THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 31, 2005

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, May 31, 2005.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, G.C.M., B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)
Hon. Dame Billie MILLER, D.A., (Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of Labour and Social Security)
Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Public Works)
Mr. R. D. MARSHALL (Chairman of Committees)
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 C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)
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)
Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance), (Leader of the Opposition)
Dr. W. F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS, J.P.
Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. (Edin.), J.P. (Minister of Health)
Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)
Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Industry and International Business)
Mr. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Ed.) J.P.
Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S.
Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, May 24, 2005.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of this Honourable House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, May 24, 2005, where Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

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

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following documents:

1. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (D.A.C. Services) Order, 2005.

2. Special Development Areas (Spykes Bay Investments Inc.) Notice, 2005.

3. Special Development Areas, (CJM Investments Inc.) Notice, 2005.

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

Annual Report of the Barbados Tourism Authority for the year April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time:

Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2003.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS : Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of referring to my Ministerial Statement of May 10, 2005, in which I informed this Honourable House of the proposals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to reconstitute a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

Sir, I now have the honour of proposing to this Honourable House the Terms of Reference of the said Committee. It is proposed that those Terms of Reference be as follows:

1. To keep under constant review the development and the implementation of Barbados' political economic relations.

2. To receive reports and recommendations from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and other relevant authorities.

3. To send for persons, papers and records.

4. To appoint specialists and experts as advisors to the Committee as deemed necessary.

5. To meet concurrently with other departmental committees to exchange information and views.

6. To review oral and written submissions from members of the general public concerning matters relating to Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

7. To examine Bills and legislation pertinent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and any other matters referred to it.

8. To report recommendations and findings and to submit such reports and findings to the Honourable House of Assembly from time to time as may be considered appropriate.

9. To convene at least once every quarter.

10. To perform any other functions and tasks that may be referred to the Committee.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: I beg to second that.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228 THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT PICKWICK GAP IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF FACILITATING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF KENSINGTON OVAL TO PROVIDE A MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY FOR SPORTING, CULTURAL, ENTERTAINMENT, BUSINESS, SOCIAL AND OTHER PUBLIC USES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution before this Honourable House today seeks the approval of Parliament in accordance of Section 5 of the relevant legislation, being the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228 to acquire certain parcels of land at Pickwick Gap for the redevelopment of Kensington Oval, specifically to provide a multipurpose facility for sporting, cultural, entertainment, business, social and other public purposes. I think this would now be the third debate before the Chamber relative, to the relocation of residents at Pickwick Gap. Sir, much information has been given to this Honourable House and to the country relative to the process.

Sir, you will recall from previous debates that the relevant social surveys have been conducted with respect to the residents and decisions have been taken to relocate and accommodate the residents. It is anticipated that Kensington Oval would not only be developed to provide a world-class facility for the hosting of the World Cup 2007 but, in fact, pursuant to our obligations with the Barbados Cricket Association and with Cricket World Cup, there must be such redevelopment to provide for adequate security and seating capacity to accommodate the number of visitors, who will be coming to attend the various matches.

Sir, it is anticipated that some of the seating would be temporary, since we do not anticipate that there would be a long-term need for all of the seating. After Cricket World Cup, given the nature of the investment in the mecca of Kensington, it is intended that, that facility will hereafter be used to accommodate multiple purposes, social, cultural, *et cetera.*

Mr. Speaker, in fact, it has also been lamented that in respect to hosting large events, whether sporting, entertainment and cultural activities, that the seating capacity for an event of this sort is limited.
10.30 a.m.

Therefore, it is believed that post-Cricket World Cup 2007, Kensington will be a proper venue for not only cricket and other sports but that large shows, various types of cultural entertainment, and business activity will take place there because there will be facilities for micro enterprise.

Equally for religious purposes, Kensington will be able to be used in the future, as it has been in the past. There have been a couple crusades held at Kensington but we expect that for those who are seeking a more outdoor type atmosphere, who want to use the Kensington ground for other purposes that the new seating and the additional accommodation will help to provide the kind of ambiance and capacity that are intended.

Sir, we anticipate that Kensington will be for a range of other purposes, depending on the approvals that are given and the purpose to which the facility is going to be put because, ultimately, there must still be some protection of the pitch and the Kensington ground itself, that we must be sure that no activity which takes place there should damage the cricket field.

We acknowledge, Sir, that Kensington as a cricket ground has tremendous history. I think that the country and the Caribbean were gratified that on Sunday, we were finally able to win a match on that ground on the historic occasion of its closure for development.

Asides.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Sir, if that match has been loss, I think that the history of having to record that the West Indies played for the last time at Kensington in its present configuration and loss, coming out of a string of other losses, would have caused tremendous consternation at the national and regional levels.

Asides.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Sir, you will recall again, in previous debates we did indicate that at Pickwick, a number of individuals and entities must be relocated to accommodate the expansion, and provision has to be made for them to be resited elsewhere. I believe that in respect of the four commercial entities that are in the critical path, we had a Resolution last week that immediately touched and concerned the commercial entities being, Aerosol Limited, Curacao Laboratories, Woodville Guest House and A & R Tempro Limited. This Parliament agreed to negotiations and compensation of those particular residents.

On a previous occasion, this Chamber agreed to compensation with the non-commercial property owners at Pickwick who are not immediately on the critical path, because those commercial properties on Fontabelle were in the immediate priority area to be moved and we will now go to the residential properties.

The properties at Pickwick to be relocated are primarily residential, I think, with one or two of them having some commercial use as well with their owners, and one family in particular using the attached shop for sale of solid and liquid refreshment and other goods, particularly during large cricket events.

Sir, with the relocations, people often think that these matters are simple and can be dealt with quickly, but critical to the success of any relocation, is the intervention of the Ministry of Housing and Lands through its Housing Planning Unit to conduct the necessary social surveys at the community from which people must be relocated. In this

instance, the Housing Planning Unit conducted an extensive survey at the Pickwick area and found that there were 20 households and two small businesses that were likely to be affected by the project and whose owners would have to move.

In fact, Sir, the process becomes complicated because when you are dealing with a multiplicity of businesses, households and property owners, you are also dealing with people who are tenants, in some instances of the land but not the house, and in other instances of the full property. There are multiple arrangements and relationships and some people with conflicting interests that need to be satisfied and for whom provision has to be made. You will find, Sir, that there will be multiple landowners. You may find, Sir, that there are people who describe themselves as tenants but they have not paid rent for years. There may be others, Sir, where the landownership is disputed, where land was passed seed to seed and there is not formal documentation governing the ownership of the property as is required by the Property Act. All of these things impact on the extent to which the relocation can be accomplished in a short time.

Sir, one cannot move unless one has had or the Government cannot move unless there has been comprehensive discussion with the landowners, tenants and other occupants, because in instances, Sir, there are also squatters who want to know what arrangements would be made for them, since they are going to be affected. Therefore, the process tends to be a very detailed and protracted one, as you seek to meet with people individually to make such determination as is appropriate for their well being and for their relocation.

In addition, Sir, the process is further protracted on the issue of money. What represents adequate compensation for property owners in circumstances where they are being relocated through no will of their own but because the land is being acquired, pursuant to the legislation which says for a public purpose and then the public purpose is defined... in this instance I have indicated what the public purpose is or how it is being defined, as the facilitation of the redevelopment of Kensington to provide multipurpose facility for sporting, cultural, entertainment, business, social and other public uses.

Hence, what represents just compensation for their property, given the state of the property, the value of the land, the general location and all of the other factors which the Land Acquisition Act compels the Government to take into consideration when relocating persons, or when there is going to be a compulsory acquisition of their property.

Again, Sir, I have made the point in here that the rules governing compensation are not arbitrary. They are very clearly laid out in the Act and that people do get sums of moneys which are fair, just and represent a fair value of the property and, in the event, if there is no consensus between Government and the person from whom the land is being acquired or the value of the property, the person has a right of application to the High Court for the High Court to make a determination of the value of the property. Sir, it is the legislative responsibility of the Government to ensure that the individual whose property is being acquired is provided with the necessary valuers, land surveyors and attorneys, who are chosen by the property owner and paid for by the Government so that all of their rights are justly and fairly represented.

10.40 a.m.

Sir, poverty is not a bar to getting just compensation because not only is the formula for compensation determined by legislation but there is also provision for a cadre of well-trained professionals experienced in the area to be chosen by the landowner whose land is being acquired and paid for by the Government.

Sir, if there is a breakdown, even with these necessary protections built into the legislative framework, the landowner still has the right to appeal to the High Court and say: 'Look, the Government and I cannot agree on the quantum of compensation, you may now please make a determination as to how much my property is worth and compel the Government to pay me what the court determines I am entitled to.'

Sir, let me speak to the matter of compulsory acquisition versus acquisition by private treaty. The private treaty process allows for greater alacrity than compulsory acquisition. The compulsory acquisition process is used where there are large numbers of property owners and where there is perhaps a time frame and there is not likely to be an agreement to facilitate the time frame for the project out of which the relocation arises.

Sir, let me elaborate. If one is seeking to expand a road or to build a road in a village, there may be houses in the path where the road will come, but you may have to finish your road within the financial year to prevent the money from lapsing or in the shortest possible time. Sir, if you are going to manage a project you should have a definite start date and a clear and distinct completion date so as to minimise expenditure and keep your cost management properly under control. Hence, you would not want for the project to be delayed because people in the project path are saying: 'Well, I live here for a thousand years and I ain't moving'. Sir, you would not want for the project to be delayed because somebody for some capricious reason does not want to relocate. Hence, when dealing with a large number of property owners you would tend to use the compulsory acquisition method so that there is no choice

in whether people surrender the land even though they then have to be discussions over the quantum of compensation.

Sir, in relation to the Kensington relocation project both the private treaty method and the compulsory acquisition method were used. There is no difference ultimately in what the persons got or were compensated for their lands. Sir, in the end, whether by private treaty or by compulsory acquisition, both amounts of compensation have to be approved by this Parliament. Private treaty is not intended to mean clandestine since both are overseen by this Parliament.

In relation to the Kensington redevelopment there were four property owners with commercial entities at Fontabelle who said: "We are quite happy to be moved, we have no objection to being moved, so move us, it is just a question of where we are going to go and what we will agree as the value of our properties and businesses and what you would pay us for disrupting our businesses." Sir, there has to be some disruption while they close and set up at the new location. So in this case it was easy to go by the private treaty method because we could agree quickly.

On the other hand, at Pickwick Gap where there were 22 households and two small businesses, there was no immediate consensus by the community about the matter of relocation. There were those who did not want to move initially or said that they did not want to move. There were those who did not want to move within the time frame required for the redevelopment of Kensington. Their thing was that they do not mind moving but that our time frame does not suit them. Sir, Cricket World Cup has a specific date so there is a time frame that cannot be changed by the whims and fancies of individuals. There were those who said: 'I ain't moving till I get pay.' 'Wunnah want to move me, wunnah pay me first' and so on. So there were a number of issues which would impact on the timing of the project if we sought to go by private treaty with this number of individuals.

Therefore, to expedite the process, compulsory acquisition was chosen, but this Parliament has to agree to the compensations to be paid. When we come here we say, look the Commissioner of Land Tax has valued the property at X dollars which is required by the Act. The Commissioner of Land Tax must give the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment a valuation or an expected valuation for the property. After that valuation is given and before negotiations take place we have to come to Parliament and say that we want to negotiate with the people of Pickwick and give what we anticipate will be the figure. At the close of negotiations the figure may vary from that which we initially informed Parliament we would need and we would have to come back to get money voted for the increased sum. So at every stage Parliament is in fact aware of the figures which are being discussed.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the households and the businesses at Pickwick Gap, there is a full time caterer located in the Pickwick area, there is a person who sells food at cricket who is not in catering full time, there is a person who is involved in a spray painting business and a person who is involved in a salvaging business. These are the four persons who by saying that they do not want to be relocated threatened to halt the Kensington development and the timing for it. Sir, it is for this reason that we had to go by compulsory acquisition in order to guarantee that we fit into the project schedule and the time frame required to allow Kensington redevelopment to be completed.

Sir, thirteen householders indicated initially that they wanted to be relocated within the same parish and as close to the Pickwick Gap neighbourhood as possible. There were two people who said: 'Um um, I making other arrangements, you do not relocate me, put money in my hand.' These wanted compensation not relocation, and that is a legitimate choice because their property can be valued and they can be paid for it. Sir, there may be all kinds of reasons for compensation. A person may decide that they want to live in rural Barbados. They may be aged, as I indicated to the House on another occasion, and they may want to go and live with another sibling who is also advanced in age and whose children are grown so they may take the money in hand for them, the sister or brother, to live off of.
10.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of reasons why people may want compensation. Some may want to get out of the area; they may not want Government to build for them; they may feel they have a friend or brother or somebody in construction, to whom they are connected, who would help them in their building, and would give them a better deal; they may feel they want a piece of land elsewhere, or they may have family land elsewhere, on which they would prefer to build. Therefore, they are entitled to ask Government for compensation, instead of relocation.

Mr. Speaker, this system is legitimate and, therefore, two people opted for payment, instead of relocation. Sir, one individual wanted relocation but to St. George, as he had enough of the city life and now wanted the rural life, while there were four householders who had no preferences.

Mr. Speaker, coming out of the social survey, we were able to determine the number of tenants; the number of property owners; the persons who were tenants of land only, who had their houses on the land; persons who were tenants of both house and land; persons who were property owners; people who were being accommodated by others, *et cetera.* Therefore, as we did our social survey, a number of arrangements and property ownership relationships emerged. There were persons who owned more than one lot, who had them rented to others; there were persons who

owned more than one house; there were persons who owned more than one lot and did not have them tenanted. All of this was picked up by the social survey and values were attached to the properties, based on valuations given by the Commissioner of Land Tax.

Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to go into the areas regarding the valuations to these properties because it is proposed that we have to come back to this Honourable House after all negotiations are completed, where we would have looked at all compensation figures, plus the disruption elements for the business, *et cetera*. Sir, these are small land holdings, some of them being 700 square feet, what we call in Barbados house spots.

Mr. Speaker, I made the point last week and would wish to reiterate that there is a standard house lot which is approved by the Chief Town Planner. Therefore, in relocating those individuals who are living on lots that are smaller than the size approved by the Town Planner, the Government will give them a minimum size lot which relates to the requirements of the planning legislation and regulations. Hence, individuals now living on lots that are between 1 000 and 1 200 square feet, which are small land holdings, who will benefit by getting 3 500 square feet lots. Therefore, there are people who not only will get a larger property in terms of houses but persons who will have their land sizes doubled or tripled, to reach that minimum requirement.

Mr. Speaker, there are persons who now live in such small units, that they would not have gotten Town Planning's permission to renovate these properties because of the close proximity to other parcels of land. These units may not have enough space to expand, while leaving the appropriate cartilages and spaces as required by the Town Planner. Therefore, those persons will now be given houses which are larger than the ones they would have previously occupied and which fall within the Town Planning's provision. In addition, these properties will be new, whereas some of them would have been living in properties that were of advanced years.

Mr. Speaker, the valuation put on the properties at this time before negotiations are completed is $l.62 million. As you know, the total project for relocation amounts to $16 million, including various compensations such as purchase of other properties; payment of legal valuers and other professional fees; compensation to various commercial property owners; the purchase of lands, where the properties to be relocated; construction of new properties and construction of other accommodation that would be put, not only for persons to buy but persons who were tenants would also have access to those properties. Therefore, the valuation of these small holdings has so far been put at $1.62 million and the Honourable House will have the opportunity to have full details on this, once negotiations are completed and we have a clearer idea of what is going to be paid out.

Mr. Speaker, given the urgency of the time frame for the Kensington Redevelopment Project, we may have to look to short-term accommodations for some of the residents who may be affected in this way, in order to allow construction to take place. Sir, we do not want persons to be in situations of noise, dust and great inconvenience when the redevelopment is being done. Therefore, there may have to be some short-term location, if the final properties to which people are being relocated are not ready at the time that residents have to move. Hence discussions are now continuing in relation to suitable short-term accommodation for such families who would have to use that short-term accommodation, pending the completion of their new homes.

Sir, we continue to ensure that the time frame and all proprieties in relation to this matter are being followed and that we move as expeditiously as we can, in all the circumstances, to meet the deadline required for Cricket World Cup, 2007.

Sir, much of this information had been given in the three earlier debates but I am seeking now to update the Parliament as to issues relating to future use of Kensington, the specific public purpose and how it is being defined in law. Sir, the definition of public purpose that we are using, is based on the advice of the Solicitor-General of Barbados and the Chief Legal Officer of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, working by reviewing accepted precedence of cases that have already been determined in Barbados and looking at the legislation and its requirements.

Mr. Speaker, last week I outlined what I would call a calender or a chart for the activities which need to be pursued, in order to ensure that the activities for the redevelopment of Kensington and the Pickwick Gap relocations, are kept on schedule.
11.00 a.m.

I would have an opportunity to give those again. Suffice it to say, the Government has acquired lands at Barbarees Hill at a sum of $2.7 million for the relocation of the residents of Pickwick Gap.

Mr. Speaker, you would recall that it was a derelict property, just over two acres of land attached and we expect that it would suffice to relocate those in the community who wish to be relocated there. I have indicated that there are other persons who took other options and other courses of actions in respect of their future and residences. Work at Barbarees Hill has started and this is obvious when you go up Barbarees to what was called the old Hewitt property or old Barbarees House, the heavy duty equipment is in

place, extensive digging is taking place and so on. We anticipate that we would be able to keep our schedule because contracts have been awarded for the construction of the properties at that site and at this time, we are not expecting any further difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, this site has beautiful mature mahogany and other trees and as part of our redevelopment we sought to ensure as far as was possible that those trees remain. We will put a security fence at the rear of the site, the lands adjoining the lands at Westbury as well as putting a hedge and other features to green the area and make it attractive.

It is intended that this would be beautiful, attractive and high quality accommodation in Bridgetown to accommodate these residents because part of our trust towards the World Cup is to ensure that housing in Bridgetown is upgrade and that the quality of life of people is improved, that we do not have a world-scale event while treating people like second-class citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I close by making the point that Barbarees Hill would also be the site of another relocation. On Thursday, Cabinet formally approved that the Ministry of Housing should enter into negotiations with the Barbados National Bank for other lands located at Barbarees Hill to relocate the residents of Emmerton in St. Michael and the negotiations are ongoing.

