Continuation ... Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-MCDOWALD: Sir, the Ministry of Housing sent in its Officers from the Housing and Planning Department and the social surveys are now completed. Sir, ninety-four households have been surveyed to determine the size of families, impact and the ownership of properties. Sir, based on the social survey, 25 percent of persons contacted indicated that they have been living in the area in excess of twenty-five years. Within the study area there were two wall houses; other units were of wood or a mixture of wood and wall; thirteen families, downwind, lived there for between 11 and 20 years. Sirr, four families, who are in close proximity but not as close downwind, identified that they also lived there

for that period and another eight families, further away, lived there for between 8 and 20 years. Sir, there are also families in the area downwind who have lived there for a period of 5 to 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, we had regular meetings with the community but the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown will speak to that and we will give the residents their schedule for relocation.

Sir, Strathclyde is described as having particular architectural interest. It is a special planning area identified by the Chief Town Planner. Therefore, it is critical that all of the houses to be resited will have certain architectural specifications and characteristics subject to the approval of the Chief Town Planner. Equally, his permission must also be sought for signage, drainage and any development at the area, including the selling of trees.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the media saw when we visited Barbarees Gardens that beautiful Mahogany trees remain at the site for the residents of Pickwick Gap. We are hoping to construct an equally tasteful development of this location for residents with good quality housing. Again, I would make the point that once the Ministry does a relocation ... I saw an editorial in the newspaper that does not seem to grasp the point.

Mr. Speaker, whenever we do a relocation, people invariably end up with larger houses than they had before, because in these areas there are people with houses made from plywood that do not meet Town and Country Planning specifications, sizes of the rooms, et cetera. Sir, when we build houses, we have to meet all of the lawful requirements. Therefore, people end up with a larger and better quality house than before, despite the complaints that people from a particular area might now be making.

Mr. Speaker, residents are also given the opportunity to walk through the area, review the plans for their houses and discuss in detail addressing their concerns or challenges, so those could be resolved prior to construction.

Sir, the new development would be tasteful, pleasantly landscaped, consistent with the constraints provided by the Chief Town Planner, bearing in mind the area in which it is located. Everything will be done to facilitate the construction in the shortest possible time and residents would be given an opportunity to discuss the actual plans of the houses so to avoid any misunderstanding before the houses are constructed.

Sir, at this stage, this money does not include any sum for the actual construction of the houses but merely for the purchase of the lands from the existing owners to facilitate the relocation. When the full project is defined, because we must have approval from the Chief Town Planner, we would return to discuss the cost of the actual relocation project. That is likely to be done by Supplementary if we are to move with alacrity to construct the houses.

Sir, I will pause at this time, since we must go to break.

On the motion of Hon. R.C. EASTMOND, seconded by Hon. A.P. WOOD, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and ask for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 1. 40 p.m this afternoon.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be now suspended until 1.40 p.m was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

H75: 12.40 p.m.

Sequence 16

Friday, August 05, 2005

House 75, sequence 17, 1:42 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken, this House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply.

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Chairman, I believe that prior to when we suspended, I did speak to the issues in a broad enough way, Sir, and I will therefore pause to allow other Honourable Members to speak before we conclude.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Dame B.A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to give my support to the matter before the House. This is a matter of very long standing. It goes back to the 1970s, when a number of people were relocated from Chapman Lane to Clapham, in order for the Sewerage Treatment Plant at Bridgetown to be erected. It was a very sore point at the time. There are some people who do not like to go back to that time but I have to start at the beginning. Some of it is water under the bridge, but it was not thought that was the best location and that happens all the time. It is happening now with the Prison.

Entities like the Sewage Treatment Plant, the Sanitation Service Authority Headquarters and the Prison are always unpopular from the point of view that nobody wants to live next to them. It is not true only in Barbados but everywhere else in the world and so, there were great contention and acrimony at the time because people did not wish to move from Emmerton.

There are some who would say that one wonderful thing which came out of it all is a now immortal song, piece of music in Barbados composed by the "Mighty Gabby". I tell him to his face all the time and I am free to say it here that he may be a good Calypsonian but for me, first of all, he is a folk singer. I met Gabby in Chapman Lane at a club house with his guitar singing folk songs, where people used to gather on Sundays to have singings. Emmerton is now universal. It belongs to the world. It is beautiful in its music alone and that is my preference but its lyric is what I want to speak to today.

