
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

Pursuant to the Adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2009.

PRESENT

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B.
(Speaker)

His Honour K. St.C. BEST, LL.B.(Hons.), L.E.C.
(Deputy Speaker)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P., B.Sc., Dip. Ed.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Leader
of the Opposition)

Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.

Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P., M.A. (Ed.), B.A. (Hons.),
(Minister of Education and Human Resource
Development), (Leader of the House)

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.),
L.E.C.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of
Housing and Lands)

Dr. W. F. DUGUID, J.P., B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S.,
FDRCS

Hon. R. L. SEALY, M.B.A., B.Sc., (Minister of
Tourism)

Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Deputy
Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister of Home
Affairs)

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, M.Sc. (C.Eng.)(Minister of
Transport and Works)

Hon. E. G. HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A. (Minister of
International Business and International Transport)

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT, (Minister of Community
Development and Culture)

Mr. J. D. PAUL, B.Sc.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, M.Ed., B.A., Ed.D., Dip.
Theology (Minister of Environment, Water
Resources and Drainage)

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.)

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.
(Chairman of Committees)

Hon. P. M. T. TODD, B.Sc., (Minister of State,
Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development)

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, M.B.A., B.Sc.,(Minister of
Health)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister of
Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, Urban and Rural
Development)

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO, M.B.B.S.
(Minister of Youth, Family and Sports)

*Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan
Harewood.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning Honourable
Members, the House is now in session.

Let me take the opportunity to welcome you back
from the short Christmas break. I hope you are all re-
invigorated, and we look forward, of course, to these
opportunities to continue to do the people's business.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting held on
Friday, December 19, 2008.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that
the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for
its Meeting of Friday, December 19, 2008, be confirmed,
subject to any omissions, corrections and/or observations.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity to welcome in our Chamber this morning the Honourable Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture for Alberta, Canada. We are very happy to have you with us, Sir.

PAPERS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Investment, Telecommunications and Energy, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Inter-American Development Bank) Order, 2008;
2. Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarter ended March 31, 2008; and the
3. Annual Report of the Securities Commission for the financial year ended March 31, 2008.

House A25 Sequence 2

10.20 a.m.

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

PAPERS (Continued)

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following Bill:

Report of the Judicial Council for the year 2006.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009, be read a first time.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, before I get into Government Business, I think it is only fitting of this Honourable Chamber that we should move a Motion to acknowledge the Inauguration of the first black President of the United States of America, the 44th President, President Barack Obama.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second that, Sir.

The acknowledgment was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3 – SECOND READING OF THE VALUE ADDED TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, this Bill before us is one which captures the imagination of the people of Barbados, because it puts in place the commitment made by the Democratic Labour Party, particularly coming out of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2008, delivered by the Honourable Prime Minister. At that time, the Honourable Prime Minister spoke to those persons who would have purchased or built, for the first time, low income housing to the tune of \$150 000. These people would benefit from a VAT refund to the tune of 7 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important commitment which is being codified this morning, through the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009. Sir, we do not want persons to run astray in saying that there were previous commitments of some other sum, because this Government is one that looks towards sustainability of any action which it undertakes. Therefore, after very careful examination, one has been able to put in place the start of sustainable delivery of a promise made to the citizens of Barbados.

A careful examination of the impact of such an amendment of the VAT Bill, demonstrated to us that persons who are most vulnerable, persons who are most disadvantaged, persons who have been shut out of getting affordable housing, this particular measure would assist in facilitating them, in achieving the objective of owning a part of the rock.

It is the first time that such an effort has been undertaken by any political party in Barbados and therefore, it should be commended and applauded. We are in difficult financial and economic times across the world, and therefore, I need to embed that statement quite early in the minds of those who might rise to speak, because sometimes we tend to lead ourselves astray in arguing that

at the onset of something, that you should give more, but the Democratic Labour Party has never been a reckless Government. Therefore, we are saying to the people of Barbados, and to this Honourable House that this is the first tranche, as we unfold this measure to impact on a greater number of citizens of this country.

Mr. Speaker, what it is we are doing? We are saying that first-time home-owners who are able, through their own thrift or through their own efforts to construct a house, to the maximum of \$150 000, which becomes their home, would be entitled to a 7 per cent reduction in the value of VAT. Sir, this works out to approximately \$10 500.

Sir, that is not a small or insignificant sum on the value of that particular home. Of course, if you get \$10 500, there are many things that you could do with it. You could outfit that home so that you not only have the physical structure of that home, but you are able to put in place a bed, a fridge, a stove, and many of those things which would make that habitation comfortable.

It would help one to afford all of those things that are important for their comfort. There are many persons who have built homes and it takes them an extremely long time to put in place those things that are necessary for their own comfort.

Sir, this is an important gesture, for instance, where persons are able to access one of the homes that are being constructed by the National Housing Corporation and its various partners, who have been identified by the Minister of Housing and Lands. Sir, to date not one of those homes will go past \$150 000. This does not include the land, only the house. Let us understand that.

Mr. Speaker, families, and in this context when we speak of families, we are talking about the adult members in the home who contribute, Sir, in this country, we have had a history of families getting together, of brothers and sisters getting together with parents, once they have not been able to secure a home earlier, and pooling their resources and working as a family towards the development of a family home. Therefore, for very low income workers, this gives them the opportunity to own a home, by pooling resources for the benefit of families.

10.30 a.m.

I have seen it in many places where families get together, pool their resources and are able to construct a home. Sir, then a little later, they pool again and construct a home for another member of the family. Sir, these are important social initiatives engineered by families.

We have always looked for this creativity among families and, therefore, the role of Government is to add

that little facilitating hand, so that greater impact and greater benefits could accrue and, therefore, this is what is happening. It is an important initiative to help persons to own their homes.

Mr. Speaker, in this vein, the National Housing Corporation has come out of its lethargy and it could only be ascribed to powerful and dynamic leadership. It takes an individual to awaken a giant, and when the National Housing Corporation was first conceived and put in place, it was conceived as a giant to work on behalf of the poor, the down-pressed, the dis-advantaged and the lower-income person to ensure they have an opportunity to live within a comfortable home.

Therefore, this acceleration and development of housing by National Housing Corporation would have this as a corollary and an impact to that particular effort. Therefore, the Honourable Prime Minister must be applauded, and the Government of Barbados must be applauded on following through with the words used, to place it and to codify it in legislation so that action can take place relative to this.

Mr. Speaker, I have said to the Honourable House that this is the first tranche and that it is a sensible sustained effort. Sir, sometimes one has seen a situation where you leap, but you did not look where you were leaping and you ended up in danger and causing harm to others around.

Sir, this particular effort is not set up to cause harm to the resources of the State, because persons who access these houses also depend on other resources of the State, through education, through health, through the social welfare and social security safety network to ensure they are able, and their families are able to have a sustained living, being part of the whole ethos of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend this piece of legislation, and I want to commend the effort. All of us on This Side commend the effort and I know that all Honourable Members on the Other Side will also support this initial effort, because we are all interested in lifting people up, and this effort adds to that whole momentum of lifting persons up.

Sir, it is almost akin to the biblical reference as to whom is your neighbour. Is your neighbour the one who passes by on the Other Side, or the one who abandons you, or is your neighbour the one who looks out and helps you every step of the way?

Sir, in this instance we are, in fact, as a government, helping working-class citizens of Barbados, those who would have never thought in their lifetime, they would be able to have a shelter over their heads that they could call their own. Sir, in this context they would be able to call this

their own. The work of the Minister of Housing, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the work of the Government, on behalf of the people of Barbados, they would be able to call this house their own.

Sir, I am thankful to the Minister of Housing for giving me a tour, two Sundays ago, of Marchfield and Work Hall developments and I, too, am amazed at the rapidity of the development taking place. Sir, there were two nice structures developing for the housing of Barbadian citizens. I would encourage the Honourable Member also to give all his other colleagues, and also those on the Other Side an opportunity for them to see what has been taking place.

I am being told - I am not privy to that information, and I trust the individual who is telling me that many of them have gone to these work sites and they too are amazed at the rapidity of the construction taking place in those areas.