Sir, again it looks as though the price tag attached to the land is going to be somewhat hefty. The Resolution for the purchase of the land at Barbarees Hill cannot be formally placed on the agenda of Parliament until such time as there is some closure to the negotiations and it is signed off by Cabinet. Sir, at that time I anticipate that we would have a full-fledged debate on Emmerton Lane. Two weeks ago at a town meeting at Emmerton Lane, I gave a commitment to the residents that I would have the paper to facilitate their relocation for the land presented to Cabinet last Thursday. The paper did go to Cabinet on Thursday, Cabinet has signed off on it and it has given authorisation for the opening of negotiations and for them to reach conclusion.

Sir, as you know, it then has to come back to Parliament on the agenda as a separate item at which time we would have a full debate. Having given the commitment to the resident, I would try to meet a particular schedule and having spoken at length to the residents at Pickwick and to lands at Barbarees, I did not think it was fair to fail to indicate that we are, in fact, keeping the commitment.

Sir, once again the Housing Planning Unit of the Ministry has been utilised extensively to do very extensive surveys. The approval for the relocation of the Emmerton Lane residents goes back to November 1994. Since then, we have had the usual internal processes that people do not see and may tend to believe that nothing is happening. This predated the awful flare-up that caused so much agitation recently. Last year Cabinet agreed and we were in the process of trying to identify suitable lands because it was our idea to keep the community together rather than fragment it.

Mr. Speaker, we had to find suitable land within close proximity to Kensington Land. We have to get the land owners to agree to sell us land or we would have had to go the route of compulsory acquisition and there would have been the usual extensive social survey of every household within that area. Sir, that was not a small undertaking because there are 94 houses within the general radius of the Sewerage Plant at Emmerton Lane.

Mr. Speaker, once one does the social survey, apart from issues relating to ownership of land and property, one needs to know the number of members in the households and their ages. One also looks at the general condition of the property and the size of it and sometimes photographs are taken so that we have visual evidence of what the property looks like because sometimes people claim to have a big house but that they are receiving monies for a small house. We therefore, measure the properties to know the exact size, to give precise information in order to do justice to the professionalism of the officer involved and equally to do justice to those persons who are caught up emotionally with the fact of relocation and dislocation. Sir, for many people relocation represents dislocation. It can be a very emotional and traumatic experience, particularly for people who are of advanced years and who may be frail, disabled or who have lived in one place for forty years, when required to move to a different location. Sir, even in a new location, it is critical to keep the community together. Mr. Speaker, for example, from their new location they should still be able to look out of their windows and see Miss Branch, to whom they have been acquainted for the last twenty years, even if they were not on speaking terms. So, it says something about the community and their sense of location.
11.10 a.m.

Sir, last week I paid tribute to the Officers of the Housing Planning Unit in their absence, with whom I am sometimes very harsh, because I too, like the public, want them to move more quickly but there is a great deal of information to be collected and work which needs to be done thoroughly, if the matters are to be completed, timely, competently and that can withstand professional scrutiny and transparency. Therefore, a social survey is a process of evaluation and recording of information that speak to a range of issues from property ownership, to employment and occupancy of property and other issues. We tried to be comprehensive in relation to this matter.

I want to assure all the residents of Pickwick Gap and Emmerton that the negotiation process is well underway.

Clearly, the negotiations of Pickwick Gap are more advanced than Emmerton but we are in the process of completing Emmerton. When negotiations are completed, we will return to this Honourable House for a full debate on all of the issues relative to Emmerton.

I know that the residents are anxious to have such a discussion and to have their issues ventilated, and to be assured that they are treated with respect, courtesy and have their cries and concerns addressed. Their cries have been heard, the relocation process began this week to bring closure to the people of Emmerton's long-suffering and to have this matter resolved. We will have a long debate on Emmerton.

Sir, as I indicated earlier, I want to take this opportunity to inform them and the wider public that consistent with my promise at the Town Meeting two weeks ago that I would have the matter before the Cabinet last Thursday, that promise was kept. The negotiations are continuing and failing to hear a full debate today, if not formally on the Agenda, because of the process, a full debate will come later. There are a number of activities which must go on behind the scenes preceding the debate.

I wish to thank Your Honour for the latitude you have given me to inform them and by extension the community. I think that it is important, given the extent to which they have been complaining. We have been in full communication with the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, who has been the strongest advocate in respect of relocation and having their issues addressed.

Sir, this is an interesting historical time with respect to these locations and the way in which we are treating communities; the way in which communities are going to be relocated and how their social and economic circumstances would be transformed.

Sir, we move to bring these matters to fruition and to ensure the residents of Pickwick that it is now time for their negotiations to move to another stage and to have their negotiations completed. Equally, to ensure the public understands its purpose, the law, Kensington and its use after cricket. Concerns have been expressed about the construction of these facilities and their use after the big event.

Finally, to assure the residents of Emmerton that the work in respect of addressing their concerns is also well in hand.

I am much obliged, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, it appears that we are continuing the debate from last week in his Honourable Chamber today. Some information has come to light which, in fact, substantiates the view of the Opposition with respect to the approaches being made by the Ministry of Housing in acquiring land by way of compulsory acquisition with respect to private treaty or otherwise.

Sir, we are told that there are thirteen residents in Pickwick Gap whose lands and properties have been acquired for a value of $1.6 million. When you sum the quantity of land alone, according to the First Schedule to the Bill, these parcels of land total approximately 5 576.6 square metres. In terms of square footage, let us multiply by ten to make life convenient, therefore, this would be approximately 55 766 square feet of land.

Sir, this is absolutely necessary for me to be pedantic, slow and deliberate in my delivery because an acre of land is approximately 43 000 square feet of land.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, when the calculation is done, the point has to be made that we are acquiring approximately 1.25 acres of land at Pickwick Gap, thirteen parcels of land.

Sir, over the years, these residents built houses, increased their value and have even established businesses on their properties. We have been told that it is going to cost Government $1.6 million to acquire approximately 1.25 acres of land, plus properties at Pickwick Gap. However, in today's presentation by the Minister of Housing, we are being told that a property owned by a large businessman in Barbados, we visited the area, which is next to a graveyard, difficult to enter at Barbarees Hill...and which apart from being acquired by the Government would not have had any substantial value whatsoever...
11.20 a.m.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I have gone there and it is my assessment.

Mr. Speaker, let me make the most substantial point that, in fact, on a parcel of land that is approximately two acres at Barbarees Hill, the Government intends to pay almost $3 million, $2.7 million for a parcel of land that is approximately two acres with no other property on it whatsoever.

This is the point because at Pickwick Gap where there are 13 parcels of land, 1.25 acres of land approximately, according to the information provided by the Ministry,

those individuals will be paid a paltry $1.6 million but for a property which is less than a mile away, which is trapped by businesses on the western side, and landlocked by a cemetery on the other side, this Government is, in fact, going to pay $2.7 million for that piece of land.

Sir, how could that be justified? Under what circumstances can you justify it?

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It has nothing to do with being commercial value. In fact, the area right next to Pickwick is even more commercial because it was right next to four commercial properties that were acquired via private treaty. Therefore, the point that you have to make is that now that Kensington is being upgraded, those 13 parcels of land would now be commercial.

I am not interested in the Land Acquisition Act with respect to the legal implications of it, Sir. What I am saying is that there is no way the piece of land which I visited at Barbarees Hill could have more commercial value than the 13 parcels of land outside of the Kensington wall at Pickwick Gap, which was right next to the same Armstrong Agency that we debated last week and which could only but have substantial commercial value.

Mr. Speaker, what is more important, is that in light of what is being done to Kensington, could you really say that a foolish piece of land, next to a graveyard in Barbarees Hill, without any access road, could be more valuable than the 13 parcels of land in Pickwick Gap, which are right next to the Kensington wall? Further, Sir, they already have properties on them.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, you can check for yourself. You only have to do the arithmetic. This talk about being esoteric and coming in here preaching or lecturing, Sir, you have to lecture because sometimes the very simple things in life are lost on people. It cannot be justified and no way can it be justified. This is why the Opposition in its whole debate last week, spent a long time talking about the method that is used to negotiate the value of properties in land acquisitions.

Therefore, having now given what the Government is promising to that large business person in Barbados for that piece of land, you can now begin to understand the concerns that were raised on the Opposition benches. I cannot see at all possible to understand why we are going to pay and by the way, the businessman even complained that he is not being adequately compensated, and he quarrelled. I was informed that he quarrelled because he is not being given enough for the piece of land that we visited, which is not an obvious site for commercial use.

Mr. Speaker, herein lies the injustices in the society. Herein lies the obvious example, Sir, of a group of small individuals who would, over the years, have cherished living in Pickwick Gap, who would have cherished the location because of its commercial value, notwithstanding the fact that they were residential properties, who would understand now that in light of what is being proposed at Kensington, they stand to benefit substantially. But that just next door, less than a mile away, a larger individual is able to negotiate with the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, for substantially more per square foot, substantially more per square meter and, substantially more per acre on a piece of land. Sir, I am saying to you, if you were to visit it, first of all, it should not even be used to resite the residents but having been used, the Government is now prepared to pay an extraordinary high price for it, but is not willing to compensate persons within the Pickwick Gap more adequately.

Let me go on, Mr. Speaker, to highlight some of the issues because we were told that there were social surveys done. We were told about the numbers of tenants and property owners. I am really hoping that the property owners in Pickwick Gap are not going to be disadvantaged because of practices that were permitted over the years.

Let me explain what I mean because it is well-known that houses in the City are extremely close to each other and there would not have been any formal surveys done. Therefore, when you visit most of the City, you can see for yourself that there might not have been official permission granted for persons to build homes.

Why is this important in Pickwick Gap? It is important in Pickwick Gap, Mr. Speaker, because there is one property owner who has three houses on her property and she would have been permitted to do so over the years. Now, when it comes to negotiation time, even if that individual might over the years not have developed along the correct legal lines, can those arguments now be used to reduce the value of the properties built on that lot? Sir, in light of that, can the Government now go and negotiate with that person because they are in a weak position, with respect to the law and therefore offer half of what the true value is for the property? This was done to a particular property owner in this area, where the Government offered only $170 000 for it but, in fact, it was valued at $340 000.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that even if over the years that particular property owner had taken the lot of land and instead of building the one house, sought to get some commercial value by squeezing a wooden structure next to a wall structure, imposing an additional structure on the

property and was permitted to do so without any complaint from the law, and now is seeking to be compensated, should that individual's properties be fully valued in spite of the so-called legal weak position that the individual is in?

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that, yes, that individual cannot now be penalised for being permitted, over the years to put additional structures on a lot, and that has happened in Pickwick Gap. I can call the name of the individual because the person came to me last week and said that notwithstanding what was said in this Lower Chamber by the Minister of Housing that, in fact, she was never fully informed and no discussions were really conducted with her, with respect to the acquisition, because she is not a tenant, she is a property owner who does not live in Pickwick Gap. She was not really fully informed of the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the properties in the Pickwick Gap area. She was written but she has not had any discussions with respect to which value should be accepted. 11.30 a.m.

Sir, even though there is legal recourse with respect to a valuer being paid for by the Ministry and even though there is legal recourse with respect to a lawyer being hired by an individual to get adequate representation, there is no evidence that what the Minister said last week in the debate was in fact true with respect to this particular individual circumstance. That is why I had the visit from that particular individual.

Mr. Speaker, I am here to ask some very pointed questions. Should it now be the case that the individual, instead of receiving the real value of the land which was valued at $340 000 by a valuer which she is entitled to have according to the Land Acquisition Act, now have to accept the $170 000 that the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment offered her for her property? Should the individual be penalised for having placed additional structures on the land over several years with the permission, albeit tacit permission, of the law? These questions have to be answered.

Mr. Speaker, we are even more firmly committed in our view that the method employed has not been to the advantage of the residents in Pickwick Gap but clearly to the advantage of the owner of the land at Barbarees Hill. A mere two acres of land at Barbarees Hill is fetching almost double what the residents or the landowners in Pickwick Gap fetched for their properties which have on houses. Mr. Speaker, there is no way that so-called commercial land in Barbarees Hill could be more valuable. Therefore, that method was not advantageous to the residents and property owners in Pickwick Gap. It is not fair.

Mr. Speaker, we were told that the Solicitor General is now to determine what public purpose means in the acquisition of the land at Pickwick Gap. It is not defined because it was not clear. The question of how could you acquire land for a private company with a public purpose was raised on the Opposition benches. What we are now having, Mr. Speaker, is that the Solicitor General has now to step forward to be able to define for the purposes of this acquisition what public purpose means. That must tell you something, Mr. Speaker. It must tell you that there was in fact no clearly determined public purpose. Therefore, the land was acquired for World Cup Barbados without an appreciation that it can only be done if you can clearly state what the public purpose is, and it was never done.

Mr. Speaker, if you are now saying that World Cup Barbados is able to invest and to derive profit and benefit as a result of the investment, is it not the case that those individuals who live at Pickwick Gap and are now being resited should be entitled to some of the benefits that would accrue from the new investment at Pickwick Gap.

Sir, it is similar in principle to royalties that are paid for oil. If you were moved from a piece of land that has oil on it, the owner of that land should be entitled to some of the benefits derived from the very precious mineral that was below the land. In this instance the precious investment is the change of use, to which the land at Pickwick Gap would be put. That has not been discussed and debated either because it was never clear that you can acquire land and change the use of it without there being substantial debate and discussion on the matter.

Sir, if you are going to move residents and use their land for commercial purposes, then you are going to get a capital gain because you are now assigning a different purpose to the land from which it was being used by the residents. Therefore, in respect of that, I am suggesting that the residents should also be entitled to benefit from the change of use.

Mr. Speaker, properties like Armstrong Agencies were used and cited as having commercial value, but those properties that have been acquired will now be used fully for commercial activity. Therefore, in light of that those persons ought to benefit from the fact that they would have made wise investments over the years to locate their property next to Pickwick Gap and therefore should be entitled to benefit from any such acquisition on the part of Government. That cannot be faulted because it is a point that must be recognised.

Mr. Speaker, we are being told that if Government acquires a property that is less than the standard size for a house lot according to the Town and Country Planner that the individual would be given an increase size property to meet the commitment of the Town and Country Planner, that is, his property would now be standard. While that

is beneficial to the individual who might not have had a sufficiently size lot, is it not special treatment being granted to a particular individual in the circumstances, and should not that special treatment be extended to all the residents or property owners within the Pickwick Gap area?

Mr. Speaker, if you are now saying that you are going to standardise the size of the lot such that the person who now is relocated would be in conformity with the Town and Country Planning Act and therefore would be upgraded in terms of size of lot, has that individual not benefited having to be relocated from Pickwick Gap to some other site, and should not all individual benefits with respect to the relocation. Can you not now provide a reason to justify giving them additional increments with respect to the change of use of the property now that it will no longer be residential but will be commercial?

Mr. Speaker, I am therefore saying that it is just a question of considering that these persons are making a sacrifice and are permitting the development of an area that would not necessarily redound to the benefit of Barbadians either. Sir, the way the World Cup is structured it has been identified that all the contracts for catering and for location of business are not going to be won by Barbadians and that there will be a restricted area within which commercial activity cannot be conducted. Therefore, there will be no externalities to be derived for individuals living within close proximity to Pickwick Gap because conditions have been established by way of contract to restrict those individuals from even beginning to benefit from the development of Kensington. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Barbadians to wake up and to smell the coffee because when we on the Opposition Bench speak to simple observations like that of the sale of the Barbados National Bank, or to the pressure that is being put on the National Insurance Scheme, to now provide loans for statutory bodies, which has become a reality, the fact is that it takes about one or two years for Barbadians to recognise those realities.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do not try that strategy here. You said you were not going to go there but yet you repeated the whole thing again.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, just for emphasis.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please be relevant.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, the important thing here to recognise is the question of being able to benefit from investments for Cricket World Cup, 2007. Sir, suppose there were persons within close proximity to Pickwick Gap, who believe that they could benefit from investing or adding an apartment to their properties, how far away from Pickwick Gap must these individuals be? Should they be close enough to be able to walk, or would they be restricted in having to go far away from Pickwick Gap, such that it does not conflict or collide with the expectations or conditions of the entire Cricket World Cup, 2007?

Mr. Speaker, in light of that, therefore, I want to make some further observations, and to warn Barbadians about this so-called investing in apartments. Sir, the most important thing is that if persons are to benefit from investing in apartments for an event that is only two weeks in length, then those persons would have to charge high rates, like those of Sandy Lane Hotel, in order to be able to recover the cost of their investments. And they cannot do that.

Mr. Speaker, the other important issue is that, as an individual, one cannot design the renovation to one's house so expertly, as to be able to get any benefit. Why? Sir, first of all, no Australian or Englishman is going to wait until he or she reaches Barbados, then to find an apartment. Therefore, that homeowner has to know that his apartment will be available one year in advance. Sir, any person travelling from Australia, England or Bermuda, to Barbados for Cricket World Cup, 2007, must know where they are going to stay one year in advance. They are not going to come and take a chance. Therefore, what does it mean? It means that a potential investor in an apartment, must be able to so organise his investment that he does not build the apartment too early. If he does and allows for another individual to occupy that apartment, it would not become available for Cricket World Cup, 2007.

Mr. Speaker, the planning must be so expertly done, that when he builds an apartment, it must be finished at the correct time and must so coincide with the arrival of persons coming for Cricket World Cup, 2007. It would mean that he has to make the most proficient business decision that he would ever have to make because if perchance he builds an apartment too early and cannot put a tenant in that apartment, one whom he would be able to get out by the time Cricket World Cup, 2007 starts, it would mean that he would not be able to reap any benefits from that venture.

Therefore, one must understand the point that is being made which is that homeowner must be so expert in the building and in the timing of that apartment, that he cannot allow a permanent tenant to occupy that apartment because he would not be able to get that individual out by the time World Cup, 2007 starts.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, there are many complications in this matter. It is not as simple as saying to add a room to one's house. First of all, who is going to market that room? When would the room be finished? Would it be finished before Cricket World Cup, 2007? Can this be guaranteed? Would you be able to get the necessary revenue for a

two-week period, to be able to justify the building of the apartment? Therefore, in relation to these questions, people should not be encouraged to build any apartments or guest houses for Cricket World Cup, 2007, because it is a long-term investment.

