
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.10 a.m. on Tuesday, July 14, 2009.

PRESENT

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

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, Q.C., LL.B (Hons.)
Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Labour, Civil Service and Energy)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., LL.M. (Leic.) LL.B (Hons.) (Lond.), B.A., Dip. Ed.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN

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, 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 The Environment, Water Resources and Drainage)

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

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

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

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

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

Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This House is now in Session.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, June 30, 2009.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, June 30, 2009, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I beg to second that, Sir.

PAPERS

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Sir, I am commanded to lay the following:

Report of the St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I beg to move the First Reading of the following:

Arts and Sport Promotion Fund Regulations, 2006 (Validation) Bill, 2009.

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: The St. Joseph Hospital, located on 22 acres of land in Ashton Hall, St. Peter, Barbados, was built and operated by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, around 1966. After persistent financial losses, the hospital was closed in 1986.

The property was purchased by the Government of Barbados in 1986 for approximately BDS\$6.1 million. Allegedly, due to the lack of a sound economic and management plan, the hospital was closed on March 31, 1995. The facility was secured and the staff members, who were seconded to the Board were reassigned, while employees of the Board were either terminated or recruited within the Ministry of Health.

The St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry was appointed in 1997, following the decision of the Cabinet in 1996. The main Terms of Reference of the Inquiry were:

1. The investigation of and report on the award and performance of contracts and subcontracts; and
2. Breaches of rules, regulation procedures or Laws related to the appointment of staff.

The Commission conducted its work within four phases:

1. Public hearings(1998-2000)
2. Notices of Allegations of Misconduct 2001
3. Hearings of Allegations of Misconduct challenged by three former Board Members, who won judgement in the year 2004; and
4. Report of the Commission concluded in the year 2005.

On December 2, 1998, the Cabinet approved \$1 647 200 to meet the expected expenditure of the St. Joseph

Hospital Commission of Inquiry. However, the expenditure incurred by the Commission as at August 31, 2008, was \$3 513 726.78; Commissioners, Legal Counsel and Staff, \$1 408 500, the cost of High Court Suits, \$1 405 112, legal fees for legal counsel \$164 310, and other Expenses related to office equipment, note taking, et cetera, \$535 804.78, a total expenditure as at that date of \$3 513 726.78.

In respect of the findings of the Commission, the Report of the St. Joseph Hospital Commission, in general, found that:

1. The Ministry of Health failed to ensure that the project was brought before the Planning and Priorities Committee.
2. The Ministry of Health failed to ensure that the procedure for the implementation of the project was consistent with best practices in the construction industry.
3. The Ministry of Health made payments amounting to approximately \$2.9 million to the main contractor, in the absence of a former contract to client.
4. The quantity surveyors for the project failed to prepare a final account in accordance with the terms of their contract with the Crown.
5. The functions of the St. Joseph Hospital Board were usurped by the Ministry of Health, who actively participated in the recruitment of staff.

In respect of the recommendations of the Commission, the major recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry were:

1. That a structured programme of training and re-training of public officers be developed to include:
 - a. The principle of project management, financial management, including the Financial Administration and Audit Act, Cap. 5.
 - b. Customs legislation as it relates to duty- free imports.
2. The management of public sector projects should be required to salvage and maintain accounting systems of all financial transactions related to the projects.
3. A code of ethics for the holders of public office be developed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what must be noted is, that the original projected expenditure was \$1 647 200 as of December 28, 1998, but by 2009, the actual expenditure was \$3 524 226.78, or a 100 per cent increase.

The entire scenario was further aggravated by the comments coming from the Ministry of Finance in October 2005, in response to a request for a financial supplemental for the Commission. The comments of the Ministry of Finance then were, that the Ministry of Health has to prescribe a process to bring this matter to a distinct closure. The justification of the proposed expenditure is also being queried. This Ministry, meaning the Ministry of Finance, would like to be assured that there will be no further claims for ongoing work of the Commission.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is worthwhile to note that no one has ever been found guilty of any wrong doings resulting in any penalties being imposed. Regrettably, for 14 years the property known as the St. Joseph Hospital has been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair, at a time when there has been increased demand for modern health care facilities in Barbados.

Finally, the Government of Barbados has commenced a structural engineering assessment of the buildings and is also reviewing all proposals submitted, today, for the future use of the said property, and we will soon be in a position to announce the plans for the future use of the property. The public can be assured that it will be utilised for the benefit of Barbadians and visitors alike.

