
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2003-2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 07, 2005.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10:20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. Roett, G.C.M., B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker) His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J. P. (Deputy Speaker) Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc.(Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and the Civil Service) Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon). Mr. G. W. PAYNE, LL.B. Hon. H. F. LASHLEY, (Minister of Social Transformation) Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.) Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD, 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) Hon. J.

X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S. F.R.C.S., (Edin.), J.P. (Minister of Health) Mr. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Ed.), J.P. Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S. Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance), (Leader of the Opposition) Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Industry and International Business) Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B., (Hons.) Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) Dr. W. F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS., J.P. Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, May 31, 2005.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes so cited be confirmed subject to any omissions, corrections and/or observations.

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

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

confirmed.

PAPERS

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

1.Representation of the People (Expenses) (Amendment) Regulations, 2004.

2.Representation of the People (Expenses) (Amendment) Regulations, 2005.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the International Business (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2005.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. A. P. WOOD, the following Bill was read a first time:

1.International Business (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2005

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the 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 PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT ROCK HALL IN THE PARISH OF SAINT THOMAS IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HERITAGE VILLAGE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FREEDOM MONUMENT

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, the acquisition before the House encompasses six parcels of land, the property of five landowners, four of whom are private individuals and the other the Barbados Diocesan Trust. The land parcels are 2 177.5 square feet, 4 641.3 square feet, 5 662.8 square feet, 1 500.4 square feet and 71 044 square feet, the larger parcel belonging to the Barbados Diocesan Trust.

Sir, one landowner has two tenants who are to be relocated to Arch Hall, St. Thomas, one tenant is to remain at Rock Hall, St. Thomas and the fourth tenant has been facilitated with a housing unit owned by the Government of Barbados through its agency, the National Housing Corporation. The anticipated relocation cost, and this is not compensation, is approximately \$320 000.

Sir, it is significant that one of the parcels of land supported an unoccupied slave hut for which the property owner will be compensated but which property will remain standing at the location. The other properties would either be moved or levelled in accordance with the arrangements made with the various property owners.

As you know, Sir, on occasions like this, it is our responsibility to deal with the property owners and usually provisions are made for

legitimate tenants of any property owners who are the subject of a Government relocation project.

Sir, I believe that it is incumbent on me not only to speak to the mechanics of what is happening to say that there will be a relocation project at Rock Hall but to put before the House the full context of that relocation and to indicate that the six parcels of the five property owners, 85 029 square feet, are being acquired for the establishment of a heritage village and freedom monument.

Sir, the history of Barbados records that one of the 19th Century owners of Mount Wilton Plantation, a man by the name of Mr. Elcock, who was murdered in the year 1821, left a provision in his Will that his free slaves should be given the sum of £5 each, which was quite a substantial sum in those days.

Sir, you would recall or appreciate that given the social history of the time there was some reluctance that the slaves should be treated in this way and the provisions of the Will were never carried out until 1840 when 18 beneficiaries of the Will were given their £5 each. It was in this context that those new money class black people made a conscious decision that they would not remain tied to the plantation - and one has to see it - but they would go out and set up independent enterprise and take their fortunes into their own hands.

Sir, people have to understand the tremendous courage that it had to take given the historical and social realities of the age in which they were living and the confidence which they must have invested in one another - and perhaps as a people we could learn something from that lesson - for those free slaves to decide they are going to work together to set up an independent enterprise to give themselves a degree of autonomy and to find their social place in what would be an emerging

Barbados.

House 67 Sequence 3

10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

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

Sir, these legatees established what is now widely accepted historically accepted as one of the first, if not the first, free villages of former black slaves in Barbados. Sir, history records that the original legatees still have relatives who remain at Rock Hall in St. Thomas bearing the names of Blenman, Clarke, Daniel, Downes, Lewis, Lynch, Maynard, Murphy, Pinder, Hall, Trotman, Wilson and Worrell. These were the surnames of those brave, strong, black slaves who took a chance in themselves and made a social and economic investment which, up to that time, was unprecedented in the history of this country.

Sir, I think the establishment of a heritage village at Rock Hall, St. Thomas is the marking of a historical juncture in Barbados in our social and economic history. Moreover, this Government is to be commended for what has been significant historical markers for the black population of Barbados in the recognition of our National Heroes by showing us who are some of the people who have contributed substantially to our development, building of the character of our nation, to the development of things Barbadian, to the creation of a psyche and definition of the Barbadian persona as displayed through the work and legacy of our National Heroes.

Mr. Speaker, it is significant that we mark Emancipation Day so that we do not forget the

passage through which we have come, the dangers which we surmounted, the obstacles that we manage to step over to come to the point of self-definition and self-rule and so now, we mark Emancipation Day in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the descendants of these legatees who remain at Rock Hall have much to be proud of because they come from an important historical lineage. It is important that this Parliament hear and recognise the names of those individuals who founded the village of Rock Hall. Sir, Parliament must also recognise the vision and generosity of the plantation owner who must have made himself some departure from what must have been the social norms at the time to leave this Will of such generous terms for his slaves.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last few months there has been some attempt at sensitising the current residents of Rock Hall in relation to the project that is being executed there. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas will speak to the scope of the village and to exactly what will be the various constituent elements of the village and the project which is expected to execute in phased.

Mr. Speaker, since I mentioned that there would be a heritage village and freedom monument, I should indicate at this point that in 2003, by way of public advertisement on the radio, television and print media, advertisements urging designs for the monument which would stand at Rock Hall were published. Sir, about 44 entries were received in response to the advertisement.

Mr. Speaker, a subcommittee was established to review the entries. A further subcommittee of Cabinet was established to take the designs of the shortlist, review them and vote on the winner. The members of the Subcommittee of Cabinet were the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Member for St.

James Central, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and myself.

Sir, the process was open and transparent and the applications went to the Ministry of Culture. They were each coded with a number and the names of the designers were removed.

H67/10:40

Sequence 4

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of... Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-MCDOWALD: ...When they went forward to the Selection Committee the designs were presented but no original identity. The five were shortlisted and to the final sub Committee, which was the Sub-Committee of Cabinet Members. There was a unanimous decision on what we believe will be a very striking, prominent and a suitable monument to mark this very important historical area and moment.

Sir, the categories on which they were selected are creativity, scale, authenticity, relevance, concept and interpretation. The pieces that were chosen for awards: The 5th Place was awarded to Israel Mapp, 4th Place Mark Hall, 3rd Place Timothy and Marderley Newton; 2nd Place Thelma Mills Studios and the winning design was submitted by architect Stanton Haynes. The design was then interpreted by sculptor Virgil Broodhagen, is currently under construction in the United Kingdom and is expected to be in Barbados close to the end of this month or early next month. However, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will speak about the design, its material and how it is going to be rendered.

Mr. President, part of the process of development does not only speak to this particular location, which we now have to clear. I want to emphasise that today's Resolution in Parliament facilitates the Ministry of Public Works to finish the process of clearing the land, dismantle houses, and if necessary relocate them as agreed, so that the construction and development of the project can take place.

Mr. Speaker, Government has a strong commitment to the entire village and as a result there will be general upgrading of the area along with the erection of a freedom monument. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas, who is the Parliamentary Representative, will speak to this in more detail.

Sir, St. Thomas could be recognised as the birthplace of freedom villages, not only Rock Hall, St. Thomas but Bridgefield, which is located not too far away. Mr. President, today it is a five-minute drive but in those days, it might have meant walking up the hills of St. Thomas through cane fields and thickly wooded areas; rather a difficult journey. If you belonged to the Planter class, traveling by carriage, would have been easier. However, the life of a slave could not have been easy.

Sir, the second village was Bridgefield which was in close proximity to Rock Hall. Perhaps it says something about the people and the spirit of the people of St. Thomas. I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would want to draw that particular interpretation that the people of St. Thomas are special and pioneering.

Mr. Speaker, today this Resolution pays tribute to those pioneers who shaped the history and development of that particular area. We also share a sense of pride as we become involved in the struggle.

I believe that there was a time when Barbadians did not fully understand that Barbados had a tremendous struggle coming out of slavery for it was not an easy path for those who sought to lead the way for us to follow. Now, we are beginning to recognise, with the acceptance of Bussa and others, that Barbados did have tremendous upheaval in its social and

economic history and development.

Sir, the development of the project areas will commence shortly. I believe that the establishment of the statue will constitute Phase 1 one of the project while the phases which speak to the wider development of the heritage village will take place later.

I sought to point out some of the other historical significant areas developed by the Government in marking our post-emancipation history. Sir, Government has also invested heavily in culture and heritage. It has established a number of sites and providing funding for the development of heritage purposes, marking our social history and the recognition of dates and places to which we paid no special attention previously.

Sir, it is sad that for many years several generations of Barbadians would have driven through Rock Hall without recognising its historical and social significance to Barbados and in the post-emancipation period. Therefore, it is fitting at this time that the full relevance of the area and its contribution to the national landscape, both geographically and historically, should be noted.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that I will have an opportunity to make further comments when winding up. These are the factual context of the history within which this Resolution comes before Parliament today.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Right Honourable Prime Minister.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Resolution and thank the Honourable Members of the Opposition for their generosity and graciousness for allowing me to speak at this time.

Sir, there has been, and sadly so, some element of controversy surrounding the purposes in which this Resolution is being brought to Parliament. I feel a duty to speak early in this debate, not only to support the representations made by the Minister of Housing and Lands but to give this important initiative on which we are embarked today and to speak to its real purpose in the process of national self-discovery and nation building in this country.

Mr. Speaker, in 1963, a biography was written by a Mr. Ernest Ifill on Frank Worrell and he was at the end of a distinguished career. It is a biography that everybody in Barbados should read because not only was it written by Mr. Ernest Ifill but at the end of every Chapter Sir Frank was allowed to give his own distinctive perspective on the matters that were recorded in Mr. Ifill's book on Sir Frank's life.

Sir, on Pages 23 and 24 of this very important biography, Frank Worrell made the statement that explains in part why we are here today.

H:67 10.50 a.m.

Sequence 5

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

House 67, sequence 06, 10:50 a.m.

Continuation of Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

He said: "Barbados has one exceptional feature. It is the only territory in the world without a local hero. This obtains in all aspects of life. What is the future of a country without heroes?"

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is one of the most biting bitter statements ever made about Barbados coming from a person whom Barbadians and West Indians of all walks of life have come to revere him for saying that Barbados is the only territory in the world without a Hero in any aspect of its life and what is the future of a country without Heroes.

Sir, the first inclination would be to criticise Sir Frank but the fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that the fault is not in Sir Frank but it is in the way in which Barbados was socialised. As you know, I participated three years ago at the Ground Breaking Ceremony for this Monument and I saw it then as I see it now, helping us to embark on a journey of self discovery that was denied to a lot of us.

I went to school and did History to A Level and I never knew about Bussa, Arch Hall, Sarah Ann Gill and was not aware of any aspect of the Barbadian history. I am not surprised that Sir Frank Worrell, speaking in 1963 would not have known about Bussa or Sarah Ann Gill. I am not surprised that he too would not have known that we had heroes because we were brought up in a society to believe that we did not have heroes.

Sir, when I spoke then, I titled my speech, "The Road to Self-Discovery." I said then, what I need to say now again, as we address this matter in this Parliament, that generation after generation of Barbadians, including my own, were made victims of a process of socialisation which divorced us from the study of our own history and made us feel awkward

about the very symbols of our own identity.

It has been a debilitating process which has not allowed us to derive spiritual meaning and hence, direction from the essential things which have formed our character as a people. Our emancipation will therefore never be complete until we succeed in liberating ourselves from the spiritual bondage which has demeaned or made less meaningful the things that have mattered in helping us to reach our current platform of national and human development and that we are here this evening therefore to take another step on a journey of self-discovery.

I want also to suggest to this Parliament, Mr. Speaker, that we are here today to advance this step of national self-discovery. The truth of the matter, Sir, is that the Barbadian personality has been the subject of the region, historically. Our accent, the way we live, and the way in which we organise ourselves as a people, throughout history, have been derided. Sir, to be a Bajan or 'Bimness' has been celebrated in some of the most acid ways.

Barbadians have, in some respect, Sir, contributed to it by often not fully appreciating the richness of our history and, very often, not being prepared to tell our young people that what we have today accomplished, has been the result of a struggle that is as rich and as meaningful as that which was engaged in the United States of America, any other Caribbean country, Latin America or Europe.

We have, Mr. Speaker, a proud history that is made up of the extraordinary struggles, sacrifice and determination of a number of simple people who, although simple, made significant history.

Sir, the history of Barbados is now being properly told by people like Professor Hillary Beckles. It has been properly told for a long

time by Professor Woodville, who has done more than any Caribbean historian to contextualise the development of peasantries and out of the peasantries, Sir, the development Barbadian society.

Sir, when the Barbadian history is properly understood, the significance of Rock Hall as the first free community in Barbados will be respected as having established the foundation on which Barbados, as a collection of communities has evolved.

The Minister spoke in a telling way about the significance of Rock Hall, but let us not forget that Rock Hall was formed in 1841, two years after the termination of the Apprenticeship Act after 1838.

Let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, that although slavery was terminated in 1838, that 1838 Act terminating the Apprenticeship was followed immediately by the Masters and Servants Act of 1940 which transformed Barbados into something like a tropical medieval society, in which every plantation owner was a Monarch of everything that he surveyed.

Therefore, Rock Hall as a free village, Mr. Speaker, was not formed in circumstances in which the communities in Barbados are today being formed. It was formed within the crucible of a most agonising social system for black people in this country. The formation of this free village had to be the turning point in the social development of the country because it made possible in almost every respect, most of the social, economic and political development that pursued thereafter.

Sir, those who are the critics on the call-in programmes and who do not know our history need to be told that the freedom of expression that they today enjoy was in many respects owed to the people of Rock Hall and their political activity, which we today properly now

come in this Parliament to recognise.

I say that, Sir, because before Rock Hall was formed, as you know people in this country voted upon the basis of ownership of land. A Plantocracy controlled not only the wealth of the country also controlled all of the political power.

It has properly therefore to be said that the formation of this Free Village and the formation of the Property Class at Rock Hall helped in 1848 to begin the process of political transformation in this country because history records, Sir, that in the elections of 1848, the voters of Rock Hall helped to unseat the Sitting Members of the plantocracy, and helped to replace them with Members of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Labour Party. Sir, from that initial act came this great wave of political democracy which has now enabled all of us as black people to serve in your Parliament.

Therefore, the significance of Rock Hall, Mr. Speaker, is deeply embedded in our political democracy. May I say, Sir, that it was the start of the process of social development. I am advised that a place in St. George - and the Honourable Member for St. George North is not here - made claims to being the first freedom village in Barbados, Sweet Vale. I do not think that it really is recognised by legitimate historians as the first freedom village.

House 67, sequence 06, 11:0014

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

Continuation of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

What happened at Sweet Vale was that a plantation owner sought to take care of his mulatto children by allocating plots of lands to

them for their dwellings. However, that was not the same thing as the creation of a first free village.

Sir, Rock Hall established the model for Barbados' social development by being the model for a village life. At Rock Hall, as in so many other places in rural Barbados throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, you had a situation where everything was done in the local community, the very model of self-reliance. The record showed that in Rock Hall you had dressmakers and launderers. The young boys were apprentices as tailors, masons, joiners and carpenters.

Sir, you and I can identify with this. I remember the village in which I grew up in the 1950s. I say this for the benefit of my younger colleagues who do not remember these parts of Barbados. I grew up in a village in the 1950s where there was a blacksmith, an upholsterer and a shoemaker. There were also two baker shops. All of our clothes were made in the village. Almost everybody living in Benn Hill, Rose Hill and Ashton Hall work in the village. Sir, Barbados evolved and had a pattern of social evolution where a model of self-reliance was established at the level of the person and at the level of the community. This was so because from the very outset the first free village in Barbados, Rock Hall, had about it all of the aspects of self-reliance that came to be mirrored in all of the other communities in our country.

Mr. Speaker, the status that we enjoy today as the world's leading developing country derives from the enormous social capital that has been generated by Barbados for over a century. The social capital is represented in strong communities, strong families, strong values, a sense of thrift, a sense of enterprise and a sense of self-reliance. All of this had to do with the way in which that first free village evolved.

Sir, we must therefore not make light of the truly historic significance of the Resolution that this House is being called upon to support. Sir, it is part of a process of self-discovery that after denying our history for so long we are not now only embracing it but this Government wants to use our history and our culture as important tools in national development.

Sir, let us therefore set this in the broader social context. We should see ourselves as being part of an important relay team in a long race of national development to be run, in which the baton will be passed from generation to generation. There are those who went before us who were involved in the process of seeking our political independence. We in the second wave have to carry forward the process of building a nation in trying times. To build a nation we have to call upon every sinew. The most important muscle is knowing who you are and where you have come from and join from the security of your foundation.

Sir, a lot of the initiatives this Government is involved with, some of which is now exciting criticism of those who are saying we are wasting the taxpayers' money and that we are only into the symbolic, is to carry forward the process of nation building by making the Barbadian society as a whole come to terms with the uniqueness of the Barbadian personality and identity and using that as an important tool of transformation.

Mr. Speaker, unless we do that we are going to be lost. This world in which we live at the start of the 21st Century is a world in which there is the great danger that the benefits of human civilisation can be overturned by making the world homogeneous. I have often complained that we are now living in a world where there is almost an attempt to make the world safe for the penetration of American civilisation. How we live, how we work, what we eat, how we enjoy leisure and how we relate

to each other on a personal basis is incrementally being shaped by the influences of western civilisation, more importantly so by the influences of American civilisation. That is representing itself in the export from the United States of America of many things which I think we ourselves would not want to export as cultural products, a culture of violence, excessive consumption and tawdry lifestyles.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot watch an American film, and I am going to speak very bluntly about this matter, even cartoons that are meant for children without seeing gratuitous violence. All of these things are taking their toll on societies.

Sir, the undermining influences in today's world are not the material import but the cultural imports that are shaping a lifestyle in today's world that bears no relationship to that out of which we have come. Therefore, if we are going to be successful in having sustainable development, we must never resile from holding up secured icons of the Barbadian personality and making the Barbadian people understand that how we live, what we eat and how we relate to each other should be based on something that is uniquely Barbadian and not based upon the foisting on our culture icons drawn from another civilisation very often to our detriment.