I know that constituents of their areas will be accommodated too in housing because we know there are 30 000 - that is not an infinitesimal number. It is not a small number. It is a major number of persons in this country who want their own housing, who want to feel the pleasure of saying "this is mine" and, therefore, these efforts would reduce that number. Sir, it is about helping every last person. Mr. Speaker, these are the kinds of initiatives that I am proud of and this Government is proud of, helping every last person to be able to secure their house and this amendment adds to that.

Mr. Speaker, we used the words "housing every last person" and this is helping every last person. Sir, that is what we are talking about. We have not abandoned the notion of "housing every last person" and the notion of "helping every last person." Sir, as I have said before, the last tranche is this. We are helping every last person, whose family's income is \$42 000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, I make the commitment on behalf of this Government that as things improve in the world's economic and financial circumstances, that we will revisit the activity. We will take the numbers up relative to the annual income and relative to the value of the housing but, Sir, we thought it important to help those who are most disadvantaged. Sir, this is the first step but it is an important step clearly to help those who are the most disadvantaged. It promotes and it acknowledges the neighbourly concept.

Sir, when I make that statement, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has a non-governmental organisation called "Love Thy Neighbour". When you look at the almost seamless integration of the philosophy of the Minister of Housing, also tied into this help initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Lands,

through the National Housing Corporation and all the various partners and contractors, who have bought into the concept, the Honourable Member of Housing and Lands could speak to these concepts.

Mr. Speaker, I can see the enthusiasm on the face of the Honourable Member for St. George North, because we know he comes from poor circumstances and he wants to see other persons in that area liberated.

Mr. Speaker, there is no fail-safe method relative to any activity such as this, but built into the legislation are three very simple processes to help facilitate this matter: (1) a Certificate of Completion from the Chief Town Planner, which shows that the property has been completed as per specification relative to the whole compliance initiatives of the Chief Town Planner; (2) a sworn affidavit stating that the applicant is a first-time home-owner and (3) a valuation of the dwelling house by the Commissioner of Land Tax or a registered valuer

10.40 a.m.

stating that the house falls within the definition, as laid down within this Bill. Therefore, these are just a few of the measures to ensure that there is compliance with the legislation.

Those who would want to support this measure are so invited from the Other Side. We will not hold it against you in any way, once you recognise what we are trying to develop here within Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, because I do not believe there is going to be a long and detailed debate on this, since persons should necessarily agree with this initial initiative, on behalf of the working poor.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want first of all to thank the Leader of the House for welcoming this new initiative and also for signalling that today is a day for the Inauguration of the new President of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, for the records, I know that the Honourable Member is an educator and an author. Therefore, I would assume that the Honourable Member is well read, but the Honourable Member must not tell this

House things that are not true. He is an Honourable Member so I presume that he does not know.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, he made the point that it is the very first time that an initiative for housing incentives of this nature is coming to the House of Parliament. He is making these assumptions as though we do not know that there was a sustainable housing programme, in the latter part of the 1950s and early 1960s where a Barbados Labour Party Government, at the time, introduced, not only free material, but some labour was also provided through the National Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new to provide sweat equity, and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy had been making that point over and over again a couple years ago, which is to provide the material, and this had been done in the 1950s.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that between 2000 and 2004, when we went to the IADB to negotiate the Neighbourhood Upgrade Programme, it was contemplated that a direct subsidy of \$10 000 would be given to the poor people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, what is important is that the poor people of this country do not necessarily need a tax break, but what they need is direct intervention. They need money up-front to help them purchase the material and that is what this is what This Side has produced.

In our last Manifesto, we made the point that a direct subsidy would be provided up to \$10 000 for families earning less than \$20 000 per year, and we would have started at Cat's Castle, Greenfields, Garden Land, Allen View and 15 other communities. Mr. Speaker, it is well documented, therefore, we do not oppose anything.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we do not oppose this measure, because it is important that the poor sector of this country receive some help. We know that since 2008, the cost of building materials has increased very much. Mr. Speaker, the cost of some building materials over the last year has increased more than 25 per cent in some instances and in some cases, 100 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, a year ago, a tonne of steel was being sold at \$2 000. Today, it is being sold at \$45, and I understand that it was just reduced. Sir, when you look at the cost of building material, including the cost of sand...

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member knows that a tonne of steel is now about \$800. Therefore, the Honourable

Member would have to tell us whether the price is what he said before or whether the price has dropped.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that we are not talking about stealing. We are talking about the cost of steel.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: High tensile steel.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is well on track because he needs to tell the House why he is educating me on that. Sir, I have never held a Ministry, so he cannot be referring or lecturing me on how to steal.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, half-inch high tension rebars are now being sold at more than \$3 800 a tonne, which is more than 50 per cent of what it was a year ago, as well as the cost of stone, sand, nails, lumber, electricity and water, and all these are the inputs of a house.

When you look at the cost of building materials today, it is very prohibitive. Who can build a house? Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the majority of persons in this country earning less than \$20 000 a year, cannot afford a mortgage. Therefore, we on This Side are saying that while we do not oppose this Bill, we believe that a direct subsidy would be the way to go. Input upfront, especially for the lower persons of this society.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at this Bill, there needs to be some clarity. I am hearing from the Leader that the refund from the VAT will now be 7 per cent. We thought that it would have been a full refund of 15 per cent, because the cost of VAT applied to material is 15 per cent.

Sir, look at the value of a house. They made the point in their Manifesto that in the first 100 days of a new Democratic Labour Party Administration, we will remove VAT from building materials on houses valued up to \$400 000, and had no income condition. Mr. Speaker, now they are saying that there must be a family income condition of \$42 000.

Sir, if there is a family of three or four persons working in a house, one working for \$20 000, even if you say that all three persons work for an average between \$20 000 and \$25 000 per year, this family would not qualify, even though we can recognise that this would be a working-poor family.

10.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has misled the people of this country. The people in my constituency, and all across Barbados, voted for this \$400 000, therefore, to come a year after the facts and give the value of \$150 000...

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the value. Sir, I believe that Honourable Members in this House sometimes do not understand what is the input of a house. The cost of a house is not only the cost of material or labour - the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands can tell you this - the cost of a house is a combination of material and labour.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise that the labour input is about 50 per cent of the cost of the house, therefore, one can say that the cost of labour for a house valued at \$150 000 is about \$75 000. What the Government is doing, is applying half of the VAT to the \$75 000, because that is the value of the house, so a person would get less than...

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that even though we could salute this initiative, the Government needs to look carefully at how it is applied.

Mr. Speaker, we on This Side believe that the figure of \$400 000 is more applicable and that the Government should reverse its decision and move to the \$400 000 that they promised, because it is not helping the poor sector of this society at all.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, based on their Manifesto pledge, the tax break would be more than \$60 000 in refund if they apply this method. Mr. Speaker, the Government needs to look at what has happened over the past 14 years and examine what we have done, to not only...

Mr. Speaker, I have made the point before that a good housing policy must contain a good financial package. Over the past 14 years, we have seen in this country, a reduction in the interest rate from 9 per cent to 6 per cent for low income earners up to \$100 000. What that meant was that a person getting a mortgage of \$100 000 at 9 per cent was paying \$900 per month. Therefore, if you reduce that to 6 per cent that person was only paying \$600 per month, and there is a saving.

Mr. Speaker, the first thing we did as a Government was to reduce the 9 per cent to 6 per cent. At the same time, we removed a number of problems that were associated with the building of houses in this country. Mr. Speaker, persons not only got a break in terms of Income Tax, but those who were repairing their homes were able to get

credits on their Income Tax every year. Mortgage interest was credited. We did this for the first time.

Mr. Speaker, in 1993 when we became the Government, we put that measure in place. In fact, the previous Barbados Labour Party Government had agreed that persons repairing their homes and installing water heaters and so on would get some rebate under the Income Tax legislation. This was stopped by a previous Democratic Labour Party Administration and we re-introduced it when we became the Government.

Mr. Speaker, we also amended the Income Tax Act to ensure that persons are able to get \$10 000 every year, whether they are in the middle-class, or the poor class.