I am obliged, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Government Business is now the order of the day.

H A41 10.20 a.m. Sequence 2

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House A41, Sequence 04, 10.30 a.m.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Government Business is now the order of the day.

ORDER NO. 4 – THE ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION FUND REGULATIONS, 2006 (VALIDATION) BILL, 2009.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will remember that earlier this year, the Government sought to amend the Act and Regulations which govern the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund. In fact, that process was completed and the new procedure was put in place to give effect to the new arrangements, as well as to the amendments to the Regulations, which took effect from the August 31, 2008.

However, Sir, inadvertently two matters came before the Committee, which were dealt with as if the Act and Regulations were already in place, or under a procedure that appeared to be similar to that which had been agreed, to constitute the Amendments. Particularly, on the December 5, 2007, an amount was disbursed to the National Sports Council and on the November 27, 2008, an amount was disbursed to the National Cultural Foundation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation is seeking to validate those particular payments that were made, in accordance with the procedure that the House subsequently agreed to, but which had in fact not, at the time when those decisions had been made, been brought into force. Therefore, I am moving the second reading of this Amendment to the Arts and Sports Promotion Bill.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to second that and reserve the right to speak.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, so that I do not have to rise again, and with the Leader of the House, there is also the Resolution to approve the Amendment to the Regulations, which is still on the Order Paper as Item No. 2. Therefore, I would like the presentation that I made regarding the Validation to apply to Order No. 2 as well. If we can take both, not together, but take the speeches together on them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move the passing of the Resolution, as well as the Second Reading of the Bill.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to say from the outset that speaking relative to the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund, this Fund is in fact making a dent into some of the challenges faced by both cultural and sporting organisations in Barbados. It was an important piece of legislation, which sought to impact on the sporting fraternity and the cultural artistes of Barbados.

Occasionally, I wear another hat and that organization benefits from the resources of the Arts and Sport Fund, particularly when we have to make expensive journeys to become engaged in competitive activity. The normal resources are not enough to sustain that kind of competitive relationship, either within the Caribbean or with those other countries, with which we have to interact through play from time to time.

I think something like that should be noted, where there are activities to celebrate the sporting talents of Barbadians, both young and mature, and to some extent, those who now play in activities called, Senior Games or Masters Games, that something like the Arts and Sports Fund comes in quite handily, to facilitate the work of those organisations.

None of the sports organizations in Barbados, outside of the BCA, has enough resources to sustain their activities over time, and a fund which is established and set up by the Government assists in facilitating those activities and those developments.

We want our young people to recognise that it is through their hard work, training and practice, that they would even gain higher levels of support. We have seen over time, many of the sporting organisations and athletic clubs seeking scholarships and fellowships for those persons who have shown some athletic prowess and, of course, aligned with their mental prowess, in universities, in the United States of America and more recently in Canada, with some small trickle to the United Kingdom.

We have built in Barbados a proud record of outstanding sports persons, particularly led by our cricketers. We should always celebrate those outstanding Barbadians, I would not want to say of a bygone era, because I believe that once there is a future, other great men and women would rise to the fore and make their contribution, so that we can celebrate their prowess on the field of play, whatever that field of play is, cricket, football, hockey, netball, badminton, lawn tennis or table tennis.

In Barbados, we play 83 different sports. In other countries they do not have that many sports being played, but in a small country of 166 square miles, with a population of maybe 280 000 persons, there are 83 sports being played in this country, and they all compete for relatively scarce resources. We play road tennis, which is an extremely important cultural activity. It could be played on a small surface, and is not a very expensive sport, but that is well developed across Barbados. At one time, I know we wanted to export it, but I am not sure that it has gained the kind of flavour or prominence that those persons who wanted to export it, would have thought that it would have gained.

Sir, I want to just spend a brief moment looking at the King of all sports and that is cricket. Today, as we look across the cricketing landscape, as Barbadians or West Indian people, either at home or within the wider West Indian Diaspora, we cannot be pleased and we cannot be satisfied with the state of our cricket.

Most recently, one had - it is their right and I want to underscore that - workers, and if they consider themselves as workers and they have a grievance, they have a right to express that grievance in a decent and an orderly manner.

House A41, Sequence 04, 10.40 a.m.

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Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at the state of play in cricket by gentlemen who today earn large amounts of money for their talent or lack thereof, we cannot be satisfied as West Indians when we hear statements from leaders in the game, when we see the display on the field, and when we see the attitude which filters down, even among the young players.