Mr. Speaker, it is not simply about Cricket World Cup, 2007 or about a two-week period, persons should be able to make business investments that are sufficiently prudent that persons stands to benefit from them. On the other hand, therefore, to have the notion that persons are going to build apartments in time for Cricket World Cup, 2007 and are going to make a lot of money from them is rubbish. Therefore, it should not be marketed that way, neither should Government be giving people the impression that it is being done for a two-week period. Sir, only a madman would invest a lot of money, only to get a revenue stream for only two weeks. Therefore, why is Government asking small Barbadian to get all kinds of loans, of which they are not sure about the terms and conditions, and for them to add apartments which would be for only temporary residence, because Barbadians may not wish to have persons living with them permanently.

Sir, personally I would not wish to live in a house with my family and have to be concerned about persons being ever present. Therefore, let us not now give the impression that everything has to revolve around Cricket World Cup, 2007, and that small Barbadians who are being pushed away from the centre of activity at Pickwick Gap, would now be in a position to go beyond the centre of excellence at Pickwick Gap, and make investment decisions with respect to accommodation. It cannot be so. Government cannot now make everything appear to be revolving around Cricket World Cup, 2007.

Sir, even though it was alluded to in the debate, and promised with respect to a debate on Emmerton, we know the circumstances that gave rise to that. We know that persons have been invited to the Public Gallery this morning, to listen to a debate on Emmerton. It is unfortunate that a visit was made only after the Opposition went into Emmerton and exposed in detail, the real circumstances pertaining to Emmerton and the surrounding areas.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I hate to interrupt but the Honourable Member is misleading this House. There has been a committee, of which I am a member, which, since November last year, has been meeting on a monthly basis on this matter at Emmerton.

The Honourable Opposition cannot come riding in on a white horse, trying to save anybody from anything, they barely know what is going on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, before you proceed, the Honourable Minister did make a statement on Emmerton. She did seek my permission to make that statement. I did say to her that she could not go into a full-scale discussion on this matter. I am, therefore, informing the House and am asking all Honourable Members to comply until the adequate Resolution comes to this House.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I am not making any discussion nor am I debating Emmerton. What I am suggesting is that because of the arrangements for Cricket World Cup, 2007, commercial entities would be pushed away from the periphery of Pickwick Gap and, therefore, if you know the area, then, in fact, Emmerton and the other surrounding areas which may be outside half-mile the radius of Pickwick, will come into play with respect to whether or not certain activities can be conducted around Cricket World Cup, 2007. Sir, Emmerton for me is not significant with respect to what it may be to the Honourable Member for the City, in trying to ensure that something would be done definitively for the individuals.
11.50 a.m.

Sir, to me, Emmerton Lane still exists within the opportunity provided for World Cup 2007 and whether we can get the area in a condition to be able to extract any benefits that may be derived.

Mr. Speaker, in the light of that, my reference is in respect to Pickwick Gap and the fact that businesses have to be moved away from Pickwick, pushed further away and, therefore, the relevance of Emmerton comes from that reality.

Mr. Speaker, I am not here to try to beat anything but to recognise the fact that the increasing emphasis being placed is the direct consequence of the pressure that has been put and brought to bear on it.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of World Cup 2007 is extremely critical. In the same way that we are establishing committees for foreign trade and to ensure that adequate drainage, lack of stench, that the garbage collection is done on a regular basis in the City, there is real need for a Parliamentary Committee to be established in respect to World Cup 2007 because the investment is all to do with the money of Government.

Mr. Speaker, World Cup 2007 is being funded by the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated and oddly enough, it is company owned by Government which happens to be private. Therefore, in many respects except for being able to debate in an Estimates debate or utilising a Public Accounts Committee, that after seven months of negotiations in respect to the regulations, was then used as a football and kicked around that we ought to have benefited in this Lower Chamber with respect to what would

be done and to know upfront what would be done with the funds to Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated that would be poured into the company of World Cup 2007.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I thought you were moving towards a point relating to the Resolution. I would not like to strike it from the record but it has no relevance whatsoever to the Resolution. I advise you to get back to the Resolution, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, frequently I have to show the logic of what I say in here because some times it is not easy to speak from point A to B in a straightline. I am, therefore, saying that any acquisition of land around Kensington Oval must have implications for the overall performance of World Cup 2007. In that regard, the company that has been established to manage its affairs must be brought into focus with respect to the acquisition.

Mr. Speaker, can we truly say that the land is being acquired for public purpose? We have now been informed that, notwithstanding, Cap. 225, that it is not clear whether the land is being acquired for public purpose and the advice of the Solicitor General has been sought. I am therefore, saying that you cannot deny the relationship between the acquisition of land at Pickwick Gap and the potential performance of World Cup 2007 because there is a direct correlation between the two. Sir, sometimes it takes time to appreciate these issues but this is a straightforward matter.

Mr. Speaker, everything being done at Pickwick Gap is being done to facilitate the hosting of World Cup 2007. Therefore, the company that oversees the introduction of World Cup 2007 must be included in this debate as a matter of priority. I am simply saying that the same way we seek to establish a committee for other areas, we should seek to establish a committee to oversee the affairs of that particular company rather than wait until money is spent for us to be able to evaluate a year later, let us have more direct input into those affairs.

Mr. Speaker, we have spoken to this matter *ad nauseam.* There is not much I want to say or will say about World Cup 2007 but I want to end on the note of which I started. You cannot acquire 1.25 acres of land in Pickwick Gap area from ordinarily Barbadians for $1.6 million which was prime commercial property and then acquire two acres of land not less than half a mile which is not in a prime commercial area at all, next to a graveyard, without an entrance for almost $2.7 million. If you check your arithmetic, you would recognise that something has to be wrong when land which already has properties could be so lowly valued but a piece of land that, were it not for the relocation of the residents of Pickwick, would not have come into play is now being valued at $2.7 million. It is an unbelievable move on behalf of the Minister of Housing. It is an unacceptable position for the Minister of Housing to take and to believe that she can justify paying 13 property owners that small amount of money but pays a millionaire businessman who could not have even contemplated making any major use of that piece of land, now being able to fetch as high as $2.7 million, for a lot of land which in some respects is not a very usuable piece of land behind the walls of St. Leonard's Church.

Mr. Speaker, in light of that piece of evidence brought to this Chamber this morning, the Opposition has every reason to criticise the methods that have been employed in the acquisition of land in the Pickwick Gap area. Now that the information has come to light, it verifies what we had been saying all along, that the notion of private treaty which permits a commercial entity to negotiate and get that type of value for the land and property cannot be used to the disadvantage of several residents, who over the years, have increased the value of the land and properties considerably but now in a process of negotiation that is not transparent, they have been losing in the whole acquisition process around Pickwick Gap.

Mr. Speaker, that is at the heart of this debate because it does suggest that there is treatment for those who have and other treatment for those who do not have. The dispossessed, the underprivileged, the unfortunate, the low-income individual in this country, even in the circumstances where there is an attempt to improve the overall value of your property at Kensington Oval, uplift cricket, the development of tourism and give additional opportunities for enfranchisement, that in the process leading up toward that, that these persons have been disadvantaged. Sir, that cannot be a fair deal. That cannot be a fair deal.
12.00 noon.

Mr. Speaker, that is the note on which I will end my contribution. It cannot be a fair deal, let the facts speak for themselves. We have been able to clearly identify the facts; we have been able to suggest by way of hard data that what has happened in Pickwick Gap has not been to the benefit of the property owners or residents; but just a short half mile away, a very large commercial entity has benefitted substantially.

I thank, you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to the Resolution before this Honourable House. Pickwick Gap falls within the City of Bridgetown, which I have the honour to represent. In another debate before this Honourable House, I made the point, and clearly, I have to make it again. It is better that the Leader of the Opposition stick to the discipline that he knows, even though in that

discipline he has given very poor and misleading advice to his Party both in and out of Government. The Honourable Member should stick to his discipline because he does not understand how real estate works in this country and particularly in the City of Bridgetown.

Sir, I made the point last week that Bridgetown is sprawling in all directions even at the western side where we have reclaimed land at the Bridgetown Port. For example, let me draw an illustration. Whitepark Road is quietly becoming a commercial area. People who have lands fronting onto Whitepark Road are the immediate beneficiaries of that improved land value but the people who live in Lightfoot Lane cannot claim the same dollar per square foot as the person who is living at the front of Whitepark Road. Persons living in Phillip's Land, these are places Honourable Members may not know of, but they do exist in the City of Bridgetown... One day it is entirely possible that Lightfoot Lane will go commercial and years from now, those persons who are living there then will get the improved benefit of the land.

It is entirely misleading to say that commercial properties fronting onto Fontabelle and President Kennedy Drive can be valued in the same way as residential properties which have no such frontage and front onto Pickwick Gap. That is to mislead people about the value of the land. It is not surprising because that is human nature. People undervalue their lands for the purpose of land tax but when they want to sell the same plot of land, they would then overvalue it. It is human nature.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. It is misleading to say that people undervalue their lands. People do not value their lands.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Honourable Member, that is no point of order.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Sir, the point that was just made is, people question valuations every day and year in Barbados. There is a tribunal which deals with these matters. People sell their lands and properties by private treaty and they put their own values on them every day.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown said that it is the residents and not the commercial entities that undervalue their lands for tax purposes. This is what the Honourable Member said.

Asides.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Not so, Mr. Speaker, the record is there. I am speaking generally. I said that it is human nature that people will undervalue for tax purposes and for purposes of sale will overvalue but you cannot have it both ways.

Sir, I am going on to make the point that this Government, of which I am a part, is a Government that in recent years has taken thousands of people off the land tax roll; those who have been paying taxes ten years ago, do not pay land taxes today.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, do not let us get sidetracked. Please, continue.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Sir, we are talking about the acquisition of lands and all lands have a taxable value.

Asides.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Mr. Speaker, because I am and I have been the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, I have, perhaps, been involved with more relocations than most Honourable Members because of the nature of the City of Bridgetown. In all cases, when this administration has been the Government, people have been treated with fairness. Compensation has to be transparent and it has to be fair. In every case that I know of, people ended up better off rather than worse off.

Sir, let me tell you about the people of Pickwick Gap who have a series of options available to them. The Honourable Minister of Housing made the point this morning that some people have opted to be relocated; some people said to give them the money and they would relocate themselves; some people said that they want to be relocated close to the city; others said that they want to go somewhere else and others said that it does not matter to them one way or the other. Sir, these options are open to people.

Sir, the people who live at Pickwick Gap, wherever they go, they are going to have a younger and a higher valued property. Let us face it, properties along Barbarees Hill are going to be valued higher than properties at Pickwick Gap. That is the reality and that is how valuations go in Bridgetown.

Sir, there are places in Bridgetown where properties have not moved for many years and it is very difficult today to value them. You have to wait to see what happens when properties begin to be bought and sold.

Mr. Speaker, people are going to have younger properties, higher valued properties and they are going to be better off in any event. That is the point. No one who is going to be relocated by this process to accommodate the rebuilding of Kensington Oval will be worse off. In every case, people will be better off.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a lot of specious arguments that because a person has a very small lot and will be advantaged by getting a larger size lot... I could not follow the so-called logic of it. I do not know if it meant that everybody has to be beneficiaries in that way.

The point that is being made is that every one will be advantaged. No one is to be disadvantaged and that must include small businesses. Those people must not be disadvantaged.

Sir, if people feel that they are being disadvantaged, they have recourse to the law and this is nothing new. Sir, twenty years ago when the then Government acquired lands at Clapham to move the people from Chapham Lane to accommodate a sewerage treatment plant at Lakes Folly, it was for a public purpose. I did not hear any of this talk then.

I said at the time that people did not want to move and that is the reality. There is a song, which I believe is now a worldwide classic, called "Emmerton", which speaks to the point. Mr. Speaker, for me, The Mighty Gabby is a folk singer before he was a Calysonian, that is how I met him. I met him in a club house in Emmerton with his guitar playing and singing folk songs. The song "Emmerton" is now a worldwide classic but listen to the lyrics of the song and you would understand that nobody wanted to move from Emmerton.
12.10 p.m.

The Minister of Housing was correct when she started this morning saying that relocations are always traumatic in one way or another, not for everybody but for some people. Even if it is traumatic for one, it is a traumatic experience. People have misgivings about one thing or another thing. People are unsure about where they are going. They ask, can I carry my chickens with me? What is going to happen with the pig pen? All of these are considerations that people have, when they have to move but at the end of the day people are better off. There is nobody who has moved to Clapham who would be willing, I believe, today to say otherwise.

As long I am involved, Sir, that has to be the case at Pickwick and it is going to have to be the case at Emmerton. When people move, you try to accommodate what they wish as far as it is possible to do so. I know that you have limited the Minister of Housing in respect of what may be said about Emmerton. I hope that I will stay within the four corners of that limitation at this time because the debate on Emmerton will come and everything will be said at that time.

Sir, it is important that people understand there is a process. We are seeing it now only from the point of view of those to whom the relocation applies but you are also dislocating people at the other end of this process because there are people whose lands have to be acquired and you have to go through due process. The Minister was at pains to point out that you have to negotiate with those people and I am hoping and praying that the negotiation, in respect to the land at Barbarees Hill for the people of Emmerton will be as quickly done as reasonableness would allow.

Mr. Speaker, both in the case of the people from Pickwick and eventually the people from Emmerton who will move to Barbarees Hill. I am talking about this business of people having a situation where in the end they are better off – people are already indicating to me that they want to build on an extra room. One man asked if he could put on a top storey, at their own expense, of course, but people are already thinking about how they will further enhance their new properties and further improve their new properties when they get them.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is nothing new in Barbados. I remember years ago at West Terrace, the Government built a series of housing establishments and these were for so-called working class people but no sooner than the people move in, sometimes even before they move in, they are converting the garage into a room and putting a room on top of that, or they are building on another room at the side or a room at the back. I see this all the time and I always view this as a good sign. They understand the value of keeping their properties upgraded.

The truth is that for the most part, both at Pickwick and Emmerton, we are talking about people who do not fall within the tax net because the first $125 000 of the value of the property, is free of land tax. Mr. Speaker, this is what this Government has done and will continue to do, Sir. The compensation must be fair and it will be transparent.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of the people at Pickwick Gap, for the most part they are relocating to a place which is virtually within walking distance of where they used to be, Sir. These are people who go to church, school and market, as we say in my profession, in roughly the same area. They are few that we have heard of, who do not wish to be located in that place and have exercised their options to be relocated elsewhere, as they are entitled.

Mr. Speaker, Barbarees Hill, like Passage Road, Westbury Road and President Kennedy Drive, is in the process of going almost exclusively commercial. Since I came to the City, I saw it happen in River Road, Bay Street, Martindales Road and Crumpton Street. I have seen the move from residential to commercial in Constitution Road, in the heart of the City of Bridgetown, and it is happening now along Barbarees Hill.

Sir, straightaway, those people are relocating from Barbarees Hill to a place where immediately after the house is built, it may virtually double in value. This is how land valuation works in this country, so nobody is going to be worse off.

I am aware that the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Housing's Social Survey has been carried out and I have been to meetings with and without the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment. It is my business as a Member of Parliament to track this and monitor it and satisfy myself that every tiny detail is being taken into account.

Sir, this is nothing new in Barbados or in the City of Bridgetown and it should not be anything that people would try to make cheap political gain out of, Sir. We are bettering people's circumstances. People who live in the City understand that for the most part, where they live is now moving to have commercial value.

We are seeing the City of Bridgetown, Mr. Speaker, moving to a situation which obtained over 100 years ago and less than 100 years ago, where you had people operating businesses downstairs and living upstairs. Big cities everywhere in the world, and Bridgetown is no different, will always have that commercial and residential mix. It is when you begin to move away from where businesses are, where people live and do business on the same premises to where you are moving onto urban living because you see it all over Belleville and George Street. The Honourable Members on the Other Side have their Headquarters on George Street that was all residential when we were all children, which is now slowly going commercial. It is almost exclusively commercial.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, if he knows what I am speaking about, could not expect that the people in Stevenson Road would get the same value per square foot for their chattel lot, as the people who are living on the front road on George Street or Pine Road. Sir, that is the reality but one day in the future their children or their grandchildren may well be getting a commercial value for that property and that is how it works.

Mr. Speaker, these are the realities that the people in the City face up to on a daily basis. They are aware of what is going on and for the most part, I am pleased to say that the people are well ahead of the politicians on all sides, because people are not fools and people know how to value their properties.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition talking about properties being close-up in the City of Bridgetown. There is something in Barbados that we call, 'de paling'. Mr. Speaker, the paling has helped to keep social and domestic peace in this country for as long as there was a paling.

In Barbados, you define your boundaries and you either operate inside of your paling, in other words, inside of your boundaries set by law, or are trespassing on somebody else's property. For years and years in this country people use to go to the Magistrates' Court fighting over inches on either side of the paling. Barbadians always understood what the poet Robert Frost said about good fences make good neighbours. You know what is yours, and I know what is mine. We would be friends over the fence but do not trespass on my property and I will not trespass on yours.
12.20 p.m.

Sir, even in the city, as indeed in all cities, where you have no cartilage, in the way that in the country you got good backyard and space to plant kitchen gardens and big front gardens and where properties tend to be more circumscribe than in the suburbs and rural Barbados, people have an even finer and sensitive understanding of where boundaries lines lie because by definition they have to live so much closer to each other and therefore it is all the more important that people know where their boundaries are. It makes for domestic and social peace.

Sir, do not let us underestimate the people from Pickwick Gap, Emmerton Lane, Church Village or Chapman Lane. Some people would be finding the opportunity for the first time to own property out of all of this because Bridgetown is a patchwork of tenantries and a lot of people in and around Bridgetown do not own the land that their and their forebearers have been living on for years. This is the Government now giving people, particularly those people at Emmerton Lane and several of them at Pickwick Gap, the opportunity to own property for the first time which they can now pass on to their children and grandchildren and the opportunity to own property in an area where property value would continue to rise and to own property with a little bit of cartilage that they can now expand whether it be across or upwards. This is the reality.

Mr. Speaker, the other people on the other side can make all the politics they can out of it but people are not fools and they will see through the reality. When you are in your new house with your yard, your driveway and your fence and in some cases where you put on a top storey or a another extra room at the back... I hope that if they are going to do that that they would do it in time so that they could get a little thing when Cricket World Cup comes in 2007. Sir, nobody in Barbados is stupid about property, it is too precious. Nobody is going to build apartments for a two-week event. What rubbish is that, even to bring it in here? If people are thinking about building something now of course they are building it with an eye of putting it on the list because they might get 'a little pick'.