Mr. Speaker, once you have repaired your home, you can now claim \$10 000 every year in repairs. That is what we considered to be applicable. It is a subsidy in its own right. These are things that we have done.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in this country where a number of persons do not rely on the State or on the banking institutions for help. We know that culturally, persons would build their homes and move forward. If you have a wooden house today, the next 20 or so years, you would take down the shed roof and put on some wall and come forward. That is what has happened in this country.

Mr. Speaker, most of these people do not rely on any Town Planning application. What the Government is saying now is that they have to get a Certificate of Completion. I do not know what that is. I believe they really mean a Certificate of Compliance.

Sir, a person living in Drax Hall, St. George, who has built a poor house for \$25 000 or less on land that was provided by us at 10 cents per square foot now has to get a Certificate of Compliance.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill here speaks to house and land. Again, we are not sure about this. Is the value for house and land? If a person builds their home on land that was sold to them under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act at 10 cents a square foot, and the value of that land now has gone from \$300 to \$25 000, that is part of the input of this. What happens when a person builds a wooden house, but has not applied to the Town and Country Planning Department for compliance? Does this person get back his or her refund?

Mr. Speaker, even though this initiative is laudable, the Government needs to tell us how they will be refunded and what source would be monitored to help these people. Mr. Speaker, even though the VAT is an efficient and effective tax, the refund sometimes takes long. I want to find out what method the Government would be putting in place to monitor this.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking that a quarterly review be done to ensure that persons get their refund on time, because it is not much and people must not hold out too much hope.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, This Side gave more than \$6 000 if we look at the \$100 000. The Honourable Member for St. James South does not understand what we are talking about. Mr. Speaker, under our initiative, once a person repairs his or her home, they could claim \$10 000 every year against their Income Tax. We are saying also that a person who borrows a loan at 6 per cent gets a saving as well. We are saying that the Government needs to control the cost of building in terms of material.

The Government was supposed to reduce the VAT on electricity. That is an input cost as well. If the Government reduces the cost of VAT on electricity, then the cost of building will definitely come down, because electricity has a bearing on the cost of a building as well.

Mr. Speaker, while we support this initiative, there are still a number of things that need to be clarified. I am of the view, Mr. Speaker, that Government is not really helping the poorest section of this society. How does it help somebody in Bush Hall or Bank Hall? How does it help all those home-owners who want to change from wood to wall? Do they now have to apply for Town Planning permission too?

Asides.

11.00 a.m.

Is it clear what is a first-time homeowner? What is a first-time homeowner? It does not help the poor section of this society. Therefore, Government needs to say to us that regardless or not, that you are a first-time homeowner, once you are building to the value of \$150 000 or \$400 000, then the Value Added Tax becomes applicable.

Sir, we would have thought that this Government would have brought this Bill to ensure, not necessarily for first-time homeowners, who are also important, but for persons who are building and who want to increase the value or the conditions of their properties.

Sir, therefore, if it is up to \$400 000, even if you are saying the value of that house is \$150 000, if the value of that house increases beyond that, then you would take out the first \$150 000. Sir, that is what we thought would have been applicable in their Manifesto.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that this Government needs to look at the amendment to this VAT Bill again. Sir, the Leader of Government Business has made a point that they are prepared to look at this Bill.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we thought it was 15 per cent, but it is now 7 per cent. How does that help the people in Haynesville or the people in Eden Lodge? It does not help those persons.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would want to say that this is the very first time, since the introduction of VAT, that this Bill is now before us and, therefore, the Honourable Member must be clear.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: But materials were always provided, not only in cases of emergency, but in other cases, where the Government of the day felt that a direct subsidy was needed for the population. Sir, this was done in the early 1950s. We have used the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill to help spur housing development. We have used all financial measures in order to help, but we have done a lot of work.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to say that when we look across Barbados at all the financial arrangements that have been put into housing over the years, one would see that there are many. Sir, by looking at the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, one would see what is happening across Barbados in terms of mortgage arrangements and interests.

Mr. Speaker, I heard this Government talking about land at \$2.50 and \$5 per square foot. Sir, we went beyond that. Land was being sold at 10 cent per square foot years ago, and is still being sold at 10 cents per square foot.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, through a back-tracking exercise, the Minister of Housing and Lands must tell us where we are in relation to that exercise. Sir, when we left office, there were only a very few that were supposed to have been completed, and so, I want to know where we are.

What about the legislation in relation to land at \$2.50 per square foot? What about the legislation in relation to leasing of land? Sir, we need to understand that there are many poor people who cannot afford to buy land, but who are willing to lease. This is part and parcel of our Manifesto pledge.

Mr. Speaker, this exercise here is mainly for the middle-income persons because we have already agreed that the very poor cannot build. Therefore, the Honourable Members on That Side, need to tell us how this would help the poor sector of this society; how it would help those persons who have not got any help, and those who will not get help under this Administration.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to extend this debate very long, but we have a situation today in this country, where it seems to me, that those who have will get more, and that those who do not have will not get. Therefore, I want to caution this Government that we need to provide house spots for persons who want to build their homes, rather than buying them from contractors.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, there was a site and services programme. Sir, out of every lot that was created, prior to 2007, we provided lots for the disabled in communities. We also provided lots for persons who wanted to rent. Sir, for example, if you would look at Lower Burneys, St. Michael, you would find that some lots were provided for the disabled and for persons who wanted to rent or lease. Sir, examples of this can be found at Cottage, St. George and at Rices, St. Philip, where lots were provided for the poor.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to say that the Minister of Housing and Lands, needs to tell us where are we on this programme for the leasing of lots for the very vulnerable poor.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I have not seen it. Can the Government tell us, in the first year of its operation, how many lots were provided for the disabled community? Can the Government tell us how many lots were provided for persons who want to lease, but could not buy? Can the Government tell us how many lots were provided for those persons who want to be relocated? Can the Government tell us the number of persons who, under the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, had to move from their properties, to find other land? Mr. Speaker, we need specifics as to how many of these persons were helped and what programme was used. Mr. Speaker, as I said before, a

housing programme must not only cater to the middle income, it must also cater to the poor sector.

I would want to say, when we left office, there were more than 876 lots left available by us to this new Government, where this Government could now do a lot of things.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, I made the point that this Government has inherited a lot. This Government is the very first Government, in 50 years, that has inherited so much. They have inherited a bountiful economy, that is why the Prime Minister could now come and give away so much, since the Honourable Member has a lot of money in foreign reserves. The Prime Minister could now come and say that his Government is going to do a lot of things, because this Government is now sitting "pretty".

Mr. Speaker, when we came to office in 1994, we did not find this. We did not find an economy that was so healthy, but today, this Government has a good economy. To date, this Government has a good record of available land, since a lot of land acquisitions were done. This Government has so much land, that I do not think the Minister of Housing and Lands knows exactly where all of this land is. Sir, the Honourable Member has more land than he knows about.

I am telling you, for example, at Lancaster, the Minister of Housing and Lands has over 100 acres of land that I have not seen here. Sir, these lands were acquired, but some of them have to be paid for, I would agree. Sir, we used the Land Acquisition Act.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I take it that in a very short while you would tell us the relevance to this line of debate.

Asides.

11.10 a.m.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, it is very important to look carefully at the underlying thinking of this particular Bill. Sir, we thought it was 15 per cent, but now it is half of that. Furthermore, we believe that the Government needs to tell us how it would benefit the most vulnerable in our society. We have seen measures to help those persons who are housed already, but I am not sure if this measure is being used to help those persons, who are really seeking and looking for a house.

Finally, I want to say that I want the Government to tell us what is happening to the General Workers' Loan Fund and how it has worked over the past year. I am of the view that there needs to be a more aggressive approach for persons who want access to funding. Sir, that is the biggest problem we have in housing today. There is land but the access to funding is important. Mr. Speaker, we were able to use the General Workers Loan Fund in meaningful ways.