Today, there is a team from the Continent of Asia in the Caribbean to play cricket against younger, not so well-seasoned players whom we had to call on to step up to the plate to represent the good name of West Indies cricket, when they should be playing against the best that we can produce, or the best that we have. This is something that should not happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not here to ascribe blame, either to the West Indies Cricket Board or to the West Indies Players' Association. We have to understand that the game embodies something for all West Indian people, because whether or not you understand the game, there is a passion for the sport. It is something embedded within the cultural and historical framework of these English-Speaking islands, and we would want to see a change in the modus operandi, the behaviour and the attitude of those who are called to represent the West Indies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are great Barbadian and West Indian players, persons like Sir Garfield Sobers, Seymour Nurse, Sir Clyde Walcott, Sir Everton Weekes and Sir Frank Worrell out of Barbados, and Basil Butcher and Rohan Khani out of Guyana, who never had the opportunity to earn as players in these modern times are earning. These present players can secure their future for generations. There are persons right across the landscape of the Caribbean who have made us proud as West Indian people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when success was wrapped around our various cricketing teams over the various decades, one saw an increase in productivity throughout the

Caribbean islands, because West Indians felt good about themselves particularly when the West Indies played countries such as England and Australia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, about two decades ago when this cricketing region was in its heyday and one had conversations with persons of African or West Indian extractions in England, one saw a change in the outlook of those persons. That change in outlook is no longer reflected today, because they are feeling the severe pressure of an inconsistent cricketing region of players who seem not to understand the role that cricket plays in the bosom of West Indian people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we put more and more resources into this sport, through the National Sports Council with its Under 13 Programme, through the Barbados Cricket Association and through the efforts of all private sector sponsors, Digicel or whomever, I therefore would want to appeal to persons to reorient their minds when they are called to play for the Region, so that the cavalier approach which now seems to be overtaking the sport disappears and that we return to the very steadfast focus delivery, of the cricketing product to the people of the West Indies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have once again to hold our heads high. We have not been holding our heads high because of the approach adopted and the confusion which sometimes results, as evident by the behaviour of the leadership of West Indies cricket, both at the level of the WICB and at the level of the captaincy and some of the other players within the West Indies team. This state of affairs cannot continue. We have done studies over time. In our university here in Barbados, cricket studies and a whole lot of cricket research is being undertaken.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are players out there who seem not to understand. We have faced the embarrassment of being beaten by a Bangladesh team that really should not beat any West Indies team whether an A team or a B team.

I want to compliment those players, several of them Barbadians who, when they were called to duty on behalf of the West Indies, got up and represented this Region, albeit, they lost by some 95 runs, but there were moments of glory such as with young Omar Phillips, fast bowler Kemar Roach and Floyd Reifer, a gentleman some 37 years old. Those persons rose to the occasion unprepared for that journey, and I am pleased to see that this was a demonstration of a commitment to the philosophy of West Indian Cricket and the philosophy that they must step up to the plate. Therefore, I do not believe that the West Indies Cricket Board of Control or the West Indies Players' Association, should be constantly embroiled in internecine conflicts over the playing of this game. Both sides have to step back, because both sides seem not to understand what

they are doing, and bring on board individuals who understand the players, the process of mediation, consultation, arbitration and reconciliation in matters such as this. It is a disaster at this stage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the West Indian people who go to the grounds, who watch the televisions from which television rights would generate income. It is funds like the Sports and Arts Fund and it is the national lotteries or the lotteries that we have here in Barbados and across the Caribbean, where people spend their money to support these endeavours, so the West Indies players must pad up once again and take a new guard, relative to what is happening in West Indies cricket.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at one time cricket was the only thing we had across the West Indies that made us real proud as West Indians. Even when we had the Federation struggle and as we go through the agony of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the birth of these structures and instruments, West Indian cricket stood fast and generated pride and glory for our Region. Today, it is generating an avalanche of shame, and we need to ask all of those involved to stop, take guard and re-assert that which should be of importance. The West Indian people must be of importance relative to the playing of the game.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought, as I support the Resolution and this Bill, that I needed to say those few words relative to the state of the game of cricket within the wider Region.

I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sure that Honourable Members would have taken note of the comments of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, I certainly have done so. Those who, therefore, have the responsibility for planning the direction of cricket, both in Barbados and the West Indies at large should take to heed the view-points he has expressed.

With those few words, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

House A41 Sequence 5

10.50 a.m.