Hence, Sir, this is not a frivolous action on the part of Government. It is an attempt to try to secure our development by rooting it securely in our culture because that is where national development will have a secure foundation. This therefore, Mr. Speaker, is not just about building a monument or helping us to properly focus on the importance of a village and our history. What we are involved in this Resolution is important to the purpose of nation building. However, we cannot build a nation unless we are secured in all aspects of our national identity.

Sir, we must see ourselves in this Parliament as being part of a long term relay where we run the race and then pass on the baton. There are many aspects of the programme of nation building that still need to be completed. There are also many aspects of the process of nation building in which we, even in this period, represent our independence and our emancipation which we need to revisit. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that as we proceed on this process of nation building that the concept of celebrating our emancipation has become recognised as being important in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased that we have now agreed to treat the Crop Over Festival and the Emancipation Festival as part and parcel of the same process.

Mr. Speaker, we surely could not just have a major festival to celebrate the end of a crop, which is a diminishing economic activity in our country. The Crop Over Festival has a significance and must come to have a significance not just as a pageant celebrating the end of the sugar season, but as a festival and a pageant to allow Barbadians to respect and to celebrate their emancipation. Therefore, I would like to see more aspects of the celebration of emancipation embedded in the Crop Over season.

House 67 Sequence 7

11:10 a.m.

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

Sir, school children must be told that it is not just about tents, calypsos on the roads and fetes

but that a predominately black nation recognises that an entire season ought to be devoted to the celebration of the emancipation of black people from slavery. I would like to see more of the aspects of emancipation of Crop Over embodied in our Crop Over celebration.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Culture has been trying to make the point for the past few years that the Crop Over Festival is not just another West Indian summer festival but a Barbadian recognition that the emancipation of black people in Barbados ought to be the subject of important celebration in culturally important ways by a predominantly black people.

Mr. Speaker, similarly, the celebration of our independence must continue to be refreshed and revitalised to enable us to use the concept of independence as a building block in building up a just, prosperous society. Our independence is one of those important landmark decisions that rank with emancipation in enabling us to be where we are today. When we came to office, we said that it was not enough simply for it to be celebrated by a parade but that we had to return the concept of independence to the communities. Sir, ten years after we sought to do that, we too ourselves have to reflect on how we are celebrating it. Is the sense of nationalism that independence should evoke coming through in a way in which independence itself is being celebrated even though we have carried it to the level of the community? Is it a pageant and is the celebration of it losing its meaning in the building of a nation?

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Prime Minister has commissioned a review of the way in which we are celebrating independence at the level of the community with a view to trying to make sure that the celebration is not only refreshed but is made more meaningful, that the

nationalistic aspect of it is enriched. We want more especially so for more institutions in the society to have ownership of the celebration because the independence of our country was, in many respects, the liberalisation of the whole society.

Mr. Speaker, I see what we are doing here as being part of a twinned process of self-discovery and nation building. What is intended to begin at Rock Hall is, in fact, to create a physical representation in a proper way that would allow the significance of that community and its place in the history of Barbados to be stated in a fashion that all and sundry would immediately understand.

Mr. Speaker, we intend to establish a community centre and erect a monument at Rock Hall. We want to designate the whole area as an area of national significance and in so doing, we want to send a message to all those living in the heights, terraces and gardens, that there has been a process of social and community evolution in this country, that people who are today enjoying the benefit of that process of social and economic evolution should reflect on the fact that it started somewhere. It all started with those actions by that historic group in 1840 to defy the times, to defy the Masters and Servants Act, to defy the fact that in 1838 daily wages in Barbados was twenty cents and had fallen to fourteen cents by 1849, to defy economic deprivation. Sir, the wages of people fell from twenty cents to fourteen cents but they still had it in them to create a free village to make progress possible for all of us. Sir, this is what we are celebrating here today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the people of Rock Hall that those who are criticising what we are doing on the grounds that Government should be doing something more pragmatic that they misunderstand it. I do not want to say that they lack pride because people say things

without knowing the implications of that which they are talking about. When Frank Worrell said that Barbados had no heroes, I do not blame him because he was never taught to understand that Bussa was a hero. When today on the call-in programmes people are criticising why we are spending money on this monument at Rock Hall and why we are not spending it on roads, I am not blaming them because they do not understand their history and some do not have pride in their history. Sir, this is not only for the people of Rock of but for the people of Barbados. As it concerns the people of Rock Hall, it was a sad action that in the early 1990s, a community centre at Rock Hall was converted into a magistrate court. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas would remember that when our sap was rising, we used to go to a lot of good fetes at the community centre in Rock Hall. Some of my most enjoyable times were spent in that community centre at Rock Hall that was subsequently turned into a magistrate court.

Mr. Speaker, I am not criticising the action of converting the community centre at Rock Hall into a magistrate's court because a court is needed there but having done so, the community centre should have been replaced because the community centre had a purpose. I am letting the House know that in addition to building this national monument in Rock Hall for the sake of the nation, the Ministry of Social Transformation has been given the resources and the mandate to replace the community centre in Rock Hall which was stripped away many years ago because we have to deal with the symbolism of national development and also the pragmatics of it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for allowing me to speak in these terms. I hope that this Resolution comes to command the entire support of everybody in this House. I hope the funds which would be expended to build a monument in Rock Hall, appropriate to the

significance of the national development of Rock Hall, that they would be regarded as funds well spent.

Mr. Speaker, in that capacity, I am greatly pleased to be able to be associated with the Resolution that has been ably presented in this House. I take great pride and pleasure in asking this House to move this Resolution with all alacrity, conscious of the significance of the moment of which we are embarking.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Lucy, are you speaking as the main spokesman for the Opposition on motion.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, then you have unlimited time.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this debate and if I did not hear something, I will apologise. One would have taught that the first thing that the Honourable Prime Minister would have said while speaking in this particular debate was that this charge had not started with this new administration. Sir, I well remember in the 1980s, a gentleman who sought to be a member of this House, Mr. Junior Rock, bought this idea to the Party which was supported and propelled by the Party. I would be ungrateful of me not to acknowledge something that was started by the Democratic Labour Party in the early 1980s even though this Government has now brought it to Parliament as if it is something new.

H67/11:20

Sequence 8

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of... Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, there are a few issues that affect me indirectly. Mr. Speaker, when I look through the Resolution relating to the compulsory acquisition of land to substantiate this particular decision, my memory differs from the Government of the day. I remember that Anglican Church of Barbados was approached about this particular project. Sir, land owned by a gentleman, who is known for insulting a Prime Minister of Barbados, was also sought for this particular project.

Mr. Speaker, I am observing in this particular Resolution that this gentleman seems now to be elevated, while the traditional residents of the district are now being removed and, in Barbadian parlance, the 'Johnnie come lately' is being allowed to remain untouched in this village as though he was the origin of the idea and could not be touched in this particular issue. Sir, the Anglican Church has been touched, ordinary citizens have been touched but the new citizen to Rock Hall, because he was bold enough in the early 1990s to carry an attack to a Prime Minister of Barbados, has been left untouched.

Mr. Speaker, I have not given you a name of a person, so I have not breached the rules by calling the name of Mr. McHale in this Honourable House. Sir, when I look through the Resolution I did not see his name. He is the latest resident to live in Rock Hall and he has not been touched, according to these records, but the Anglican Church has been touched. Apparently, this gentleman is now an untouchable because of some statement which he made in the 1990s.

Sir, there are artisans and professional that have been touched in this particular issue. A man who operates a business has now been

placed in a development where he can no longer continue his business, and that gentlemen is known to the other side the same way he is known to me. Sir, in the original idea we appreciated the contribution this particular gentleman could make to this project and we did not intend to interfere with him.

Mr. Speaker, the first thing we did, in dealing with this particular project, was to negotiate with the Anglican Church the possibility of land for the proposed monument, et cetera. However, ordinary citizens who have a history with this particular piece of land have been relocated to create history. I am calling on the Right Honourable Prime Minister as the Minister of Culture to reflect on these things and reverse some of the decisions made here today because this particular acquisition, even though the intention is good, can be falsely applied.

I am challenging the Barbados Labour Party today to recognise that they are about to commit a wrong to the people of Rock Hall, especially those persons who made a livelihood performing on this site, and to recognise that you cannot relocate a person who operates a bodywork shop from a particular area to a development where he cannot operate, because residents would complain. It is like relocating a man from a development to a farm, where there is a foul smell, and not expect him to complain.

I am saying that we need to reverse some things. Peace, love and unity must be the hallmark of this particular Assembly. We want to see some peace in this Honourable House, that is why we will create peace on this side and always give love, but unity must come from the Government and they must acknowledge unity to protect the interest of the masses in the same way they protect the interest of the rich.

Sir, I am saying that the rich must be protected in this country and the poor must be protected, but no way should we have anybody believe that because they are arrogant enough to fly in the face of the Prime Minister of Barbados, that they should be compensated, by not being touched.

Mr. Speaker, those persons who are being removed from Rock Hall are part of the history. The 'Johnny come lately' is not part of this history of Rock Hall. When you check the Registry of Barbados, you will not see any trace of this particular gentleman. All the other persons who are being removed from Rock Hall are being removed from their history. That is the point that I am making. History must be built around history. You do not tear down history to create history. This is becoming a commonplace action of this Government because they believe that in order to create history, they must tear down and rebuild. Sir, I have seen this happen with Nelson statue and Kensington Oval, now, today it is the turn of Rock Hall. I am saying that there is something called continuity. If we want Barbados to be a place where we practise heritage tourism, the best way to do this is through continuity.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party cannot oppose this project because it was conceived by the Democratic Labour Party and it is now being planned by the Barbados Labour Party. I always warned my Party that whenever they have a good project, they should implement it themselves and do it quickly so that the Barbados Labour Party do not put their hands on it and the evidence is here.

I am hoping that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, and she has my support on this particular area, would get up and defend her constituents because...

Asides

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I would support the Parliamentary Representative if the Honourable Member gets up and support her constituents on this particular issue. She can count on me to support her on this particular issue because her constituents are to be protected.

Asides

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, if the Honourable Member is calling on me, to defend her like I did when the Honourable Member was in a Church in St. Thomas over the dump and I was bold enough to go into a Barbados Labour Party meeting at Arch Hall and defend the residents of Arch Hall, I am now here today again defending the people of Rock Hall. I was told that I was bold to go among Barbados Labour Party members and defend the rights of the people of Arch Hall.

Sir, today, I am here defending them. I also call on the Honourable Member for St. James Central, who understands the demographics of the constituencies and even though the name St. James Central gives the false impression that he represents only St. James Central. He also represents a part of St. Thomas and he has an obligation to the people of Rock Hall to defend them. Unless, the Honourable Member recognises that when they are removed from Rock Hall they will be relocated to Arch Hall and he would have an opportunity to convert them as part of his electioneering machinery.

Sir, this particular issue is very issue serious and grounded in the right principle and must be protected. That principle must be fairness for all, you can only get that by giving peace and love and showing unity. Sir, as a Parliament, once those three virtues are practised, you could count on my support but when they are not practised, I would strive to create conditions for them to be practised.

Mr. Speaker, the Emancipation Monument, the Freedom Village or whatever you call it, is a good idea, but you cannot take from the poor to promote the poor. At the same time making allowances to persons who can afford to give up some of their lands depriving those who cannot. That is not the format of a socialist Government. That is not supposed to be the way that a Labour Party behaves.

Sir, I agree with the Prime Minister when he spoke about the virtues that can be found in the villages. He and I understand it well. We are both from villages and we can appreciate ownership. We can appreciate the meaning of a line mark. If the Right Honourable Prime Minister can appreciate a line mark in Benn Hill and I can appreciate a line mark in Alexandra or Checker Hall, then we understand how the people of Rock Hall feel on this particular issue.

H67: 11.30 p.m.

Sequence 9

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

House 67, sequence 10, 11:30 a.m.

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

... Sir, I am saying that if in his survey, there is evidence to show that there are people who feel aggrieved with this, then it is for the Prime Minister to take charge of this issue and make sure that those persons we are seeking to create a freedom village for, are free in their hearts and feel that they are being fair. Sir, you cannot speak about freedom and at the same time, oppressing people. It cannot work, and

the last place for it to be, is in this Parliament.

Sir, it is laudable and no one on this side can criticise it but what we will criticise is the application. Surely, the problem we have today is how it is being applied and how it will interfere with the people who live there and who wanted to be part of the history.

I am assured, Sir, that all of these persons whom we are taking the land from, in their original thoughts agreed with the idea. I am sure that they agreed with the present idea because they understand where the original thought was and where it is now. Sir, they know that where it was supposed to impact, it is not now impacting and that they are now prisoners to their own idea. The same persons were all partied to the idea of the monument. They look forward for the glory day.

Mr. Speaker, do you understand what is happening here? Sir, when this project is truly marketed, as planned by the Democratic Labour Party, it is going to be a big tourism project, so how could you take the people away from this particular project unless the Barbados Labour Party is only seeing it as a monument and a freedom village and they do not understand how this project can be expanded.

I would not say that they should not understand this because they have heard me already speaking about how we have misused Harrison's Cave. Sir, buses should not drive to the entrance of Harrison's Cave, people should be made to walk to Harrison's Cave and we should develop the infrastructure leading to Harrison's Cave.

Surely, Sir, if you hear that idea and you now come to put a project like the Rock Hall Freedom Village, you would be expansive in your thoughts and planning and you would know how to make a major project out of something that looks like a minor project.

Sir, creativity is something that would always be practised on this side and we will continue to share freely with the Other Side, knowing full well that we can give them the best ideas and they will destroy them. I have consistently said to my comrades to feel free to float your ideas on the Floor of Parliament because an idea can only be implemented when you understand what you have heard or what you are talking about, Sir.

I am saying, Sir, that we have heard about how the Community Centre was converted into the Magistrate's Court. This is true but the point was not made, Mr. Speaker, that when the Democratic Labour Party came to Government, the magistrates and lawyers had to operate in some conditions in the Magistrate's Court where they had no choice. Sir, in order to get action after seeing what was about to happen in Barbados and how the atmosphere had changed in Barbados, and they wanted to keep stability in the country. Therefore, they had to keep the Magistrate's Court in that particular location, so that they could continue their work.

Sir, we were fighting hard because we saw the built up of guns from the early 1980s and that is why we kept the Magistrate's Court in that particular location. We understood, Sir, that when people were given unemployment benefits instead of work, that would have created social unrest in the country and a decrease in productivity would be seen and we understood that, Sir.

Sir, we understood the social fall-out that would have occurred because of this particular event. When that particular point was made as a negative comment, and then was withdrawn to be a positive comment, I understood exactly what was occurring at that particular time.

Mr. Speaker, a country that speaks of Independence must understand that

Independence cannot only be for a 'too few' and Independence must be for all. I am not going to fool the masses of people in Barbados that everything in Barbados belongs to them. No. Everything in Barbados belongs to everybody but the masses must get their fair share, the middle class must get their fair share and the others must also get their fair share.

Sir, what we are calling for, is peace, love and unity. We are calling for an acknowledgment of everyone in this country because at the end of the day, if we do not have peace, love and unity, we will not have a productive country. Sir, what I have been seeing in Parliament for the last 11 years, is that we need to put this country on the path where it becomes a productive country. People have to understand that politicians who came here in the early 1990s dealing with localisation where you had to deal with one group within your country versus the other group, it was obvious at the time that you had to side with the masses of people.

We are now in a globalised economy, Sir, where everybody within the Caribbean and Barbados must be seen as part of localisation, and everybody outside of the Caribbean region must be seen as part of globalisation. Therefore, we cannot be in this Parliament arguing about who in Barbados has money and who in Barbados do not have money, for the simple reason that we must see everybody as part of localisation whether it is in Barbados or the Caribbean region and everybody else as part of globalisation.

We must also understand, Sir, that a person whom we might have seen as the enemy previously cannot now be seen as the enemy because we are now in a globalised world and we must come together in unity and go forward as a country called Barbados, and pitch it further to the Caribbean, to fight the rest of the world. Until we do that, Sir, we are not going

to go anywhere.

This nit-picking within Barbados must stop. We must understand exactly that we have to come together as a group, bring unity, peace and love within Barbados and the Caribbean to fight the rest of the world. Sir, do not let anybody believe that WTO, FTAA, and all that foolishness is in the interest of the Caribbean people. It is all about increased market share for other people, Sir, and the people in Rock Hall understand this and that is where we must first practise unity, within Rock Hall and then we can carry it all across Barbados and across the shores.

Sir, we must understand what is going on in the world. We cannot be allowing our Parliament to divide our people at a time when we should be uniting our people to take Barbados to new frontiers in its development. Mr. Speaker, when I look at the examples that are coming in front of me, I see an opportunity where we have wasted good opportunities to develop this country and carry it to higher heights.

I am saying, Sir, that we might have to use the referendum or the referenda for these particular matters because it is sure to me that we are dancing out of tune and we need to get back to the beat and understand what our people are calling for, and we need to develop this country called, Barbados.

Sir, I am saying that if it means having a freedom village to put education and common sense back into the heads of politicians, maybe this is the best time because commonsense and wisdom seem to be lacking in some areas. We have to be very careful because we are so caught up in the globalised world that we do not understand that in order to be part of the globalised world, we must first be able to master our local situation.

Sir, you have heard me say at conferences that the Caribbean is ten years behind, and now that people are practicing globalisation, we are still trying to learn how to deal with localisation. We need to speed that up and the fastest way we can do it the same I, which is to see all people as one within our country and for them also to see us one. It is alright for us to get in this Parliament and say that politicians must see all people as one, but the people to whom we are speaking, must be prepared to see us as one also, because there are two sides to the equation, Sir.

House 67, sequence 10, 11:4014

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

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

If assets equal liabilities, liabilities must equal assets.

Sir, the call being made today is a very high road one, therefore we must understand what we are asking for and what we are seeking on this particular matter.

Sir, it is alright to talk about independence but we also have to understand that independence means something to the people of Rock Hall too and that they too are part of the independent movement and that they too have rights. If independence gave one group rights, it also gave rights to the ordinary citizens of Arch Hall, the people who came with the original thought.