Asides.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: I am trying to agree with the Honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition for once. People are going to look for the opportunity. Sir, Pickwick Gap, Emmerton Lane, Chapman Lane, New Orleans and Cats Castle, in fact, all of the City of

Bridgetown is the host to Cricket World Cup 2007. The people of the City of Bridgetown are looking forward to be beneficiaries and perhaps frontline beneficiaries of whatever is going to take place not only for World Cup 2007 but all of the other big magnificent events that will take place over the years when Kensington becomes, as the Resolution described it, a multi-purpose facility for sporting, cultural, entertainment, business, social and other public uses. I keep telling the people in the City of Bridgetown from the platforms, in the Branch meetings and at every opportunity I interface with them in the social centres and so on that they must be in the frontline.

Mr. Speaker, everywhere in the world people living in the cities are on the frontline. They are the first to be the beneficiaries of major events which tends to take place in cities. Therefore, I want to encourage the people of the City of Bridgetown to position themselves in such a way that they can profit and be advantaged by all that they see going on in the City of Bridgetown today. I want to see more and more of them coming with their small businesses. They will begin small and will grow large. I see it happening in Bridgetown all the time.

Mr. Speaker, people like to put down the young men in the Rastafarian community but look at how they have taken over the fruit and vegetable trade in Barbados particularly in the City of Bridgetown. Sir, you can go into an establishment owned by such people in Swan Street. That is part of the ongoing social revolution in Barbados and it is only incidental to the resolution before us.

Mr. Speaker, like I said last week, all of the planned redevelopment within Bridgetown predates, by many years, any notion of World Cup 2007. We hope that we will catch up to that and benefit from it, but we must go way beyond it. From time to time in the past and from now as we see in the present and in the future people will always have to be relocated. Right now a few people are moving from Seaview Village up to Lower Burney to accommodate the bus stand in Cheapside. People are moving from Church Village to accommodate the expansion in the middle of the City of Bridgetown. People are here now moving from Pickwick Gap, and some will move from Emmerton Lane that should have been moved a long time ago. The time has arrived now, but I will talk about that on another occasion. In the future this will be the case and the people who live in cities will always find themselves in this situation and will learn to pool from it the best advantage that they can.

Mr. Speaker, it was the people at Pickwick Gap for the most part who preferred to be closer rather than be further from the City of Bridgetown. I believe that at the end of the day the persons who will move to Barbarees Hill as a result of this Resolution which we are now debating and those who have chosen to go elsewhere would find that they are much better off because many of them will get a property which they thought in their lifetime they might never have come to own. Sir, many of them who may be doubting now, because that is the nature of relocations, will find that they are going to be better off and will discover that very quickly too, because as soon as you finished building your property it increases in value, it is an improving asset. Mr. Speaker, that is why you will find women not making a fuss about a big flashy motorcar. Therefore, the more young men who would understand that, unlike buying house and land, a motor car depreciates in value from the minute it is driven out of the showroom, while on the other hand, the minute one finishes building a house, that house becomes an appreciating asset, and that makes sense.

Mr. Speaker, the people who the Opposition were saying that we must put first and who were put first, perhaps for the first time in their lives are moving to parcels of land which will appreciate for all time to come. Sir, I do not believe that in the City that what we are redeveloping and literally reinventing today, that you will ever come to a place in Barbados, unless we get to a Government which is so disastrous that even property values in Bridgetown... Sir, not even when the Democratic Labour Party was at its worst, were they able to do that to property values in Bridgetown. Therefore, for all time to come, these people will now have an appreciating asset, which their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and beyond, will be the beneficiaries of such.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION

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

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute albeit briefly to this debate. The matter before this House has to do with acquisition of properties and relocation of persons from certain parts of the area surrounding Kensington and Pickwick Gap to Barbarees Hill. I speak particularly so since

I represent the area, Barbarees Hill, which is intended to be the area where the people from Pickwick Gap are to be relocated.

Mr. Speaker, in a country the size of Barbados, development often leads to dislocation. The Honourable Member for St. James South has already acknowledged that we are talking not only of relocation but to some extent, we are talking about dislocation. Sir, development of the magnitude that is contemplated to the Kensington area, in a country the size of Barbados, a densely populated area such as the urban area of Barbados will inevitably involve in some form of dislocation.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that it necessarily has to be an evil thing. I want to lend my voice in support of the view that in this instance as is the custom in this country with practices such as this when people have to be relocated and, therefore, compensated, that it should be compensation which reflects proper terms and value.

I am of the view that every effort should be made on the part of the Government to ensure that this continues to be the custom and this is the precept which would be applied to this particular situation. We have mechanisms in place which help to determine the value which persons should be paid in compensation for properties lost or exchange. Sir, reference in this instance has clearly been made to those mechanisms. There are market indicators which are very suggestive of values obtained in transactions such as these. I have not heard anything to suggest there is anything out of the ordinary with respect to compensation being anything other than adequate to those persons who are being relocated or dislocated.

Mr. Speaker, since these persons are relocating to St. Michael West I want also to know that the alternative accommodation which is going to be provided is going to be adequate. I have heard reference made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that the area is landlocked by a cemetery, having no means of access, and it seems to suggest that these people are being located to some sort of outback area.

Mr. Speaker, Barbarees is not an outback area. It is an area that is very much the subject of development as the Honourable Member for the City indicated a short while ago. It is a reasonably populated area, highly trafficked and one of the largest church congregations in St. Michael is to be found located just off the site to which these people are to be relocated.

Mr. Speaker, the proximity of the cemetery was mentioned but I do not know that in Barbados in 2005 that it is something to be shunned. We have long left those days when living in close proximity to a cemetery would have been considered a taboo because there is a cemetery in Sandy Lane, St. James. I do not know that we have a concern to that issue.

Mr. Speaker, we are not relocating people to any inglorious outback. We are not depriving people of what is theirs without the necessary value being returned to them in compensation. I would also want to ensure that there is no removal of any currently existing opportunity for economic advantage which these people now enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, mention was made of the fact that Kensington is becoming an even more commercialised area. If one makes reference to the World Cup and beyond, then one perhaps envisions that the area would become more highly commercialised and become an area which would be associated even in greater terms with economic enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, to have these persons relocated from Pickwick Gap to Barbarees Hill could not be seen as depriving persons of the opportunity to pursue any economic endeavour which has been their want in the past or which they are likely to want to engage themselves in the future. As I said, Barbarees Hill is a large commercial area but a stone's throw removed from which they are currently accommodated and I do not see there is any robustness to be attached to that particular point, that persons are being deprived of economic advantage.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to know that persons when they are relocated are brought into a situation where there is scope for improvement of their surroundings. I think it is an ambition that stirs in the breast of every Barbadian. Sir, when you own property, over time you want to improve it as much as possible, not only improvement in the terms of value which then attaches itself, but because you want comfortable circumstances for your family to reside. I heard the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown alluded to the fact that persons to whom she spoke to, as the incumbent Representive for the City of Bridgetown, have indicated plans to improve themselves.
1.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, frequently, it is the case that when persons, are forced to relocate their circumstances have improved substantially. Sir, one can refer to the relocation effort that took place off Passage Road and Westbury Road, which might be considered to be the renewal and refurbishment of the Urban Corridor along Passage Road/Pickwick Gap/Barbarees Hill area.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the residences at Country Park Towers, adjacent to premises well-known to you, Mr. Speaker, these people are accommodated in some of the most luxurious circumstances one could imagine, having come from living circumstances which were inferior to that which they now enjoy.

Sir, as long as there is scope for improvement, as long as there is no removal of economic opportunity or relocating people to some outback area where they are detached from civilisation and comfortable living circumstances; so long as there is proper compensation for the dislocation, reflecting improved value for their property, I think that the Government is looking at the things which matter to those people. If these things are taken care of, then I say let us get ahead with the exercise.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to welcoming these folks to St. Michael West. Sir, St. Michael West seems to be one of the more depressed areas of urban Barbados. Thankfully, in recent times we have seen some changes in quality housing and road maintenance. There is a very robust programme with respect to the Transfer of Title of property, which is ongoing. We are looking forward to welcoming these people to the same quality representation now being received by the people of St. Michael West. We are seeing some degree of improvement, though we are not suggesting that we have reached our goal.

Sir, I said that I would be brief, but let me make this last point for we are dealing with a development which comes out of a desire to improve the infrastructure of cricket and other sporting and cultural facilities, but particularly to make way for the improvement of the Kensington Oval facility. Once that decision has been taken we need to move ahead as quickly as possible ensuring that the construction at Kensington Oval is a development of which we can be justly proud, which would not only service the particular needs of 2007 but the economic and cultural needs of Barbados beyond 2007.

Mr. Speaker, cricket is a legacy which we would want to preserve in this country. It is suffering these days for various reasons but nevertheless, it is a treasured part of the legacy of Barbados in respect of social, sport and cultural expression, but beyond that, we need to do what we can to preserve that legacy that comes to us through cricket.

Mr. Speaker, cricket has brought tremendous recognition to Barbados, moreso, perhaps, than politics, the good quality of our governance, our social stability or, perhaps, many of our better-known personalities, outside of cricket. Cricket has enhanced the name of Barbados. Therefore, anything we can do to develop our cricketing culture, the environment, where the sporting discipline and the cultural expression of cricket can thrive, is something worthy to be pursued, I see them in these terms.

Certainly, cricket has brought economic benefit to this country and to prominent cricketers, past and present. Tourism achievements can be attributed to cricket. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, you as a past cricketer, recogonise the numerous English travelers to Barbados when England is on tour to Barbados, creating substantial gains to the Barbados economy. Sir, when we recognise cricket as a business as well as a sport, it can create entrepreneurial development and enterprise resulting in greater gains.

Sir, cricket has been the engine of social cohesiveness, community spirit and cultural experience. I am of the view that part of the problem which we face today is the diverse interests and other sport significant extent around other sports leading to some measure of societal fragmentation and conflict that we see between individuals at the community level in some of the village life in Barbados.

It is important to our national psyche as a sport and skill and it gives us a sense of achievement. I think that sense of achievement has been suffering recently because of our fortunes on the cricket field, in terms of Barbados and the regional side. It also gives us a sense of national well-being. Sir, when we fail at cricket that sense of well-being is not as healthy or strong. I think these things are being reflected in the Barbadian society today.

Mr. Speaker, we are not simply relocating a few people from one spot to another. We are pursuing a significant aspect of development, not only of sports but of national enterprise in modernising the Kensington facility and as a result, residents must be relocated.

Sir, I am satisfied that I have heard sufficient to suggest that their needs are being taken care off. I want to stress, as the Representative for the area to which they will come, that we will ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible. I hope I am not too hasty in extending a warm welcome to those new residents to St. Michael West.

I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a short intervention because I have two areas of concerns which I think I could deal with very quickly. Those areas of concerns were brought into focus when I sat and listened to the Honourable Member for St. James South.

Sir, when the Honourable Member spoke to conditions under which an administration may choose to apply the compulsory acquisition of land, utilising the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228, and when the Government may choose to apply private treaty.

Sir, I find it difficult to accept the angle that where negotiations seemed to be difficult or could be protracted, for whatever reasons, where residents may find it necessary

to utilise all means necessary to procure the best possible terms and conditions for themselves, I am not sure that a group of residents, looking out for their own interest should necessarily have that interest undermined by Government compulsorily acquiring the land.
1.50 p.m.

I feel, Sir, that is indeed somewhat draconian, and high-handed because, irrespective of the difficulties involved, if an administration can argue that private treaty allows great alacrity, and lateral aspect with respect to negotiation, I believe that residents should have the same set of rights.

I also want to challenge a few statements by the Honourable Member for St. James South, the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment made in this Chamber last week.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you know that is not allowed and be careful as you speak then that your reference to last week does not in anyway intrude on Rule 28.11.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Yes, Sir. I can ask for your indulgence based on the rule but I would not do such, Sir, I would concur with your ruling.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, under this law, it clearly gives a Minister the right to purchase land for the Crown from a private citizen, and no Parliamentary approval is required in law.

Mr. Speaker, I have reviewed every single land Resolution brought to this Parliament since 2003 to date, and there were no Resolutions brought to this Honourable Chamber to purchase land from private citizens during that period by private treaty.

Mr. Speaker, I want to revisit my statement because I have every single one of the Resolutions here and I will reemphasize the statement made, that no Resolutions were brought to Parliament for the purchase of land between the stated period of 2003 to 2005 either by private treaty or by using the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act.

The reason why it is important, Sir, is that it allows me to go to the section in that same Act which speaks to how a Minister may sell land under the Act, and that is going to be important, because I will then speak to the Land Acquisition Act to make the correlations.

Under the said Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, Sir, a Minister must get Parliamentary approval to sell crown land. A Resolution must be brought to Parliament as indicated in section 5, regarding disposal of land.

Section 6 clearly delineates the relationship, Sir, which I will outline as follows:

If a Minister does not get prior approval of Parliament to sell Government land, but sells Government land anyhow, then that Minister must produce a statement by law, an annual statement that must be laid before both houses of Parliament with regards to dealings, actions and dispositions with respect to the lands which have been affected by that Minister without Parliamentary approval.

Mr. Speaker, that becomes important because when I look at the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228, compulsory acquisition requires the approval of both Houses of Parliament and it must occur via a Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, what is important is that Section 3 also goes on to say that nothing in this section shall be deemed to prevent the acquisition of land for public purposed by private treaty. I will go even further, Sir, to indicate that private treaty is not in any way defined in the law. There is no definition of it, Sir, none whatsoever.

Therefore, when I am hearing references to the fact that the only difference between private treaty acquisitions and compulsory acquisitions, is that fact, that notices may be published for compulsory acquisition, and you may not have to publish one for a private treaty, Sir, I have never seen one published notice for private treaties' acquisitions. Since 2003, not one such publication has been put out in the public domain.

The Honourable Member for St. James South and the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment can indicate where such publications exist and where the Resolutions are that came to Parliament, indicating that Parliamentary approval is required with respect to private treaty acquisitions.

Sir, it is important to go through it like this because it relates to what I believe law is supposed to be about, Sir. Philosophy underpins law and the philosophy of equity, in its classical philosophical terms which is a categorical imperative principle that is equitable distribution to everybody for those who do not understand.

Another fundamental principle, Sir, would be the application in the interest of the majority but that seems not to apply with respect to how this administration is utilising the two essential pieces of legislation for acquisitions. If I am to believe that embodied in this is justice, fairness and equity, then, I would want the Honourable Member to explain why it is that we could have had such a significant discrepancy with respect to a private treaty purchase of

land at Barbarees Hill to the tune of $2.7 million for a little less than two acres of land and about $1.6 million for about 1.2 acres. That is a fundamental difference.
2.00 p.m.

Sir, if, with respect to the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, this administration has the right to sell Crown lands, what I am concerned about here is that there is no agreement or requirement by private treaty for the Honourable the House of Assembly and the Other Place to be involved in any form or fashion with respect to that acquisition. Under the same Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act a Minister can purchase land on behalf of the Crown without coming to Parliament, but there is is no requirement in law for that Minister to do such.

Sir, why that is a problem for me is because when you remove Parliament from participating in an oversight capacity with respect to a Minister purchasing land on the behalf of the Crown without parliamentary approval, that cannot be in the interest of the people of this country.

Sir, I am not casting any asperations on anyone but the fact exists that without the watchdog of the type of expenditures that can ensued in many of these purchases, there is a loophole that can be utilised and can be utilised inappropriately.

Mr. Speaker, as I said my intervention was going to be short. All I wanted to point out was that under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, a Minister has the right to purchase land for the Crown without Parliament ever seeing any documents and there is no requirement in the law for such; that is wrong. I challenge anybody to challenge that.

Mr. Speaker, if the same Minister has to come to Parliament to sell land, then the Minister should have to come to Parliament to buy land. It is the taxpayers' money that is used when you are buying land and conditionalities can exist where you can sell land not in the interest of the people of Barbados, that is the point.

With respect to the compulsory acquisition of land, under the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228 parliamentary approval is required before the acquisition can occur. However, for a while a loophole exists under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act to allow such to occur, that is a critical difference.

Mr. Speaker, I am not concerned with how long X was there or Y was there. If I believe that it does not meet or stand the test in the interest of the people of Barbados, I will speak out against it. It is as simple as that Mr. Speaker. As a result, I will simply rest my case because I think I have raised the points I wanted to raise.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by suggesting that the appropriate permissions were not sought in accordance with the legislation. Sir, I would wish to refer the Honourable Member and the House to an item of Government Business on the Order Paper for Tuesday, May 24, 2005, and I am just citing one of them, Item No. 7 which reads as follow:

> "To move the passing of a Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 the sale to Armstrong Agencies Limited of a parcel of land situate at the Lower Estate in the parish of Saint Michael in this island."

Notice of this Resolution was given on May 20, 2005 and then the appropriate documents were attached.

The point therefore is that then the Honourable Member suggests that this Administration and specifically this Honourable Member moved to sell Crown lands without ever coming to Parliament, that is a gross error and a terrible falsehood because right there in the documents in his possession last week was the permission being sought by the Ministry, of the Parliament to sell or dispose of lands before that sale or disposal took place. Every aspect of all the acquisitions and every aspect of the disposal in accordance with the provisions of the law all came to this Parliament. The Honourable Member should stick to the practice of medicine, if at all he is good at that.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point, please.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: That is an unintelligible statement, Sir. You should dismiss that as an unintelligible statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, please. It is okay to dismiss it but you cannot refer to it as unintelligible.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: That is a falsehood, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a falsehood? So, I would not allow you to say that.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I will respond to the Honourable Member because what I spoke to is the purchase under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act. Sir, I emphasise most categorically that I was referring

to why certain Ministers have the right to purchase land without parliamentary involvement. What nonsense am I hearing, Sir?

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: On a point of order. Again, the Honourable Member seeks to mislead the House, mired in confusion as he is. The reality is that when we are seeking to purchase, equally this Parliament gives permission. It comes to this House and the Parliament says yes or no. Sir, I would have an opportunity to reply and I would take care of him.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: None of that please.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the problem comes with respect to differentiation with the usage of the two pieces of legislation that is why some Honourable Members in here are also so confused. With respect to the compulsory acquisition of land under the Land Acquisition Act you must come to Parliament. Under the Land Acquisition Act there is a compulsory acquisition. It is for private treaty acquisition where you do not have to come to Parliament. If the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment says that I am incorrect, then let her tell the Honourable Chamber when any private treaty acquisitions were ever brought to this House.