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Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that in the absence of the substantive Chairman of Committees, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central be appointed temporary Chairman of Committees.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees (Ag.), in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 2, inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the DEPUTY SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund Regulations, 2006 (Validation) Bill, 2009.

ORDER NO. 2 – ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION FUND (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 2009.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to adopt the same arguments that I did in moving the amendment to the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund Regulations, 2006 (Validation) Bill, 2009. Therefore, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT CAP. 225, IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING

CORPORATION OF THE PARCELS OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT BRANCHBURY IN THE PARISH OF ST. JOSEPH AND WOODBOURNE, IN THE PARISH OF ST. PHILIP IN THIS ISLAND, FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Resolution before this Honourable House seeks to vest the following parcels of land in the National Housing Corporation for residential purposes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the lands I am speaking about are at Branchbury, St. Joseph and Woodbourne, St. Philip.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in its Manifesto, this Administration promised that we would acquire lands situated within existing villages and that we would make those lots available to Barbadians. Indeed, that is part of our programme, the HELP Programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we came to office, a Special Committee was set up. This Committee comprises the Permanent Secretary, the Deputy Permanent Secretary, the Chief Legal Officer of the National Housing Corporation, the Chief Legal Officer of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Principal Legal Assistant to the Minister of Housing and Lands and the Chief Surveyor.

We also met with representatives from the Town Planning Department and set about to look at lands throughout Barbados that we could make available to Barbadians, lands within villages that would already have the existing sites and services.

The Honourable Member for St. George North spoke many times about it. We recognised where there is development in a particular area. Sir, if I may mention the area of St. George North, Dr. Hamlin's Land, on one side we have an existing housing development, which was carried out by the former Honourable Member for St. George North. On the other side of that housing development, an application was made by the then Honourable Member for St. George North, to develop lands on the next side of the road to this same development and that application was turned down. Sir, after the acquisition process started, what is happening is that the owner of the land, through his attorney-at-law is about to - I do not know if he is going to take legal action, but of course, he has all legal rights to get his due compensation for the time he was out of the land and for the time that he was kept out of the land for his purposes.

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Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I do not know if he is going to take legal action but, of course, he has all legal rights to get his due compensation for the time he was off his land. Mr. Deputy Speaker, to my mind, that was a perfect opportunity where the then Administration could have got more land in that area to be given to the other residents and for other Barbadians to have access to those lots.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that the person at the lower income level cannot go today into the private market and acquire a piece of land and, of course, Sir, some of us cannot readily go and get a piece of land on the private open market, but my friend from St. Michael East Central is not in that category.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I started this programme, I remember the comments often made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that, give them the land and that Barbadians when they have a piece of the rock, through savings, through help from villagers and friends, would then build their homes. Sir, I know full well, because I grew up in a village and I remember seeing houses being moved on Sunday mornings and by the Sunday evening they are moved to particular spots and are put up.

Sir, it is in situations like these where we have acquired the land and where some of the lots on the ridge are for immediate access, that Barbadian can now purchase that lot at \$5 a square foot and would be able some day, through their savings or when it is conveyed to them, by using the conveyance as security.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, if I were Member of Parliament for the area, and I had recognised that the State had acquired land in my Constituency, I would be glad, because my constituents would have some access to land in the area. Although, when I was in Opposition, we heard a lot of talk about River for about 14 years. We heard a lot of talk about other areas and, particularly in St. Philip North, we suffered to an extent in terms of land being available in St. Philip North. Sir, St. Philip South was moving fast. They acquired Rices but St. Philip North was moving a little slow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are saying that we have now to vest this land in the National Housing Corporation, because we recognise that there would be land available. For one instance, I recall when I came to this House early, that land was acquired in the Marchfield/Six Roads area, houses were built by the National Housing Corporation on

them and the land was not vested in the National Housing Corporation.