Sir, it really hurts, because had I seen that name of that person in this debate I would not have had an argument. This name is allowed now to look down on the poor people of Rock Hall untouched. The normal artisans who only have one call must remove themselves to Arch

Hall while the glory boy looks down untouched on the people of Arch Hall.

Sir, that is not fair. I know this particular issue has slipped the Prime Minister but I know he will deal with it because I heard what he said about Benn Hill. The Prime Minister does not use words lightly. Therefore, when the Prime Minister speaks about Benn Hill and the connection of land, I understand quite well what he is saying on this particular issue.

Sir, the Prime Minister cannot come and speak about what I am speaking about because it is his charge but I could understand the pain that went through the Prime Minister when he saw this and recognised that the new landowner is untouched but the normal citizens of Rock Hall have been touched and deprived of economic activity. Sir, people must understand what is occurring here, if they do not, it tells me that this project has not been well thought out by the other side. If it has been well thought out by the other side, then what it is saying is that they understand how they are going to deprive persons of their rights on this particular issue because anybody owning land next to this project when it is completed will have something of higher value and higher appreciation and greater opportunity, that is what I am speaking about. This project will create higher opportunities, and I know the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will agree with this particular point.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side understand how the residents of Rock Hall feel about their Rock Hall because it is the same way how the Mighty Gabby feels about Emmerton and how I felt about Checker Hall when our lands were taken away.

Sir, I understand the pain, that is why I can speak to this particular issue with the passion that I speak to it. Sir, I understand how this Government operates because when they move

in and took the land for the Arawak Cement Plant the people who own lands in that area were left without lands and found themselves scotching on a piece of land in St. Thomas.

Sir, I understand how my demographics changed, if I could understand how my demographics changed, I could understand how the demographics of the people of Rock Hall would change. Sir, I felt it but I am not going to be like any of those who have felt it and said that it happened to them, so let it happen to somebody else. I will defend their rights and that is why for 11 years I have defended the rights of those persons and have been calling for the Land Acquisition Act to be changed.

Sir, I am not saying that people should not move or their lands should not be acquired but surely you cannot take a bodywork man who has a business and put him in a development where he cannot operate anymore, that sounds like punishment. Sir, that gentleman should have been given a choice. That is why I believe that the purchaser in the Land Acquisition Act has too much power and that the power should be changed to the vendor. That man should be able to decide where he wants to go and operate from, but it seems to me that he has no choice. Sir, whether he owns the land or not, the point is that he is operating a business and he has a right to operate that business.

Sir, we heard in this Parliament that there are persons in Fontabelle and Pickwick Gap who did not own land who would get a right to own land somewhere else, so this gentleman has the same entitlement.

Sir, I congratulate those commercial players who were able to play the ball better than the West Indians players and who were able to convert fours into sixes as it relates to compensation. Sir, the small man must be represented by us in here to make sure that a fair deal is given to him. That is why I like the

comment that was made by the Prime Minister of Barbados when he said that persons born in villages understand villages. Sir, that is a very serious and fundamental point that was made by the Prime Minister. However, I do not think the Honourable Members on the other side understand what the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister has not removed himself from his birthplace, he understands quite well where he came from. He also understands that if he were not the Prime Minister of Barbados that given that side the opportunity they would do the same thing to him that they are doing to the people in Rock Hall. Sir, I believe that is the point the Prime Minister was trying to make and I understand him. Sir, as you know the genes are not too far away and we would understand each other.

Mr. Speaker, the questions this Parliament must ask itself, when this project is completed, are where will it take Barbados, how will it develop the minds of the people living in that particular area and what financial rewards are to be gained from this particular project. Sir, in my vision I can see them, they are bountiful. Sir, if I can see them, why would I want to deprive ordinary citizens from getting them. Sir, why can one man look down and start budgeting on his glory days? I can see the heritage tourism and the community tourism project that was created around that pretty building in Rock Hall. I can imagine the proposal before the bank about this wonderful tourism project that will now be in the middle of Rock Hall. However, the original planners will not get the day, but this new born child of Arch Hall will be able to get the full benefits of the hard work and sweat of the people of Arch Hall all because of one famous statement that was made in the early 1990s about a former Prime Minister.

Sir, I hope that we are not now using that as an example as how to achieve in this country. I

hope that people would not get the impression that if you 'bad talk' the Prime Minister of this country that the other Government will look after you.

Mr. Speaker, this statement is timely because in other countries I have seen situations where people were about to create civil wars and I can see that this peaceful place called the Caribbean is about to be destroyed. Sir, the witch-hunt is about to start. You lock up me, so I am going to lock up you. Sir, this country Barbados must stay far from this type of politics and understand that unity, peace and love are the three things that we must practice. Sir, we must allow election time to be the compensating period for the masses of people in Barbados to punish politicians who are not doing right.

Sir, I do not support any move that will destroy the unity of the people within the Caribbean or the bedrock and the development of the Caribbean. I am one for unity, peace and love. I believe that this Parliament cannot take the weapon away from the masses of people in Barbados in dealing with politicians and transfer it to the law courts. I believe that the electorate must continue to have that power to deal with politicians.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, what are you talking about now?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am still on the freedom village. I am talking about freedom of politicians and you should be happy, Sir, for this statement. It is a bit high I agree but...

Mr. SPEAKER: I will understand.

House 67 Sequence 11

11:50 a.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2005

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

I am sorry for being a philosopher here today but I can only be that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The rule here is that you can have unlimited time but the Presiding Officer believes that you are repeating yourself.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Surely, that cannot be true. You are hearing what I have said for the first time so it cannot be a repetition.

MR. PRESIDENT: Proceed then.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, within the Caribbean and in Barbados there are things with which Parliament should not deal. We have to be careful as politician about examples being set by others that could back to haunt us. We have to understand that the electorate has their power too and that if the people of Rock Hall believe what we are doing is right, they would react and deal with the issue. Sir, if they believe it is wrong, they would also deal with the particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, on this issue, I want to say to Parliament that it was a very good idea that was created by the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, as it stands right now, the implementation is wrong and it should go back to the drawing board. The Minister should speak to the Prime Minister on this issue and try to get an interpretation of the statement made by the Prime Minister on life as it relates to life in the village so that there is a finer appreciation of village life, how people come together as one and how you when people are divided from the village how it can break up the society.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of us believe that because people have money that they should not live

certain places but that is wrong. If you want to destroy the morale fabric of a society, remove the influence from the society and see what happens.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying it should be widespread but I strongly believe that certain figures who dominate the society in housing developments should remain to continue to protect the development so that people would continue to have people to whom they can look. I also believe we must look for a ratio to balance the activity that can happen in these housing developments if we remove certain influences from the developments.

Mr. Speaker, you do not want to have developments without positive influence. We cannot allow negativity to continue without the matching positive influence. We cannot allow the people of Rock Hall to come up with an idea, start to implement it and then be deprived of being part of that idea. Sir, it is a good idea but if you remove the people from the idea then you have destroyed the whole thought of the idea.

Sir, I thank you.

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

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Sir. I want to say that today is one of the proudest moments of my life as a politician. I am extremely grateful to this Government for having given me the opportunity to be able to join in this outstanding historic debate about the Rock Hall Freedom Village Project which I know will take the people of Rock Hall and Barbados from one level to another as the years go by.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to get up and speak to gain credit. I am not particularly

interested in that aspect of the discussion from the point of view that if he would bring facts to the table, the people of Barbados, particularly the people of Rock Hall, would be able to better understand what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, during 1977, research of Rock Hall was done by Professor Woodville Marshall, ably supported by Mr. Ronnie Hughes so that when all the facts were put together it could determine that Rock Hall was the first Freedom Village. The research ran on until 1982, when the documentary was made available and a film entitled "Freedom Is" was prepared and shown across the length and breadth of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaks of 1985 to be exact when the residents of Rock Hall, of which the then political aspirant was a member of that village, and was a part of what the residents conceived as the Rock Hall Freedom Village Festival. Mr. Speaker, even though I was not a member of that village, I served on the Planning Committee which designed the activities. Sir, I will make it a document of this Honourable Chamber so that Honourable Members can see that the residents of Rock Hall were the ones actively involved in the coordination and implementation of that first one-day festival and there has been none other since then.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that it is unfortunate that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy continues to speak about these grandiose ideas but when the Democratic Labour Party had the opportunity between 1986 and 1994, they did absolutely nothing for the same poor people of which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaks.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that I have a problem with arithmetic. Sir,

1986 to 1994 is eight years and 1994 to 2005 is 11 years. The Democratic Labour Party was in Government for eight years but the Barbados Labour Party is now in Government for 11 years. Therefore, they had 19 years to think about this.

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I hope the few seconds would not be taken from me because it would have been a great privilege if I could have got 15 minutes of the time that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy regurgitated over and over the aspects of this project. I would have preferred if that opportunity was given to me.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member spoke about poor people being disenfranchised but anyone who knows me to an ordinary village person - I trust that God would give me the ability to remain humble - would tell you that I would never support any venture in this country or anywhere else where people would be disenfranchised.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the role of this Government. The motto of the Barbados Labour Party speaks about better life for all people. I would be the last individual to support a project where poor people would be disenfranchised. We are putting so many systems in place to ensure that we focus on poor people and give them a helping hand and to lift them up and, in essence, to lift them.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is misguiding this Honourable Chamber when he speaks about the resident from Rock Hall who has a business and has to move. As far as I know and the information which reached up, he is referring to a resident who has to be resited because of the project.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke about someone who insulted the Prime Minister. I do not know about that nor am I

particularly interested at this point. My major interest is to ensure that we are accountable for our action whatever we do and that we are transparent in whatever takes place. Sir, it is on this premise that I wish to speak.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has been ill-informed and when the Honourable Member for St. James South wraps up, I hope she would handle the other aspects of it but I wish to speak directly to the project.

Mr. Speaker, this document has to do with Rock Hall as a village and I will make it a document of the House. Sir, as a child, I learnt about Christopher Columbus and other people who are not as important for me today as the symbols and other aspects of our history and heritage that make us a proud people.

I want to quote from a document which deals with cultural heritage. It says:

“Our cultural patrimony encompasses all the tangible and intangible aspects of Barbados’ cultural heritage, namely, traditional music, dance, indigenous craft, culinary art, folk history, folk medicines, dialect, traditional games, visual arts, artefacts, public art, folk history, dialect, traditional games, visual arts, artifacts, public art and places of memory, archeological resources both terrestrial and marine, the built environment and the landscape of our island.”

H67/12:00

Sequence 12

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of... Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE:

Sir, I will make this a document of this Honourable House. Sir, I say that in order to give a better understanding of the Rock Hall Freedom Village project.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware that Rock Hall is situated between Fortress Hill and Porey Spring to the East; to the North West of the village are St. Thomas Parish Church, Portvale Sugar Factory and Content. Along Rock Hall are dotted sites of our past, which I hope that in the future the Government, in association with the Barbados National Trust, should acquire. There are structures still standing reminding us of the various forms of housing that existed between 1700s and today. In Rock Hall, Arch Hall, Highland and other communities in Barbados some of these houses have been modified and people are living in them. There are approximately ten such remaining structures in that community.

Mr. Speaker, the outstanding work of Professor Woodville Marshall and Mr. Ronnie Hughes was presented to the people of Barbados in the Sixth Emancipation Lecture in 2003. I think that lecture helped to expand the knowledge of Barbadians about this excellent work.

Sir, in a manifesto pledge of 2001, in the by-Election, the Government of Barbados determined that the people of Rock Hall must have the opportunity to be involved in micro business and certain sites must be put in place to ensure that they continue their cultural activities, social development and to be as cohesive as possible. Therefore, the concept of Freedom Village was put to the fore and accepted by the people of Rock Hall.

In the document about cultural heritage inventory, fourteen sites were identified. We are aware that Harrison's Cave, Flower Forest and various places of interest are playing their part. However, as we continue to expand and

our people continue to get a better appreciation of their history, we know that heritage sites are going to be significant to Barbados. This particular site is to help with the slave trade route connecting the Americas, Africa and the Caribbean. Sir, fourteen sites are listed in the document, which I will make a document of this Honourable House. The sites include, Newton slaves burial ground, St. Nicholas Abbey, Baileys Plantations, The Harrison's Cave, Codrington College, Gun Hill Signal Station, The Pier Head, Rock Hall, St. Thomas, Sweet Vale, St. George, Bournes Land, Christ Church, Lawders Hill, Christ Church and Marchfield, St. Philip. I trust that these sites would put in place so that locals and visitors would have places where they can learn of our rich history and see how our people are intimately involved in the offering of services and performances in Barbados.

Sir, there was a ground-breaking ceremony in November 2002 and there has been consistent dialogue with the residents of the area. There has been a series of Town Hall Meetings and we were able to identify aspects of the properties which would be an integral part of the project, the monument and the interpretive centre. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke about someone who lives in the area. Sir, I am only interested in the fact that the only remaining site at Rock Hall, compared to what we knew since the early 1900s would have been the Almshouse, now the District Hospital, and the Church's Rectory, which was the property of the Anglican Church sold probably fifteen years ago. I do not know about anything else.

Mr. Speaker, the early inhabitants recognised Rock Hall as a free village and, therefore, made it the civic centre of the parish of St. Thomas. Sir, we are talking about the Police Station, Magistrate's Court, Rates and Taxes Office, Post Office, Social Centre and the Rectory. Sir, today, there are no other sites in the village

except the District Hospital and the Church's Rectory. All the other facilities have been relocated to other parts of the parish.

Mr. Speaker, for example, the Post Office is now in Welchman Hall and there is no longer a social centre. I want to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for ensuring that the people of Rock Hall and the adjoining communities would now have a social centre where the cultural and social life of the community can be harnessed, the way it has served many of us in this Honourable Chamber who would have visited that centre to see the Mobile Cinema, attend lectures, panel discussions, political meetings and cultural expressions of all forms. I am extremely grateful for the particular initiative that has been offered to us.

Sir, earlier I spoke of the involvement of the locals and I believe the Committee at Rock Hall will continue to function effectively because they are integral to the whole project and its sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, although I did not ask your permission, I will like to mention a few Christian names of persons who were intimately involved in a project in November 2002, where individuals visited Barbados and toured the entire village of Rock Hall, ensuring that we were able to earmark specific areas for the future. It was a historic experience. As a result of that visit, they were highlighted in our Heritage Magazine. I will also make this a document of this Honourable House so that Honourable Members can be better informed. That Heritage Magazine, Volume X1X, series one, highlighted many of those aspects. The project was coordinated by Tracey, Hector, Mary, Tyrone, Mr. Palmer and many others who saw it as a historic initiative.

Sir, there were Town Hall Meetings at which the residents expressed their gratitude for being recognised because they saw it as unreasonable

and unfortunate that when the Social Centre was converted into a Magistrate's Court, nobody said anything to them. They were happy that this Government sought to have communication with them, hear their concerns and addressed them as humanely as possible. Therefore, the community meetings have given us insight so that we can work with the residents to determine how we should proceed in the future.

Mr. Speaker, there was an award ceremony where persons were recognised. It has shown transparency and accountability of the Government. A national committee was coordinated by Mr. Steve Devonish. A team of professional artistes were able to put the information together setting out the rules and regulations for the competition. As the Honourable Member for St. James South indicated, a sub-committee of Cabinet looked at the designs, without identification to determine the winner.

Mr. Speaker, there was also a social survey where members of the Ministry of Housing sent individuals to conduct a house to house survey to determine the needs of individuals, the sizes of their houses, to hear their views regarding the project and the relocation aspect of the project. Sir, it is not that the residents were left in the dark. The document of the social survey is available.

H67: 12.10 p.m.

Sequence 13

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

House 67, sequence 14, 12:10 p.m.

Continuation of Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE:

I would wish, Mr. Speaker, at this point as well to make mention of Adisa Andwele, now called Aja who, in 2001 prepared a formal project. He is a resident of Fire Hill in Rock Hall, St. Thomas. Mr. Andwele made sure that he puts pen on paper as old people say, to make his proposal as to where he would like to see the project go, Sir. It was submitted to the National Cultural Foundation and hence, the National Committee was able to use that information. Therefore, he is even more integral in this respect than I am. He brought along other residents with him in the proposal that was sent to the National Cultural Foundation to highlight how the project can proceed, and ensuring that the various relics in the Community remain and are properly sustained, so that for many years to come, every Barbadian can get a chance to be a part of it, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, to show the involvement of the residents, on Emancipation Day 2003, there was a special service held at the St. Thomas Parish Church, where the residents were intimately involved as some of them read the lessons. The patients of the District Hospital were able to be a part of the service by playing the harmonica and so on. This only goes to show the progressive steps that were made to ensure that the residents were a part of this whole project.

Sir, I would go on further to say that it is unfortunate that sometimes we do not properly think through what we have to say and the message that politicians seem to want to send to people all the time, is that somebody is always there to unfair them.

Mr. Speaker, somebody cannot always be there to unfair ordinary people, when you tell the Rural Development Commission to repair the houses of the old people and when you

decide to upgrade the roads for the people so that they do not have to wear two pairs of shoes. We are going to upgrade the schools because people's children must be housed in schools that are conducive to learning. Therefore, I have a difficulty when the Honourable Member for St. Lucy gets up and speaks about one individual in a whole village of hundreds of people, and gives the impression that the Government needs to stop its foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there is no attempt by the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Culture, or indeed, the Government to have any acrimonious approach towards what is happening. Sir, it is for the public good that this project is being implemented. I accept and I empathise with the people in Rock Hall, particularly those who have to be resited.

Mr. Speaker, it is not easy when you have cultural links because when I had to leave the Vault Road, I felt that a part of me was torn away. Sir, I was leaving all the people I grew up with, where I could open my door and shout and say that I have just made conkies, and bring me two of your fish cakes. The real village life is going to be taken away from some of these residents who were born in the community. Therefore, I feel that the social survey should have helped to cushion some of that because the communication is necessary. I believe that the meeting together and trading off aspects of what will happen to those folks, is integral when you lose your friends and you are uncertain about the new environment into which you will be put will bring.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that it is not the intention of this Government to make anybody feel uncomfortable, disenfranchise or uproot anybody just because we want to, but the space that is being acquired is for the public good. The space will serve the 20-foot Monument that symbolises the spirit of our former residents

and indeed the present residents of the village and help to keep that spirit alive.