Mr. Chairman, the lyric speaks to the truth of it and people did not wish to go. There are people who are pretending now that is not so but people had to be persuaded. Those who know the words of Emmerton will recognise the truth of it and that is what makes a good folk song immortal. It is like: "Millie Gone To Brazil". It tells a very real story about folk and country music and life in Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. Dame B.A. MILLER: Yes. Millie went to Brazil that is what the gentleman said. The magistrate said to him, "Do you mean with the wire tied 'round she waist and the razor cut up she face, she gone to Brazil?" Then he said, "Please, Mr. Barklett, don't lock me up, Millie belongs to me." You have to know your folk songs.

I am saying that Emmerton, if you listen to the lyrics and understand it, you would recognise the truth of what was happening there. He was in despair that his grandmother, who had lived all of her life in Emmerton, was being made to move. He said that it would not be forgiven and it would not be forgotten.

Sir, people did not wish to go but the design of the Sewerage Treatment Plant required a buffer zone around it and when people were moved for the plant to be built, the people who then were the secondaries to move to allow for the buffer zone, in the event that what happened now ever happened, people would not be in the path of stench or spill or anything of that kind, even in the event of a storm and something happened. It did not happen and people were happy that it did not happen, because they did not then want to move.

The reality is that all these years later times have changed, quality of life has changed for the better, for a lot of people and people do wish to move, and it is their right that they should move. The Honourable Minister of Housing has made the point in here, on more than one occasion that the move would be in phases. The first phase would be for those who are in the original buffer zone. I have made the case over time for the buffer zone itself, to be widened and that has been taken into account.

This is therefore, Mr. Chairman, as you can see, a matter of long-standing and it now, in more recent times, has become a matter of long-suffering. I have petitioned Ministers of Housing from the late 1970s until now but, the point is that the matter is being addressed. There is nobody apart, of course, from the people themselves who suffer as a consequence of the malfunction of the Sewerage Treatment Plant, who could be more relieved and pleased than myself...

House 75, sequence 17, 13:5015

Friday, August 05, 2005

Continuation of Hon. Dame Billie MILLER:

that we have come now to the point where lands are to be acquired within good walking distance because the majority of those people still want to remain in close proximity to town.

Mr. Chairman, although country and rural may be regarded by some people as only notional in Barbados, there are people who are town people. I am one, I am not going to deny it, I am not a country girl. There are people who love the country and who live in the country all their lives, but I am definitely an urban creature.

These people at Emmerton have said that is their preference and the Government has tried its best through the good work of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment and associated agencies, to make sure that this wish would be satisfied in much the same way as we did with the residence of Pickwick Gap, who had to move. This is a feature of city life as cities grow and expand and sprawl. The City of Bridgetown is growing, is expanding and is sprawling. That can only happen because the economy of Barbados is growing and expanding, that is always a good indicator.

Mr. Chairman, everywhere in the world the whole question of relocation is more frequently an occurrence in cities particularly capital cities than anywhere else. When the City of Bridgetown began it was just a cluster of houses around the Cheapside area. There was a time when there were sugar plantations that came up to areas which are now within the City of Bridgetown. The Bayland was a huge plantation which came right down to Browne's Beach.

Mr. Chairman, over time as people have had to be relocated and buildings have had to come down to make room for the development and the growth of our city and the economy of our island there were always difficult and contentious times for those who were against the relocation and those who were willing and anxious to go.

Mr. Chairman, what we are seeing now is not anything new. However, it is new to those to whom it is happening now and that is what is being taken into account. This will not be the last time that people would have to be relocated, it is the nature of life. We started out, it is said by the scientists, in the primaeval swamp and now we live in sophisticated and polluted cities in conditions that 100, 200 years ago no one could have imagined. These people at Emmerton, who are my constituents, are sophisticated in their own way and in their own right. They understand the dynamic of growth and development, but it is always the manner of doing things.

Mr. Chairman, this matter is under very close and careful management. There is a committee, I am a member of it, which started out meeting every month, now we are meeting every other month although in the end it turns out to be about every six weeks or so. The Minister of Public Utilities because it is the Sewerage Treatment Plant comes frequently to those meeting. The Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment, the Chief Medical Officer and officers from these ministry and other departments of Government come to those meetings as well, so the matter now is coming to execution.