Asides.

2.10 p.m.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, any member of the public can search the records of Parliament for land acquisitions that were brought between 2003 and 2005. Sir, I would want the Honourable Member and Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment to produce the list of resolutions where acquisitions by private treaties were done, under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act. That is the reason I spoke to the law, to deal with the discrepancies and how they could be used.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, Honourable Member, you will get your chance to speak.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, this Parliament has a chronological entry of all the land resolutions debated in this Honourable Chamber and I would advise the Honourable Members on the Other Side, to access that information and to acquaint themselves with the fact, that not one resolution with respect to compulsory acquisition of land, has ever came to this Honourable Chamber by private treaty.

Sir, in addition, now we are somewhat in a tantrum from the Other Side, I would want to find out if any financial statements were laid in this Honourable Chamber, as is required by law, with respect to Crown Lands(Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, at Section 6, where prior approval of the House was never given. I want to find out if any financial statements were laid, explaining as indicated with respect to the land deals that would have been acquired or effected by the Minister without approval. Sir, let them bring the information and prove that the Opposition is incorrect.

Mr. Speaker, I rest my case.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to participate in this debate. Sir, I would say that I do not believe we should be divided on what this Bill is about. We are here debating and planning for Cricket World Cup, 2007, and I believe that we should not be divided at all. I believe that Barbadians are looking forward to Cricket World Cup, 2007, for the benefits that would accrue to this country. I also do not think that we should be looking to score any cheap political points whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, on the point about the allocation and relocation of people, with some wanting to be moved, while others do not, people, over the years living in a neighbourhood, become emotionally attached to their neighbourhoods. Therefore, for one reason or other, after living in a neighbourhood for so long, amongst family members, children, proximity of schools and homes, they become attached. Sir, I agree that people would not want to move after such involvement in their neighbourhood for so many years.

Mr. Speaker, people were moved from the Chapman Lane area to Clapham, and I guess upfront that some of them did not want to move, but I have seen the development of those persons' homes. People are glad that they have, in fact, moved, as they look at their present neighbourhood, the value of their houses and what can be done to them and their standard of living, *et cetera*, which would have improved over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the same thing would happen to the people in the Pickwick Gap area who are moving to Barbarees Gardens. These people are not being put in any backwoods. The Barbarees Gardens would be a kind of upscale or middle-class neighbourhood, with a driveway, *et cetera.* I believe that over the years, as the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has said, a number of persons have been inquiring about making upgrades or improvements to their homes, for they would only have to seek Town Planning permission in order to do those improvements. As I said, it will augur well for those persons, as they try to upgrade their standards of living.

Mr. Speaker, the other point I would want to make, would be in relation to Cricket World Cup, 2007. Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West talking about people adding apartments to their houses for a two-week duration and having two weeks' income, and that people cannot be expected to build now, while waiting for Cricket World Cup, 2007. He also spoke about those persons having to rent for only short periods, then the houses will be needed for Cricket World Cup, 2007. Sir, I do not see it that way.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, all of the countries that hosted Cricket World Cup, have seen an upsurge in visitors to their countries. We can see Cricket World Cup in Barbados as moving Barbados from a dot, then Barbados will become like a moon to the world, where people would be able to see the country, because of the fact that the Barbados Tourism Authority would embark on a very serious programme, where they would be doing more marketing, to encourage people to visit the country. I believe that we will do extremely well.

Barbados will be seen as the home base for those persons coming to the Caribbean if we have a number of matches played, as well as the finals. We would see people going to other Caribbean islands, but would be using Barbados as a base, where they would have rental accommodations in Barbados, where these people would go to other islands and would stay at the same places, when returning to Barbados.

Sir, any person who is thinking about an investment, can take the opportunity to borrow to add to their existing premises. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West talking about feeling uncomfortable with having a number of people living in his house, among his family. Sir, when one sets up an apartment like that, these apartments would be fully furnished and self-contained, instead of being part of a person's house.
2.20 p.m.

Sir, many people are looking for accommodation in Barbados because Government cannot provide accommodation for everyone. People would now have an opportunity to improve their homes to make income especially retired persons who are into their sunset years. They can use the opportunity to add to their house in order to make additional income to their pension.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, we have seen what sports had done for the Caribbean. The name of Sir Garfield Sobers has been linked to Barbados over the years and will push Barbados further on the map. We see the same thing happening in Trinidad with Brian Lara and we see the entire Caribbean as one with the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. Sir, after the success of Obadele Thompson, Barbados is now known throughout the world and with World Cup 2007, it will further put Barbados on the map.

Sir, I support the Resolution. I thank you.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter the debate and to say that unlike some of my comrades, I beg to differ on this particular issue. I want to say that we should be happy that a Minister has brought a private treaty to this Parliament for the first time since I have been in this Chamber for eleven years.

Mr. Speaker, Cap. 225, Section 4,5 and 6 do not ask the Minister to do what she has done but as a good P. J. Patterson, the Honourable Member recognises that she should hold the confidence of Parliament. The Honourable Member has done exactly that and has not hidden what other Ministers have hidden from this Parliament. In the light of this, we should not be castigating that Minister but should castigate all other Ministers who took the money of the taxpayers and did not account to Parliament on how it was spent.

Sir, I remember a vesting came to this House for land...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is a serious imputation you are making. You said they took the money of the taxpayers and did not account for it.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, that is true. The law says that....

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I know you are about to explain what the law says but I know you do not mean what you said. Could you please rephrase it. The word "taking"....

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, you are interpreting my speech and you are wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, in that case, I am going to ask you to withdraw those words.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I have not said anything wrong. You are going into my mind.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you said that the Ministers took the taxpayers money.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, if that is your ruling, I accept it. As a good schoolboy to the headmaster, I accept your ruling as the headmaster.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John can bear me out on this point because we were the only two members on This Side at the time when the Odle's lands came to this Parliament and we sought to get information on the sale price of the land. We also sought to get information on the price the Government paid Vaucluse for the land but to this date, we have not got one piece of information on those private treaties that the Government went into when they bought the land. In the light of what was done in Parliament prior today, I cannot fault the Minister for bringing this information to Parliament. We, as an Opposition, have always sought to get this type of information but the Minister has held this Parliament in her confidence and provided the information.

Mr. Speaker, this tells me that beyond this particular issue, the Minister has nothing to hide. The question must be asked how this Minister can be so opened on this particular issue but all the other Ministers hid from Parliament. Sir, we need to find out why. We must ask what was so secretive about the other deals that they could not come to Parliament.

Sir, I do not believe there were any secrets in them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are again making serious imputations about former Ministers of Housing. My understanding of this Resolution is that it is about compulsory acquisition. Are you saying that there were other occasions when there were compulsory acquisitions and the Ministers did not inform Parliament or are you saying that there were occasions when there were private treaties and the Minister did not inform us? If so, I have to ask you the question. Is there anything which says that the Minister has to inform Parliament about the price when there is a private treaty.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I know you listen well to what Honourable Members say. From the beginning of my speech, I quoted Cap. 225, Section 4, 5 and 6. If you want to see a copy, I can ask the Clerk to pass a copy. It states that the Minister does not have to inform Parliament even though it should be changed. It is clear after today that an amendment has to be made to Cap. 225, Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act because we are learning things we did not know before.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that the Ministers did anything wrong when they did not bring it to Parliament. I always argue as well that the Land Acquisition Act needs to be changed. It is clear to me that this Minister understands the importance of openness. She held her comrades in Parliament in her confidence and gave them the necessary information to guide them. I want to congratulate the Minister on this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate the Minister again for admitting in this Parliament that Government might have contravened the laws of Barbados by not seeking first to find out what was public usage. Sir, they were warned on many occasions from This Side of the House that they might have found themselves in trouble and there were given advice how to get out of it. I even said to them that they should buy out Barbados Cricket Association and then there would not be a legal problem.

Mr. Speaker, I also told Parliament that the Solicitor-General gave advice to this Government about the Windsor Hotel, owned by Hal Martin, when they wanted to buy it for the Gems of Barbados. I provided all the information to this Parliament to show them I was not trying to be mischievous in any way.

Asides.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do not be distracted. Proceed, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We have the English who want to tie themselves to their roots but in another breath they want to get rid of Nelson to make people believe that they are politically expedient.

Sir, on the one hand they want to hold on to the Queen but on the other they still want Republican status.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what has that to do with the compulsory acquisition?

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, they are caught up with the language.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do not worry about those. Just proceed, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that there is enough information in this Parliament to show that this Government is guilty of ignoring the advice that has been given on Kensington and the land acquisition. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown understands the point that was made by the Opposition that the location is wrong.

Sir, let me tell you why it is wrong. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown argued that land at Kensington cannot have the same value as land in

Barbarees Hill. It is a very good point. This is so because there is no traffic congestion or potential for expansion at Barbarees Hill, but at Kensington there is congestion. I want to congratulate the Honourable Member for being frank with her colleagues for telling them they have put World Cup 2007 the wrong place**.**

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, those are her words and you can check the records from Hansard. When the Honourable Member said that they undervalue the property at Pickwick Gap, she said, "Oh no. The land at Barbarees Hill will be more expensive". When you look at the logic, it could only be traffic confusion. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown understands the problems of the city but they would not listen to her. They put a bottleneck in a bottleneck.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. One minute, please. Could I have some order? Just make your point of order.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, I have not spoken in this debate and I would like him to strike that from the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: That must be struck from the records.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member were ordered to be expunged from the record.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Can I have a Standing Order, Sir. The Honourable Member cannot hear an aside. I am saying that if the only thing that the people of St. Lucy deserve are prisoners, we are going to keep them and use the bright lights as an attraction. If that is what the Government believes that we are entitled to, we are going to use it to our benefit. They had positives and they destroyed them. They had all the money that they want and we still have one cricket field.

Sir, I am saying today that we are going to make a positive out of the prisoners because we are going to make it a tourist attraction. We know how to convert positives out of negatives.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Minister of Housing's comment, to lawyers and valuers with regard to the residents of Pickwick Gap. I am shocked that after all of this advice, this amount is now being paid to the small landowners in Pickwick Gap.

Sir, there should be a call for a public investigation into the amount of money that was paid to the private sector. I congratulate them for the amount of money which they received. I am also saying that this Parliament should make comparable compensation to residents. We now know the true value of the properties in Pickwick Gap. I am saying that we should compensate those owners in Pickwick Gap at the same rate as the commercial sector.

Sir, if this Government is truly a Government that cares about poor people, they will accept this and refocus on what has occurred.

In light of what the Minister stated in this Honourable House, lawyers should resubmit the claims on behalf of their clients. They should write the Ministry of Housing and tell them that they were not aware of the information that was put to the Floor of this Honourable House by the Minister and now that they have the information, they want to resubmit the claims on behalf of those poor persons in Pickwick Gap.

Mr. Speaker, with this new information, those compensation packages cannot be appropriate for those persons, they need to be revisited.

We also have to understand that at the end of the day the Government must tell us where they are getting the money to finance Kensington Oval. Sir, the same way that the Government found money to solve the problems that they created around Kensington Oval. I know that they have already found the money to rebuild Kensington Oval. I also know that forty-five cents per litre is not the world price for oil because I have worked it out. I have done surveys around the world and it is clear that the price per litre of fuel charged in Barbados is overloaded to compensate for the cost to rebuild Kensington Oval.

Mr. Speaker, they should tell the public of Barbados that is what they are doing. They did it with culture and now they are doing it with Kensington Oval. A precedent was set before and now it is acted upon. The Honourable Minister knows that the price of fuel is falling and if he did not know before, he has been forewarned. As a good boy from the rural area, I know that he will make the necessary correction. I have confidence in this Minister to make the correction on this particular issue, because he is a rural boy.

Sir, I can see the haste with which the Government is trying to complete Kensington Oval. There was no need for them to do that. If this were really an expansion, a Government with ideas and creativity, would have gone for a new spot at Windward, St. Philip or some other place in St. Peter, St. Joseph or even North Stars in St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, we would not have to wait until after the completion of a test match to commence building because the construction of the building would have been half finished and we would have a multipurpose complex in Barbados and we would still have our lovely Kensington

Oval with its historical value that the Barbados National Trust is always preaching. How can you destroy things like this? We should build our tourism on these things.

Sir, when we are finished there will not be any Kensington Oval. It would be some new building because all the historic value would be gone.

Mr. Speaker, we are given the impression that when we go to Kensington Oval, the Kensington Stand and the Challenor Stand are going to be the same. They are not going to be the same. We could have retained everything that we had at Kensington Oval and build on the historic value and would have a multipurpose complex where all the sporting organisations would be happy.

Sir, after World Cup 2007 is finished, $100 million would be spent and we would then have to decide what to do with Kensington Oval. Nobody can tell us who is going to benefit from it. Mr. Speaker, I want the Barbados Cricket Association to tell me what would be their share of the profit in this project and how it would be arrived at. I have already said that the best thing would be for the Government to acquire the BCA as well, to get it out of this legal bind.
2.40 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am serious. Get 100 per cent because they are in an acquiring mood.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, how much would you advise that you would pay for each person in the BCA?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, it is not for us at this Parliament to advise. We deal with a sum, not the break down of the sum. We deal with the macro aspect and not the micro, so I am not going to allow anybody to take me to the micro when I am dealing with the macro aspect. Sir, that policy decision is a boardroom decision. It is not for this Parliament. We have to deal with how we are going to get out of the legal bind that this Parliament has been encouraged to get into, Sir, and I am only trying to solve the problem today.

Sir, there was a lot of talk about value in the area. All of us in here would know that value is not dictated by the particular project. It is first dictated by the activity around the particular projects. Those householders in Pickwick Gap need not worry about any ignorant valuations that have been sent to them.

Sir, what they need to do is to worry about the valuations of the properties around them that have gone into construction, the commercial activities, because a lot of people are saying they are not commercial, but if commercial activity is going on around them, that is what would influence it, Sir.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is in breach of the rules of the House. The characterisation of the valuations as ignorant, is not only a reflection of the Honourable Members of this House and the person who holds the portfolio of housing, but is also a very serious allegation against the technical officers, like the Commissioner of Land Tax, the Chief Legal Officer and the Officers involved in the process.

I really think, Sir, that the Honourable Member should be made to withdraw those comments which should be expunged from the record. It is really a very serious aspersion, not only on the Honourable Members of the Administration on This Side but, certainly on the Civil Servants involved in the process. Sir, to say to the public that they are getting ignorant valuations, really is to put very prejudicial characterisation in their minds.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Chair's interpretation of it was that it was just a colloquial expression. Just proceed, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The whole problem is that some of us want to be mischievous in this particular issue and that is why they would draw this red herring. Sir, ignorant means, not a true reflection of what it should be...

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not worry with that, please, just proceed please.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, any of us who understand exactly what occurs as it relates to valuations will know it is the activity in the area that would dictate the Land Tax Bill of the area.

I am saying, Sir, based on the activities that are going on in the area that the properties in Pickwick Gap will increase in value. Therefore, that is the value we will have to use and that is why I made the particular statement earlier on, which I will not repeat.

There are some of us who can appreciate these finer points, when we are dealing with our own property but when we are dealing with poor people, we do not want these particular points to be made. I cannot understand how a party that claims to be a Labour Party cannot appreciate this particular point.

Mr. Speaker, what is also dangerous about this thing is that when we had the urban tenantry debate in this House, I said to this House that you cannot allow people who

are living in urban tenantries to remain on the same size land that the Government was compulsorily acquiring from the landlords and keep them on that same size. They brought a Resolution to this Parliament. They even amended the Constitution, Sir, to allow people to remain on land that sometimes you could not get through the two 'palings'. You know what is a paling, Sir, but if you want me to say, guard wall, I can, if you do not know what is a paling.

Sir, this argument is now being used by this Parliament that you must give people lands of the adequate size so that they can have all the necessary amenities. I am happy to hear this particular argument today. Sir, when the Constitution was amended for political reasons to capture the imagination of the public just before elections, and people in here said to me that I would have paid for taking the particular stance I took, I am happy that I did not pay in a negative way but I paid in a positive way because those poor persons whom they thought could not understand the value of the point, understood the value of the point.

Today, Sir, years after, this same Government is now trying to use the same argument to capture some votes in the City, now they realise that Patrick Todd is working hard in the City and brought the Prime Minister down to the City to save one of his Senior Ministers. They are now going to give adequate sizes of land to the people.

I would have hoped they would have done that to the whole of urban Barbados when they amended the Constitution. I know, Sir, that you would fight hard to ensure that the next time it occurs in an urban tenantry, you will side with me and not with the others.

I thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Let me see if I can bring some semblance of order and goodwill back to this debate.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that you are not conducting the affairs of this House properly, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the Speaker really agrees with the Opposition. I believe there is no need for you to make such inferences.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: I withdraw that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on a very serious note, I believe that there is nothing more important at this time that we could be doing in this House, than really seeking to get Barbados prepared for World Cup 2007. I do not know, during the days of this debate, as a matter of fact, I know you cannot reflect, Mr. Speaker, with past debates..

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I believe that in both debates relative to the acquisition of land, for the improvements of the environs of Kensington and Kensington Oval itself, the Opposition has been with us on the issue of improving Kensington Oval and the land around it for World Cup 2007. We are not at odds on the issue of how we need to upgrade the facility to bring cricket in Barbados and the region into the modern world. We have all agreed on this, Sir.

This issue however, Mr. Speaker, of turning this debate into a debate on the concept of how you acquire land and the issue of the law under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, is a whole debate in itself. Sir, what has happened in this debate is that rather than focussing on the issues at hand and allowing Barbadians to clearly understand from Both Sides of the isle and particularly on That Side of the isle, the opportunities available to them, as we improve the facilities for the people in Pickwick Gap, around Kensington Oval and for Barbadians on the whole, we have crowded and clouded this debate with nonsense of whether or not the law in itself...