We have talked about the Housing Credit Fund, which I have discussed before, but too many people are still saying to me that when they go to National Housing Corporation to apply for a loan, there is still too much red tape.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, the Barbados Labour Party had moved that away. We had taken the bureaucracy away and we were able to give easy loans within two weeks or three weeks. Sir, we were able to float a bond for \$50 million that helped to improve the General Workers' Loan Fund under Settlement 2000.

Mr. Speaker, there is a need to recapitalise the General Workers' Loan Fund at this time, because I am aware that a number of persons are still waiting for a small loan of \$10 000 to put in flooring, or put on a roof and, Sir, this would also help. I believe if this is done and government could promise these people that they would get the removal of VAT, this would also help hundreds of persons who are really in need of repairs. Sir, persons really need this up-front cash in order to help them.

Mr. Speaker, there are people across St. Michael, people who have houses already, but they want repairs and the General Workers' Loan Fund would help them. There are people who want to buy their lots at \$2.50 per square foot, that the Barbados Labour Party Government gave to them since 1998, and this would help those persons to have and enjoy meaningful lives. Sir, once this is in place, we believe this is the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, while This Side does not oppose this Bill, we believe more has to be done in order to help the poor section of this society. Sir, I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, today is a very historical and significant day in the history of black people across the Diaspora in the Caribbean, and certainly here in Barbados. I am saying that against the background of the fact that, as I am standing here in Parliament, I am in the presence of a Parliament that is equipped and full of black intellectuals.

Sir, I say that, because this piece of legislation before us here today, is exceptionally important and significant.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that, because I have lived on Government Housing Estates across Barbados, particularly in the Pine, Parkinson Field and Wildey for 38 years of my life. Sir, I would have never thought that as a tenant of the Government Housing Estates, having been raised most of my life in the Pinelands Housing Area, that I would ever see the day when tenants in the Housing Estates across Barbados would be able to get their housing units free of cost.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying this, because I do not think we have fully analysed and understood what has happened, and this is what I call "housing reformation". You have to understand how poor people feel when something is given to them, against a back-drop of an international world recession, and they are benefitting from it.

Mr. Speaker, when I heard of the initiative "Housing Every Last Person" having been a frequent visitor to the National Housing Corporation, on behalf of my constituents, I really thought it was a methodology in madness. How could you help every last person with housing in Barbados?

Sir, let me say that the rate at which this Minister of Housing is going, I am most certainly sure that housing every last person in Barbados, based on the application of the National Housing Corporation, could be fully realised. Sir, not only that, but it would be a historical achievement, because if you go to the National Housing Corporation you would see the number of persons who have applied for housing across Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I see this initiative before this Parliament as a serious initiative in social engineering for the poor. It also gives me the insight to say that this could be the beginning of cooperative housing policy in Barbados, which encourages poor persons, particularly gas station attendants, maids and those persons in the lower income bracket, who could also be classified as poor persons. In fact, there is a sociological terminology called the "working poor" and this particular piece of legislation before this Honourable House facilitates that process.

I do not think any of us, if we are honest to ourselves, could recall a Minister of Housing in Barbados, who would have started off building so many houses across the length and breadth of Barbados. Sir, Abraham Lincoln would have put it in the American Constitution as "undeniable truths", because the reality is there and you can see it.

Mr. Speaker, I am only saying that once initiatives come before this Honourable Parliament, that is pro poor

and gives relief to the poor in Barbados, Hamilton Fitzgerald Lashley III from the Pine, St. Michael, Barbados, will support it. Sir, if truth is staring you in the face and you take a blinker view at it, therefore, you are not being honest to your conscience and to yourself.

Mr. Speaker, this programme, in the time it was introduced and executed, as simple as it sounds, is a serious and important initiative by the Government of Barbados. Sir, incidentally, when you examine it carefully, it gives a relief of 7 per cent Value Added Tax to those persons who apply it. I see the former Attorney-General is looking back at me with a kind of stiff neck. Sir, I do not want him to get a stiff neck. I only want him to use his ears and listen to me and do not get a stiff neck, because it is a terrible thing.

11.20 a.m.

Sir, what I also like about it, is that it offers flexibility. Imagine my family and I want to build and my brother is a carpenter, I probably a mason. I have never practised masonry, but we could pool our resources, which is a traditional concept and precept of building by Barbadians in the past up to now.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: It is cultural. That is correct.

We could pool our resources and achieve the programme, "Housing Every Last Person in Barbados", through those kinds of initiatives. Sir, social programming is a lot about interacting, getting programmes off the ground with little help from the State. Once the State has created the enabling environment, then it is left to you to really follow through.

Sir, I am saying that when we think that in these difficult times, we could see a housing policy like this coming up, then it must be supported. However, there are more international programmes available that, I believe, we could partner with, and I am sure that we could partner with Habitat for the Humanities, in terms of furthering the effort of cooperative building.

Sir, I would also like to see established at the National Housing Corporation, is a Tenants' Association, which would create a partnership between Government and the tenants themselves, so that the tenants who reside in the Government's housing units, would have a direct link with the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, Tenants' Associations could create such wonderful social programming within the housing districts across Barbados that you would be amazed at the benefits.

I also heard the Minister speak about the In-filling Programme, which should be, and must be supported by all of us. It simply means that you build on the spaces which are available in the Government Housing Estates. Hence, the backlog of applications at the National Housing Corporation for houses and, in particular, those persons who reside in the immediate community would have first-hand benefits to them.

The other programme that I would like to see us embark upon, is that of high-rise building, three to five storeys high, so that rather than building across, there would be a simple methodology of building upwards. There is a proposal I would like to make for each of these high-rise buildings. I heard the Minister talk about them, and I saw a prototype at Country Road. I would like to see it on the bottom floor of these buildings that you put in the other amenities, for instance, a supermarket and a Barber Shop, a similar prototype like what is at Pond Side.

Sir, I am simply saying this, because the facades of the housing areas are changing. There are so much energy and creativity now in terms of business among young people in the housing areas, that we must also facilitate the process of their energies and creativity. We can no longer thwart, or frustrate the ambitions of our youth. Therefore, when we are constructing the housing areas, we must take these things into consideration.

Sir, what I would also like to see is the fact that we build more business enterprises and business development centres within the housing areas. There is one in Deacons and there is the Parkinson Business Centre, but what is far more important is that we find channels to ensure that our young people could really lend to their creativity in the outlets.

I also believe that the relationship between the tenants in the Government housing area and the National Housing Corporation for the first time in the history of Barbados, could be at an all-time high. I am simply saying that, because there has always been in the past this criticism of the National Housing officials and the way the National Housing Corporation expedites business.

Mr. Speaker, I have three Government Housing Estates in my Constituency. The Pine, Wildey and Parkinson Field. Sir, most of the people in my Constituency reside in the Government's Housing Estates and I could only reflect from where I am standing what they are saying. This is the first time they are now saying that, at least, we see the possibility of us owning our houses for the next 10 years. We see there is hope, because every time we look around, we realise that we have an application at the National Housing Corporation for 15 to 20 years.

Sir, if the Minister continues on this path that he is on now, in the next three to four years, I will own my house, too.

Sir, the reflection is that at least there is the offer for hope. The Bible tells us about faith, hope and charity, if we remember it well. Therefore, we cannot condemn an initiative like this before this Honourable Chamber. It is the purpose of intent. It is the intent that matters most.

Mr. Speaker, there are many lawyers in here. I am not a legal luminary, and I will never be, but I understand it, and I understand the basics from a former Attorney-General, from the perspective that if I am going in court for a murder charge, the first grading is intent. Then suddenly the charge might shift or change. I am saying that the intent of this legislation before this Honourable Chamber is to offer hope, and also give poor people in Barbados a good chance of ownership in this land.

Sir, we have to commend the Government. It is difficult for any sane human being in Barbados to go against an initiative like this. There is no perfect world. Yes, there could be one or two areas that could have been improved.

I am judging this legislation before this Honourable Chamber on its intent and its purpose, and the more rapidity that the Government is moving to stop poor people from being poor, must be applauded. Therefore, it is with great anxiety and anticipation that I am awaiting the Budget to be presented by the Honourable Prime Minister. There cannot be any condemnation. I am not saying anything is perfect.