Mr. Chairman, I know the location, it is a really very nice location. We are hoping that the same urgency that attends the relocation of those who have to move from Pickwick Gap would attend the relocation from Chapman Lane and Emmerton to Barbarees Hill.

Mr. Chairman, it is interesting that this move is to Barbarees Hill because within my lifetime, when I was a child and going to school at Richmond Gap, Barbarees Hill was a place that was very residential. There were large and very spacious town houses with ample grounds where doctors and other professional people lived. It was a microcosm of life in Barbados at that time because there was a part of Barbarees Hill and still a part of Barbarees Hill where ordinary working-class people live in chattel houses many of whom were working in those same big houses on the other side of the road. There were also black middle-class people who were living in Barbarees Hill, where I use to stand up to get the bus coming down Richmond Gap, where I went to primary school. There were a number of people living there. The grandfather of the Honourable Member for St. James Central, lived in a very grand house there, which had a fountain in the yard.

Asides.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: He was the first black man to own a bank in Barbados. I am saying that 50 years ago the whole social spectrum was represented on Barbarees Hill, when I was a school child catching the bus along Barbarees Hill. Today, we see Barbarees Hill, going very quietly commercial\residential.

That was so 50 years ago because in the days when the bus companies were private, a Mr. Percy Stuart, who owned the National Bus Company, and whose buses were painted in blue and silver, was located right there on Barbarees Hill. Mr. Chairman, I used to catch the number 24 bus that went to Speightstown or Paynes Bay. A number of black doctors had their homes and their practices along that stretch right up into Eagle Hall, where Dr. Charlie Manning at Bosvigo had his practice. I know the area well, I am a 'Black Rockian.'

Asides.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: I am proud of that heritage, and I am proud that is where, as Bajans would say, I originated from.

Mr. Chairman, that mix is changing now because Barbarees Hill, as I said, is becoming more and more commercial but there are aspects of it that remains residential. I applaud the choice because it was not an easy one, because it is not easy to find these lands now on the immediate outskirts of the City of Bridgetown, therefore, I applaud the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment that they have chosen these locations for the relocation of the Pickwick Gap and Emmerton residents.

Mr. Chairman, I will say it, I have said it so many times and I will say it again, that people live in cities and must live in cities if cities are to remain active and alive. People are living in the heart of every great city in the world you know of. In Manhattan people live right in the heart of the city and what would approximate to Broad Street. There are big fancy shops of all kinds on Fifth Avenue but people live in fancy apartments on top of them. You see it in London, Paris and Washington. Everywhere in the world people live in the cities and that is how the City of Bridgetown began.

Mr. Chairman, this is just the City of Bridgetown, as I said, sprawling north. Sir, it is important that in the face of a Barbarees Hill, that is going commercial, that we are seeking to make sure that they are nice residences there so that you have that commercial and residential mix, which speaks to the balance which must come to a city, so in many ways it is a good thing. These people will all have upgraded housing and that is a good thing. It happened in the case of those before them who were relocated to Clapham in the late 1970s.

House 75 Sequence 18

2:00 p.m.

Friday, August 05, 2005

Continuation of Hon. Dame BILLIE MILLER: Mr. Chairman, nobody is going to be worse off, the majority are going to be better off than there were. Nobody will have a pit toilet, and I know that the Minister of Social Transformation is working to make sure that the time will be very soon when there will be no pit toilets left in Barbados because all systems will be waterborne.

Mr. Chairman, as the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, I know this because persons have spoken to me. There are some persons who are already planning to upgrade their houses, even before they are finished built. They would like to know if they can put on a top storey, and I have said yes, but that they must approach the National Housing Corporation for its permission.

Mr. Chairman, people in here and outside will hear a lot of rhetoric about the housing estates where people have been relocated but people need to stop talking, especially on the call-in programmes and go and see for

themselves. I have gone and seen for myself where those relocated people now have gardens and cars are parked in their driveways. In each of these houses, there is accommodation for a washing machine and dryer, because that is what people are requiring.

Mr. Chairman, this is not new. Twenty-five years ago we did the same thing at Kensington Lodge. One would have to imagine that 25 years later, one would want to upgrade at Barbarees Hill, and that is what is going to happen. Therefore, I hope that just as we had done at Kensington Lodge, where we were able to save some of the trees, where the entry to Kensington Lodge, which used to be St. Cecelia Barracks, is still a nice suite of driveway, flanked on each side by ancient mahogany trees. Sir, it is still a nice place because people have kept their apartments well. Now that the asbestos roofs have been replaced, people are in the process of buying their apartments.