Asides.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot use that word either, please.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the way the debate has gone because instead of focussing on the importance of the action being taken here today relative to the properties and the upgrading of Kensington, we have gone into a debate relative to Government's policy on land acquisitions. What they have done was to deal with things like valuations and in my opinion have cast serious aspersions on the character of the Commissioner of Land Tax and all the other officers who deal with issues of valuations. Valuation has nothing to do with any Minister of Government.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. At no time have I challenged the valuations from the Commissioner of Land Tax.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member did not refer to you. That is no point of order, please.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: What they have done today is to take public officers who are in the people's confidence and brought them down in the eyes of the public. Valuations have nothing to do with the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment. Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned what they have done is to deal with the issue of valuation trying to make people, particularly the people in Pickwick Gap, believe that they have been in some way disadvantaged relative to some large businessman and large landowner somewhere else. Mr. Speaker, I think that is unparliamentary and it is wrong.

Sir, there is nothing in the law that demands that any private treaty come to Parliament. Sir, if we wanted to acquire a stretch of land, let us say 100 pieces of land, to build a road, are we going to bring every single Resolution to the Parliament. Sir, you understand the bureaucratic nature of Government. To do that Government would literally grind to a halt and the only thing that you would do in here would be to deal with land acquisitions. Sir, they should not try to bring that as a red herring across the trail, they should understand how Government works. Sir, the only one who would really understand that is the Honourable Member for St. John, but he does not come here too often. None of the others have ever had any experience in Government and all they do is talk.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is actually confusing himself because he is saying that if you have a number of acquisitions, that you should use private treaty to avoid...

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: You just said that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member never said those words, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, yes, he said those words.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, let me proceed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, just proceed, just make your point of order, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The Honourable Member said that it would not make sense to have to come back to Parliament so often and therefore it makes sense to have the process of private treaty such that you would not have to come back and confuse Parliament so frequently, which is contrary to what he should be saying.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I never said anything about confusing Parliament. Mr. Speaker, I merely made a statement relative to the practicality of how you deal with Government's business. Sir, who is better to make the law than those who understand the law? Many legal luminaries, of which there are none to be found on the Opposition benches, have passed through this Parliament and the Democratic Labour Party, and they had the opportunities available to them under the power of the law vested in this House to change that law. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that in their wisdom they determined that the only thing that is relevant in this case is that if you bring every private treaty to Parliament, Government business would literally grind to a halt.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to go further. Government has had its own checks and balances in place.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, under the section 225 a private treaty cannot come to Parliament, so the Honourable Member is misleading the House in saying that we are seeking to get private treaties to come to the House.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor-General, the Commissioner of Land Tax and their officers allow us to have the checks and balances that are necessary to ensure that these private treaties are acceptable to the public. Sir, if the Honourable Members on That Side are not satisfied with the procedures that they have, I would suggest that they bring a Private Members' Bill and seek to amend the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act. They had years in Government and they never changed it. Mr. Speaker, I want to go on because I think I have made my point.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, Honourable Members, and I speak to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, just control yourself, please.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is giving the House the impression that

I attacked the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment. All I did in this Parliament was to praise the Minister for exposing and bringing everything to Parliament. I have not criticised the Minister. Sir, I think the Honourable Member should understand what exactly is happening where and stop getting angry because I praised the Minister. Sir, it was not me who said that he does not know how to deal with the houses after 2007.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me hear what the Honourable Member is saying, please.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: On a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy need not think that I fear any attack from him.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order, please?

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: It is a point of elucidation, Sir. I would liken it to an attack from a fly, no more lethal than that.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I believe that Government has embarked on a very ambitious programme to deal with the reconstruction of Kensington Oval. I do not share the view that Kensington Oval is going to lose any of its character or any of the other things listed by the Barbados National Trust. Again, that is red herring dragged across the trail. Sir, I read somewhere that after Lords, Kensington Oval was the second or third most desirable ground in the world when it comes to cricket.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that was and will be the same thing, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order, please.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am at a loss to understand this logic.

Mr. Speaker, given Kensington Oval in its present form and given what is demanded for Cricket World Cup 2007, I do not see how any Government could have done anything else but seek to refurbish and redo Kensington Oval. I do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that it should have been anywhere else but exactly where it is now, the Mecca being redeveloped. Sir, I do not think that Kensington Oval would lose any of its character. As far as I am concerned I think the upgrade would do a lot for Kensington Oval because I think more people would desire to come to a new and refurbished and upgraded Kensington Oval.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with an issue that was raised by the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, relative to the issue of the construction of accommodation and the like for this said event that we are dealing with. Mr. Speaker, the issue of building apartments or making provision for people to have loans or some other facility for building accommodations for Cricket World Cup 2007, is not only placed within the context of Cricket World Cup 2007 alone, it expands upon the programme that is available to the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, for people who already provide home accommodation.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the concept of the Home Accommodation Programme and providing money is not only for Cricket World Cup 2007, but to build a pool of accommodation that would be known the world over, in which, after the Cricket World Cup 2007, people would know how to market their facility, how to manage it, and what are the standards for security, for food and beverage, *et cetera.* Sir, the concept of the programme is that Barbadians should be playing in the tourism sector, at a level which is more than just being maids, housekeepers, *et cetera.* It does not have anything to do with being prepared for a two-weeks window and then moving onto something else. Therefore, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West believes that is what it is, he is, again, wrong, as he is usually.

Sir, given the fact that when we look at the accommodation figures and projections for 2007, we are at a stage where we think that we are going to be approximately five thousand rooms short, given what is already available for visitors, given what is on the cards for building out, and given what is for cruise ships option, *et cetera.* Therefore, we already have a cadre of persons in Barbados plying under the bed-and-breakfast programme but in many instances, many of them are not governed by rules and regulations. They do not have easy access to capital, many of them are simply plying in an environment in which they are not competent enough to play.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is misleading the House with respect to his information. If the Honourable Member believes his own data that the current level of occupancy in Barbados is as low as is stated in the official publications, then there is no great need for the

bed-and-breakfast accommodation. In fact, what the Honourable Member is saying is that there are about five thousand rooms, which are not currently occupied at the level at which he should be comfortable. Therefore, the need to have people building a number of new accommodation would be unnecessary because the occupancy level would decline even further, given the official data that is published in documents published by the Barbados Central Bank and by the Barbados Tourism Authority, unless the Honourable Member does not believe his own data.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, occupancy levels at this time is irrelevant to what we are talking about. We are talking about the projected number of visitors that we will have in the window for 2007, and the number of rooms that we deem necessary for them. What we are saying is that in a two-week's window, these would be the number of persons who would be in Barbados and these are the number of rooms that would be needed to accommodate that number of people.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Member is therefore saying, is that we have to increase our accommodation, only to take account of the fact that there will be a bursting at the seams for a two-week period and, thereafter...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, the Honourable Member did not mention a thereafter. He did not get that far.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, are you listening to the debate?

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am asking you to control yourself. I listen, just as well as you, and you would notice that I do not fall asleep. There is no need for that.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: No, you are not.

Mr. SPEAKER: But he did not say that. He got as far as what you said at first. He did not get any further in his statement just now.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, we have, on our books, approximately six thousand rooms available. By our calculation, about 20 per cent of those rooms have found themselves unmarketable by tour operators, *et cetera.* Sir, I suspect that about four thousand of those rooms go into the tour operators programmes but even so, the other two thousand rooms are used at sometime during the year. What really pulls the national average down would be those rooms at the bottom which do not get themselves into the tour operators programmes because 80 per cent of people who come here, come on tour operators programmes, and we would want to upgrade those rooms to make them available to tour operators. In addition, to the six thousand rooms, we have estimated that we are going to need more than four thousand rooms to accommodated the influx of people coming in for Cricket World Cup, 2007.

Mr. Speaker, the bed-and-breakfast programme is only about six hundred rooms. Therefore, this programe would allow those businesses that are located, for example, along Paynes Bay, St. Lawrence Gap, Silver Sands, *et cetera*, that are engaging in the business of bed-and-breakfast facilities, but do not meet the basic standards for home accommodation, to allow them to upgrade their properties but also to teach them the standards that are necessary in most jurisdictions for bed-and-breakfast facilities.

Sir, if someone were to eat at one of those places and got food poisoned or mugged, what image would that have on a tourism destination? What the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport is seeking to do, is to bring those people on stream, to offer them loan facilities at very soft rates, to upgrade their properties.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I join the debate, perhaps not willingly. Again the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is giving a very false impression to this Honourable Chamber. I am saying that if there is going to be a windfall in Barbados for two weeks and one determines that one ought to spend this money allowing Barbadians to invest in new accommodation, are you going to able to sustain that level of visitor beyond the two-week's period to justify the investment?

Sir, more importantly, if the Minister of Tourism and International Transport is saying that he is worried about those room that are currently occupied because they do not meet the standard, is he suggesting that hotels cannot upgrade existing rooms of that type and be more accommodating and more reasonable to a visitor, than asking an average Barbadian to add an additional room to his or her home? Is the Honourable Member suggesting that a hotelier cannot so improve his property or rooms, to be able to make that accommodation?

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, this is a Party that talks about looking after the poor black man. Sir, there are two facilities available; one is a $30 million facility that

allows the two thousand rooms that I have talked about, that may not be easily marketable, to upgrade themselves and to be able to come up to standard.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have to withdraw that statement and it must be struck from the record.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: The Honourable Member needs to ask how many rooms are coming under the home accommodation programme. I have already explained that the majority of people seeking this facility are already people who are plying under the home accommodation programme. These are not new people and already a number of them have been seeking to upgrade, having already made plans or are already plying in the pool. Sir, because we do not have a proper bed-and-breakfast portfolio as a part of our entire room complement, we are missing out on a number of people who want to come to the country, to stay in places where they would be more in a family environment than they are now.

Mr. Speaker, this Honourable Member constantly talks about things of which he has no knowledge. Sir, the Honourable Member needs to ask about the number of rooms that are being added under the Home Accommodation Programme.

Asides.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please control yourself.

Hon. N A. LYNCH: Sir, thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let me give you a caution. This matter was raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. His point was brief and did not relate to the Resolution before the House but I allowed it. It is not a major point of debate relating to this Resolution and I would wish you to conclude on that point.

Hon. N A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, the number of rooms that are going to be available for people in the home accommodation programme are few compared to the pool of rooms that we have.

Sir, we need to get Barbadians involved at that level because we are not getting the type of visitors who want to stay in a home accommodation setting because we do not have the quality or number of rooms. The legacy of the World Cup would allow people to understand how to market, control, deal with these issues and to have their legitimate place among the accommodation for Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, going back to the Resolution itself, Government is on the right track in the way it is going toward the redevelopment of Kensington and how we accommodate those who live in the environs of Kensington which is now to be redeveloped.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Minister of Housing, the Minister of Sports, those involved in World Cup 2007 for the speed at which Barbados is going to make this island ready for World Cup 2007.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition agree with Resolutions in Parliament and then seek to draw every red herring across the trail to confuse Barbadians when the Members of the Opposition are supposed to be stewards and guardians of poor people in Barbados. Sir, they seek to pull down everything that is done to help poor people.

Mr. Speaker, I say to Barbadians that the grass is not always greener on the other side but that the greenest grass is under their feet and not to get mixed up with the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central will now bring some calmness to this debate.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, the saga continues. When one looks at the tone, tenor and aggravated argument coming from the Other Side, one has but to reflect on what can be termed confusion in the whole redevelopment of Kensington Oval which includes the relocation of both businesses and residences from within the immediate environs of Kensington Oval.

The Opposition long ago stated its commitment to the development of a modern facility in sports particularly the sport of cricket which is essentially the lifeblood of Barbadians. This does not mean that as we move towards that particular exercise that we should by necessity trample on what persons might consider their rights and privileges in the particular area. As we on This Side look at the particular Resolution today to deal with the compulsory acquisition of 13 parcels of land ranging from 296.6 square metres to 643 square metres in the Pickwick Gap and other Resolutions which have gone before dealing with acquisition of land to complete this project, that we should forget, discard and remove ourselves from the interest of the people.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes one gets the feeling that the people on whom these matters impact are being shafted by the State. I use the word "shafted" to mean a quality or action of being pierced and not within the normal Barbadian vernacular that is used under the street lights even though the two can be placed side by side sometimes. Sir, people should never feel that they are being hurt by the State.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the language of the people themselves as they sought to espouse their particular concerns. We have seen the contortion of Government particularly those who lead on this particular matter relative to the relocation and resiting of the citizens of Barbados from that particular locale. Even now persons are uncomfortable with the manner in which they were treated and dissatisfied with the places to which they would be located, in this instance, Barbarees Hill. These are concerns that a caring sensitive Government or those who act on behalf of the Government should take into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, one recognises that this type of transition is not always as smooth as possible. There are persons across the length and breadth of Barbados who can speak to their movement from a particular area from which they had strong ancestral roots and because of developments taking place in the wider society, they had to be relocated. The annoyance stemmed from being pushed around by people because their understanding of the process might not be as clear as the technocrats or the Ministers who carry out the process.

Sir, the Opposition is part of the process of governance and Government and the Opposition have always to explain to the people. If the technocrats and bureaucrats are part of the process, they cannot avoid scrutiny as well. It is unfortunate that on some occasions, Ministers of the State claim unto themselves some things and on other occasions, they pass it easily on to the technocrats that we have in the public service. Let us not fool ourselves that our bureaucracy is critical to the management of State function because it has always been that way. Sir, inserted in there is a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary to help deal with the total process.

On this occasion, I do not know the Commissioner of Land Taxes nor I might never meet him. I do not know any Government employee who carries out surveys or that values land and I might meet them in life but they are involved in the process with those whom they have meetings and discuss these issues. Sir, they sit on Fridays in their meetings and discuss these issues and the input of the Minister or Ministers is always valued. Sometimes the voice of the Minister or Ministers is taken as the voice of Gospel and there might be adjustments to a particular thought process which was first visited on the table. Sir, sometimes we pretend that we do not live in the real world in this Honourable House. The real world should be the one that we embrace because it is the real world that impacts upon the people everyday. This morning the Honourable Minister said that they are persons in Pickwick Gap who have a salvaging business or a small car repair shop. She used three examples. However, they were persons in Pickwick Gap who were using their square footage to make a living for themselves and families. Therefore, by any stretch of the imagination, that process must also be considered commercial.
3.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we are of the view that we must have 15 000 or 20 000 square feet of land with a stone structure, with massive importation from China, and the United States of America where goods are produced cheaply, to be considered a commercial enterprise. That kind of thinking must be resisted even now because it is a dangerous form of thinking.Therefore, that is why you could have between Pickwick Gap and Barbarees Hill, the location for some of the residents from Pickwick Gap, such a difference in the pricing of the land.

I believe that those who are more comfortable with mathematics can work it out and determine what is the cost per square foot placed on the land of the residents of Pickwick Gap, which is targeted as commercial property, you would see the extent of the difference relative to that.

It is unfortunate that at critical times like these, and it happened before, that persons were removed from their properties by State action. We have inserted very deliberately in the minds of Barbadians and we have captured people by saying that we are fortunate as a region and that Barbados is most fortunate to host the finals of Cricket World Cup. Therefore, you must not say, do, or even conceive anything in your mind which persons might consider to be detrimental to the overall project. The redevelopment of Kensington Oval is only one part of the wider project relative to Barbadians.

Sir, that is itself a dangerous argument because it is saying that persons must subjugate their rights, interests and emotions to this construct called World Cup 2007. I cannot embrace that kind of thinking, even though I support World Cup, as a loyal citizen of Barbados and our achievements thus far in this exercise. I would want to see that before anyone lands here in Barbados, that the road along Highway 6 and 7 are done in such a way that vehicles can move the visitors to their designated spots for transfer to Kensington Oval to watch cricket, and hopefully the West Indies team would be there.

Mr. Speaker, every right must not be subjugated to the might of the State and the State functionaries in this particular exercise. If we are fortunate and Australia or

England makes it to the Finals along with the West Indies, then the people would be moving in droves. The Bermudians would be visiting with 5 000, the British with 15 000 and others will come. We will be able to make a few shillings from that particular exercise.

Sir, they must go unless one absconds and hides in the cane fields of St. George North, they will take their planes and return from whence they came. Therefore, when one listens to the argument from the Other Side, it seems to suggest that we must now put all our eggs in one basket called World Cup 2007. Therefore, we would have a bounty from the tourist sector and we would have a bounty from those who will add on three or four bedrooms on their homes. Sir, because there is this revolving fund, they will rush to get loans in order to satisfy their particular demands.

Mr. Speaker, this has nothing to do with the normal process of Barbadians who always look to improve where they live. There is nothing wrong for the persons of Pickwick Gap who will be relocated to Barbarees Hill, even before they move, to have a discussion about adjustments relative to where they are going to be. Maybe they are talking about readjustments because they might be expressing some dissatisfaction with what they are going to get at Barbarees Hill.

Mr. Speaker, that might be a process of thought that they might be having now. Therefore, they are putting it in the mind of the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown. She said that persons spoke to her about further developing their particular housing in the particular area.

Sir, as we move towards 2007 and change the entire character, that point must not be missed, sometimes the character of any place has to change as a process of development. I think that is the fundamental point which is being made by the Representative for St. Lucy. Even though the sport of cricket will be played at Kensington Oval, the character of the entire environs will be changed. That character has to do with the daily lives of people, their cultural and social mix and the way they speak to each other.

Mr. Speaker, do you realise that sometimes when you move people from a given location and relocate them somewhere else that the social relationships which they developed over time, the neighbourliness, the harmony, the compassion and caring, all of those things somehow go through the window and they have to reinvent a new process of interaction, even though they might consider themselves the same people.

Sir, if you look deeply into the souls of those individuals, they are changed people because they have been removed from the environment in which they had the process of growth and development. Therefore, let us also look at these things. Let us be fair at the day. As I said earlier in this speech, they are persons who have testimony where the State has not been fair to them. I know several people. There are still people, Mr. Speaker, at Wilcox, Fairy Valley, Thyme Bottom and Parish Land who feel as though the State trampled on them.

3.30 p.m.

Therefore, the people in Pickwick Gap also would have these examples so they would be uneasy. They have a right in this democracy, if it can continue to be called that, and I still think it could and that is why there is an Opposition. There will be an Opposition of those who sit on That Side in the near future. They will also have the same type of argumentation, if they are conscious of the role in this Parliament to bring to the people's minds that there must be another way. There must be another process. There must be another opportunity for them, as citizens of Barbados to express themselves.

Therefore, there is no need for anyone to accuse This Side of ignorance on this issue. There is no need at all for anyone to charge the Opposition of stepping left, stepping right, stepping forward and stepping back on this issue.