The construction of that monument, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to think that when our locals and other visitors are coming into Rock Hall, in fact I know that when they reach St. Thomas Parish Church, they will see that monument towering on the rising in Rock Hall. Similarly, when people come down Content Hill and into the village itself, they will see the monument.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot expand the village in that way and lose sight parking facilities. Therefore, there is a designated area where cars and vehicles can park.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, this is now almost three months that the Ministry of Public Works and the staff have been in the village cutting down rocks that would have been sought to be cut more than 35 or 40 years ago. Thank God for the Ministry of Public Works. This is one time that I cannot get down on them because that rock at Rock Hall, as soon as you would have passed where the former police station was, has been cut by the Ministry of Public Works, making life easier and safer for the people. Therefore, there is going to be road expansion and road refurbishment into Rock Hall from Barkers Corner to St. Thomas Parish Church. This is another aspect of the improvement of the life of the people in the village and it has started.

The monument will be set back from the main road, so there will be the construction of a bridge, linking the main road to what is now called a gully to make easy access for visitor to the Monument, to take photographs and so on. This is another excellent idea coming from the persons who have done the designs.

Mr. Speaker, there are opportunities for micro business for the residents of the community.

They are the ones who should receive the immediate benefits first and foremost and I am sure that they would probably want to embrace others their neighbours from Content, Spring Farm, Fortress Hill and the other communities. Sir, we in the community of St. Thomas, like others communities, share our resources and our opportunities.

Therefore, there will be, Mr. Speaker, aspects of retail shops for souvenirs, persons to have their coffee shops, persons to fry fish cakes and an amphitheatre where cultural activities can take place for the residents. There would be, I suppose, opportunities for locals to get a fish cake, a soft drink, literature about the whole village and at some point in time, another phase will be a museum where certain relics could be placed that will make it even more integral to the life of Barbadians as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to leave out some of the aspects of it because I am no longer following my notes but I want to indicate that the folks at Rock Hall are ready for this project. They are working towards the activities for the 2nd of August this year where they will be actively involved. I believe that they are looking to develop tour guides for the nature trail, which will be a part of the same gully and this will provide employment for the folks in the area and others. I believe that is integral to their own existence and I also believe that this Government has the responsibility to continue to work with the project and its expansion to ensure the sustainability of this heritage location.

I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, the Portvale Factory and there has to be a plan for its incorporation into the Cultural Village. There also has to be a plan for the St. Thomas Parish Church that is more than 300 years old and Fortress Hill to be incorporated into that historic site.

Sir, Fortress Hall, so called because of the elevation of its location, it had to play some significant role when it came to wars and the protection of our country.

Sir, Porey Spring, whether there is rain or not, for six months, eight months and the whole year, Porey Spring has water flowing, and that is also integral to these aspects of the heritage sites which will make the impression as intended.

Mr. Speaker, I want to extend sincere thanks to all those who are associated with this project.

House 67, sequence 14, 12:2014

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

Continuation of Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE:

The officers of the Ministry of Culture have worked tirelessly to put the information together. Mr. Speaker, if we are talking from 2001 when the concept was first developed until now 2005 for the implementation of the first phase, yes I would say that it has taken us four years for the full implementation of this first phase. Therefore, it is no small means that the workers in the various government agencies have worked tirelessly to be able to pull this project together.

Mr. Speaker, I want to sincerely and publicly thank all the civil servants for the efforts that they have made in helping to develop another aspect of our history, making it come alive in these times when a lot of individuals, young and old, because of lack of the knowledge do not really appreciate, in the way that they should, aspects of our history and our culture.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a property owner who said that if the land acquisition is

for the Government's good, to let them go ahead and do the acquisition, they would let their lawyer and valuer determine compensation, therefore, I want to thank that property owner as well.

Mr. Speaker, there was only one tenant who has been relocated as we all know. He has his links in the village still and he knows that he is welcome to come back and I trust that he will get the opportunity to further his employment.

Mr. Speaker, I mention Aja's name earlier. I want to thank the Freedom Village Committee; the local committee as well as the national committee under the Ministry of Culture; the Anglican Trustees from whom the largest portion of land is to be acquired; the staff at the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment; Mr. John Smith who is the overall coordinator of the project - I am sure that he is at the location as I speak - Professor Woodville Marshall, Mr. Hughes and all the other individuals who assisted with the research to bring the history alive.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make this document a document of the House because lectures of this kind from a man of the calibre of Professor Woodville Marshall should be shared by all Honourable Members. I also want to thank the Government Information Service for all the assistance that has been given. I want to thank the media in general for the interest and the concerns and for highlighting the challenges as well because there is no point in us moving forward feeling that everything is going to be bright and that everybody would be in favour of what we are doing. I had to rely on the media to give information to persons who had grievances and who felt that it was not wise to speak about them in an open forum or to say it to us at all.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the members of the private sector who indicated

that they would be willing to be a part of the programme so that the people of Rock Hall can feel comfortable in having achieved this very historic landmark in their own community. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I would wish to thank everyone for the guidance, the patience and the support. I also welcome all Barbadians and all other visitors among us to Rock Hall for the Freedom Village Festival so that they too can be a part of the celebrations of a rich culture.

Mr. Speaker, the structure that is there is not fully a slave hut, but a representation of the style of housing that was used in the particular era. It will be shelled and left as a structure so that activities will take place in the location. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I trust Honourable Members in this Chamber who have concerns would visit it from time to time and will give their criticism, to which we are open, so as to help us to move together as Barbadians who are not divided in the way that we make the public feel. Sir, we should be unified because at the end of the day Rock Hall, as is Bridgefield and the other fourteen sites that have been identified for recognition and for the interpretive signage that the project would take care of, are a part of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should move together as a unified people charting our history, indicating to our young people aspects of the lives of their foreparents and letting them know where we have come from, where we must go and what all of us as a collective group must do in order to ensure the sustainability of what is happening here.

Mr. Speaker, as we move across the world we will see similar heritage sites that those countries have developed and made a part of their own. At some point in time people would become tired of Harrison's Cave and some of the other locations. I believe that the Rock Hall Freedom Village and by extension the other sites of the community would help to bring a

freshness and a further knowledge of where we came from. I believe that our ancestry is important and that we must work together as policymakers and as role models, as all of us in here are, with the residents in the various communities to help them to identify and to appreciate that they can get business, social and cultural opportunities from where they live and where they have spent their entire life. Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I want to publicly thank everyone particularly the residents of Rock Hall and the adjoining communities who are the ones at this time will be undergoing a lot of challenges with the digging, the mining and so on to set up the structure for the monument and the other projects. I empathise with those individuals and I am begging them to give us a little more time so that on August 2nd we could all celebrate the coming to fruition of a project that was well-conceived way back in the 1970s with this Government putting \$2.3 million into it to ensure that it comes alive.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you and lend my support to this Resolution for the compulsory acquisition of the six parcels of land for the Rock Hall Freedom Village Project.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 130 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 1:30 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

House 67 Sequence 15

12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

RESUMPTION

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Honourable House is now resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you. I first must address a misunderstanding of the interpretation of the dynamics of history of both the 17th Century and that of the first half of the 19th Century, both in the pre-emancipation and post-emancipation periods because misrepresentations of history are equally as dangerous as not knowing your history at all.

Sir, Marcus Massiah Garvey in his concern for the lack of cultural and historical icons in the early 20th Century asked the question: "Where are your kings and queens, where are your men of high affairs?" He was concerned because he felt that black people, putting the concept of race first, did not see the required icons of their history that they could look up to with any sense of pride that would motivate them to understand that they had made a positive contribution to this world human development called civilisation and that is why he asked the question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Peter indicated that the first black man to captain the West Indies team with a sense of consciousness, however meagre it might be, was also concerned about our sense of history and our men of state. There are many persons who recognise the importance of having these icons and symbols in our history so that we can trace the footsteps in the correct sequence in order to put clarity to

the view that is loudly expressed although not clearly understood where we came from, where we are and where we are going. You can only understand that and appreciate yourself as a genuine man and human being contributing to the development of the world, if you have some sense of history.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you must know when you left the African continent and if you do not want to go back into antiquity, you must know when you came to the Western world on that trip across the ocean, the steps you have taken in order to achieve the present status of your liberation and the present achievement towards this high level of this complex word called democracy which we have now achieved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you have a sense of the trend and purpose that your ancestors actually cultivated and guided us on, then even in your state of governance, you would be very clear on what it is that you are trying to develop as a nation. You cannot have a national spirit by talking about independence in 1966 but not understand the sequence that led to the independence itself. The liberation struggle is a continuum from the time you were held captive because you were constantly in a state of resistance moving towards liberation and every step of our history must be written or clearly demarcated by a symbol. This is why a statue or monument has a more fundamental meaning, a more intrinsic importance than persons who tend to interpret these constructs in a superficial manner.

Mr. Speaker, you do not talk about the concrete, sand or steel. There is something behind those material things that are more fundamental to the human spirit and the consciousness of society itself that would enable you to appreciate the struggle and the purpose of being in the House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the history goes back to Samuel

Prescod and the struggle of the 1820s and 1830s before Emancipation. Sir, when you see a monument of this kind, you begin to probe into history to understand something about yourself.

H67/13:40

Sequence 16

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of... Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, although we are addressing the question the land of a free village, we still have to explain why a monument, because there are some people who believe that there should not be a monument in St. James to mark the crash of the Cubana plane. There are some people who do not believe in a senseless debate when roads in St. Philip need barber green. Are we going to spend money on that?

Sir, if you understood the human spirit and had any national consciousness, you would understand that when you visit Latin America, Uruguay and Europe and see monuments and statues, you should ask yourselves why mestizoes, mulattoes and all kinds of strange concoctions of mankind can understand it but the only people who seem to be tangled in a misunderstanding are black people.

Mr. Speaker, some people do not believe that we should take land in Rock Hall and erect a monument, beautify it, making it an attraction not only to tourists but to the people of Rock Hall, and to be a reminder to those people from Rock Hall, who have now reached social and economic ascendancy, some of them have probably forgotten and some might have a sense of indifference about the path which they have passed. If we want to develop a people

that would be able to put their collective interest behind the development of the State and the Caribbean, even on the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, then we have to establish the historic bonds and contemporary bonds of commonality among our people.

Sir, we do not want to be in a situation like the West Indies Cricket team, singing "Rally 'round the West Indies" when other people are standing at attention and a hand on their hearts shedding tears to an anthem, and we 'wukkin up' and singing "Rally 'round the West Indies", with all the respect for calypso. We have to be serious.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we are trying to develop in the Caribbean as we begin to fight globalisation. There must be a common ideology and a rationalisation for the establishment of the ideology itself. Our history has been obliterated, distorted, misrepresented and we have been told that we have no history at all. What we are trying to do is to reclaim our history and culture.

Mr. Speaker, as a consequence of British education and the implanting of British ideology, we were made to believe that we made no contribution to the world's development prior to the 15th century because they had to establish in the psyche of the black man that he is not a human being. That is what we talk about by an ideological rationalisation of imperialist teachings. A doctrine that was taught to us that we are not human beings and therefore they had a justification to enslave us because we needed to be christianised and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and his agent to preserve, purify and purge us of all the sinister qualities that are animalistic in us. That is what it was all about.

Mr. Speaker, we are now recapturing ourselves so that the Honourable Minister, who introduced this Bill, can feel a sense of pride in

her African robes. So that she can speak about blackness without the fear of being called a racist in the society. It is when you reach a level of consciousness of whom you are and you abandon fear and begin to speak and understand these things you can appreciate why people would feel passionate about black history; the removal of Nelson statue, a criminal symbol from Trafalgar Square; the establishment of a statue of the struggle of 1816 which came before this and about the respect for the battles of the 1960s and 1970s in the Confederation riots of the time. You can understand and appreciate every struggle from the time we came to the western world. Mr. Speaker, that is why we are calling on legislators and the intellectuals in the society to begin to help the society to understand the profound meaning of the establishment of an important historic landmark.

Sir, I also want to make the point that with all the genuineness in which it was made and certainly an objective criticism, that in the 17th century Barbados was also into revolt and they were also marooned. The approach which we used was completely different from the Jamaican revolts by the maroons of the period. As was rightly said, because the topography of the lands but we used the gullies to escape in the rural communities in the parish of St. Andrew. As they encroached more on the agricultural land and the troops made it more difficult, enslaved human beings, black people from Africa called slaves, escaped through the caves in St. Andrew and when off by sea to St. Vincent. The revolt continued in St. Vincent by Barbadian so-called slaves. Sir, human beings that were captured and classified as such went St. Vincent for the so-called slaves and they were defeated in St. Vincent. That is where the relationship between St. Vincent and Barbados has its connections.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only about other elements that are part of the underground

market at present. That was the method that was used in those revolts.

Sir, I am going to make some leaps. I do not have to wind-up because my capacity is much more extensive than that. I want to address another misrepresentation. Sir, I do not believe Elcock from Mount Wilton should be given any credit for his enduring conduct. Sir, Elcock was also a criminal. He was a plantation manager during the period of slavery and all the records of slavery told you how the plantation managers treated us, especially those who worked in the field. Sir, Elcock knew that he demanded service day and night from the female slaves. The spirit of Elcock must not be amused by black Parliamentarians giving any credit to him. Even in spirit he must recognise our anger.

Mr. Speaker, Elcock abused our foreparents morning, noon and night. God spoke to his conscience and Elcock wrote a Will.

Asides

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: The love between Elcock and his so-called slaves was as such that the slaves did not let him live a full matured life. When I say that I do not mean when he was 50 or 60 years old. They ended his life prematurely.

H67: 13.50 p.m.

Sequence 17

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

House 67, sequence 18, 1:50 p.m.

Continuation of Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Elcock.

The monies of £7 which he bequeathed to the beneficiaries of the time, they had to linger for a long time waiting on that £7 - of course, it had some level of interest I would hope - I was told 19 years, before they got it, Sir. The family and the attorneys were fully aware that within that period of time, some of those who ought to be beneficiaries would have deceased.

Therefore, if 20 persons were supposed to get it when he wrote the Will, which was a conscience Will, less than that got it in the end. He never had the foresight that he would have purchased land to give them power, because they could not buy land from Mount Wilton. It had nothing to do with any humanitarian or any benevolent Christian feelings. The reality is that those estates were going through an economic crisis, as a consequence of sugar. They were selling out lands in Sweet Bottom, all through St. Thomas, Carrington Village and My Lords Hill in order to get finance to sustain their existence and part of their estate.

Sir, they were so cunning that when the black people took the money from Mount Wilton and invested it in the purchases of Rock Hall, that the legislators then took it upon themselves to put a number of encumbrances in restricting the power of these small black landowners. Therefore, when you look at it, you will see restrictions as a consequence of different acts coming to Parliament, not only the Masters and Servants Act but also Immigration laws were put into place, because their view was that black people must not move. Their view was also that black people must not have power because they understood as well, the dangers of having political ascendancy and the right to vote and control of office in the Assembly.

Therefore, they passed legislation and they put pressures on the same landowners. This is

where people like Samuel Jackman Prescod and these people came into existence - not he was not alive - but became an important political figure, fighting on behalf of the same black people of the day. He was of mulatto background. He had a white father and black mother but he took up the struggle on behalf of the masses of people, not only in St. Thomas but throughout Barbados, writing in the Liberal newspaper and criticising the plantocracy, asking for greater liberation. After examining the whole concept, he gave his perception of freedom in a quotation he made in the Liberal Newspaper in 1838, after the Apprenticeship period:

“I have lived to see you declared free men and

I hope to live to see you made free.”

Sir, he understood the difference between a declaration of freedom and true freedom.

The debate still exists in contemporary Barbados in the 21st Century. The question is whether the freedom or what we interpreted as freedom in the first half of the 19th Century that we fought so hard in the 20th Century, 100 years after to achieve, with not having the right to vote because that is why I talk about the sequence of footsteps in your history. The extension of the franchise that occurred in the first half of the 19th Century, we still find ourselves fighting for a further extension in the second half of the 20th Century, over one hundred years after the same struggles in a different form was occurring and is occurring in the system itself. There are always imperialists forces. There are always treaties and laws and all different types of legal instruments that restrict freedom of people and black people suffered this more than anyone else. It is unfortunate that we hear people talking but other people endured slavery as well, such as the Romans. People talk all types

of nonsense because they cannot make the divide between European slavery in Rome and Chattel slavery in the western world here in the Caribbean.

They tell you that people were enslaved on the African Continent because they cannot make a distinction between what they perceive as slavery and chattel slavery in the Caribbean. In all of those forms of slavery, the so-called slaves still had an opportunity for vertical mobility to become leaders, to dominate and to have power but slavery in our society was powerless. Black people had no power. You were dehumanised and 'deculturalised' and that is what it is, not having a persona. You were not a person. You were a property. Human beings can be murdered without facing a murder charge before a criminal court.

Sir, when you wasted a whole lifetime through the 20th Century, those who claim that they are the greatest beneficiaries of history can only relate Caribbean and Barbadian history to Christopher Columbus and sometimes it is so misunderstood that they believe Christopher Columbus came here as well.

Sir, no doubt they feel quite comfortable with Nelson's statue in National Hero Square. Nelson is a national hero, a man who said clearly that he had no support for any liberator who wanted to free slaves and slaves said that he was a great man and they want him as a symbol for their children. He was a contemptuous white man who had no human spirit. He was a total animal and a beast. He was described in this society of being worthy of being placed in the central location of the commercial market of Barbados, Broad Street, and nobody quite understands.

Sir, we have to come to Parliament to represent black people, but we want to put up and highlight these symbols all around Barbados of our own and every time we put up

a statue like that of Bussa of 1816, somebody says it looks ugly. People ask how Sir Gary Sobers can be a hero and this body can be a Hero? They do not ask how come Nelson can be a hero in the National Heroes Square. This is where I have fundamental differences because I need to see a level of consistency in the Government's approach to these issues.

Sir, we can introduce them. We can talk in noble terms in the most glorified language about them but I need to see those concepts transformed into action, so that I would not have to wobble in my footsteps of history. I can see history following a trend towards a destination so that I know what we are doing. It is not about contempt for anybody else. It is about love for ourselves as a people.