Mr. Chairman, as the Honourable Member of Parliament, who, for 30 years, have represented the concerns and the needs of the people of the City of Bridgetown, I do not think that there is any Honourable Member who can really understand how full my heart is, in respect of this matter. This was not my choice for them, this was what the people of the City of Bridgetown had identified as their number one priority.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that because in these decent cities all over the world, one would find what are called ghettos or slums. It is often a feature of the old part of a city, where a new, more commodious and beautiful city has grown around the beginnings which did not grow with it. That is why I felt so strongly about Church Village, the city. In a small developing community like ours, one has to be very careful that we are not building these huge wonderful structures, while there are little ghettos cowering in poverty in the very shadows of them.

Mr. Chairman, we do not have that in Barbados, Barbados still remains a place, happily so. It also speaks a lot to domestic peace in this country, where the rich live juxtaposed to the not-so-rich, where one would see big, fancy houses, next to humble chattel houses, and long may that continue. Sir, that has made for domestic peace over the years in this country and I would hope that in the 21st Century, that would continue to be so.

Sir, it was not a good thing that the big and impressive Central Bank should have cowering in its shadows, a Church Village which had slumped into dereliction. It was also true of the Green Field area, where the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment has its new spanking headquarters at Country Road and across the watercourse, there is the Green Field area, a ghetto area. Therefore, I am pleased too that the Inter-American Development Bank had sought to include, in its pilot programme for neighbourhood upgrade, the Green Field and Cats Castle areas. They are the two remaining areas in the City that are targetted for relocation, and this relocation of persons from Emmerton to Barbarees Hill is all part of a greater design.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that in my time that it is finally coming to fruition. Therefore, I want to use this opportunity to say thank you to all Honourable Members, who have empathised with the people of Emmerton and with me on this matter. I want to say thank you to all the agencies led by the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment and to some extent those led by the Ministry of Public Utilities, because of the fact that the plant at Emmerton has been repaired and is planned to be retrofitted, so that one day, even the possibility of a breakdown like this kind, would not reoccur.

I want to say how heartfelt is my gratitude that we have come to this place and that I am not giving up on this until those houses are up and people are in them. It is the end of the planning process and the beginning of the implementation and execution process. Sir, as you would know, once building is going on, I will be on the site, but I am very pleased that the matter is before this Honourable House and I urge all Honourable Members to give their wholehearted support to it.

I thank you.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, the sigh of relief is coming from the bosoms of all of those residents of Emmerton, who, for a number of years, have undergone some of the most harrowing conditions occasioned by the difficulties emerging from the Sewerage Treatment Plant. Therefore, on this side, since as a Party we are committed to bringing relief to the troubled breasts of people, we would have to support this particular Resolution.

Mr. Chairman, since I am not familiar with such large sums of money being expended at any given time, particularly if one follows the debate that is ongoing in Barbados for some weeks, I am a bit taken aback, but one can assume that part of this is commercial land and part of the town-spread urban area where $32 per square foot is reasonable, et cetera. Therefore, I am not going to quarrel and say that this is too much or too little, because I do not know. I leave those kinds of things to those persons who say that they do know, and trust their judgment on such matters. Of course, if careful research proves otherwise, then, at some other time, one might be forced to speak in a different or contrary tone.

Mr. Chairman, those persons at Emmerton are deserving of condition, which will enhance or improve their quality of life, which does not simply have to do with the location or the quality of housing that they will now get, as a result of this particular exercise or activity but a quality of life also has to do with the quality of air that they breathe, how there are able to take care of their children within an environment that is polluted, one where stench is known to have been emanating over a long period of time.

Mr. Chairman, it is usually unfortunate in such circumstances, one had it at Arch Hall and the surrounding areas. When there was a dump in Christ Church years ago, people on the other side had the occasion to have experienced this. It says to us that there are things that we have to do, and that we have to be proactive in seeking to find solutions to what the engineers might call complex issues or complex problems.

H:No.75(19)210 p.m.