There is one thing that we maintained our stability on and that has been our support for the exercise relative to World Cup 2007 and the process but we cannot abandon ordinary citizens in the quest for the redevelopment of Kensington Oval because, tomorrow, which might be just after the games finish, we will have to face them, and even now we have to face them. We will have to say to them that we acted in your best interest as this project evolves and as this project was concluded.

We always have to be focussed and remain cognizant of these types of deliberations among people and how people truly believe that we are looking after their interest in this House. We recognise that there would have to be relocation. We recognise that persons in Pickwick Gap would have to be relocated, because the structure as envisioned as charted, the plans drawn for the development of that area, would mean the speedy movement of people from that area so that the job of redeveloping Kensington Oval will be undertaken.

We are not saying that we will not support the Resolution. It is not double speech. It is not a contorted argument. All we are saying is that as we do these things, fundamental to the process must be the protection of the people's rights on each and every occasion. The statistics provided by the Minister relative to what is being paid for 13 parcels of land *vis-à-vis* one parcel of land, is testimony to what I am talking about, Sir.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as we continue more of these things will come as we speedily try to get the project

underway. I want to re-emphasise what I said because there are persons who might want to go and spread malicious rumour and propaganda that the Democratic Labour Party, represented by the seven persons here is not in consort with this movement for the redevelopment of Kensington Oval for persons in Barbados and our guest coming from far and wide to enjoy lovely cricket. Sir, knowing that cricket is a passion, they might want to insert a deliberate block between the Democratic Labour Party and the people of Barbados relative to this, and that must never be the case. We are committed to that effort but we are also managers of the process for the citizens of Barbados, and we have to look after as well, how the monies of the people of Barbados are spent on this particular project.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak very long on this matter but the last Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central who last spoke, has really drawn me into this debate and his statements, even though they were said in all innocence, they paint a picture of a Government that is not caring. He talked about the State and in his last statement he said that he does not want the people of Barbados to think that the Democratic Labour Party does not want the Cricket World Cup 2007 in Barbados but he wants to portray the Party as an innocent party but the Government as the opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this whole process has been explained over the last two Sittings. We have dealt with this matter and I must reiterate that the whole question of compulsory acquisition has been used over and over again for many years by this Parliament. The whole question of private treaty has also been used. I can think, Mr. Speaker, of the ABC Highway when hundreds of parcels of land were acquired both by private treaty as well as compulsory acquisition. The Bridgetown relocation, Searles to Six Roads, and Constant to Dash Valley were also projects where large parcels of lands were acquired over the years by compulsory acquisition as well as by private treaty.

It is important for us to allow not only the House to understand but the public, in general, that the whole question of valuation is not done by the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment or the Government. The Government has been using and continues to use the Commission of Land Tax Valuation as a guide.

There is also, Mr. Speaker, a standing Valuation Committee and the Members of the Opposition need to understand that every parcel of land is valued by the Commissioner of Land Tax. It does not mean that the Land Tax Valuation will be the only guide because the law does speak to the fact, Sir, that there is a vendor and a purchaser so, of course, they can discuss the price between themselves and their Attorneys-at-Law. The whole question of valuation is really between the person who is selling the land and the person who is buying the land, being the Government. Therefore, if the Commissioner of Land Tax values the land at Kensington one price and land at Barbarees Hill another price, it has to do with the Commissioner of Land Tax and the Standing Valuation Committee.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Kensington, and Pickwick Gap have a right to ask their attorney and have their own valuation done as well, so that this is not a question for the Minister. The public must not believe that the State is valuing the property for them because the State does not value the property. The State carries forward a policy and a policy was set by the Government that the land is being acquired for a public purpose.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy asked what is the public purpose. We came in here some years ago and acquired a shop on the west coast, when we thought that shop was being taken up by foreign interest and that was a public purpose. Therefore, the public purpose can always be set by Government because the Government sets a policy that in this case the public purpose is for... There are still people, Mr. Speaker, at Wilcox, Fairy Valley, Thyme Bottom and Parish Land who feel as though the State trampled on them.
3.40 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is giving the public the impression that Government can go to Cabinet and change the meaning of public purpose without coming to this Parliament and making an amendment as if we are running some banana republic. Sir, I think it would be wrong of this House to allow that to go out. I think the Honourable Member would serve His Side very well if he decides to withdraw those remarks.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: The question is: Who determines public purpose? Public purpose can either be for roads, for tourism, for sports and culture or for housing. Government determines the public purpose. In this case once the public purpose is set by Government that is the policy that has been set by Government.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The question is not what is a public purpose, the question is about the ownership of the public purpose. That is what is being disputed.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is really confusing the issue. He talks about the ownership of public purpose, but what is he talking about. It has me really confused, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition must not get away with saying that this is a wicked Government and they are caring. We came to this Parliament to acquire the land at Kensington for a public purpose because we believe that this is for the greater good. Therefore, we want to thank the residents of Pickwick Gap and the environs for believing that this is for the greater good.

Sir, the Opposition must not believe that we are doing this because we want to relocate the people. Relocation is always a hard task. The Government is doing this basically to help. Barbarees Hill might not be the best place to relocate them but we are trying our best to make it the best place for them, and the Government will do whatever is possible based on its resources to make it possible. The Government has made it better for them. Some of these persons will get wall houses, some will get improved toilet facilities and improved accommodation, this is what the Government has done for them. We are not relocating the people at Barbarees Hill without proper accommodation.

Sir, as the Minister has pointed out, the Housing Planning Unit has carried out the social survey to ensure that every aspect is taken care of, that is what they do from time to time. The people in the Housing Planning Unit are very caring and we have absolute confidence in them that they would do a good job to ensure that the people are better off. The Parliament must not believe that we are doing it only for the Government wishes or to make the Government look good. We are doing it because we are hosting the Cricket World Cup 2007 and all of us must go along with this. The valuations must be left to the people who are doing the valuations.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that this happens from time to time, but there are hundreds of persons whose properties have been acquired, before my time, since the 1950s, and Honourable Members have spoken about it, but they have not taken their money because they felt that they were not properly treated. Their monies have remained in the Treasury for a long time. From time to time their attorneys have been arguing this case. They meet together and they decide on their money. Money is left there for them and more to the point interest is paid on any money that have been left for persons.

Sir, compensation is arrived at between the vendor and the purchaser. As far as I know it is a system that has worked. Governments go and governments come and sometimes people are paid long after for their properties. To my mind it is not the best thing but it happens because some people are not necessarily satisfied. However, it does not mean, Mr. Speaker, that the people are always right and the technocrats or the valuers are wrong. Some people want to get the most for their property. Some people would not accept because they feel that they have been unfaired, so we have to look at that. However, Sir, they are always compensated for the land.

Mr. Speaker, there are some people who give the land free. Every day in this country people give their land for roads. They usually say cut my land and improve the road. That happens in the tenantries programme. There is no payment. We are not saying that they should not be paid, but people would say that this is a good gesture and all they want the Government to do is to adjust their plans and put back their line marks. This is what has caused a lot of problems.

Sir, we are trying our very best within the Ministry of Public Works to ensure that the Surveyors put back the line marks that they have removed over time. We do not always put back these line marks in time because we have a severe shortage of Land Surveyors in this country. Every parcel of land that the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment brings here must be certified by the Lands and Surveys Department. When we first came to Government the Lands and Surveys Department had a staff of eight Surveyors along with the Chief Land Surveyor. I believe that figure has decreased. These Land Surveyors are working extremely hard, so this process takes a long time.

Mr. Speaker, one has to compliment the Minister and the departments for bringing this acquisition here. Commercial properties must be acquired and the owners must be compensated. Sir, we have to have faith in the Commissioner of Land Tax, in the various Surveyors and in the members of the Standing Valuation Committee. All of these are eminent persons who are working in the process in order to ensure that everything is treated fairly.

Sir, the Opposition must not be warm on certain cases and be cold on others. Let us get out these simple matters

that can be debated in a short time because there are still many more things to be done. The Minister must bring other acquisitions here in order to complete the programme. It is important that both the Opposition and the Government understand the process. There is a private treaty and there is land acquisition.

Sir, the point I made last week was not taken by the Opposition. The reason for compulsory acquisition is not only to bring it here and let people know. When you bring the compulsory acquisition to Parliament you are giving the Government proper title. Mr. Speaker, when compulsory acquisition is brought to Parliament, it is done so as to give that land a proper title. Sir, on the other hand, when land is acquired through private treaty, it becomes the onus of the landlord to provide that title. Sir, there are a number of persons who cannot find their land titles, some of which were passed down to them from seed to seed, *et cetera*. There are also some landowners who cannot find their titles, as some of them would have given these things to their attorneys-at-law, who might have misplaced them.
3.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I keep hearing the Honourable Member for St. Lucy saying that the land acquisition process needs to be changed. Sir, Chapter 228 of the Laws of Barbados has been tried and has stood the test of time. Therefore, I do not think that there is any need for an amendment to that Act. All that we need to do, is to ensure that people get proper valuations and ensure that compensations are paid out.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for your indulgence.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, the hour is getting late but I feel very compelled to rise on the behalf of the good people of St. Philip South, to make a contribution to this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to start by giving my full support to this Resolution. As I said, I feel very compelled to speak because I have heard a number of things in this debate that has caused me to wonder, and much of it would have come from the Honourable Members on the Other Side, while a number of Honourable Members on This Side would have tried to deal with a number of them.

Mr. Speaker, we need to get the support of Both Sides of the House pertaining to this Resolution. Sir, Cricket World Cup, 2007 is around the corner and is, without doubt, the largest sporting event ever to take place within the Caribbean. Therefore, it becomes a real privilege for Barbados to be hosting the Cricket World Cup, 2007. Sir, in like manner, it says a lot for this country, therefore, the country has to prepare itself to benefit in the best possible way, as we need to reap the highest level of benefits from its hosting, along with the opportunity that has been given to us, to host a number of games leading up to the finals.

I have heard Honourable Members on Both Sides speaking to whether the Land Acquisition Act should be changed, or whether the people at Pickwick Gap, whose lands are being acquired, are going to be fairly compensated. Sir, the Opposition has been questioning the procedure which has been adopted, in order to have arrived at those valuations. They are even seeking to suggest that somehow the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment, and by extension other Honourable Members on This Side, should have literally interfered in the process by which private treaties are done, so as to give them the comfort that the persons at Pickwick Gap, whose lands are to be acquired, should have been given a better deal. Sir, they have even raised queries over the quantum that is to be have by those at Pickwick Gap, in relation to what is to be obtained by the owner of the land at Barbarees Hill.

Mr. Speaker, when Honourable Members come to this Honourable Chamber and seek to question the integrity of public officers who are charged with such responsibilities, then we are going down a very dangerous road and are on a very slippery path. Sir, it has become a trait of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, to come into this Honourable Chamber and to malign persons. Sir, when the Honourable Member is not only seeking to question the integrity and professionalism of the Governor of the Central Bank, Dr. Marion Williams, he is seeking to question the integrity and professionalism of officers in the Central Bank's research department. When he is finished with them, he goes over to the Barbados Statistical Service and questions the integrity, professionalism and ability of those well-appointed Government officers doing their work. Sir, it is happening time and time again in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, it may not be any day soon but one of these days, the Honourable Members on the Other Side may have the opportunity to work with those public officers who they come here seeking, time and time again, to question their professionalism and their approach to doing serious business, on the behalf of the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, at this juncture, we should be debating how best this country could prepare itself for staging Cricket World Cup, 2007, so that Barbados, when it is on shore for the period leading up and indeed on a larger scale, for the period of the Cricket World Cup, 2007, that those millions of people who would be viewing the Cricket World Cup, 2007 and those thousands of people, especially those coming to Barbados, would see a country that is properly prepared to host one of the most significant sporting events in the international sporting calender.

Mr. Speaker, there may be the need for us to have to revisit a number of things, but the Opposition must not come here and give the impression that the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment, can be charged with a dereliction of duty because she had not intervened in the process by which private treaties are determined, so as to gain valuations that would have suited the Honourable Members on the Other Side.

Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions, the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment, has said that because of the sensitive nature of those acquisitions in the Pickwick Gap area, that Government has made every facility available to the owners of those lands, via the engagement of attorneys-at-law, private valuers, accountants or surveyors, so that when the negotiations start, when they continue and when they are closed, that every landowner who would have been asked to relinquish his land, would have been provided with all the technical support necessary, so as to ensure that his case would have been properly put and that the best possible case could have been done on the behalf of those individuals, recognising that if they were to treat to it on their own, they might not have been able to do the best possible job for themselves.
4.00 p.m.

Sir, after all that was done, I am hearing that the people from Pickwick Gap and it environs are not getting the best possible valuation on the land. They are saying that Government has the ability to negotiate well so on one hand they are praising the appointed workers of the Government or the Minister but they are passing judgement on accountants, surveyors, lawyers and those teams which would have acted on behalf of the landowners.

Sir, every week they come to Parliament and give the impression that Barbadians are persons of very poor intellect, that people are misguided in everything they do once they are acting on behalf of poor people. The Democratic Labour Party like to give the impression that they are champions of the poor people but when the Government tries to lift up poor people they have a problem.

Mr. Speaker, we said that for the World Cup 2007 to be as successful as it can be that Barbadians need to buy into the event. Barbadians must feel they have a stake in what is happening at every strata and opportunities must be created for them so that they can feel comfortable participating. Sir, Government said that given our accommodation challenges, that cruise ships should not be allowed to berth at the port, visitors go to cricket and then get back on the cruise because that is not development or how Barbadians should be treated. We want Barbadians to get involve in the process and we will encourage them via the provision of soft loans to make renovations and refurbishment to their properties so as to get involved in providing the accommodation. Sir, would you believe that the Leader of the Opposition has a problem with that and has lead others down that path.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy should understand what we are doing when we give people the opportunity to improve their premises so as to become part of those persons who would be offering accommodation. The only horizon that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West can see is two weeks. He is seeking to confuse the issue by giving the impression that any such investment would be stranded and only good for two weeks.

Sir, implicit in that, he is saying that those people have no ability whatsoever to market their property on their own thereafter, so as to provide a sort of bed-and-breakfast operation that this country can well afford to have at this stage. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central put it in perspective because unlike the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West he is looking beyond two weeks. He said that if the Barbados Tourism Authority does its marketing properly and the individuals through the connection of family and friends overseas, for many nights each year they can get family and tourists coming to Barbados to stay in their properties.

Mr. Speaker, there are various events happening here each year like the Jazz Festival, Cropover, Gospelfest car racing, Test Cricket and all types of festivals in Barbados which attract hundreds of people from overseas. Sir, people of all types of economic backgrounds come to Barbados to be part of these events. There is room within the spectrum of tourism accommodation for those people. Mr. Speaker, if those rooms are properly marketed by the individuals themselves and with the assistance of the Barbados Tourism Authority, I am certain those rooms would be put to good use.

Mr. Speaker, I do not like the statements made in this House about the State trampling on the rights of people because we have a duty to ensure that does not happen. Sir, I would have said no, if I thought that I were offering myself as a candidate to the people of St. Philip South to be part of a team that would trample on poor people. I do not understand from where the statement comes because I have seen nothing to indicate that this Government is trampling on the rights of people. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, if we look at what transpired with the other teams without going into other details, you could see what is trampling on the rights of people.

Mr. Speaker, the last occasion on which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke he sought to provide a link between the recent increase in the price of petroleum products and the funding of World Cup 2007 activities. He also raised the point again today. Sir, last time I rose on a point of order and asked the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to desist from providing such a link because it is as spurious as it comes.

Mr. Speaker, I need to clear the air on this statement. I sincerely hope the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would not repeat it again. Sir, towards the end of June last year the Government was forced to adjust the price of petroleum products as a result of increases in the price of crude oil from the international market and the response of Trinidad to that.

Mr. Speaker, just after those increases took effect, the price of crude on the international market continued to increase. As a matter of fact, when those increases were given towards the end of June last year, a barrel of oil was $41.50. The price of oil steadily increased and the Government said it would see to what extent the Barbados National Terminal Company could absorb losses occasioned by the continued increase in the price at which the oil had to be purchased from Trinidad & Tobago.

Sir, it took this Government ten months when the Barbados National Terminal Company would have accumulated losses in the neighbourhood of $13 million. If you do not think that is a responsible Government, then what is a responsible Government, for other Caribbean countries have a policy in place which is characterised by price flexibility in its best possible form. Therefore, when prices are increased on the wold market, they are passed on to the consumer.
4.10 p.m.

Sir, this Government will hold strain, although its policy is price flexibility. However, when prices increase on the International Market and the Trinidadians respond in a like manner, those increases should effect prices at the pump. Sir, we said that we were not doing that and we would hold strain. We are a significant energy importer. Mr. Speaker, we held strain for 10 months. This year when the prices had reached record levels, we said enough is enough, for the company was hurting too much.

Sir, let me also say that...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have given you a little rope because I understood you were trying to show a sense of responsibility. Surely, you cannot prolong that point because that is not what we are debating.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Sir, I want to make the point that the Excise Tax component of the pricing formula, which is used to determine the price structure for petroleum products, is a specific tax. It means that irrespective of the CIF price, the Excise Tax is the same. Whether the buying increased significantly or marginally, the Excise Tax is the same. So, the Excise Tax charged, when we increased the price of fuel a few weeks ago, remained the same for diesel and gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, I do not understand what the Honourable Member is trying to say.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have to finish that now, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, if your point of order relates to what he said, I am not entertaining anything more relating to that point. I gave you a lot of leeway. You must get back to the point, please.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: The Honourable Member should know the difference between a specific tax and *ad valorem* tax.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Lucy, what is your point of order? You do not seem to understand what I am saying.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Sir, I was making the point earlier that Barbadians should cherish the opportunity that their country got the chance to host the World Cup Finals. I also want to remind Barbadians that the success of this venture should not be taken for granted. We hear a number of persons touting this event as a significant success, but it will only be a significant success if every Barbadian participates at his best, similarly elsewhere in the region.

Mr. Speaker, Barbadians should also use this event as an opportunity to give the country the impetus that it needs to make it more professional in every aspect of life. It is an opportunity to make the country and citizens more professional in every aspect of life and I am extremely serious.

Sir, this country, like other small developing countries, is slipping behind with respect to competitiveness and other aspects of its operations. We must redouble our efforts and commitment to ensure that the event is a success. Barbados must be showcased in a systematic and structured way so that it continues to benefit handsomely from the tremendous planning and investment long after the World Cup.