I want to give, Sir, credit to a number of distinguished historians. I might not always agree with their interpretations but they are in some of the material facts in the documentation that are worthy of note and respect but before we discuss this matter, Professor Woodville Marshall at the UWI, at the time did extensive studies on the free villages across Barbados and the peasantry.

House 67, sequence 18, 14:0014

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

Continuation of Mr. T. A. PRESCOD:

Historians Ronnie Hughes, Bentley Gibbs, Karl Watson and Professor Hilary Beckles also did extensive studies. When we begin to speak about the Rock Hall free village, I believe that we ought to show some respect to these men who did extensive research in this particular area. I feel that I would be doing a disservice if I did not do that.

Sir, the evidence produced to justify Rock Hall as the first free village is unequivocal. There are Wills, there are provisions in Wills, and sometimes good historic information is included in Wills, there are stipendiary Magistrates reports, other valid important historic documents and reports of Parliament, some not here and some that found themselves in Great Britain, that have been thoroughly examined.

Sir, we must never forget the oral historian. When this research was done in order for the historians to determine where that money that Mr. Elcock bequeathed was spent, it was as a consequence of oral historians helping to guide the path in finding the truth that led them to examine the Rock Hall site. That method of history has saved us as a black people throughout all the years because all of the history related to us was white obliterated completely, so we went along with the view that there was nothing that we can say about our contribution. We never knew where Timbuktu was because it was a joke to be sent to Timbuktu. We never knew anything about King Jah Jah because we believe that King Jah Jah was some element of comedy who used to run down Becka. When we hear about Shaka Zulu, we thought it was an ugly man. These were some of the difficulties that we faced because those were the things that were revealed to us about our history.

Sir, what we are doing now is reclaiming and to rewriting history, not distorting it. I know it is difficult to tell people about rewriting history because they always find ways of twisting the term rewriting history, but we have to rewrite it and write the truth because the truth was not told to us. If it were, we would have been able to respect our greatness and our contribution long before we were held in captivity that is why they could not let us know about our history. Nobody knew about the Nile or that it was 1 400 miles long or how it run when it

passed through Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Sir, nobody knew anything about Africa, so we knew nothing about our history prior to captivity. Even since captivity limited lines were given to us in our history. We began to unearth the truth in recent times. We began to probe profoundly in the 1930s and the 1860s. That is what we must understand and what we must learn to appreciate. To speak about nationalism without a clear understanding about these things you would never be able to internalise anything called nationalism, it would only be given lip service.

Sir, that monument is a symbol of tremendous importance. This debate is as important as our own discussions prior to what was called freedom in 1834 or 1838, whichever date you choose to use. This is an important debate for conscious men and women. Some people might perceive it as infinitesimal but it is an important debate that should engage the minds of persons, if not in here today, thereafter.

Sir, the concrete, as I said before, holds meaning, not superficially. However, one could only understand and appreciate it if the knowledge is imbued about the significance of the particular monument to the people of Barbados. Therefore, I want to urge the Government not to allow academic charlatans to distort history but to spend some time imbuing wisdom to the society. It is something that we are trying to cultivate and develop. If we put statues here and monuments there and the people are not enlightened about the significance of these statues and monuments then the efforts would be in vain because these important symbols must be complemented with a clear and correct interpretation of our history.

Sir, I know you have indulged me and have listened to me for a reasonable time and

probably allowed me to expire the limits or the constraints of the Rules, which I normally would be guided by, and I really appreciate your generosity on this occasion, but I wish you could allow me another 30 minutes on this specific issue.

Thank you very much, I support the Resolution.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, just like the last Honourable Member who spoke I do believe that this is a very important debate and one that I think should be taken very seriously not only because it has special historical significance but because symbolism if used effectively within a set of packages that involved associated educational elements as well as socio-economic and political conditions to give relevance and substance to the symbols will make the symbolism more effective.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though I appreciate the importance of symbols and the usage of symbols in attempting to reconnect links to one's heritage and so on I believe very strongly that symbolism on its own is pointless because it represents a play on the psyche without the appropriate material conditions that allow the psyche to be fulfilled by the living conditions of individuals that make their history either relevant or irrelevant. Sir, it is from that premise I think this debate has meaning.

Sir, I am not going to get caught up in the platitudes, I am more concerned with whether the timing is right for the erection of the monument. Therefore, from that perspective I will suggest that I do not believe that given the objective conditions in Barbados where from my own understanding of history and the objective conditions that existed during the period of the 1830s and the 1840s where the same black individuals from Mount Wilton Plantation that purchased lands from Rock Hall

Plantation existed in a plantation society where the socio-economic and political paradigm represented that of oppression and exploitation as well as deprivation of opportunities. Sir, some of the same opportunities and lack thereof, and deprivation still exist in Barbados today.

House 67 Sequence 19

2:10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2005

Continuation of Dr.D.C. ESTWICK:

Sir, some of the same opportunities and lack of and deprivation still exists in Barbados today. It is okay to talk about erecting a symbol to freedom and the first such village, I understand the importance of that but I believe that if I am to associate the famous sociologist, Maslow's concept to what is important to survival, the hierarchy, that conditions of being able to eat in Barbados, housing and land and clothing are the fundamentals and basis are more important because many Barbadians are struggling today.

Sir, many other writers in the world understood how the material conditions affect the psyche. Today, if Barbadians cannot find land, housing, are struggling oppressively under high gas prices, high cost of living with respect to food, with respect to light and telephone bills, making a decision as to whether they should pay a bill or buy an underwear or not, or whether to send the children to school today because they do not have lunch money. These are the sociological foundations that would only become important if they are part of a package with symbols. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the critical point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not convinced, looking at the hodgepodge approach used by this administration with respect to the establishment of symbolisms in Barbados that when I juxtapose it with the objective material conditions under which Barbadians live today, I have a problem with how Government is going about its business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one speaks about Heroes Square that cannot even hold two heroes. We speak of setting up monuments in Barbados of freedom when the majority of Barbadians are not only psychologically enslaved but also economically enslaved. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is the point of this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this says to me that both administrations over the years have failed the people of this country from the perspective of not utilising Parliament in a more fundamental way to make sure that the conditions that existed during the period of plantocracy do not exist today. Sir, those who controlled the economic power, the land and means of productions, still control it today, and the employees are still the workers today so I question the relevance of Parliament. Sir, their responsibilities should be to ensure that the objective conditions that my great grand mother had to ensure in Barbados that my grand children should not have to ensure them. This is why I say I have a problem with the symbolism when it is not in a package that changes the conditions from that period of time in the 1830s and 1840s in a significant way with respect to what obtains in Barbados today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of us would want to lie but we know how land is distributed in Barbados and who are the big landowners in the country. We also know who are the small landowners in the country. We have had a Parliament that has prescribed only over black people owing a block and being tied to debt. I am going to sit here every single day debating

X and Y that really had no impact on fundamental change. No one is going to tell me of the importance of a freedom monument when there has been no fundamental change. Sir, it is indeed a symbol but a symbol of what.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look at the other aspect of this debate which has to do with land acquisition, I want this administration to appreciate that the two provisions in law in Barbados, the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 and the Land acquisition Act, Cap 228 that the usages of these two pieces of legislation require delicacy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you are talking about disrupting the lives of people. You are talking about disrupting families. You are talking about disrupting community life. What is more pertinent, is that you have to try to appreciate whether when you relocate the individual, whether it is a location that has better amenities or poorer amenities, whether you are locating them next to a dump, a quarry, a place that floods or a graveyard. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of these are fundamental issues. This is why I said that it has to be treated with kid gloves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to know if there is proper transportation in the area. Supposed I was located next to a bus stop with proper bus transport and I am moved, compulsorily moved, to the backwoods where there is not proper transport. Sir, these things cannot be fair. I am raising these concerns because they will be dealt with at an appropriate time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the talk about creating multiple heritage sites around Barbados. It sounds good and is platitudinal and I want to find out whether the National Museum would be closed after they have created all these heritage sites. I have visited the National Museum and there is no historical

paradigm that is not represented there. I want to find out if this is another ploy to sell off the lands of Government to raise money for foreign exchange or if it would not happen in the future.

H67/14:20

Sequence 20

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of... Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: . Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a serious matter. Why the duplication? It does not make sense. What more are they going to put in? More for the Arawaks and the Caribs? Pots and bricks that are not there? Cast iron, the money or the coal pot, that the Honourable Member for St. James Central has no clue about? He has never seen one yet.

Sir, when I made the point that this administration with all the talk about culture and revisiting culture and so on, those who needed emancipation still need it today. Those who needed Independence still need Independence today. Those who have been rich are still the rich people today. It is critical and we need to appreciate this. I am advancing without any form of reservation that anytime that I see the changes that have occurred in Barbados that have created the advancement of poor people in Barbados in a way that they have equitable access to the goods and services and largess or output from Government, then I would believe that Parliament becomes relevant and important to my life. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not mind all the talk from the other side. Sir, the owners of the plantations in Barbados needed no emancipation. They needed no Independence. Has that changed? Have the owners of plantations changed? Those who

worked on the bottom floor of Woolworth, Cave Shepherd or Fogarty, are they still working there under new names and establishments?

It is okay for Honourable Members to come here every week and believe that they are doing something by carrying home a fat pay cheque. All they have to do is search their conscience and deal with it, not only the pot holes but the flooding that is going on as I speak. Sir, they have to deal with the 7 000 applicants for house spots in Barbados every year. That is what this debate is about.

Sir, when I speak about this symbolism and utilising symbols as a way of connecting to one's history, that connect must be in a meaningful, political and economic manner, not a psychological one only. That is the point. I do not mind the talk on the other side.

It must not mean that a decedent of a slave on a plantation because of the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act, by having access to a plot of land on a plantation and buys it from the same plantation that your great grandmother would have worked on that you are still in debt for the next thirty years. What has changed?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is important that they are some people who have never read or understood Das Capital or Augustus Conte who spoke clearly about your mindset and consciousness that determined how you think about your objective condition on the ground. I do not have any time to waste with those who choose not to read. However, you understand, we are debating that today. It is a matter of material conditions whether it affects your psyche or not and a matter of whether your consciousness, whether driven by symbols only, can redound to your social and economic conditions. That is what this debate is about if you want to put it in an intellectual forum.

Sir, I will wind up by making these three points: (1) symbols are important but they are important when they are part of a package of initiatives that change the objective conditions from a slave set of conditions to a set of conditions that are meaningful and uplift the people that were once enslaved or their descendants. Otherwise, do not tell me about any symbols. (2) When this administration utilises the Land Acquisition Act in this country or the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act in this country, this administration must be more sensitive to the fact that because the law gives you the right, the individual has some rights as well and some moral rights. I am sure that my comrade from St. Philip North will speak to the legal and moral elements later.

Therefore, the administration should proceed cautiously and make sure where that relocation is occurring, that the individual who has been relocated is not put in a new environment that has fewer amenities than the environment from which they were located. I think that is critical.

Finally, I have not perceived in any fundamental way that there has been any economic and significant social change in terms of the distribution of wealth in Barbados or access to it.

Sir, symbols do not mean anything to me because those persons who come to on Thursday ask for access to land and a job. They have problems with transportation and they need the road fixed. They need a hospital that has X-ray machines and Ultra Sound machines that are working. They need to be able to have a MRI done at the hospital. Sir, the roof of the Geriatric hospital needs fixing and where the windows are falling off. That is what this Government should be thinking about. Do not tell me about any monument.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$300 000 is the cost for

only the relocation of residents but when the actual project is completed it is going to cost over \$2 million. Am I to be satisfied to accept the symbolism because it is important to connect to your history, culture and heritage. Yes, I understand that but I have a constituency to serve and I am going to do that.

Sir, I said what I wanted to say and I think that my colleagues on this side will deal with other aspects of this debate.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to begin by pointing out to this Honourable Chamber that it has to be at the very least outrageously insulting and offensive, not only to this regime but to successive regimes, not just to this Cabinet or Prime Minister but to successive Cabinets and Prime Ministers, if you are going to suggest that there is no objective material condition to accompany cultural changes in this country.

H67: 14.30

Sequence 21

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

House 67, sequence 22, 2:30 p.m.

Continuation of Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as recently as a month ago in this Chamber, when the Honourable Member who just took his seat was present, this Parliament changed a limit to a level of \$400 000 so that persons, who otherwise would have

had to pass by and stare in wondrous awe at plantation land or what was formerly plantation land, would now be able to access that land as purchasers.

Sir, if that does not speak to objective material conditions being made available by a Government, and the linkage between the cultural change and the economic conditions that the Honourable Member ventilates about then, what does?

The problem is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is a part of this debate that has escaped the Honourable Member who just took his seat. Sir, he likes to talk about philosophy and we would have reached the quintessential Marxist Utopia.

I am inviting any Honourable Member of this House to identify the State at any time in the history of the evolution of mankind which was able to house, feed, transport and clothe all of its citizens bar none. Sir, the Cultural Chinese Revolution that the Honourable Member likes to talk about, accompanied with objective material conditions could not do it and the Soviet Revolution could not do it, Sir.

The reality is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us not get bamboozle with what is really amounting to a lot of farcical nonsense. We have to be very serious about where we are going in this debate. This begins, Sir, with the fact that, as the Honourable Member for St. James South said and quite rightly so, the ownership of Mount Wilton Plantation in 1821 bequeathed to former slaves £5.

They had, Sir, to wait until 1840 to reap the benefits of those provisions, until this country had attained a status where you were being taught to be free under apprenticeship. They had to exist in a situation where as free as they were, and I am going to come to this point for the benefit of the Honourable Members on that

side, the so-called objective conditions that you are hearing about now operated to oppress, suppress and repress any semblance of this new found freedom.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want to suggest that this debate cannot be about the red herrings that are being dragged across the trail by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, nor can it be about the suggestion made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that this has anything to do with the new arrival into Rock Hall.

Sir, he was not stopped on any point of order but it must be said, even though he is not in his seat that the new arrival in Rock Hall...If some of them were capable of physical locomotion, apart from rocking from one side of a chair to land softly on the other side of it and perhaps, Sir, passing wind so that we know they still exist, if they would venture into Rock Hall and see where the man lives, the so-called new arrival, they would realise that he is far away from the project. This so-called victim a tenant of 3 000 square feet has not yet been able to produce any semblance of permission for the business that he is conducting.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to come to the point where you realise that in some things, it cannot always be about a narrow partisanship. It cannot, Sir, with respect to you be a debate about people who wish to come here to moralise but do not come to the debate with clean hands. It has to be about equity and fairness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you are talking about the situation that exists in Rock Hall today, it has to be a discussion which is dealt with fairly. You cannot be heard to say that somebody is being deprived of access to land, or somebody is being deprived of an opportunity to conduct a business, if you are not at the same time going to be able to

demonstrate that the individual in question, or individuals have permission to conduct the business.

Sir, we still operate in a country where there are rules. I am asking the Honourable Members on that side, in all of their exuberance - whether it is exuberance of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West or that of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy - to let us try to ground this in what it is because this is really a moment when this country should pause, as we debate this Bill, and reflect on a few critical things.

I want to suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Freedom Village was not...If you want to talk about objective conditions, if the Honourable Member for St. Philip West you are going to be guided by, or the other end of the Opposition spectrum, if it is the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, this debate was not about either the objective conditions or the so-called fairness.

It has to be a moment when this country pauses and reflects where we came from and that is what we have to be doing. Perhaps, it is best understood, Sir, when we understand that the Freedom Village itself and the lives of the new so-called free men were systematically by the conditions of the day. These are the so-called objective conditions from which, if you are going to be guided by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, we have not transformed or from which we have not seen any transmogrification. Sir, those are the conditions that set about to create the reimposition, and let me say that it was not a subtle reimposition but it was a reimposition of the pernicious slave society, in what was an emancipated society.

This Parliament of which we are a part, Mr. Deputy Speaker, played a leading role in making that possible. The best appreciation of

the struggle and understanding of how the objective conditions that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West continues to refer to, the understanding of those conditions is best understood, if you follow the legislative policies of containment and the systematic policy of suppressing social transformation in Barbados.

I want to say that you have to contrast that policy with the policy of this Government today, which has been a policy of creatively bringing about not only social transformation but providing opportunities for the broad masses of the citizens. Sir, let us call some of them because you know they like to talk about philosophy and history but they never ever bring you any of the factual reality.

Sir, having sat shoulder to shoulder with the Honourable Member for St. Michael East at the University of the West Indies when we were doing the history, I know that he understands it, and for the benefit of those who are more hard-headed over there, I will share some of the difficulties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you want to talk about objective conditions? In 1694, it was this Parliament that brought a Bill to this House of Assembly, which in my youthful lifetime celebrated its 350th Anniversary, to prohibit the sale of goods to Negroes, which was aimed at stopping black people from becoming tradesmen. It was this Parliament, which in 1708 brought an Act to prohibit the inhabitants of this island from employing a negro.

I want to contrast those objective conditions because I would use the language of the Honourable Member, to the Parliament in which we sit now, a Parliament that brings and creates an Agricultural Development Fund, a Parliament that creates a land for the landless programme, a Parliament that finances and funds the TVET and vocational training to

continue the process of emancipating, training and ensuring the progressive, upward and social mobility of black people in Barbados.

Sir, tell me that the economic and social conditions are not changing. Small business development, Sir, tell me that they are not transforming. In 1836, it was this Parliament that brought...

Asides.

House 67, sequence 22, 14:4014

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

Continuation of Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you go into the history and as you start to speak about some of the wickedness that took place, those people who are apologists and 'Uncle Toms' are the people who become very agitated. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North was quiet until I made the point that black people were being oppressed and now all of a sudden he feels he has somebody to defend.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1836 this Parliament brought an Act to authorise the appointment of rural constables. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North who finds this amusing might have come across some of this legislation if he had done some reading instead of spending a lot of time in the refectory at the Students' Union at Cave Hill.