Tuesday, August 5, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R.D. JONES:

it has been argued that the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant was not set up to handle the kind of capacity and effluent that eventually ended up there and it helped to exacerbate the particular problem in that area. It would have been more costly than this initial $5.244 million to move the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant and, therefore, the next best alternative would have been to relocate the resident and create that buffer zone.

Sir, there would be persons who make a living in businesses along the area, so it means that the engineer connected to the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant and the Barbados Water Authority, must do everything necessary now to ensure that we do not have a recurrence

of the difficulties which the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant had.

Therefore, as we work towards finding solutions to problems of disposal of effluent and different substances thrown out by human behaviour that an elimination of these types of difficulties can continue. Sir, I agree with the Honourable Member for the City that when one listens to the lyrics and interpret the poetry, the Mighty Gabby spoke deeply and passionately to their circumstances and reality, and they did not want to be removed from that reality. I am sure that those persons who were located to Clapham are happy and comfortable in their environment and the same thing would happen to those persons who move from within the confines of the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant.

Mr. Chairman, I know that there are always rigidities in persons having to uproot themselves and start a new domestic and cultural form with a new environment but as human beings, we are able to adapt, create new attitudes and behaviours to where we go. Therefore, I urge the Minister of Housing and all parties concerned to move with alacrity to ensure that we not only pass this particular Resolution for the $5244 million to acquire the land, which should be noted was dealt with through Private Treaties. It seems that only the lands of poor people come through Parliament with rigid compulsory acquisition but that is another matter.

We have to move with alacrity towards satisfying those persons and that two years down the road, when I and still in this Honourable Chamber that we would not hear that these persons have not been relocated. I know that in the retiring period of the tenure of the Honourable Member for the City that she would work overzealously to ensure that the residents have their just claim.

Mr. Chairman, we should not only pass this Resolution relative to the monies for the payment of the two pieces of land but we do what is necessary with alacrity to satisfy those people who should now be allowed to develop themselves with the comfort of more salubrious conditions.

Sir, I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, thirty years ago, the Democratic Labour Party made a decision to enhance the environment of Barbados by building a sewerage plant at Emmerton in the City. At that time, it entered an agreement with the IADB and the Opposition of the day sought to make sure that the residents in the particular area did not adhere to the resiting from that area.

Mr. Chairman, a great calysonian was able to pen a song called Emmerton...

Hon. Dame BILLIE MILLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. This debate is going, historically, quite correct. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy must not mislead the House. Preparations were being made at Clapham to relocate people, pit toilets were being dugged at the time and that was a quarrel that the then Opposition, led in its protest by myself, that you should not remove people to a situation not at all improved from that whence they came. The Honourable Member should not mislead the House on this issue because the history is there.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have not gone into toilets yet but seeing that the Honourable Member for the City brought it into the records of the House, there is no need for me to deal with that aspect of it. Sir, because of that decision some residents decided that

they were not moving and some moved to Clapham. Thirty years after, we are now in a situation, because of World Cup 2007 and because we need to enhance the lives of those who live and operate near World Cup 2007, we are now before this Parliament creating a job that could have been done by any cosmetologist in Barbados, that is, we are presenting a pretty picture to make sure that World Cup 2007 would not have any hindrances.

Mr. Chairman, it is interesting that....

Hon. Dame BILLIE MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I rise again on a point of order. The Honourable Member is deliberating misleading the House. He knows what he is saying is not the fact. The relocation from Emmerton to Barbarees Hill has nothing to do with World Cup 2007. The relocation of residents from Pickwick to Barbarees Hill has to do with 2007.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, you were here prior to lunch. The Honourable Member for the City was not here. We would have been privy to the beginning speeches. I want to remind you that the the word World Cup 2007 is not now being first said by me because it was already said in this Chamber Mr. Speaker, because of what occurred within the last 30 years, we have seen a situation where 37 per cent of the people we now seek to move from Emmerton are squatters which means that previously people were resited from Emmerton but then another set of people placed their homes in the same area and 30 years after we now have to deal with 37 per cent of these people who were not legally entitled to live in that location.