Sir, my voice is failing me, because I am not feeling too well today but, finally, I want to say that at least I would have had the opportunity to say how I feel about this legislation before this Honourable Chamber.

I would hope that at some point in time, the Government, in its continuing exercise, to inform the poor people of Barbados about what they are doing for them, that this piece of legislation would also be highlighted.

I know that later we will talk about transfer of titles, the Tenancies Freehold Act but, Sir, I really want to support this initiative before the Honourable Chamber, and also to encourage the persons who are the architects behind this kind of legislation, to realise that they are doing a good job, and they are on the right path, and a path of serious social engineering in Barbados, and in doing so, Sir, let no obstacle be greater than the cause.

I thank you, Sir.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I want to start by saying that social engineering is continuous and is not piece-meal by the Democratic Labour Party, and if one has any doubt about that, one has to look at our social engineering policy, when we brought free secondary education to this country, and one would recognise that it still continues today.

Mr. Speaker, it is no doubt that this Democratic Labour Party is not a piece-meal Party and that it understands social engineering at a level far greater than the Barbados Labour Party. If one had any problem in understanding that, one only had to listen to the spokesman this morning for the Barbados Labour Party, who could not understand the social engineering that occurred here, or

11.30 a.m.

occurred since January when we won the Government in this country.

When one speaks of housing, it is no wonder that these persons are so confused, because it is clear that they do not know the difference between the egg and the chicken, and they cannot tell you which came first or which would ever come first.

Mr. Speaker, if they understood social engineering at the level that we have understood it, then they would understand that when we came and offered housing lots in this country at a subsidised rate, that was the beginning of this policy, and that we would have been coming later to offer a subsidy also on the house, through this initiative that we have before us today.

Mr. Speaker, they asked us about the subsidy. I want them to know that it is easier to give the subsidy on land than to give it on the house, for the simple reason that when one wants to purchase a piece of land one enters into a contract and has to deposit or agree to purchase that piece of land. Mr. Speaker, it is at that time that you can apply the subsidy, because you know the intention of the person preparing to purchase.

Mr. Speaker, if you were to give a subsidy on housing, there is clarity whether or not that person would complete the house, so it is better to give a rebate on the house and give the subsidy on the land.

We also heard today that the Government of the day promised to give back the 15 per cent VAT, and is only giving back 7 per cent. That is the biggest lie.

Mr. Speaker, everybody should know by now that in the cost of \$150 000, 46.7 per cent of that is on material - we are dealing with poor people - and 53.3 per cent will be labour. All of us who understand poor people would know

that when poor people employ people to build houses, they do not pay VAT on labour. They pay VAT on material.

Sir, if you were to take the \$70 000 of which 46.7 per cent equal, and you were to multiply that by 15 per cent, you would get \$10 500. Sir, if you want now to use the total figure, and you divide the \$10 500 by the \$150 000, you would get the 7 per cent. Sir, that is accounting 102. We are now going to another level.

Mr. Speaker, when one comes to this House of Assembly, one must come prepared. Sir, once you understand the democratic and philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party, you need no coaching. You can come and defend it any time, at any part of the night, or at any time of the day.

I am told that the Democratic Labour Party in its Manifesto promised \$400 000. The Honourable Member argued that they should have been giving \$400 000, yet the Honourable Member is arguing that the \$150 000 cannot be for poor people. It has to be for middle income people.

Sir, I cannot understand what is happening in this Parliament. That is a confused Party. It is no wonder the former Leader said what he said in St. Peter a couple Sundays ago. Sir, I knew and I said that he could not have been speaking about the Democratic Labour Party, because we have new Honourable Members on This Side who came in for the first time, but you had an Opposition with all experienced Members who were not in here for the first time. Sir, at no time have they defeated the Government in any debate.

Sir, any talk about “poor-rakishness” cannot be on This Side. It has to be on the Other Side. Sir, after hearing that speech today by the new Shadow Minister of Finance, I might have to consider what is “poor-rakishness” today. Sir, I do not normally consider these things, but the Honourable Member for St. Peter is very close to St. Lucy and I might now have to give him some consideration in his thoughts, especially when he speaks about his Members.

Mr. Speaker, subsidies and rebates are different things and are for difference reasons. Sir, I have no intention of wasting so much time on the Opposition today, when we have President Obama to listen to, so I will shut up right now.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off to some extent where the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East

left off. The Honourable Member spoke very clearly about intent, and I would like to start there, at the intent of the Bill and the details of the Bill and work forward from there.

The first thing is that I agree with the Honourable Member for St. George North that the intent of the Bill to help people, especially first-time home-owners, gain a house and a shelter is laudable. Sir, the intent is laudable, but the details as seen in this Bill have so much errors and inconsistencies within it, that even though I support the intent, I will find it very difficult to support the Bill in essence.

Mr. Speaker, let us start first with what the promise of the Democratic Labour Party actually was. In their Manifesto, they made it clear that in the first 100 days - that is the first failure, because a 100 days have long past and gone, and 365 days or more have past.

Mr. Speaker, the second inconsistency is that they will remove the VAT. It does not say remove half of the VAT, on building material.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy’s arithmetic gymnastics, which said absolutely nothing and proved nothing whatsoever. It is completely inconsistent with what is in their Manifesto and with what the Honourable Member for St. John said in his Budget Reply in 2007. The Honourable Member for St. John said the same thing in that Budget Reply, that in the first 100 days they will remove VAT from building materials on houses, and again, valued up to \$400 000.

Sir, you have inconsistencies in terms of the date it was introduced, you have inconsistencies in terms of the amount of the refund and you have inconsistencies in terms of the quantity of the value of the building material. Therefore, there is no way that this Bill is in keeping with the intent of the promise. That is the first thing. Let us go further, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, the Bill speaks to a Certificate of Completion from the Chief Town Planner. Mr. Speaker, I have had some experience with building...

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that you can get compliance without completion.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, I did not even make the point as yet. I thought the Honourable Member was going to get up and...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us move on.

11.40 a.m.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, the Bill speaks to a Certificate of Completion. Sir, the first thing, the Chief Town Planner gives something called a “Certificate of Compliance”, and not a “Certificate of Completion”.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, what is completion? Who determines completion? Is it completion when the fence is erected? It is completion when the driveway is completed? Is it completion when the solar water-heater is on? Is it completion when the house is painted? Is it completion when the eaves are finished?

Sir, there are different levels of completion. Therefore, the Chief Town Planner gives a Certificate of Compliance, which means that one has complied with the plans that were submitted and that according to the Chief Town Planner’s conditions, he would append to that approval. The Chief Town Planner does not give a Certificate of Completion, so I think that needs to be amended to a Certificate of Compliance, as opposed to a Certificate of Completion.

Mr. Speaker, I will go further. Sir, not only does it prove that the details in the Bill do not match the Intent. Sir, in their Manifesto and also when the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals reply was given by the Honourable Member for St. John.

Sir, I am sorry the Honourable Member is not in his seat today, because I would have loved to see his face, when the Honourable Member could have said these things in 2007, but could now come back with this shadow of what at this time was a gimmick to gain a Government. I would have loved to see his face where he could now come and completely retrench almost everything they had promised the people of this country.

His Excellency D. StT.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member knows that he cannot make such charges against another Honourable Member. Sir, for the Honourable Member to say that the Honourable Member for St. John gave a gimmick, is implying that the Honourable Member has deliberately misled the people of Barbados. Sir, there is no such evidence that has occurred.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I do not find that to be a point of order.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, not only in those documents were there any requirement, at all, to be able to qualify. There was no requirement about how much the home-owner was making. There was no requirement about being a first-time homeowner. There was no requirement that person had to occupy the house. Sir, therefore, for this Government now to come and bring these eight measures

of what the promise was to the people of this country, is shameful and disrespectful.