We need to ensure that we are able to enhance our delivery of service at all levels. We need to assure a better effective management of things such as the sewerage and garbage issues; the effective beautification of the island; better signage system; a harmonious relation of working among Barbadians and those who they interact with to ensure that across the Caribbean the countries can become more competitive; a better approach to the management of our traffic issues and in summary; ensure that our attitudes, environment, infrastructure and everything is significantly enhanced to have Barbados reach the highest status in the eyes of the viewing public. Sir, millions of people would be looking on and thousands will be coming here for the World Cup.

Sir, I am going to be parochial and I do not have a problem being charged with that. We have a precious piece of property in St. Philip called Marriott Sam Lord's Castle. I sincerely hope that the new investors would move with some alacrity to get that property renovated and upgraded, hopefully, before the World Cup, but certainly in time for the World Cup. That property is too pivotal in the advancement of the lives of many families in St. Philip. It is shameful that it has been taken out of operation for such a long time. However, now that the new investors have taken over, I want to encourage them to press on, for it still holds a very precious place in the hearts and certainly in the minds of Barbadians, especially those living in St. Philip.

Nevertheless, I want to issue a word of caution. Sir, while the country would feel good about what is to take place in the build up to the World Cup, it must be done orderly with competent public financing. While, this administration will be seeking to do the best possible job in investing and creating the opportunities for others, we also have to manage our economic affairs properly so the country would not be forced to deal with the serious consequences of pumping up the economy prior to World Cup. The Prime Minister has spoken quite eloquently to that and he has made it clear that he will still be seeking to move forward with proper economic management principles, notwithstanding the magnitude of the task before hand.
4.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, let me close just where I have started and that is by giving my full support to the Resolution. Let me also say that I think it is time the Honourable Members on the Other Side come to a realisation that the World Cup means very much to Barbados and the region, and that they should not come to the House in such a confrontational mood, when we are dealing with issues pertaining to acquisitions. They should also recognise that they are Government appointed officers to lead us on these issues pertaining to valuation and they must stop questioning the ability of those individuals in their quest to get appropriate levels of compensation.

The Government has provided every facility for that to be the case and the landowners have made use of the Government's facilitation in that regard. I do not know why is it that they are encouraging the Minister of Housing and other Honourable Members on This Side to intervene. Mr. Speaker, if that is what they want, it will not happen.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There has been very interesting debate on this matter, some of it totally anticipated and some of it not at all anticipated. Some of the information that has been put or that the Other Side has sought to put out, I think, is likely to confuse the public. There are a number of issues that were raised, which I would want to address. I turn first to the issue of private treaty versus public acquisition and just refer, Your Honour and Honourable Members of the Chamber to the legislation.

There has been much discussion today about the interpretation of the legislation by former Ministers, present Ministers and persons aspiring to be Ministers, by lawyers and non lawyers. I am just going to read the provisions of the section and leave the interpretation to the wider public.

I would make the point only, Sir – and I will try to do a list of the matters done by private treaty since I was a Minister – that when Government funds are being spent, the Parliament has to approve that expenditure. Therefore, even where one goes by private treaty, ultimately the funds to be spent have to be approved by this Parliament and insofar as there has to be such an approval, that invests the Parliament with the right of oversight.

Section 4 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act says:

"4. (1) The Minister may purchase, lease, take, accept or otherwise acquire any land for the use of the Crown and such conveyances, leases, contracts and other instruments as may be necessary for the purposes of this subsection may be executed in his name and may be signed by the Minister or by the officer for the time being performing the functions of the Secretary to the Cabinet on behalf of the Minister."

"4. (2) All lands which are acquired by the Minister under subsection (1) shall be vested in the Crown in accordance with the terms of the conveyance, lease, transfer, will or other assurance executed in relation thereto."

Sir, section 4 gives a general authority for all activities relating to land from purchase to lease.

Sir, Section 5 states the following and I will quote.

"5. (1) The Minister may:

11. grant a licence to use any lands vested in the Crown for any purpose or for such purposes as are mentioned in the licence; or

(b) grant by way of licence or letting any easement, profit or right in respect of such lands; or

(c) with the approval of Parliament sell, lease, exchange, grant, assign or surrender any such land."

"6. In respect of each financial year and as soon as possible after the close of such financial year, the Minister shall cause to be laid before both Houses a statement of all dealings, transaction and disposition with respect to land which have been effected by him without the prior approval of Parliament."

Sir, in relation to all matters pertaining to land, certainly, acquisitions have come before this Parliament. In relation to those by private treaty, as I indicated, they have been brought here for Parliamentary voting of the funds. In relation to the acquisition, I think that we have had substantive debate at that time in this House.

In fact, Sir, when we came for Barbarees Hill and Fontabelle, which were not by compulsory acquisition but by private treaty, the figures were proposed, the valuations were given by the Commissioner of Land Tax and the discussions which had been taking place up to that date were put before the House.

Mr. Speaker, the quanta which were proposed to be spent were put before the House and approval then sought, and at no time did the Honourable Members on the Other Side object to the passing of any of those Resolutions. Although today, Sir, they would speak in a vein as if all of this was clandestine by way of subterfuge, they had no knowledge of evidence of it and at no time did the figures come before the Parliament.

In fact, they did come, Sir. Therefore, I also make the point that the compulsory acquisition process is the process more frequently used. The private treaty process is not frequently used but it is very rarely used. Mr. Speaker, in the majority of instances, the route is by compulsory acquisition.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West during the course of his comments sought to draw a distinction, in respect of the valuations ascribed to the lands at Pickwick versus the lands at Fontabelle and the lands at Barbarees. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central spoke in a very interesting way. He subtly suggested that Ministers interpose themselves into process. The word of the Minister is the word of God or the word of the Gospel and so, Sir, let me say that when there is to be an acquisition, the agency responsible informs the Ministry of Housing that it is their intention to use land for a particular purpose and the public purpose has to be defined.

In the case of the National Sports Council, they may say for a playing field or for recreational purposes. In the case of this matter, Sir, it was for sports and other cultural and entertainment activities. It could be, Sir, for the construction of a monument. It could be for the construction of a hospital or polyclinic, various forms which will enure to the general public good. When the instruction is received by the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, the Planning Unit has to be mobilized to see whether there are residences there and who occupies the residences. The Commissioner of Land Tax has to be told of the particular parcel or parcels of land and asked for a valuation. The Commissioner of Land Tax and the staff of his department are professional valuers. The Minister does not go to the site to value the lands. When the Minister receives the professional advice from the Commissioner of Land Tax, he or she does not seek to substitute his or her opinion.
4.30 p.m.

In addition, the Chief Surveyor or the officer acting on his behalf from his department needs to go to the site and define the boundaries of the land to be purchased. The information then comes back to the Ministry which says that the lands which the Ministry of Health, the National Sports Council or whatever agency wants is an acre and a half, 20 000 square feet or whatever quantum and it must valued by the Commissioner of Land Tax at Y dollars. Whether it is occupied by commercial or residential entities, details would be given of those and permission is then sought to open negotiations for the purchase whether by compulsory acquisition or by private treaty.

Sir, Cabinet has to agree that these negotiations should take place in the sums recommended by the Commissioner of Land Tax. That is how the process is done. It is not the Minister who determines the valuation even though that was suggested in here today.

Mr. Speaker, let us look now at the three parcels of land – I am calling them three even though I know there are many parcels at Pickwick Gap – which are caught by this Kensington redevelopment process. The first are lands at Barbarees Hill which are owned by a well-known businessman and property owner in Barbados. His name has been called today, so it is no secret that the land is owned by Sir David Seale. It is the former Barbarees House, an old great house, which was formerly owned by the Hewitt family, who is very well-known by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Sir, in respect of the valuation, the land is a large parcel, 2.2 acres, which is not currently in commercial use. Sir, I want to speak plainly because this is a matter that has engaged a lot of time today. As one moves away from town and seeks to go up Barbarees Hill one encounters, from almost the corner of Westbury Road as it adjoins Baxter's Road, two or three private dwelling houses on the left hand side of the road going up the hill. There is also the Berean Bible Church or a church property belonging to the Wesleyan Holiness Church or something of the sort. There is land in commercial use. Sir, I am seeing the building now but I cannot identify the owner off the top of my head.

Adjoining the lands owned by Sir David, the subject of the former Resolution which was brought before this

House, are lands owned by Medford Mahogany which are in active commercial use and the land adjoining that, I think, are those belonging to Brydens which are also in commercial use and the land adjoining that, if my memory serves me correctly, belongs to the Alleyne's of Shamrock, a black family in business for many years. So all along Barbarees Hill on that left hand side as one goes up there is high valued land in commercial use. Some are owned by black Barbadians and some by white Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, the Alleyne's are asking for $7 million for the Shamrock property which are two properties away from the Seale's land. Therefore, one cannot say that the Seale's property which sits between these parcels of land has no particular value as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West sought to say. It may not be under commercial use at the time, but by its very location in high valued commercial land and between high valued commercial properties in a high valued area, it is valuable.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. James South were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Sir, there were various descriptions ascribe to the property owner today. The impression was sought to be given that the Government was favouring one particular person over another group, that was the allegation.

Sir, I am suggesting that the land is not land-locked because there is an egress onto Barbarees Hill which is a main commercial vein in and out of Bridgetown. It is not a wide entry but all of the commercial entities along that route have businesses on either side. Some have businesses on their left, on their right and behind them. However, the entry way being narrow does not constitute it being land-locked.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. Again, I am suggesting that the Honourable Member is misleading the House because in all fairness, to access that piece of land Government would have to acquire the land that butts and abound Barbarees Hill because it is going to be impossible for two cars to pass through that access, it is not really an access it is just an entrance, there is really not a road. There has been no discussion at all in this Chamber with respect to making a road to the land. I have noted that the land up front have not been acquired so that the David Seale land by itself is land-locked, that is a fact.

4.40 p.m.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, the Sir David Seale's land come onto Barbarees Hill, one only has to drive up the road to see it. It was a Great House with a long driveway, which was right onto Barbarees Hill, therefore, the notion that this land is land-locked and is pushed up into a cemetery with no value, is entirely false. It is a parcel of land in a commercial area, which is between other commercial properties of high value.

Sir, I have given the kinds of valuations which have been ascribed to neighbouring properties to demonstrate to this Parliament and to the public that even though the land was not in commercial use, that because of its contiguity to adjoining properties, that it has a high commercial value and a high commercial potential.

Sir, it cannot be said that these properties would have a low commercial value, as Fontabelle is one of the main commercial arteries into Bridgetown, having very high-valued commercial properties.

Mr. Speaker, we then moved to the second parcels of land being acquired, which would be those parcels on Fontabelle, which, again, are large commercial entities, such as Curaçao Laboratories, A&R Tempro, *et cetera*, that are involved in what is as inactive trading.

We then moved to the third parcels of land, which are the residential blocks at Pickwick Gap. Sir, the reality is that they are not lands that are in commercial use at this time, except for a number of small properties, which were indicated. These small properties are not bought, neither are they in a commercial area in the same way that Fontabelle or Barbarees Hill are commercial areas. Equally, the parcels of land at Pickwick Gap are extremely small. Therefore, whether people build two-storey, the reality is that nobody owns an acre of land.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, again the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber. Sir, the thirteen parcels of land of which the Honourable Member speaks, are, in fact, to the West. These parcels are blocked by Kensington Oval, which must be commercial; to the North, there were Armstrong Agencies and the other commercial entities that we have already debated; to the South, there are a number of shops that are right next to the entrance to the Kensington Oval ground, and they must be considered commercial. Therefore, one wonders how those thirteen parcels of land can be classified as approaching commercial value, when, in fact, the piece at Barbarees Hill is locked to the north by a graveyard; to the west by model houses that were recently built by the National Housing Corporation; to the South by a small Berean Church and to the East by Shamrock Supermarket.

Mr. Speaker, certainly in contemplating the use to which the lands at Pickwick Gap will be put, and the existing commercial entities around those lands, some consideration could have been given to upgrading the value of those particular parcels of land.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, the sum total of the thirteen parcels at Pickwick Gap, is 1.25 acres. None of them is a large lot by itself. Pickwick Gap – not Westbury Road – is a narrow gap with largely residential properties and is not a commercial area. In fact, two cars can barely pass at the same time and when there is cricket, the road is blocked.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. There is not even a gap on the land at Barbarees Hill and, therefore, one is asking the question, was there a formal agreement to allow for a car to pass on the land that is owned by Sir David Seale, or it is now the case that in order to build an adequate road, Government has to acquire land?

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, there is every reason to be concerned with whether or not there is proper access to the land that is being developed and how Government intends to acquire that land. Therefore, I am suggesting that if one has a look at what surrounds that piece of land, with the graveyard and the other sites, one could assess whether or not it is worth $3 million.

Hon. Mrs. H. E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Mr. Speaker, the Sir David Seale's land at Barbarees Hill is doubled the full total of all the lots at Pickwick Gap. The Sir David Seale's Land is l.3 acres, while the land at Pickwick Gap is a little more than an acre. Sir, these are matters which I am sure will continue to engage national discussion and, therefore, the Commissioner of Land Tax would have applied certain principles in valuing those properties.

Mr. Speaker, at this stage the negotiations with the Pickwick Gap residential properties are not yet completed. Therefore, we are not fixed to the figures that are being given here. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South was making the point during the course of his comments that these property owners have access to a number of valuers.

Sir, the point I would wish to make is that the parcels of land at Fontabelle are 39.1 square feet, 33.5 square feet, 28.8 square feet, and 33.2 square feet. These are all parcels that are bordering on an acre, and are not small properties. 4.50 p.m.

Sir, I was making the point that under the legislation, Government is compelled to pay for the property owners to choose their own lawyers, valuers, surveyors and accountants. They can choose anybody who they feel can advise their cause to get them the best possible price for valuation and, under the law, Government is compelled to pay for the services of these individuals.

Sir, there is no question of them being unfaired *vis*-à-*vis* the big business owners or not have access to representation or justice not being done because they are poor and because people want to unfair them or ascribe values that are low because we are into a negotiation process. The Commissioner of Land Tax has given one valuation and professionals are entitled to say that they disagree and challenge the valuation given by the Government. Sir, where there is a challenge that cannot be resolved by way of negotiation, the landowners have a right to go to the law courts of Barbados, say that the Ministry is unfairing them and get them to put a value on the land. Sir, a court hearing would then be held and a valuation ascribed. The notion that we are unfairing them is entirely false.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I just want to remind you that your wind-up time is 30 minutes and that you have gone past that time.

Hon. Mrs. H.E. THOMPSON-McDOWALD: Sir, I am sorry. I was not following the clock and was not aware that my time was up. In fact, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has so frequently interrupted me that I thought I had a lot more time.

Mr. Speaker, there are two issues before the Chamber today. Are the valuations fair and is the process a fair one? My submission to this Chamber is that the process is defined by law and that there are many checks and balances and mechanisms available to ensure that poor people and private landowners have access to the best professional advice so that they can get fair value and proper compensation for their properties, Sir, their final recourse is to the courts. The Government is not seeking to trample on the rights of anybody. In fact, the valuation given today are the pre-negotiation valuation and do not include moneys which people will get for disruption of their businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the process is a dynamic one. I expect that in due course, once the matter is settled, that I would have to come back to this Honourable Chamber and indicate the final figures agreed after negotiation. It is not our intention to be unfair to anybody. I would wish to hope that we could come to negotiate with people being satisfied with their compensation but most of all with us developing a wonderful new residential site at the new Barbarees Gardens Development.

With those few words, I thank you, Sir. I also thank all Honourable Members who spoke, all the officers who have worked in this process and the people of Pickwick who are relocating for the national good.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this concludes Government Business for today. I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, June 7, 2005, at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, June 7, 2005 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

4.56 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 1

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, May 31, 2005

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER 1

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 2

1. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (D.A.C. Services) Order, 2005.

2. Special Development Areas (Spykes Bay Investments Inc.) Notice, 2005.

3. Special Development Areas, (CJM Investments Inc.) Notice, 2005.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH 2

Annual Report of the Barbados Tourism Authority for the year April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL . . . . . .

Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2003.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS 2

1. To keep under constant review the development and the implementation of Barbados' political economic relations.

2. To receive reports and recommendations from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and other relevant authorities.

3. To send for persons, papers and records.

4. To appoint specialists and experts as advisors to the Committee as deemed necessary.

5. To meet concurrently with other departmental committees to exchange information and views.

6. To review oral and written submissions from members of the general public concerning matters relating to Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

7. To examine Bills and legislation pertinent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and any other matters referred to it.

8. To report recommendations and findings and to submit such reports and findings to the Honourable House of Assembly from time to time as may be considered appropriate.

9. To convene at least once every quarter.

10. To perform any other functions and tasks that may be referred to the Committee.

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 2

Suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of this day's Sitting.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228, THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT PICKWICK GAP IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF FACILITATING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF KENSINGTON OVAL TO PROVIDE A MULTI-PURPOSE FACILITY FOR SPORTING, CULTURAL, ENTERTAINMENT, BUSINESS, SOCIAL AND OTHER PUBLIC USES 2

Hon. Mrs. H. E. Thompson-McDowald, 3, 39; Mr. C. A. Mascoll, 8, 28; Mr. Speaker, 12; Hon. Dame Billie Miller, 13; Rev. J. J. S. Atherley, 17; Dr. D. C. Estwick, 19; Mr. R. D. Marshall, 22; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 23; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 27; Mr. R. D. Jones, 31; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 34; Hon. A. P. Wood, 36.

SUSPENSION 17

ADJOURNMENT 43

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 43.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ATHERLEY, Rev. J. J. S. (St. Michael West)
CLARKE, Hon. G. A. (St. George North)
ESTWICK, Dr. D. C. (St. Philip West)
JONES, Mr. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
LYNCH, Hon. N. A. (St. Michael South)
MARSHALL, Hon. D. D. (St. Joseph)
MARSHALL, Mr. R. D. (St. Michael West Central)
MASCOLL, Mr. C. A. (St. Michael North West)
MILLER, Hon. Dame Billie (City of Bridgetown)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
ROETT, His Honour I. A. (St. Michael Central)
THOMPSON-McDOWALD, Hon. Mrs. H. E. (St. James South)
WOOD, Hon. A. P. (St. Philip South)