H75/14:20

Sequence 20

Friday, August 5, 2005

Continuation Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Sir, it is interesting when one looks at $32 per square foot that is now being paid to those persons who have land at Emmerton, if we use the same concept, one finds it rather strange that $32 per square foot could be paid for the land at Emmerton. Sir, but I am glad for those people who own the land and I have no problem with that price.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is determined to mislead the Honourable House. Sir, $32 per square foot is not being paid for land at Emmerton. It is price paid for land at Barbarees Hill. Perhaps, he should stick to St. Lucy.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James South spoke about land at Barbarees Hill. It had nothing to do with land at Emmerton. Please, continue. Honourable Member for St. Lucy please continue with your debate. Please do not mislead the Honourable House to believe that $32 a square foot is the price paid for land at Emmerton. Continue, please.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, it is quite clear that we are swopping land. If we are swopping, what are you saying? Are you taking cheap land exchanging it with expensive land, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, why do you continue to go down that line? Why are you doing it? Please, continue.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am glad to see that those persons in Emmerton who, 30 years ago were encouraged not to remove

themselves, are now in a privilege position to be resited on land that is valued at $32 a square foot.

Sir, it tells me that if we are prepared to relocate people from Emmerton at $32 a square foot, which I agree with, surely, those persons in Pickwick Gap, who gave up land, should have been compensated at $32 a square foot also. At least they were not on Crown lands. They were on land, not too far from Emmerton, of a higher commercial value. The only neighbour of the people of Emmerton would have been the sewerage plant, whereas in Pickwick Gap they had the famous Kensington Oval but they could not get that value for their land. That is the point that I was making.

I do not know why the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown is angry with me, because I am only looking after the interest of those persons who...

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-MCDOWALD: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House by drawing an analogy which he knows to be inaccurate by positioning the two areas together. The Honourable Member is seeking to suggest that the land at Emmerton was valued at a particular price and land at Pickwick was valued at a particular price.

Sir, the residents at Emmerton are being relocated to Barbarees Hill and the residents at Pickwick are also being relocated to Barbarees Hill. All of the land to which the residents are being relocated is in the same area, of a similar character, the negotiations were made public and took place within a very close timeframe. Therefore, the property at Barbarees Hill are all of the same price. Land at Barbarees Hill is designated commercial property, which is valued at $32 a square foot. What will be paid ultimately for land at Emmerton or Pickwick is a matter for which negotiations now have to be finalised. The relocation area which is Barbarees Hill has three different owners, Barbados National Bank, Sir David Seale and E & L Company Limited, I think the business is called. Everybody at Barbarees Hill is receiving the same price.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, thank you very much. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, another example of this particular debate is the Arch Hall situation where the people were downwind from the landfill and the Parliamentary Representative brought a class action suit. He convinced this Parliament that for environmental reasons, the residents of Arch Hall should be compensated for the health problems incurred during the reign of the landfill at a particular point in time.

Sir, I thought that, included in this Supplementary would be damages for the people of Emmerton, who would have suffered the same consequences as those persons at Arch Hall. I am hoping that the Honourable Member for St. James South who brought this Resolution, would be soon return to Parliament to bring compensation for those persons who would have suffered medical conditions from living so close this particular plant. I do not think that anyone on this side of the Chamber would object to the people of Emmerton receiving compensation for the problems they had to live with.

Sir, we on this side look forward to the day when the Honourable Member brings the Supplementary to compensate the people of Emmerton. If they do not intend to do so, we are making it known that this side is supportive of the residents of Emmerton receiving the same compensation as the people of Arch Hall.

Sir, I am told that the Honourable Minister of Energy is also in on these meetings. I do not know what kind of energy the Honourable Member is bringing to Emmerton, but it is clear to me that the Honourable Member is preparing a package in his particular way, and I would not be surprise that within the next week or two he increases the cost of bottle gas in this country.

I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to give my full support to this Supplemental request that is before this Honourable Chamber to facilitate the relocation of those folks who live in the environs of the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant. Sir, Honourable Members on both sides of this Honourable House who spoke before would naturally give support to the measure as well. It does not come as a secret to any one living in Barbados who has been following the development in the functioning of the plant to realise that this particular measure is extremely timely.

Sir, I would speak fairly abd frankly in this debate in respect of the issue. Sometimes when both sides of the Honourable House have to be joined on a particular issue; Once persons' health can be compromised - I am not saying that it has been compromised to any significant degree, because of the functioning of a facility, that is indeed deemed to be extremely important, we all have to participate and throw our support behind what measures are deemed to be necessary in order to improve the situation.

H75: 14.30 p.m.

Sequence 21

Friday, August 05, 2005

House 75, sequence 22, 2:30 p.m.