Sir, if I were not in this Honourable House, I would have considered it to be dishonest, but I cannot, because I cannot imagine Honourable Members would bring anything dishonest. Sir, I cannot say it was dishonest but I would say it was disrespectful.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, if I was not in this Honourable House, I would have said that this is farcical, and that the only thing left would be for the Honourable Members Over There to say that they have to clap for that, or that Trevor Eastmond say so, because that is the only thing I would have to relate this Bill to, to what the promise was to the people of this country, because they have moved far way from the promise.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. As far as I know, it is against the Rules of this Honourable House to impute terms such as farcical and dishonesty to Honourable Members.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, the imputation is still an offence, and therefore I think you should rule on it. Sir, the Honourable Member has been in here long enough and he knows that. The Honourable Member was very good at quoting Rules when he sat Over Here and should remember them now he is Over There.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear, even although the intent and the concept is laudable, the way in which this Bill is written and the way in which it is to be implemented does not bear any relation to the intent or to the promises that were given to the people of this country.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, let us now get down to the numbers. Sir, even if we were to take the numbers of the promise, the people who read the Democratic Labour Party’s Manifesto and went out and voted so that those Honourable Members could come and sit here, would have expected significant amounts of money in refund.

Sir, let us be straightforward. In relation to a house valued \$400 000, even if we were to take the idea that 50 per cent of that cost is people coming together, to help

build the house, and the other 50 per cent is building materials cost of \$200 000. The legislation speaks to removing the 15 per cent VAT, so that 15 per cent of the \$200 000, people would have expected approximately \$30 000.

Sir, with that \$30 000, they know they could finish the driveway, install the solar water-heater, put in the built-in cupboards, maybe put in tiles, rather than putting in linoleum, paint or trowel-plastic it, so that they could have a house they would be comfortable with and proud of.

Mr. Speaker, instead, we are getting 7 per cent of half of \$150 000, which is not even \$5 000.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, Government is saying that in order for a person in Barbados to get back a refund of \$5 000, any person who is building a house valued \$150 000 or less, would have to apply to the Commissioner of Land Tax for a valuation of the house. Sir, that person has to make sure that the value of that house is less than \$150 000, because even though that person might not have spent \$150 000, the Commissioner of Land Tax could value that house very highly, and we know that the Commissioner of Land Tax has been valuing houses very highly recently.

Mr. Speaker, it does not finish there. Persons then have to hire a lawyer or somebody to make out an affidavit, so that they could swear that they are first-time homeowners. Sir, it does not finish there. Persons then have to keep all their receipts to show and to be able to compute the amount of VAT that they would have paid.

Sir, it does not finish there. Persons then have to turn around and prove that they are going to be living in that house. It does not finish there. They then have to prove that the total amount of money that they make in the house is less than \$42 000. Sir, after doing all those things, they would then get back a maximum of \$5 000.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, that is ridiculous. The cost and time that person has to invest, to be able to get back that \$5 000, would be about \$2 000 to \$3 000 itself. Therefore, what are we actually doing?

Asides.

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

Mr. J. D. PAUL: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is deliberately misleading this Honourable House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, no Member deliberately misleads this Honourable House.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, the impression is being given that this is something which the normal home-owner in Barbados would not have to do. Sir, in order to get certain benefits from Income Tax concessions, it is expected that a home-owner, who has built or is building a house, would keep those receipts. Therefore, to suggest in this Honourable House that what is being requested is unusual, is stretching the imagination. Sir, I think the Honourable Member should know better.

Mr. Speaker, for the Honourable Member also to try to give the impression that the Bill does not reach the working poor, is also stretching the imagination. Sir, I think the Honourable Member needs to do better than that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you need to come to the crux of the matter.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Member should withdraw those remarks.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I do not find that to be a point of order. The Honourable Member is entitled to his opinion.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the Honourable Member lives. I do not know when last the Honourable Member would have bought a house, and would have had to swear on an affidavit, that he was a first-time home-owner. If the Honourable Member had to do that, the Honourable Member has to let this Honourable Chamber know right now that he had to swear an affidavit to be a first-time owner. The Honourable Member said it is in accordance with what the normal home-owner does. Therefore, if the Honourable Member could get up and tell this Honourable Chamber that he swore an affidavit that he is a first-time home-owner, let him say so now. I will give way.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, I do not know when the Honourable Member would have had to go to the Commissioner of Land Tax to get a valuation of his dwelling house. Sir, if, at any time, the Honourable Member had to go to the Commissioner of Land Tax to get a valuation of his dwelling house, let the Honourable Member get up and say so now.

11.50 a.m.

I do not know at any time when the Honourable Member had to go and prove, if he ever built a house, that he is the person who will occupy the house. If he ever had to do that, let him get up and say so now.

Mr. Speaker, I completely reject whatever it was that the Honourable Member said, because it was nonsense.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you must withdraw that remark.

DR. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the remark. It was not in keeping with the intent of what the Bill was supposed to be doing. Sir, it was totally incomprehensible.

Mr. Speaker, I have proven with several points that these measures, after promising people the maximum of \$5 000, the amount of hoops that a person would have to jump through to get that \$5 000 itself has a cost. It means that it further reduces this replacement.

Mr. Speaker, I heard something very inconsistent. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy saying that the Democratic Labour Party is not piece-meal. Sir, that is completely inconsistent with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, who was saying, in the first instance, and that this was the first tranche.

Sir, that is the definition of piece-meal, because the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central said the first tranche would be 7 per cent and that they may increase it further, as time goes on. Then, Sir, it is completely contrary for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to get up and say that it is different. This is completely contrary for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who said that the Democratic Labour Party is not piece-meal.

Mr. Speaker, which one is it? Is it a piece-meal refund? Is it a refund which is going to be increased over time or, is it one that is stuck?

Mr. Speaker, that brings me to another point. I have another difficulty with the Bill. Let me get to the cost of \$150 000. Sir, over time, building materials change price, and over time, the cost of the construction of the house will change price.

Sir, let me go further. A valuation is a very subjective thing. It is not a finite science, because two, three or four valuers could value the same property differently. Sir, somebody could value a property at \$150 000, somebody else could value it at \$155 000, and somebody else could value it at \$165 000, so you throw out the two at \$160 000 and \$165 000 and you keep the one at \$150 000 and, Sir, I understand that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to suggest to the Government what may have been a better way to structure this Bill, and it is straight forward. Rather than have a cost associated with the value, it be related to the size of the house. In other words, a 600 square foot wall house or 900 square foot wooden house...

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, the concept would be that it would be related to the size of the house, because the size of the house is verifiable and definite, and the size of the house would be on the Town & Country Planning application. If we were to put it, based on the size of the house, it would take out the ambiguity of the valuer themselves. Sir, that way, even if building prices went up, people that benefit, would be benefitting, based on the size, rather than based on value, which is very subjective.

Sir, with those few words, I thank you for my consideration, because we all want to go and hear Obama.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give full support to this Bill before the House today, and to make a few short points on this matter. Whilst I join with all in noting the Inauguration of Barack Obama today, as the 44th President of the United States of America, and what that symbolises primarily to minorities around the world, I cannot help but to reflect that this Bill before us today symbolises, in many ways, once again, the determination of the Democratic Labour Party to get it right in respect of housing solutions for the poor in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have sat for the last few hours and listened in particular to the comments of the Honourable Members and I cannot help, but express a level of dismay and dis-satisfaction with those comments, because it speaks fundamentally to their own failings as a Government when they held office, with respect to housing and a desperate and naked grab to concede some kind of support or accommodation, where it is not rightly deserved.

Mr. Speaker, I have always contended that once you stand steadfast with your philosophical moorings, your policies and programmes that emanate thereof, would certainly be in tune. Sir, this Government has, from day one, exhibited that level of commitment to the cause. We have, perhaps, shown to Barbadians from all walks of life, what an innovative programme we can bring to bear in this country. Sir, we have delivered and delivered well.

Mr. Speaker, for 14 years, the former Administration made nothing, but wild promises in respect of housing in

this country. Those of us, who campaigned in the last Election, noted that housing was, in many respects, the number one concern of Barbadians. I cannot believe that any one of the Members of the Opposition could come in here today and seek not to give support to such innovative measures on the part of an informed and enlightened Government.

I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, for example, talked about housing solutions, and that you should relate this issue to the size of the house and not the value.