Sir, this is the language of the Act, this is the Parliament speaking. An Act to curb and check the spirit of licentiousness with which the Negro is imbued. Sir, that was then followed in 1837 by the Pernicious Contract Act which

essentially was described by the Colonial Office as the most perverse, regressive atrocity ever to be legislated in the colonies. It provided that if you accepted work for one week you were bound to that person for a year. So it sought through the legislative backdoor to bring about a process which was as closely related to the economics of slavery and the relationship of slavery that you could find.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have in a Parliament in 2005 a Deputy Leader of a political party, which found its genesis not only in Independence but in the advancement of the masses of black people in Barbados, coming and saying that he can find no difference and draw no distinction between that vulgar, and in the language of the Colonial Office, perverse and atrocious type of social infrastructure.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because if he understood anything about land development in Barbados he would have recognised that at the height of the plantocracy in the 18th Century the largest landowner had less than 2 500 acres of land in Barbados. Today, we have landowners in Barbados that own more than that. So how could the Honourable Member now be speaking about an objective conditions that would have changed, in fact it has got worst in Barbados with respect to land distribution. That is the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed Honourable Member.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you present some people in here with facts and historical records they become patently uncomfortable. I said to the Honourable Members of this Parliament and all within earshot of my voice that when he who is the Deputy Leader of the Democratic Labour Party and he who is responsible for shadowing

economic affairs speaks, I treat him as speaking as a visionary for that Party on what they would do with the economy. He is saying that he believes that he can equate a Barbados of today with a Barbados in which if you work for one week - and heaven helps us if he is ever in a position to legislate this - that you should be bound to that person.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because that was never said nor implied. I was very precise and very specific. What is wrong with the Honourable Member is that he cannot understand lateral thought as he is caught in a box.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have made your point. Proceed Honourable Member.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, it could be lateral thought, it could be parallel thought or it could be upside down and inverted thought, that is my interpretation of it. It is part of the record of this Parliament and I want the people of Barbados to come and read Hansard because it fell from the lips of he who has future responsibility for the economics of this country, unless the Honourable Member for St. John will deliver us from him as we know is his intention.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I did start by saying that the partisan divide is not what this debate should be about, that it should be about a moment to pause and reflect on where we came from and where we are going. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I listened to the Honourable Member I am reminded of the words of Aime Caesare when he asked the question what does Negritude means.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, rescue me from them, please, they are unsettled.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, the only one who is composed is he who knows that his star is in the ascendancy.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am reminded of the words of Aime Caesare what does Negritude mean to me. That is the question that the Honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party should be asking themselves. When we are talking about a symbol of the emancipation of the people of this country, the creation of a village unit which was, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter has said, an economic enterprise carrying with it the blacksmiths, the dressmakers and every form of economic endeavour that was able to be culled together in those days, we should not then be asking whether it is too soon. The question of timing was asked in this Parliament. Sir, how soon is too soon?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is a poetic piece of timing and it is perfectly appropriate in my view for one of the ministers in this country who holds responsibility for education, one who is highly regarded within the parish she has the privilege of representing as one of the exceptional products of the educational environment in Barbados and one who is reviewed and revered as being one of the best educators this country has provided in this generation could be in a position to preside over bringing this fundamental development to the constituency that she represents. That is what it has to be about. That is why I asked the Honourable Member for St. Philip West to come down off his high horse and answer the question what does Negritude mean to him

because I do not think he knows what it means to him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you are going to say that you are going to invest in this State so that the psyche of the people which has been robbed of any expression that we are people too and we are capable of being equal to anybody in the world, but then when the Honourable Member spoke he asked if you could have a country with a museum and cultural heritage sites... Sir, is that only for the white people in England, Rome and Germany?

Sir, if when they travel they would do more than go to visit the peep shows, the supermarkets and the places where there are other forms of undesirable entertainment, and learn a little about the environment where they go, then perhaps they would be in a position to speak a little more authoritatively and less offensively to the people that they are elected to represent. Sir, I understand that Negritude has to be about what previously has been an undermined confidence that led to a paralysis of economic activity.

Sir, if you read the works of thinkers like Michael Manley and Marcus Garvey you would see that they themselves were of the view that in shaping post-colonial society you had to start first with the psychological framework and then move towards an economic platform.

House 67 Sequence 23

2:50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS:

Sir, if we are talking about cultural heritage, I

want to say, that I am unapologetically of the view, even if someone in here gets offended by it, that when you attract a tourist to this country you should not be keeping that tourist behind any pristine, concrete structure where he is drinking himself silly and is oblivious to what is going on outside the window of his hotel. He must be encouraged to go out to places like Rock Hall where he would be able to see a craft exhibition and participate in a form of experiencing our culture.

Sir, the visitor must be encouraged to come to a craft market or go to see an art gallery. If we talk about the economics of it, it is the only way that the visitor would be contributing in a meaningful and effective way to the economic upliftment of the same people in the village in Barbados of whom we speak. Sir, I dismiss with abject contempt the entirety of the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these people who are going to be crossing the street are part of one big community. The residents of Rock Hall, I am married to one of them, Seaview, Arch Hall all of these residents are part of one big community.

I must on behalf of the Government of Barbados and my own constituency express my gratitude to the Honourable Prime Minister when he says that there is going to be a new community centre in Rock Hall. This means that people from next door, in my constituency, have access to one too. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that we welcome those new residents into St. James Central with open arms. We are confident that there will fit into the community because they have long been part of the community. We are confident that they would not detract from but rather add to the community.

I want to wish this effort God speed and every blessing. Equally, I wish to say to this House that the saddest part of the debate is that

there had to be a departure from the thinking that the culture heritage of our people should be something that the Democratic Labour Party should find difficulty with.

I thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you. I consider it a high honour to have the opportunity to participate in a debate in this Parliament which strikes at the very core of my identity as a black man in this country, as a descendant of slaves, as a descendant of the people of Rock Hall, the first free village.

Sir, this is one of the most simple yet important debates in which we will engage. It is a straightforward land acquisition Resolution. It is behind its very simplicity that lies the importance. This debate is taking place in 2005 in a country where even in my relatively short lifetime, issues of blackness, identity and our history were things whispered about. These things that were not accepted as matters fit for public discussion. Any person who attempted to speak about our history, particularly identifying himself or herself as a black person speaking of slavery, would be accused of wanting to disturb the delicate balance which was purported to exist between the races in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, it was a unique and excessive sensitivity to issues of identity that people in countries all over the world even in the United States of America which has not had as good a record in progress in matters relating to the advancement of black as we have in this country. Long after we had resolved some of our issues, they were still denying people the right to vote and things of that nature. They were still determining where you go and what bus you could get on. Sir, segregation was still

ripe in the south when we were an independence country and black people were running our country.

Mr. Speaker, in Barbados the fact that we are able these days to speak openly and it is more acceptable has taken us a long way forward and it should have come a lot sooner. Sir, for Parliament today to involve itself in the acquisition of land for a fit and proper recognition of Rock Hall, a symbol of freedom, recognising that it was one of the landmarks which were part of the struggle.

Mr. Speaker, let no one fool you. Right through our long history of slavery, my ancestors were not merely biding their time, picking their nails and polishing their toes but there was continuous rebellion. The freedom eventually gained was not conferred on us by a benevolent planter class. It was a recognition that the continuous struggle by the oppressed people had made it impossible to continue the system and the oppressive regime and concessions were made along the way.

Mr. Speaker, historians have written extensively on it and recognise that it has been the oppressed people, the slaves and then the free working class that have fought for their rights. The various measures that have been taken particularly by this Party over the years to bring to the attention of the people, to raise their sense of consciousness of their identity as black people, their long history and the role of their history in Barbados is something to be applauded. Sir, I consider it a high honour to have the opportunity to participate in such a debate.

Mr. Speaker, even in places like the United States of America and various countries of the world, people are able to say what is their identity and history but we were never encouraged to do that. I want this Rock Hall debate and several other events of

enlightenment that have been taking place in this country to put our young people in a position where they....

H67/15:00

Sequence 24

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of... Hon. R.R. FARLEY:are proud to identify themselves as they are, black, white or whatever, all within the melting point of this Barbados.

Sir, we are coming from a long history of self-denial. Indeed, the work of writers like Franz Fanon in "Black Skin, White Masks" gives you a good insight into the kind of psychological oppression, the kind of psychological conditioning that would have led us to the point where we were ashamed to identify ourselves. For many years we were black people wearing white masks. Sir, the assertion of our self and identity as black people, is not out of any reflection of a dislike for any other race. It is just a recognition that our history is long and proud and we need to ensure that our children are aware that we are not merely a bi-product of slavery but we have a history that goes well beyond that. Sir, even within slavery, our identity was not crushed and eliminated as we were taught in the early days in our history.

Sir, I believe the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, who said that he would have gone through school having done history and had not heard in any of those history lessons about Bussa or any of the National Heroes or much of the history of Africa or the Caribbean. Sir, until a few decades ago that would have been the experience of a typical child going to

school. Thankfully, not so today.

Indeed, the education system in Barbados, the reform of the curriculum has been undertaken in such a manner as would assure that Caribbean history is on the forefront of the agenda, also, special theme events, for example, Black History Month, Africa Day and several other key events are observed nationally across all of our schools;. Sir, special attention is paid to ensuring that the 95 per cent of our population is given the proud historical record of their history, going back to Africa,Mr. Deputy Speaker, as done in all countries of the world where unique and distinct sections of the population are proud to trace their history.

Sir, this Party can take significant credit for a number of things that have been done. Mr. Deputy Speaker, going back to the Moses of his day, Sir Grantley Adams, and the part that he would have played in the struggle, recognising and giving the right for every person to vote, despite colour or economic position, holidays with pay, the elimination of Located Labourers Act, and we can go on.

In more modern times, lest anyone should think that all of these great things that have to done to advance black identity and to mark important milestones in our history were done by men of long ago in the life of this very administration, I consider it a remarkable amount of good fortune that I was born at the time and I had the honour to serve in an administration in this country that put Emancipation Day on the map. It fits naturally in the order of things in this country. There are people who may forget that before this administration, Emancipation Day came and went without a word being said, not an observance or any thing to mark it. All other kinds of holidays and days of significance were observed but not Emancipation Day in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a country which was the first large-scaled plantation society built around slavery; the country, which in that era, was the first country founded on the principle of globalisation, planters from Europe, workers from Africa producing products for sale in the Americas and elsewhere. Like globalisation today, the aim was the exploitation of the resources and the people for the benefit of the few. Two hundred years of the slave trade will soon be celebrated. It is part of our history. We need to use this opportunity to place these important markers in our history.

Sir, not only Emancipation Day will be marked but the 1937 Riots. There was a time when the language was watered down. We heard about the disturbances and all kind of foolish language that was used to play down what was in effect a full uprising of oppressed people against the oppressors. It is the most significant occurrence of the 20th century.

All of the institutions that we regard as significant today, our system of Government, the presence of political Parties, trade unions, the credit union movement and other working class progressive movements, all had their origin in the post 1937 period. Before this administration, there was not a marker. A few enlightened private citizens and non-governmental groups would mark their observance, but from the State, nothing was done.

Sir, the identification of National Heroes and the setting aside of a day for National Heroes in the life of this administration because we recognise the identity in our people to recognise who they are and where they came from, marking significant milestones and individuals on that path, were important for our identity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I were to sum up what

the Honourable Member for St. Philip West said, he said not to tell him anything about identity, National Heroes, riots or history until the pot holes in roads are fixed, houses are fixed and all the buses are running. What are we really saying? Is man nothing more than food and shelter?

Asides

H67: 15.10 p.m.

Sequence 25

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

House 67, sequence 26, 3:10 p.m.

Continuation of Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

...I heard what you said. It is nothing more than that, Sir. Are we saying that we can only speak to issues of black identity in this country, when we are able to address all of the physical issues? Left to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, we would not even have Emancipation because we still have some other things to do, Sir. I cannot read his mind. Maybe that is not what he was thinking but that is what I heard him say.

Sir, these higher order things, these issues of the mind, these issues of the national psyche, these issues of identity are to me, even more fundamental than the physical issues. The physical issues, with improvements in the economy, and with better fortunes will be taken care of but if you have our people living in darkness, and not a candle to light their way, they would just be well fed but lost; they will live in good houses but not have a spiritual home. Sir, these are the issues that we have to address.

Asides.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the essential point is that this Parliament in the 21st Century must discharge its obligation to cater to all aspects of the human condition. We cannot merely be about what a person will eat today or tomorrow. Sir, that is important but identity, confidence, knowing our history and identifying ourselves as the people in our country is fundamental, and that is where I locate my support for this Rock Hall debate.

I want to say, Sir, that it has not been, contrary to what the Honourable Member for St. Philip was trying to imply, that it is all symbolism. It is this same administration that recognise the importance of symbols but also put institutions in place to provide for practical improvements.

Indeed, Sir, it was a previous Barbados Labour Party administration which through the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, empowered the children and great-great grandchildren of the slaves to have for the first time in their history, security of tenure on the very lands that saw the blood, sweat and tears of their ancestors. It was this Barbados Labour Party and in the life of this current administration, it has been our lot to use the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission to specifically improve life in those communities with the provision of roads and other amenities.

Asides.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: Sir, in addition to the symbolism of owning the land of their ancestors, we have also put the practical measures in place. The Honourable Member for St. John as a good rural representative would know how villages have been transformed which were behind the cane fields on rab land. These villages are now on very

pleasant rural residential communities with large wall houses. Several of them have excellent views of the countryside. Therefore, people not only have historic ties to those lands but they are able to live in the most modern of conditions, so that none of the modern developments selling for high prices can compare to some of these villages as old as 100 years.

I would never forget, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George South speaking of Woodland. In fact, there was a time when there was no debate in this House unless the Honourable Member spoke about Woodland. This a community that I know well because I live not very far from there. Woodland was a community that has been left unattended from the days of slavery, with no roads or infrastructure but with steady and dedicated people.

Sir, with the provision of the tenure by way of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, and subsequently the roads provided by the Rural Development Commission, the vast improvement, revitalisation and rejuvenation of Woodland have been tremendous, Sir, and so it is with villages like Rock Hall.

It is important for us to recognise that this Monument and the wider project, because they are those who were of the view that if we were going to do anything in Rock Hall, we should have gone and put a two-by-four piece of granite - like X marks the spot - to say that this marks the spot of the First Free Village, which would be absolute nonsense. Sir, the scale of this project reflects the importance that we place on the concept as well as the improvements to Rock Hall. Indeed, for those who know the area and, in fact, it is perhaps a sign that we still have a long way to go in our thinking but there are some people - I daresay, Sir, unfortunately even some in this Parliament - who could not leave here now and go to Rock

Hall, St. Thomas. It is an indictment, on our level of development that a vast part of our population would not know some of these places.

Sir, I can tell you that already the narrow, even dangerous roads in Rock Hall have been transformed where some of the rock along the way has been removed. This cropping of the rock has commenced to allow for safer travel through the district. I am sure that the project would not only add to the sense of pride which those descendants of the first inhabitants, landowners in Rock Hall enjoyed but also provide opportunities for residents to enhance their property values.

Let us not forget, Sir, to me it is important for us to ensure that these property holders of long standing, before many of our other families would have had properties, that those properties are enhanced, rather than being left to the vagary of the market but also that as we take more pride in our own history, other persons are likely to find our history interesting. In fact, Sir, this is not being built for tourism purposes but certainly with us taking pride in ourselves, I have no doubt that visitors to our island seeking to learn more about us, will also visit and perhaps that would create opportunity for residents there as well.

I want to say that though I am ecstatic at this use of Parliament's time, I believe that as a country, we still have some things of a similar view to do, Sir.

House 67, sequence 26, 15:2014

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

Continuation of Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

For example, research has shown that in the

area of Newton Plantation in Christ Church there is, and some say was, one of the largest dedicated burial grounds for slaves. Sir, I am wavering between the is and the was because in that unenlightened period of our history when we as a country paid little attention to the preservation of our artefacts and to managing or preserving our history, several of the artefacts, even some of the bodies, would have been removed and taken overseas for further studies and investigation.

Therefore, we need as a country, as we have done in the case of Rock Hall in bringing it to a place of national prominence where it justly deserves to be, to look at places like the burial grounds for slaves at Newton and other important aspects of our history, be they in Bridgetown or anywhere else in the country, and bring them to national prominence.

Sir, in terms of our buildings, I am pleased to see that the balance has finally been struck because for many years plantation houses were recognised as an important part of our architectural heritage but not the slave huts. Therefore, after many years, I am pleased to know that the one in Rock Hall will be maintained because for many years we went through St. Lucy and we saw many of them which were just left to crumble.

Sir, there was an imbalance in terms of those things which we sought to preserve as part of our history in favour of the plantocracy but not against slavery. It is as if in our minds we had determined that since slavery was such a barbaric and evil institution that we would obliterate all that went with it without recognising that in seeking to do so we would in effect cast away a part of our history.

Sir, we have come to the point in our national lives where we recognise that slavery was evil and abominable and that our foreparents suffered and that it is part of our history.

However, in the same way how other races that have suffered in their history mark those periods of suffering by studying them, researching them and recording them to provide the opportunity for future generations to learn how they could prevent this from happening again, it is fundamental and vital for us as young people to preserve and to research those aspects of our history of slavery to ensure that it does not happen again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I therefore want to say that this part of our history, the first free village and the early spirit of these pioneers, landowners, entrepreneurs and free people is an important part of that journey of self-discovery.

Sir, I look forward to journeying to Rock Hall to join with the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, my colleague, to celebrate this most momentous occasion of what I consider to be one of the moments of enlightenment and of awakening on the journey which we now have to take to full, proud and spiritual identity of ourselves as black people in this country with a rich history and a bright future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to support this Resolution.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have heard some very interesting contributions from the Honourable Members on the other side as they attempts to, I would not say put words in the mouth because that would be unparliamentary...

Sir, both the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and the Honourable Member for St. Philip West who spoke on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party have made it quite clear that the idea of acknowledging what took place at Rock Hall in 1841 is something that the Democratic Labour Party, far from having problems with it, was of the view that it is something that should be recognised. What we

are having some difficulty with is what precisely we are called upon as a Parliament to do today.

We are acquiring a vast track of land nearly two acres and we are not quite clear on what is the precise objective. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understood after the Queen Street fiasco that when the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment bring Resolutions like this they would provide us with a simple site plan of exactly what is involved in terms of the parcels and so on. The Honourable Member for St. George South, the most senior parliamentarian on that side said that it used to happen and that he in fact would like to see it happened again. So we are left here basically with a lot of nostalgic remembrances with Honourable Members trying to show off how much history they know and do not know, but we are not at all in a position to determine what really is the precise objective of the Government in this effort.