Continuation of: Hon. A.P. WOOD

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City spoke about the problems that were brought to bear on the plant, as a result of the pace and the nature of our economic development in Barbados. Indeed, when the plant was designed in the late 1970s, in terms of capacities, it had a certain level of capacity in the case of that substance and the sewerage that would come through the collection system, and also had a certain capacity in respect of the sewage that would come by trucks.

Therefore, optimal functioning of the plant would have taken place at these levels, 2.4 million gallons per day of sewerage coming through the pipelines from the properties within the Bridgetown area and that is what is called the hydraulic load. The maximum designed hydraulic flow is about eight million gallons per day.

In the case now of what is trucked in, the capacity was about 5 000 gallons per day and what has happened over the years is that, in respect of the hydraulic load, the plant has not been getting anywhere close to the maximum that it can handle, but the overload of the plant is occasioned predominantly by want is trucked into the plant. In some cases, up to nine and ten times the amount of sewerage is trucked into the plant.

Therefore, you would find that in some cases, the daily average of that which is trucked in, is in the neighbourhood of 45 000 to 50 000 gallons, and straightaway you see the problems that can be created. Of course, there might have been some slack in respect of what it can

take of what is trucked in and, I would imagine that over time, the movement from 5 000 to 15 000 to 20 000, so when the plant got up to full functionality, it might have been good to handle 10 000, 15 000, 20 000 but when you get up to nine times and ten times the amount, then problems might be created.

The other concern, Mr. Speaker, which compromises the functioning of the plant is the types of materials that finds its way into the plant, and that is a genuine concern because at the time the plant was designed, it was not to cater to certain types of materials. Persons are not conscious enough of the types of materials that are to reach the plant. Obviously, I am not saying that they are doing it purposely but in some cases, you would find that when the trucks get there, they carry unwanted material to the plant.

For example, waste such as blood and molasses, paint sludge, et cetera, the plant is not designed to handle and you will find that in some cases, those things find their way into the plant, and that is what would cause the upsets. Therefore, the upsets might be as a result of the overloading of the plant, but the upsets would be definitely also as a result of unwanted material, in the sense that the plant was not designed to handle it, Sir.

For example, Mr. Chairman, just a couple of weeks ago, we had a problem with plant upsets. You will be surprised that the main cause of the last problem was a substantial amount of prohibited solution. It was paint sludge on the one hand, which got into the process tanks and on the other hand, there was a problem of illegal discharge of molasses into the system, Sir, consider this against the background that over time, the plant is ng called upon to deal with more waste than it was designed to do, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, and the other Honourable Members in the Chamber would come to the conclusion quickly that if the Plant is called upon to work harder and harder and harder, the pace of deterioration of the Plant and the equipment therein would be faster than if the Plant was called upon to handle the amount it was designed to deal with, Sir.

This has been the dilemma that successive Governments have had to deal with since the Plant was established. I do not want the thinking to be such that any overload of the plant would have started in very recent times because this has been a concern for in excess of 15 to 20 years, as I speak.

The Government realising that and, of course, we would have heard the complaints over and over, this Administration decided towards the end of last year that this is an issue that has to be dealt with decisively, and a comprehensive plan of action was devised to deal with this problem. Components of that plan spoke of the need to introduce short to medium term measures to improve the functioning of the plant, and longer term measures to deal with the nature in which the plant should be called upon to function.

A part of those measures also spoke to the need to relocate persons living in the environs of the plant, and what you are seeing here today is part of the results obtained from the framing of this plan, and as this Government sought to execute various component of the plant.

For example, the comprehensive plan included amongst other things, measures to improve the plant aeration, that is, there is a need to get adequate blower capacity and what that required, Mr. Chairman, is for us to access as much as $1.5 million, in order to improve the aeration capacity of the plant.

Mr. Chairman, we had to refurbish the existing septage handling bay at the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant to reduce the

amount of solids impacting on plant performance. I said earlier that the trucks which take the influent to the plant, on some occasions those trucks contained unwanted material. Mr. Speaker, there is a small screening facility at the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant, and of course, over the years, the plant has been called upon to work so hard, that screening facility from time to time malfunctions.

This is the first line of defence for the plant and if that malfunctions, naturally, the solids and the other unwanted material would find their way into the plant so we needed to do that, Sir. We also needed to clean the process tanks at the plant to remove solids and to repair the digestive pumps. This was the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing. We needed to conduct a social survey to identify and develop a programme for relocation.