Sir, common sense should dictate that the size of your house does not bear much relationship necessarily to the value of the house. You could have a 600 square foot house of marble floors, granite counter tops and top-class plumbing fittings that is worth more than a house that is 1 600 square feet.

Then I heard spurious argument about the definition between completion and compliance. The reality of it is that the Law stipulates that once you are issued with a Certificate of Compliance by the Chief Town Planner, that is what the financial institution accepts in order to change your interest rate on mortgages, et cetera. So why should the Government seek to come with anything different? Sir, we should all accept...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

DR. W. F. DUGID: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Bill says "Certificate of Completion" and what he is speaking to is a "Certificate of Compliance", so he has made the point for us and I thank him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will continue. Sir, I am not going to be caught up in any spurious argument. The bottom line is, that hundreds of Barbadians, who before could not own a piece of the rock, could not get a roof over their heads, with this new Bill, they will get that opportunity to do so.

We had a former Government that did not take housing solutions seriously in Barbados. The cost of living was high, job opportunities were not as great as they talked about. The sheer ability to own a piece of the rock for the average Barbadians did not - except their focus was on taking care of the "two-few" in this society.

Their housing solutions spoke to one that said, if you were from abroad and you had deep pockets, that you were welcomed, and that you would be accommodated. It did

not speak to a housing solution that the average person in Barbados could relate to. Sir, that is why we came into office and found on the National Housing Corporation's waiting list almost 30 000 Barbadian families waiting to own a piece of the rock in this country. It is a crying shame for this Government that had more money to spend than any Government in the history of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we came into office and found that between 2004 and 2008, the former Administration constructed 48 houses, including six in Culloden Road called "Lady Bird", "Country Boy", "Bumble Bee" and whatever fancy names the former Honourable Member for St. James South called them. Sir, then they had to tie them off, of course, with a piece of rope to stop them from blowing down.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that Honourable Members on the Other Side have the moral authority to stand up in here and speak in any serious way about housing solutions in Barbados.

12:00 noon

We came in and in a few months, with the stroke of a pen, hundreds of Barbadians who were renting from the National Housing Corporation, got the opportunity to own their units.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: When they were talking about selling the units to individuals, we came in and said that is not fair, and that is not right. We made that commitment and we lived up to it. We said that if you lived in the unit for 20 years or more, consecutively, and your rent is paid up, you will own that unit.

I have hundreds of people in my Constituency who have benefited from that initiative. If the title deeds have not yet been passed, at least they stopped paying rent, and when you add to that, the fact that their own children can now ride the buses free, giving them a higher disposable income, you cannot say that we are not an enlightened Government.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I heard the former Honourable Member for St. James Central, or we engaged in a little discussion on the weekend, where he talked about the Condominium Act, and accused this Government of not putting structures in place to protect the homeowners. I saw that as a vicious and an aggressive indication or need for him to re-assert the public of Barbados that he, an attorney-at-Law, is open for business.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: It is free advertising he received.

As I said then, whether you are selling the units or giving them to the tenants free, the same Laws apply in respect to the Condominium Act. Therefore, we can take all of this grandstanding for what it is really worth. At the end of today, you have a Government that is committed to providing housing solutions to average Barbadians. Therefore, in respect of this particular Bill, and the reimbursement for VAT on \$150 000 of the cost, yes, we did indicate in the Manifesto, that we will do it up to \$400 000. We did not say we will do it at one time, but on the other hand, let us be frank about this, because I know that the Opposition has a tendency to get up and continue to talk about Manifesto pledges, et cetera.

Sir, had we known the kind of financial mess that was left for us, I do not think many things would have gone into our Manifesto that went in. There are some harsh realities that we have to face. I would be extremely irresponsible as a Parliamentary Representative to encourage the Minister of Finance to go and waive Value Added Tax (VAT) on the first \$400 000 of input cost on a house, and then find that I do not have money to provide much needed equipment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, or the Honourable Minister of Education does not have money to fix an aged plant that he inherited as the Minister of Education.

Therefore, we will not be such an irresponsible Government to fall prey to the follies of the Opposition grouping in this country. These are trying times that we are in, and I know that there are many Barbadians who are surprised at what we have been able to do in such a short space of time, given the challenging global financial situation. I have always contended that Barbadians are smarter than we politicians often take them to be, Sir.

Wherever I go in my Constituency and in the Constituency of Christ Church West, and the Constituency of St. Joseph, where the Honourable Member should visit from time to time, I encounter Barbadians from all walks of life, who could not believe that we could allow children to ride the buses free, that we could give National Housing Corporation's units to people without cost, and that we could have reduced the cost of fuel prices on six occasions. These things all translate to Barbadians getting more money in their pockets at the end of the month, and being able to spend it as they should.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Therefore, let us all agree that this Government is on the right track.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North, who has the responsibility for leading the fight in respect of our housing programmes, must be commended for the effort that he has done today, and it really goes to show because, by and large, he is still working with the same public officers that the former Government had to work with, but when you have enlightened leadership, when you have individuals who can motivate workers, when you can have an overall national agenda that workers can connect to, you can meet with success.

Sir, when you have a culture of fear that permeates the entire public sector, when you have a lot of political victimisation that has happened under the former Administration, then you cannot ask people to produce and to deliver. We have been able to do much with so little, compared to the former Government. Therefore, let us not be ashamed of anything we have done.

Mr. Speaker, when Barbadians today accept that we have major challenges, in respect to providing housing solutions to low income individuals in particular, they must commend us for taking this initiative in saying that if you construct a house, valued up to \$150 000, and you are a first-time home-owner, and the gross income of the family is \$42 000, maximum, once two years of that have gone past between construction and filing that you can apply to the relevant Department to get the refund for the Value Added Tax. It is not on the land, as one of the Honourable Members was implying, but it is strictly on the house. These things, to my mind, are crystal clear, and will benefit hundreds of Barbadian families but it goes further.

The former Administration's housing policies in respect of low income Barbadians, in particular, was one that did not speak to ownership, but it spoke more to forcing Barbadians to rent. Each one of us takes pride in pushing a key in our own door and not paying rent to somebody else. Therefore, this enlightened Government, armed with such philosophical thoughts, has moved forward.

We have progressed. We have taken hundreds of Barbadians from a situation of despair and hopelessness, just as President Obama is doing for the Americans today, to one where they see hope, despite the trying circumstances out there, but, yes, we can. As a matter of fact, yes, we have and, yes, we will but it goes further.

This will, in many ways, help to relieve some of the burden off Government, in terms of being able to house Barbadians. It will certainly free up some of the rental units that we may have currently available. Certainly, when the Honourable Member for St. Philip North rolls out the new housing units that will be available for rent, that too will certainly help to solve a lot of the challenges that we are currently facing.

Sir, with rent-to-own policy, we believe that Barbadians must own, not like the former Government that believed Barbadians must be strangers in their own land. That is not in keeping with us in the Democratic Labour Party, and that is not in keeping with the thoughts of our founder whose birthday we celebrate tomorrow.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: We have not moved away from our philosophical moorings at all, even in my Constituency, because I want to say that we too are working on solutions for middle income Barbadians. My Constituency is approximately 75 per cent middle and upper income. It would be remiss of me not to champion or to call for initiatives that will speak to assisting them, in respect of being able to own a piece of the rock, and their children as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party over the years, as a responsible Government and political organisation, has been responsible for the creation of large middle-income sub-divisions, like West Terrace Gardens, Wanstead and Husbands. Some people forget that these were Democratic Labour Party's initiatives. Sir, we provided housing solutions to civil servants in Barbados. I remembered during the last Election that the now Prime Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, spoke about taking initiatives and thinking outside of the box and finding solutions that spoke to providing housing assistance to civil servants, teachers, firemen, nurses, those kinds of professions that we need in Barbados, and we were laughed at.

12.10 p.m.

Sir, I remember that it was right there in St. James South that the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow and the Democratic Labour Party created middle-income housing solutions. Today, as I canvass and walk through my Constituency, people remind me that they are where they are today due to the efforts of the Democratic Labour Party back in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Sir, this Government, and the political organisation that backs it, can stand tall anywhere in this country, and be proud of the housing solutions it has brought. Unlike the former Government, who sought to take the roof from over their heads, we have housed a nation.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue. We recognise that there are major financial challenges looming on the horizon. We believe that Barbadians are extremely resilient and that once we have a focussed political directorate, we can achieve a lot. We have done a lot, as I said before, in a short space of time and there is much more that can be done.