Sir, looking at the Resolution and the Schedules, we are acquiring nearly an acre and a half of land from the Anglican Church through what is called the Diocesan Trustees and then four very small parcels from descendants of the same free slaves that we are talking about. It would seem to me, I have not had any site plans, that perhaps the Glebe land or the church land should have been enough to provide some sort of a suitable monument and that way we could have left the residents in place and kept the community intact.

Again, Sir, I am sort of speaking in the dark because we have not been provided with enough information and frankly speaking the record of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment in bringing Resolutions in here of late, has not been stellar so we are left to just assume that they are just acquiring land for acquiring land sake. The rumour mill has been quite active about reasons why land has

been acquired, from whom, for what reason and for retribution and so on, so that is something that we need to consider.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my honest opinion the argument that has been put forward on this side is a compelling one. We can acknowledge Barbados' first community of free slaves, but do we need to spend over \$2 million at this point in time, I say no. An appropriate monument can be erected on a very small parcel of land that can duly recognise the work and the effort of these free slaves to establish a community. What is the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of erecting a ten-foot statue and a link bridge and so on? That is all we heard about. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas was of course going on but she said she did not have her notes in front of her and she could not give us more details and so forth and again we were left to just assume what it is that is supposed to take place at Rock Hall.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have heard now from the entire subcommittee of the Cabinet that has been responsible for piloting this project and we are still not clear on the objective. The Honourable Member for St. James Central had a golden opportunity to maybe bring some sort of detail and direction to this debate but he chose instead to go the route that he is most familiar with, one that we on this side are quite familiar with too, ad hominem of course, against the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

House 67 Sequence 27

3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R.L. SEALY:

Mr. Speaker, real issues were raised. Every week, constituents, landless, homeless, jobless were bombarding us in here as members. Are we supposed to tell them to go up to Rock Hall and mull over a monument?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is my list from St. Michael South Central where people looking for houses alone. I am sure you have a list too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Am I supposed to tell these people to go and look at a monument and reconnect? What nonsense are we hearing in here? Sir, the monument is on two acres of land which is mostly church land but the Minister of Housing should enter into serious discussion with the Anglican Church because there are vast tracks of glebe land all over Barbados that perhaps could be incorporated in the efforts of the Honourable Member for St. James South to bring housing to the people of Barbados because, clearly the Honourable Member for St. George North failed when he had the opportunity. I understand that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas may be part of laity so the discussion can ensue along those lines.

I want to return to the objective of this Resolution. Mr. Deputy Speaker, for whom are we building this monument? Are we building it for tourists? Am I to understand that we are to get tourists to come from hotels after going to Harrisons Cave and the Flower Forest to go to the heritage site to point out a slave hut and other aspects of a freedom village? Mr. Deputy Speaker, such exists already by Tyrol Cot which is two miles from Bridgetown. I am told that when the Port is full of vessels and there are tourists throughout the island, you can count the visitors who go to Tyrol Cot to see the Heritage Village. Are we certain that they would go seven miles outside of Bridgetown down a hill, up a corner, through a gully to see the same thing? Sir, I am not sure that this remote location would do the trick.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, are we simply building something for locals? Again I ask what would attract the locals to the Freedom Village. Sir, there is nothing wrong with acknowledging the contribution but there is something wrong when you have no clear objective at all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand that several of the residents of the community of Rock Hall would have preferred to see an improvement to the roads and the infrastructure improved. We are being told that after a constituency that the Barbados Labour Party has represented with a Premier, Prime Minister and Attorney-General finally the first free village is getting road improvement. This says a lot for the Barbados Labour Party and its priority. It is interesting that the people of Rock Hall always felt they have been discriminated against because of being the first free village.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that as a representation of a constituency other than St. Thomas that I resent the suggestion that somehow the spirit for freedom was greater in the people in Rock Hall than in the rest of Barbados. Just because a man by the name of Mr. Elcock, who I understand from the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was a criminal among other things - I do not know that for a fact but I was told this - and because his conscience pricked him, he willed some money to some of his slaves from the Mount Wilton Plantation and just because they happened to be in a pecunious enough state that they could have bought land that it means that the spirit of freedom was somehow greater in them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I reject that totally. We all know there was no freedom in Barbados. I know that Mr. Elcock was a planter and the planters resisted emancipation tooth and nail. Barbados was one of the last colonies to implement the Emancipation Proclamation that came from England in 1838.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was not until 1941, that this Parliament which was occupied by people like Mr. Elcock decided to recognise Emancipation. I heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central going through a list of legislation that was passed and in 1840 this Parliament passed the Masters and Servants Act which, in essence, nullified what you called Emancipation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at that heinous piece of legislation, there was no difference between a slave and a servant. In fact, some felt they were better off as a slave than as a servant. If you stole a sheep you went to jail for five years but if a domestic was rude to the mistress she could be whipped with the tamarind rod and sent to jail for one week.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to put things in their correct context. In my humble opinion, I think the events of 1816, the revolt which occurred in the parish of St. Philip, was a more significant expression of freedom. It is a travesty that we are going through all this struggle with Rock Hall and acknowledging the benevolence of Mr. Elcock. Sir, I am quoting from the Minister of Housing. She said that we need to be grateful that the plantation owner gave these slaves five pounds each so that they could buy land. We are acknowledging.....

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misframing and misrepresenting what I said. I did not say that we needed to be grateful to Mr. Elcock. In fact, he could not finish his comments because he made them up as he went along.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the rules of the House are that you sit down when a member is on a point of order and that is why I did not finish what I was saying. Sir, maybe you need to explain that the Honourable

Member for St. James South.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the serious and significant point is that we are moving ourselves to provide all this land for this enormous twelve-foot monument, link bridge and long streams in Rock Hall and there is a good chance that the Bayleys Plantation may very well find its hands in the descendants of the like of Mr. Elcock, his cousins and so on. It would be a shame for that property where a genuine expression of freedom in revolt of slaves had originated may be desecrated and find itself as some sort of resort or having high price condominiums, desecrating where our National Heroes was able to originate a genuine expression of freedom. Instead we are finding it fit to go over the top with this issue of Rock Hall.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the residents of Rock Hall want to have a little plaque acknowledging what took place there, that is fine but it is a glaring inconsistency, Sir.

H67/15:40

Sequence 28

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of... Mr. R.L. SEALY: Sir, I take the point being made about Heroes Square. There are ten National Heroes and each of them scotching for space on a little piece of land in Trafalgar Square competing with the pigeons, taxi drivers, hawkers and everybody, and of course, Nelson who does not belong there.

Asides

Mr. R.L. SEALY: I do not think that he is odious, I simply think that the Government

should take him down and put him where he belongs, in Nelson Street. He is was a sailor and I am sure that he would be comfortable there. Sir, we should put who should be there in Heroes Square. In my opinion, a statue of the late Excellent Errol Walton Barrow would be the ideal one that should be there. It was a travesty that it was not done before 1994.

Sir, I call here and now if we are talking about symbols and the importance of imbuing our young people with a sense of self-worth and self-definition, then take down Nelson and put in Errol Walton Barrow. That is my view and we should do that.

Asides

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Having said that, I want to make it clear. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been in politics long enough to know how easily your comments would be misconstrued. I am not taking away anything from the pioneering spirit of the people of Rock Hall and the wider St. Thomas. I am merely stating that the people of St. Philip and St. George have similar pioneering spirit in them. To my mind, for Government to simply deprecate the point made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West on taking care of the basic of people.

Sir, in Christ Church there is a very proud history of having black landowners, in the early days, many of the first black owners of property were in Christ Church as well. I would not want you to think that somehow the people of St. Thomas, because they happen to have had an opportunity facilitated for them, that means that they are more pioneering than the people in Christ Church.

Sir, in St. Michael South Central, a community by the name of Carrington Village is known as well as a spot where blacks had owned land for the first time. In fact, many of the residents of these free slaves from the

various plantations, when they came to Bridgetown, one of the first areas that they occupied was Carrington Village. While we are erecting a \$2 million monument, I have constituents who are looking for land and are being told that a little parcel of is now \$140 000 because it is now deemed commercial.

Sir, currently, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and myself are engaged in a battle in Halls Road trying to get that tenantry situation sorted out because the owners are insisting that because of its proximity to Bridgetown and the arteries leading into Bridgetown, it is a commercial area and they are asking for a ridiculous price, which now has to be adjudicated by the Small Holdings Committee. These are the real issues and erecting monuments is not going to solve that. A suitable monument is fine but infrastructural development and what we must do for our people are what we must also consider. I think that we need to understand and separate the real issues here. We need to do that.

Sir, again, it is very easy to misconstrue comments made by Opposition Members. I know the consequences of that. As soon as you make a point it is misconstrued and of course, 'Beresford Leon Padmore' and everybody else has something to write about it but that is life. I am standing by what I am saying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is too much for this effort right now. It is too much land and too much money. That is all that I am saying. We could easily have found a suitable monument to acknowledge what these people have done.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central speaking about a progressive Government and what they have done to increase the limit at the Barbados Mortgage Finance and that you can now borrow up to \$400 000. Am I supposed to tell my constituents that they can borrow \$400 000

from the Barbados National Bank or the Barbados Mortgage Finance? Is that what I am supposed to do?

Asides

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Sir, he then engaged on an attack on a small businessman from the same Rock Hall community. If the Honourable Member understood the history of Rock Hall, one of the things that has been lauded about the community is that they were many of Barbados' first small business people. They were small farmers. I also understand that a few of them were shopkeepers. To suggest that because wants to stay there and be part of the sacred land and carry on the tradition that was started by the free slaves, he should now be the subject of an unwarranted attack from a Cabinet Minister.

Sir, I am saying that is uncalled for. I do not know the individual but I know that there are several business men...

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-MCDOWALD: On a point of order. Did I understand the Honourable Member to say that somebody was the victim of an unwarranted attack by a Cabinet Minister. I do not think that is the kind of language which can be allowed in here or that those sort of improper motives and conduct can be ascribed to a Member of the Cabinet.

In fact, I think there have to be expunged from the record. It is a serious allegation. The abuse of power to disadvantage a private citizen. That in itself is an attack and it cannot be allowed.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, perhaps, what should occur, is an opportunity

should be sought out for that sector which is screaming out for assistance and help. If, indeed, it is true that there is a small businessman from the Rock Hall area who does not have the adequate permission to carry out his trade, you should make it possible for him to be properly enfranchised so that he could carry on the spirit of what was meant by the entrepreneurship that was initiated by the first residents of the Rock Hall area.

I do not know what sort of representation was made to his Parliamentary Representative and what did or did not occur, but to the extent that we need to be very clear on where we stand in terms of what the true spirit and meaning of the Rock Hall initiative were all about. We need to be crystal clear on that.

I also made the point that there is nothing wrong with Barbadians understanding what Rock Hall is all about. More important than having the monument is having it clearly explained to them.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it may be delayed action but it is necessary to do the research before one gets up. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

If the Honourable Member had put himself to doing a little reading, the Manifesto, "Every Bajan A Winner" states that with respect to community-based enterprises, the Barbados Labour Party Government will make available for rental with an option to purchase for small entrepreneurs who provide such services such as, spray painting, mechanics, wrought iron, inter alia, in order to meet the express urgent demand for space.

Asides

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if Honourable Members would allow,

one has to, in order to be able to bring this life, complete the work through the legislative process, which is now being done. It is therefore wrong, and I think it needs to be withdrawn, when the Honourable Member will make a suggestion that there has been no representation made for the gentleman in Rock Hall and that there is no effort being made...

H67: 15.50 p.m.

Sequence 29

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

House 67, sequence 30, 3:50 a.m.

Continuation of Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS:

... by the Government to accommodate him and many others in Barbados who are in identical circumstances, but who have to comply with Town Planning permission, all other requirements of law, and who are being assisted to do so by Government policy.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the more we hear from the Honourable Member for St. James Central, he reminds us of a character from, "In the Castle of My Skin" called Mr. Slime. We heard the Honourable Member in his speech state categorically that the man has no permission to carry out his business. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was putting a case for him and the Honourable Member for St. James Central sought to say that, Sir.

I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is an attack. He does not have to agree with me.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is abundantly clear that the Honourable Member is in here today to ventilate and give life to the fact that there is truth in the rumour that the only book he has ever read is a bank book.

It is very clear, Sir, that if it is that a business is being conducted in Barbados, irrespective of whom that business belongs to, that business has to be conducted in such a manner as it complies with the rules and the laws of the country. The owners of the land would also have certain legal rights. Where are we in this Parliament, Sir, if we are going to say that special cases must exist for one but not for another? It cannot be compliance of the law of Barbados and that is what I am here to defend. If the Honourable Member would read a little, and stop putting proof to the fact that he has only read a bank book in his life, he would not have this difficulty.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can understand that he is a little agitated because of the reference to Mr. Slime from, "In the Castle of My Skin". He would be very au fait with Mr. Slime and his conduct. Sir, having said that, I believe maybe he is letting certain utterances that were carried in a certain newspaper over the weekend go to his head and he had better understand that 90 per cent of them did not want him to be a candidate so there is no way they are going to want him to be any leader. Sir, do not let things get carried away and he can sit down and take it easy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if any heritage site that highlights the predominantly black heritage of

Barbados is to be truly utilised, I think that the Government of Barbados would be well advised - and I am happy that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South has taken his seat - that the idea of tourism from the South that was talked about for so long, I would think needs to be more developed. I could be wrong but based on the experiences at Tyrol Cot, there is nothing to suggest to me that visitors from our traditional markets will go up in their numbers to look at a heritage site in Rock Hall.

Therefore, perhaps the long promised tourism trade that we were to be getting from other members of the southern hemisphere, in Africa and South America, could more identify with a heritage site such as Rock Hall and the experience of Rock Hall because of the common experiences that we spoke of, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few remarks, I would just want to say finally to the Government of Barbados, on the Tomb Stone of Sir Christopher Rein, the great British architect, is inscribed in Latin, very simple, *si requirus momentum circumspecte*. It means in English, if you need a monument look around.

What I am saying to the Barbados Labour Party today, it is not about the concrete, the link bridge or the ten foot Monument, it is about people. Sir, if they really want to keep the spirit of what existed in Rock Hall in 1841 alive today in 2005, they could look at facilities, vehicles and means and methods of improving the lot of the average Barbadian today and making him feel good about himself because of being able to own a piece of this Rock and to participate meaningfully in the economy of this country and that is the ultimate monument which would really make a difference to the people of this country.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable

Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Resolution speaks to the acquisition of land at Rock Hall, already identified by the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands for the establishment of a heritage village and the construction of a freedom monument.

At the outset, let me say that I see this as a dichotomy of action. We have already spoken and we have identified that those persons who were ancestors of some of the people who now reside at Rock Hall were able to establish a village, arising out of the bequeathing of some funds from a plantation owner and manager, known as Mr. Elcock from Mount Wilton Plantation.

These people used those funds to procure the land at Rock Hall for the establishment of housing and business. The establishment of business was part of the culture that they had established among the very small houses, which they had on the periphery of the plantation at that time. Therefore, it was already embedded in them, a culture of backyard or small farming so that action began in that type of way.

Sir, right across the length and breadth of Barbados where former Africans who were enslaved were able to drift gradually from the plantation and establish on the blush on the rab lands of the plantations, housing for their families, one saw the development of this farming because that was essentially where it all began.

It is therefore - to make a contradiction - that to celebrate that type initiative and freedom, we have to displace some of the people from what I would call their ancestral freedom village. It is dichotomous. It is confusing. It is contradictory in its intent and purpose.

I would want to argue that if one conceives of Rock Hall as a total place that, the designation of Rock Hall as the Freedom Village, would be the type of concept that I would want to advance and in there, seek to capture within a people, a particular value, a particular system, a particular modus operandi, which could ignite the minds and expectations of all of the other villages and people who live within those villages to follow that particular mode of behaviour.

House 67, sequence 30, 16:0014

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R. D. JONES:

I am talking about independence of thought and of action, entrepreneurial activity, self-fulfilment and all of these types of serious liberating initiatives that our people should have. I do not believe that the disestablishment of the progeny of the ancestors whose foresight catapulted them to establish the first village by free men at Rock Hall should be disturbed in such a manner. I am careful in using the word slaves because of the connotation which we continue to bury in the minds of our people.

Sir, when people were moved from across the Atlantic in that beautiful continent called Africa, particularly West Africa, they were not slaves in the harsh conception of that particular word, they were not shackled and bond to anyone, they were free men with free spirits who were conscious of their own reality. Therefore, I would want to eliminate the word and refer to the ancestors of those persons in Rock Hall or wherever, in Barbados as Africans on the Barbadian shore, who were caught up in one of the most odious systems

possibly known to man.

Sir, Barbados was the capital for the kind of the dehumanising, most barbaric system ever visited. In fact, this small country exported some of the most dehumanising aspects of control to other Caribbean islands and to other parts of the Americas. This is known. Persons hide from this. Therefore, I do not want to be captured within the mental mode which would suggest in any form or fashion that I want to celebrate that type of behaviour visited upon the ancestors of 90 or 95 per cent of this population, including those persons today whose complexion might be unlike that of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North because within the mix of the master moving from the house on the hill down to the - well I would more say St. Andrew - because I would know that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew complements very well the complexion of the Honourable Members for St. Philip North, Christ Church South, Christ Church East Central and Christ Church West Central. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South does not like to be left out of such behaviour, so he too is included in my description.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look across the landscape of Barbados, the mix which is reflected in Barbados is a mix of a form of sexual activity, it is not cloning, which strictly demonstrated a behaviour of control and also of certain pleasurable delights that certain owners got from the persons on the plantation. That is reflected in this Parliament, on the street of Bridgetown, in the heights, the terraces and the villages of Barbados.