House 75, sequence 22, 14:4014

Friday, August 05, 2005

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

We must thank the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, skilfully led by the Honourable Member for St. James South, for the swiftness in which her staff responded to the request for this social survey to be undertaken and for them to formulate a relocation plan, which is one of the reasons we are here today.

Mr. Chairman, there was also a need to identify the buffer requirement. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has been making a very loud call for a buffer zone to be created at the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant so as to ensure that persons living close to the plant are sufficiently far away so that the incidence of harm is reduced.

Mr. Chairman, the Government has decided that as part of the response to deal with the overload of the plant, and the plant having to deal with so much unwanted material, that we will move with some despatch to establish a separate septage handling facility somewhere in the country.

Mr. Chairman, in respect of the implementation of these measures, a considerable amount of the work which is required to repair the plant and improve its functioning has been completed. The process tanks were cleaned, they were serviced, the digestive pumps were fixed and all the parts for the blowers have been received, so shortly those problems that were occasioned by lack of proper functioning of the blowers would be rectified. We have also effected the repairs to the screening bay at the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant.

Mr. Chairman, you would have realised that for the last two months or so since the bad experience in late May early June - I am not saying that all of the odour problems would have gone away - that we have not had a repeat of the complaints which were with us during those two months. This is as a result of the direct intervention of the Government in seeking to spend upwards of $1.5 million in trying to improve the functioning of a plant and the attentiveness which the Barbados Water Authority staff has given in respect of effecting those repairs.

Mr. Chairman, the Government views this issue of handling sewerage and septage in a very serious way. Looking beyond what I just outlined briefly, as short to medium term measures, there are long-term measures as well, which you would be hearing more and more about as we go on, which speak to the need to

retrofit the sewerage treatment plants and to have that done as part of a wider set of water argumentation measures. Sir, these measures would ensure that we retain that wastewater that is going out to the sea, which is about 4.5 to 5 million gallons at the requisite level of treatment and make use of it so as to take a little pressure off the vital potable water which we use in this country, by using it first and foremost for non-potable purposes like irrigation and for golf courses. Mr. Chairman, that is part of the longer term solution which speaks to the retrofitting of these plants.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank all Honourable Members for their contribution and give an assurance to the House that just as we move with great alacrity to do the Pickwick relocation and have defined a project that is pleasing aesthetically and environmentally that we would do the same in respect of this area.

Sir, for the sake of accuracy, I would want to make a correction in respect of some figures that I gave the House. The land to which the residents of Pickwick Gap are being relocated was paid for at $30 a square foot and the land to which the residents of Emmerton are going was paid for at $32 a square foot. This land to which the Emmerton residents are going has some infrastructure in place which the land to which the Pickwick Gap residents are going did not, and hence the slight variation in price. I did say on a point of order that the lands were in the same area and were paid the same price, not paid to the last dollar but approximately the same price, there being some deferential between $30 and $32 a square foot.

Mr. Chairman, we want to give the assurance of a good project to those who are going to be involved. The Pickwick Gap residents have already have their walk-through of the area and an opportunity to see where they are being relocated to and the house plans and so on are being discussed with them. Equally, I have asked our officers to facilitate site visits for the Member of Parliament and the residents of Emmerton to the area that they are going to.

We have a committee meeting with the residents next week on August 10th and they might perhaps want to be thinking of a name. There is a meeting to be held this afternoon or on Monday with all the various agencies, the Barbados Water Authority, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment and the other agencies and Government miniseries involved in the relocation so that we can give very detailed information when the committee meets in its caucus next week.

Mr. Chairman, with these funds we are now in a position to pay the property owners and to move to the design and layout of the development to determine how many properties would go, of what particular type and what kinds of green-scaping we are going to do.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the House for approving the financial instrument by which we are going to facilitate this development. With that, Sir, I am much obliged and beg to move that this Resolution under Head 48 do now pass.

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

House 75 Sequence 23

2:50 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, MR. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour MR. SPEAKER, the passing of one money Resolution in Committee of Supply and MR. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the Resolution was read a first and second time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of today's proceedings and I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 16th August, 2005, at 1000 a.m.

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

The question was put to and resolved in the affirmative without division and MR. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

H:No.75(24)252 p.m.