Mr. Speaker, we would not be a reckless Government. We will not mis-spend the taxpayers' money. I know that the Opposition likes to walk around the place and talk about a fiscal stimulus package and an economic stimulus package and want us to say what we have done.

The truth of the matter is that if they have been listening, they would have heard what we are doing. They give all of this talk, yet they cannot come and tell Barbadians what they would have done, if they were in our position today.

The only person who has done it in one of the four statements he has made since this House rose again, is the Honourable Member for St. Peter when he said that we should go and borrow another \$300 000, because his solution to everything in this country is to borrow, borrow.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that when you borrow you have to borrow for a purpose, something that is sustainable, something that speaks to uplifting your people and to moving a country forward, not to borrow to turn around and ensure that a couple million dollars end up in the pockets of a few political operatives.

Mr. Speaker, when we speak of constructing two high-rise buildings in Warrens to house public officers, it is not like the Warrens Building that they built, that is the most expensive building per square foot in the Western Hemisphere. It is because we came into office and found that the accommodation for public officers was despicable.

The Ministry of Health that I have to work in is a condemned building. I join with the workers when they complain about the conditions there. Fortunately, the plans are to move in a few months. It is a housing issue. It is not just about residential issues, it is about showing a level of care and commitment to the average Barbadian.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph would always miss the point, but it comes back to basics. If you care about ensuring that the average Barbadian has a certain quality of life, whether at home or in the workplace, you would ensure that Barbadians get housing and accommodation for offices that they can be proud of.

Sir, there are some politicians who are so removed from the people that they seek to represent, that they cannot even connect. Like the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, I too live in a nice big wall house and drive a nice motorcar, but we are not the norm. We are not the average. We need to be cognisant of the fact that we are here to represent people who may not be like him and I. That is

why I say some politicians do not have the moral authority to get up and speak on some issues.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: I do not have a yacht. I know my father had a 26-footer fishing boat. I do not smoke cigars and I do not wear suspenders, et cetera.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let us get back to the debate.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I do know is that I have many individuals in my Constituency, who like I, wish to receive a land tax bill at the end of the year, who like I want to know that they can push a key in a door and say this is my house and that they could go in their house and kick off their shoes wherever they wish to kick them. This is what we are here to do. We are here to remember the challenges and the plights of those who elected us to office, and to ensure that we use the resources of Government, financial and moral authority, as well, to bring to bear solutions that are sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, I can safely say that in the first year we have been in office, we have been extremely successful in respect of our housing programme. We have provided solutions to low income individuals, and this Bill today is just another step in that direction.

We continue to be cognisant of the challenges facing middle-income Barbadians, because too often they are the ones who are not looked at. We often talk about poor Barbadians, but the State provides well for them. Those at the very top, like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, are well taken care of by themselves and their bankers, but there is that group in the middle that we too would work with.

We need to ensure that the children of the residents of West Terrace Gardens, Wanstead and Husbands can also own a piece of the rock. That is why I commend the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the National Housing Corporation for identifying almost 100 house spots in St. James South. It is not just in St. George, St. Peter and other parts of the island.

I cannot believe that the people of St. James South had a Parliamentary Representative for nearly 14 years who also served as Minister of Housing and Lands, who could not find one house spot in St. James South for her people. We have identified almost 100 house spots. West Terrace Gardens is to be expanded. We will provide some low income houses in Wanstead and parts of Oxnards and the Haynesville areas.

Sir, this Government is busy at work. We are not grand-standing and looking for the photo up. We are serious about the people's business. Sir, like in so many other sectors of this economy, we can stand up about housing and say we have done well. We have listened to our people and we brought sustainable solutions to bear.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to give my full support to this Bill before Parliament today.

I thank you.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed until Tuesday, February 3, 2009.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, February 03, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, February 3, 2009 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

12.20 p.m.

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DUGUID, Dr. W. F. (Christ Church West)
INNISS, Hon. D. O’N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East)

PAUL, Mr. J. D.

PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)

STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)

TODD, Hon. P. M. T. (City of Bridgetown)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Papers. Hon. F. J. Stuart says ‘I am commanded to lay the following Bill:’, but the item laid is the ‘Report of the Judicial Council for the year 2006’. Printed as in the source.

Q2. Order No. 3, speaker labels. Three speech headings carry slips: ‘His Excellency D. StT.E. KELLMAN’, ‘Mr. J. D. PAUL’ and ‘DR. W. F. DUGID’ (for Dr. W. F. Duguid). Printed as in the source.

Q3. Motion on the Inauguration of President Obama. The outcome of the motion is printed as an ordinary paragraph (‘The acknowledgment was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division.’) rather than as a procedural note. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 3, Mr. G. A. Clarke’s speech. Mr. Clarke gives the rate both as ‘15 per cent’ and ‘15 per cent’ against the Bill’s 7 per cent. Printed as in the source.

Q5. End of record. The second reading debate was not concluded; further consideration of the Bill was postponed until Tuesday, February 3, 2009.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 20th January, 2009 at 10.15 a.m., with Mr. Speaker, His Honour M. A. Carrington, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood. Mr. Speaker welcomed Members back from the Christmas break and welcomed the Honourable Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture for Alberta, Canada. On behalf of the Minister of Finance, Hon. R. D. Jones laid the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Inter-American Development Bank) Order, 2008, a quarterly report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund and the Annual Report of the Securities Commission; Hon. F. J. Stuart laid the Report of the Judicial Council for 2006. The Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009 was read a first time and Standing Orders were suspended.

Hon. F. J. Stuart then moved that the House acknowledge the Inauguration that day of President Barack Obama, the first black President and the 44th President of

the United States of America; Mr. Jones seconded and the motion was agreed without division.

Hon. R. D. Jones, Leader of the House, moved the second reading of the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009, which gives effect to the 2008 Budget commitment to first-time home-owners. Those building a home valued at up to \$150 000, in families earning up to \$42 000 a year, would receive a 7 per cent reduction in VAT, about \$10 500. Applicants would need a Certificate of Completion from the Chief Town Planner and a sworn affidavit. He described this as a first tranche to be revisited as economic conditions improved, and said some 30 000 people wanted their own homes.

Mr. G. A. Clarke, Member for St. George North, did not oppose the measure but argued that building material costs had risen by 25 to 100 per cent, with high tension rebar at more than \$3 800 a tonne, and that the Manifesto pledge had implied refunds of more than \$60 000. He contrasted the 7 per cent with the 15 per cent expected, recalled his party’s reduction of mortgage interest for low income earners from 9 to 6 per cent and its \$10 000 annual tax claim for home repairs, and was asked by Mr. Speaker to show the relevance of part of his remarks. His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman raised points of order on the price of steel.

Mr. H. F. Lashley, Member for St. Michael South East, linked the Bill to the Inauguration and spoke of his 38 years on Government housing estates and the transfer of units to tenants free of cost. His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman described the measure as continuing Democratic Labour Party social engineering. Dr. W. F. Duguid, Member for Christ Church West, supported the intent but said the Bill’s details were full of errors: he questioned who would determine ‘completion’, said a voter reading the Manifesto would have expected about \$30 000 on a \$400 000 house, and argued that the cost of claiming a \$5 000 refund could be \$2 000 to \$3 000. Points of order were raised by His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman, Hon. P. M. T. Todd over the word ‘farcical’ and Mr. J. D. Paul, and Dr. Duguid withdrew one remark at Mr. Speaker’s direction.

Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Member for St. James South, gave the Bill full support, saying that hundreds of Barbadians would now be able to own a home and that the Government had been successful in housing in its first year. On the motion of Mr. Jones, seconded by Hon. M. A. Lashley, further consideration of the Bill was postponed until Tuesday, February 3, 2009, and the House was adjourned until that day at 10.00 a.m.



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