Sir, to some extent the notion of a freedom village is a misnomer because to some extent it was not a concept really visualised by the ancestors who moved to Rock Hall from Mount Wilton Plantation. They did not visualise when they sought to have a space, that it was a space

to escape tyranny with the few pounds that they got. The visualisation of a freedom village is a contemporary concept. The harsh reality of the existence of those persons did not conjure up in their minds that when they move to establish themselves on this spot that they were establishing a freedom village. We who are 167 or so years removed from that time have now visited on those people a value judgment that was not of their own making. Nevertheless, I do not quarrel because it takes time to interpret and revisit certain aspects of the social dynamic of a given reality of 1841 and 1838, when full emancipation or amelioration came to the people of these islands.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though they can be freedom within captivity, a concept with which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East would be familiar, it is essentially a freedom of spirit. That is one of the things those persons who were enslaved with this landscape called Barbados had. They did not have, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East spoke to, the mountain peaks and the large expanse of land in Jamaica. When they ran, even though through the gullies, there was no escape for any long time because the vicious pathological condition of the mental state of the enslaver meant that when they were captured they were no more. That is the history, it cannot be contradicted. They were willing to sacrifice the flesh to some of the most hideous and heinous pieces of contraction developed right here in Barbados. We talk about a people who did not have technological skill, that is not true. The technological skills were bent for the control and the manipulation of another people. That is what we had within this country.

Sir, it is essentially a freedom of your spirit which could not be held in bondage. Essentially, the pioneers of the establishment of the village which is called Rock Hall were not a

free people. How could they be such when the conditions of the countries in which they established their housing were still inimical to their enjoyment of freedom? We have already heard the expressions by the Honourable Members from both sides who have an understanding of the history of Barbados of the time.

Sir, one thing I would not take from the Honourable Member for St. James Central, is that which he understood when he referred to the various laws passed in this country to control, manipulate and criminalise persons, who should in reality be free persons to pursue their objectives in the kind of way they wanted. I would never take from him that understanding with the regurgitation of dates. What I would necessarily want to compliment him on is the comfort with which he identified peep shows and perverse houses of entertainment.

House 67 Sequence 31

4:10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R.D. JONES:

He rolled it off his tongue and this demonstrated to my understanding, though limited, a familiarity and knowledge of such place maybe gained in the last two years as he went about the business of the Government in the far-flung regions of the world. I know the pressure that someone feels in having to deal with the business of the people that he might seek other delights in other places.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the marginalising of a legally emancipated people to rab lands mostly scotched bluffs of plantations, gullies, persons who could not find lands as they did in

Trinidad, British Guiana, Jamaica, Grenada, St. Vincent, there was no such place here because it was all controlled. Therefore, there was no essential freedom in the midst of what should have been a celebratory mode of a people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can argue even now in this particular place and space that there are thousands of Barbadians who will never connect with what we are talking about in t his Parliament. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West is absolutely correct when he identifies Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs principles. It states quite clearly that man seeks to reach the highest level which some people would call the esoteric level of development but he must first satisfy those basic needs as he or she rises towards that ultimate glorification of spirit and mind. Sir, the enjoyment of the art, the culture, the appreciation of freedom village, the appreciation of monument, is Maslow's theory. It is also captured as well in calypsos which says that a person cannot learn on a hungry belly because you think of the hunger more than the expression of self through learning.

Mr. Speaker, how many persons beyond the cursory glance as they move through St. Michael see the statue of emancipation referred to as Bussa Statue feel the tug and passion of his struggle in 1816. Sir, thousands of Barbadians make no connection to that. Unfortunately, it is not in their consciousness to understand the dynamics of that process at that point in time and what it means to a people down the road and through time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make this point clear. I am not saying that we should not in our time as the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians did, established monuments in the celebrations of their lives because monuments must be constructed with a purpose for the celebration of our people down through time

but when people do not connect and make sense because hunger bites at them in real ways, shelter is a noise in their heads very well-articulated by those of us who speak about the lack of work of the National Housing Corporation on behalf of the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to enjoin the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and the Honourable Member Christ Church West Central in this particular principle because this is serious business. Sir, when people cannot find shelter, at the end of the day, the greatest platform is in the Parliament of the people not on the platforms where the Honourable Minister of Tourism jumps up and speak and still we are in serious state of development in this country regarding the performance of tourism in this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what justice is being served when these things are there among so many of our population.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do not mind the long talk. Essentially, this project was not for celebration when you look at the underground motives of any freedom of spirit of the people. It is a dying tourism country and therefore, they are running helter skelter constructing and reconstructing Washington House because a man spent a few days here, constructing Heritage Village and the Freedom Monument.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do not believe as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East believes, who struggles in the periphery to bring sense to the unconscious. Sir, it is essentially a tourism product because we are creating monuments for the celebration of tourism so that we can advertise that we have these monuments. Sir, as persons trek into the former colonial capital of the world, England, and see the monument, we must raise monuments for the celebration and not for the celebration of African people here in Barbados and of African people in the extended diaspora.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hypocrisy steeps and is smelly and if your nose is sensitive, you would smell it. Those who suck their teeth, it is because their noses have become clogged up and they do not understand about what I speak. In this time, we are still marginalised people because there is still an insidious domination right across the length and breadth of Barbados.

H67/16:20

Sequence 32

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of... Mr. R.D. JONES: They remain challenges to persons who want to establish businesses. There are still those challenges. I want to make the point that we have, successively over time, moved people from one physical condition to another. When one reviews the past and present, there are changes in the material conditions of many of our people. That too should be celebrated. It should be celebrated in the works of Governments.

Sir, Governments from the 1940s and 1950s should be celebrated. I would be lying to the people of Barbados and to this August Chamber if I stand here and say that they have not been some material changes, brought about by determined people whose history has transformed many lives. There is still a lot to be done and we have to do it. We have to put all of our people, those who at one stage were in control and to some extent, some people argue, are still in control of the commanding heights of this economy and those persons and their friends who are still eating of the fatted calf.

Sir, I believe that the power of the dominant working class is now encapsulated in the bosom policies and practices of a political governing class, and there are no apologies for that statement. The cries of people will not be heard in the way that they should be heard. The voices of the people will be crowded out by louder and more commanding voices whose backdoor entry is to gain the front door of power.

Sir, we are not building monuments. We are building transient structures of brick and stone, mortar and concrete, steel and grit, and we are saying to our people that this is a monument. We have to build monuments which celebrate the spirit, faith and power of our people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that, I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a contribution in this debate. First, I want to say that we on this side, in relation to any policy that is designed to promote the nation building, that is symbolic with the struggle of our colonial past, that is an expression of our freedom and an expression of national identity, we will support it.

Sir, at the end of the day, no doubt, this Government would expect that the people of St. Thomas would accept that the Barbados Labour Party has done something for them and that the Freedom Village will provide some hope. I, like my colleagues, question the cost of \$2 million for a monument. In my constituency I have people requesting house spots and that their houses be repaired.

Sir, I recall an incident of an elderly lady, over eighty years old, who has been begging this administration for the last ten years for some sort of shelter. Today we are talking

about equity, fairness and justice. However, what is being meted out to this lady who is pleading for justice from this Government.

Sir, it does not surprise that \$2 million is going to be spent on this monument because a few months ago \$432 000 was spent on a two by three. This does not surprise me because when resources can be used to the real benefit of the people, we are now hearing about symbols.

Sir, I want to place on the record that the Democratic Labour Party is not against the erection of the monument but we are questioning the cost of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to look at land use in this country. How do we use our resources to the benefit of the masses? What better use can be made at this time based on the state of affairs in this country?

It brings me back to Rock Hall. Two Tuesday ago, while we were in this Parliament debating another Resolution, bulldozers and other heavy duty machines were at the site at Rock Hall. At the same time the Honourable Member for St. Thomas was sitting in Parliament.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not a welcomed sight to go home and see bulldozers outside of your home digging away the soil. It is a fact that heavy duty earth moving equipment removed top soil from the site and some individuals' driveways were blocked and people had difficulty getting into their homes. Sir, that is how the poor working class in this country is being treated. Sir, the Resolution was not even debated yet but the machines were on the site removing top soil.

Sir, when we look at the law, Section 3 of the Act, Cap 228, gives the Chief Surveyor permission to enter our lands to remove top soil, to do all other acts necessary to ascertain

whether the land is adapted for such purposes. Therefore, we must assume that at that time Section 3 of the Act was being followed. The other point is that according to Cap 228 Section 3, subsection 3, the Chief Surveyor cannot, enter the land with the consent of the occupier thereof, without previously giving such occupiers at least 25 hours of notice in writing of his intention to do so.

I want to challenge this Parliament to bring evidence that the occupier who spoke to me was given notice because I do not have a copy of the notice. I want to see the notice that was given to the occupier because Section 3 sets out clearly that any land that is likely to be required for any purpose for which the Crown is authorised by any Act to acquire land or for any purpose which, in the opinion of the Minister are public purposes, that there upon it shall be lawful for the Chief Surveyor to do all or any of the following things:

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H67: 16.30 p.m

Sequence 33

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

House 67, sequence 34, 4:30 p.m.

Continuation of Mr. M.A. LASHLEY:

... to dig or bore into the sub-soil of such land, Sir. This was stated in subsection 3, Sir, and that is the point.

Sir, I am saying that the working class people in Rock Hall were treated, with scant respect, no compassion, no justice and no care. Machines were on the property. If the Honourable Member for St. James Central had

knowledge about this, he would have gotten up and put the law to it and then ask if a notice was given to that occupier.

I want to say respectfully, Sir, that if the notice was given, I challenge the Minister responsible to produce the notice, or any document, according to section 3, subsection 3 that gives the Chief Surveyor the permission to go upon the lands and start digging. I want to say that it was an immoral act on behalf of this administration, even if they produce a copy of the notice now. We have adopted a Constitution...

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and I will give three reasons.

The first is that the section 3 notices were published as is required by the legislation.

Asides.

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: You cannot interrupt a point of order.

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Secondly, the Honourable Member in his speech suggested and in fact stated that people had no information. There had been long discussions with residents and occupants, in relation to what would happen at that site.

Thirdly, the lands on which the tractor went last week, belong to the Church and was not occupied by any of the residents.

Therefore, the Honourable Members on the Other Side were given information by an individual who has personal reasons to mislead. The reality is that the Church gave permission last week for the tractor to enter on unoccupied lands which the Church owns.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, a householder invited me and I witnessed that the property occupied by the householder was dug up. I do not understand this. Sir, I never made the point, respectfully, that no information was given to them. Sir, if the machine is going in, a notice in writing must be given in accordance with the law, and that is the point I made. How can you respond to that now?

I challenge the Minister responsible to bring out the notice because, if you were to bring it out, you would have accorded with the law out. I would still argue that it was an immoral act because people were inconvenienced. Sir, people's right and use of property was interfered with and that is what I am saying. There is a golden principle that the Government has a moral duty to protect the safety and welfare of citizens, especially those who are weak, vulnerable and those of weak economic and social dependence. Sir, I say that what happened at Rock Hall that Tuesday was a fundamental breach of a golden principle, Sir, if they accept that they do not have any notice.

I know full well that this Government is capable of saying, sorry, at any time. If they cannot produce the Notice, in accordance with the law, they should say that they are sorry, because they have said sorry to the people in Emmerton, they have said sorry about what happened at Queen Street, they have said sorry for what happened at Greenland and, Sir, I would say that they should have no difficulty in saying sorry now to the people in St. Thomas because of what happened on that Tuesday.

If they continue to say sorry, I would never say that they are a sorry bunch. Sir, I want to respectfully say that we are saying, it is not a priority at this time. When I started out, I said that my constituents were asking for house spots and repairs to be done to their houses. This is why I ask how can they get up in this House and speak about equity, fairness and

justice? What kind of shame do they have? What kind of conscience do they have? They have the audacity and unmitigated gall...

Asides.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the people of St. Thomas or other parts journey to this Freedom Village, and they know that the cost is \$2 million and when we speak about the basic necessities of mankind, such as shelter, food and clothing...Sir, there are still close to about 5 000 to 7 000 people waiting on a list for a house, Sir, after you carry out a public relations programme, telling the people that we would offer them a bumble bee house, a beetle house, a humming bird house, a low income house, Sir, and not one has been passed to the ancestors of the persons from Freedom Village.

Sir, all we have is a Minister of show housing...

Asides.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: I am talking about the Freedom Village.

When we speak of Freedom Village, we want to know that the people are free and they have their right to enjoy the basic necessities of life. Indeed, we heard that this is an opportunity for small business persons and people in Rock Hall to engage in business operations. We know what has happened to small black businessmen in this country.

House 67, sequence 34, 16:3955

Tuesday, June 07, 2005

Continuation of Mr. M. A. LASHLEY:

We know the plight and the suffering small business persons in Barbados have to undergo because of the restrictions placed on them and the red tape which they have to go through, so we hope that when this come to light they would be given the full opportunity to flourish in this village.

Sir, this is indeed a significant debate. They would want us to believe that this is the last symbol of freedom. Sir, in light of what is going on in this country as it relates to land acquisitions some poor people are still waiting to be compensated for their lands, and some have been relocated to smaller lots than what they have had. Sir, people are wondering whether they can fight the State when it comes to the acquisition of their lands.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said in my opening remarks, the people in Rock Hall had a right to their property and to the peaceful use and enjoyment of their property. Sir, I hope that what happened two Tuesdays ago with the bulldozers and would never ever happen again. Sir, that is my respectful contribution to this debate.

I thank you.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am honoured and privileged at this time to be involved in such a historic debate and also to be part of an administration and a Cabinet which, all the evidence is there to prove, has taken the greatest strides in this country toward recognising and advancing the cause of black people in this country.

Sir, whether you look at the issue of the recognition of our National Heroes, whether you talk about the abolition of slavery and making it understood, whether you talk about the introduction of black studies in schools or whether you speak of this Rock Hall monument, I believe that we are talking about

an administration which has taken the greatest of strides. Even in the giving of money to the Pan African movement and recognising their existence in the Barbadian society on its way to full development, I believe that this administration has taken 'the bull by the horn' and has fully allowed and permitted Barbadians to recognise their blackness in Barbados.

Sir, I start with that as the premise. Sir, the other side have supported this Resolution for the acquisition of the land for the erection of the monument. However, Sir, they have done so in what is now becoming the norm in this House, their contradictory mode of support. Every week they come here and anything that is intellectually, socially and economically progressive in Barbados they claim to support, but then they seek at every stage during the debate to pull down the same base that they are supporting. That is the brand of politics that has now emerged in this country and in this Honourable House. Sir, in my opinion it is intellectually dishonest to debate in that way by seeking to support a Resolution or an initiative and then seek to pull it down in every way that you can.

Sir, this debate is about the acquisition of land at Rock Hall, St. Thomas. The acquisition of this land is grounded by an underlying theme of symbolism, which I believe is important to our overall development. It is a symbolism of the struggle that our people have had towards social and economic upliftment in Barbados.

Sir, I do not want to get caught up in the platitudes and the historical correctness of the exact site, the timing of the act, the exact conditions surrounding the act and Mr. Elcock or whether or not he gave £5 and the movement from Mount Wilton. What I want to get caught up in is that this is about the recognition of the vital role that these symbolic acts have played and continue to play in our struggle for identity, for recognition and for the upliftment of our

people even today. That is where we should be, not in these issues of platitudes and this nonsense about housing and everything else.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, I would like to hear the Honourable Member.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, parliamentarians who do not recognise where they are grounded in this particular debate are lacking when it comes to what we need to further push Barbados to another level of development. Sir, the concept of using these symbols as a recognition of the identity for blacks in Barbados and even in the wider world is a fundamental theme underlying this debate. It should be clear to the most enlightened in this Chamber that most of the huge and small steps that were taken toward the full development in Barbados must have taken place against a backdrop of these acts of symbolism which have helped us to recognise who we are as a people.

Sir, I believe this is a proud moment that should be embraced by all not only in this Chamber but by all Barbadians. Sir, to seek to belittle this huge moment by some weakened and irrelevant argument of social condition today in Barbados and even to seek to compare the social and economic conditions of today with those of over 180 years is in my opinion to take this thing down to the depth of intellectual dishonesty. How could one seek to base one's debate and argument on something as symbolic and as important as this, on some issue of trying to compare the social and economic conditions of today with 183 years or so ago when someone was given the opportunity to be a part of a free village? That is the most ridiculous and ludicrous argument I have ever heard in my entire life.

Sir, this is coming from a past administration

and a Party that claims to be the Party of the disadvantaged, the vulnerable and the downtrodden in our society. The late Right Excellent Errol Barrow must be turning over in his grave this evening. The Democratic Labour Party is clearly, from what they have said today, coming from their Deputy Leader, a Party that has clearly turned its back on the black masses in this country, the people that have seemingly supported them more than they have seemingly supported us.

House 67 Sequence 35

4:50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Continuation of Hon. N. A. LYNCH:

Sir, social and economic progress begins first and foremost with the recognition of your identity, who you are, where you come from and where you are going. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the saying, you need to know where you come from to know where you are going has never meant so much to people as it means to us today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to speak out against this Act, the Democratic Labour Party is at the height of their ideological defection because there is ideological defection going on in that Party but I call it ideological hypocrisy. To claim that to acquire the land to erect the monument is somehow contradictory is rubbish. Sir, you cannot erect the monument unless you acquire land because it cannot be erected in the sky so to say that someone is being disenfranchised is ridiculous.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this age cries out more for the concept of identity as a platform for social and economic development than any

other time in the history of our country. Sir, in this age of globalisation, you have to chart your own path because no one else is concerned in the world about your geo-political circumstances, your size or the circumstances surrounding your resources. Mr. Speaker, it is even more relevant today that we seek to create more symbols of our identity and of our people and who we are than was needed in the past. To say that you are not going to move towards these symbols to allow us to take our rightful place in the world is again bordering on the ridiculous. The comparison and the analysis of those who want to tell you about the movement of the people from Mount Wilton, that they did not believe they were establishing a freedom village is out of sync with reality. I believe they fully appreciated what they were about at that time in terms of the establishment of the freedom village.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party spends their time putting down black people. It is insulting to our ancestors to say that they could not have recognised the act they performed in that day. Sir, whether they recognised it or did not recognise it, is not the point because the act is historical reality, they did establish the freedom village and it needs to be recognised at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is part of the continuum and raft of initiatives being brought by this administration that drives us towards a higher level of consciousness of who are as a platform for who we can be. Sir, the issue of this debate is the recognition of symbolism like the National Heroes Day, Crop Over and what we have done with black studies.

Mr. Deputy Spea