Sir, the problem it poses is that the National Housing Corporation could not, at that time, give the conveyances to those persons living in the houses and they were paying an occupancy rent for about seven years or eight years to the National Housing Corporation, although the land was not vested. Of course, that is now tidied up because this Government came to Parliament in February and we finally vested the land in the National Housing Corporation, so we could activate the process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the past, I know that Government would allow the residents of a particular area to use the land as house spots and, in some cases of emergency, we cannot wait for the vesting process. Sir, in cases of emergency where someone's house is burnt, or there is some disaster, once it is the Crown's land, you can then give them the opportunity to go on the land and later put the proper paper work in place. Sir, now we have the proper paper work in place and we are now vesting the land in the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember the Honourable Member for St. George North in a side comment saying that Government had come to Parliament, but they had not yet acquired the land. He said that in a side comment, but Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have acquired Cliff in St. Philip North and it is in the village, so we are using this as the strip of land on the frontage, so that we could use the existing utilities in Cliff, and Sir, there is another area at Guinea in St. John.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really and truly want to congratulate the officials of the Ministry of Housing. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know I have not asked for your permission to call names, but there is a legal assistant in the Ministry of Housing who actually ran with this project. He is not in the House of Assembly today, but Sir, I want to congratulate him. He is from the parish of St. Lucy and Sir, on some occasions he worked single-handedly and we could call him out on weekends to go and look at available spots.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, only yesterday, on doing some research, I recognised there is Crown land in Dayrells Road. It is land that was given to the Crown by a deed of gift in Dayrells and Sir, that land is lying there idle. Sir, the Minister of Housing, at that time, was a Mr. Greaves and I know the land was given by a deed of gift and the land is there. The Honourable Member for St. James North is agreeing with me and I am not misleading the House because it is true.

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Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: In fact, an application was made to the Ministry by a private person to build houses on that land.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: He asked for permission to enter into Government. Sir, that letter was sent probably 14 years ago. We have to look at it again. I am just saying that there is available Crown lands lying around, so we have to take a look at that land.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph would know that we will go to Blackmans, St. Joseph. I do not know if that is bordering his Constituency or the Constituency of St. John.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, we have found about 10 or 15 lots in Blackmans, St. Joseph, that we can make available.

Sir, I went to St. Joseph a Saturday, and there is land in Tourville that we are trying to use for residents, and for people in Barbados who suffer from disasters. We have to utilise some of these lots for some of the persons in that area.

Sir, again, I also want to thank the same gentleman, in the Ministry of Housing and Lands, for moving swiftly to go to areas like Forty Acres, St. Thomas, where he sent initial letters to owners. On instructions from the Ministry he has started negotiations with the owners.

Sir, in some areas where we can get the lands in the existing villages, we have taken the whole field for future development. An area like Forty Acres, St. Thomas, where initially we can get 21 lots on the ridge, we have taken the whole piece for future development, be it low income development or middle income development.

Sir, I want to congratulate him again - At Applewhaites, Roach Village and Brighton, St. George, Colleton, St. Lucy and Todds, St. John. Again, I want to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. He carried us out one morning, and we recognised the vast amount of land available in St. Lucy. He showed us a number of lots in the area of Colleton, St. Lucy, another area called Coconut Hall, St. Lucy, and we are looking at areas in Sedge Pond, St. Andrew. We are working with the Minister of Agriculture where there are marginal lands which he believes, can be released out of agriculture, to be used for residential purposes. Sir, I am pleased with the progress of this project. In Woodbourne, there is remaining

land for future development. These lands would be sold at \$5 per square foot.

Sir, the person in Barbados who cannot go on the private market can now come to the National Housing Corporation, and as soon as we have vested all of these lands in the National Housing Corporation, we can make these lands available for first-time home owners, as I said before, who can use the conveyance as security to get financing. They can build homes according to their means and become a landowner in this country.

Sir, with those remarks, I respectfully beg that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North is our lead spokesman on matters of housing, but I crave his indulgence because a part of these lands to be vested in the National Housing Corporation are located in the wonderful village of Branchbury, St. Joseph. I had long asked the Minister of Housing if he would let me see a copy of the plan, and he promised that he would, but he has not yet kept the promise, so I had to go to the Land Registry to find the conveyance, so I now have a copy of the plan.

It really appears to me that this land is more particularly in a place call "Ginger Works", which is a part of Branchbury, but we call it "Ginger Works". I am a little concerned because, up to this weekend this land in "Ginger Works" still showed evidence of sugar cane, but it is a matter for the Minister of Housing and the Chief Town Planner to provide the necessary provision under the Town and Country Planning Department legislation to allow housing to be built there.

Sir, I am pleased to see the National Housing Corporation moving again to do some work in my Constituency. Certainly, in the last term, the wonderful people of St. Joseph benefited from 120 lots at Blackmans Development. The National Housing Corporation would be forced to advise that I was after them to look at other areas.

Sir, what I particularly want to mention has to do with land at Tourville Road, that the Minister of Housing spoke to, and also the possible use of this land at "Ginger Works".

Sir, last year the Minister of Housing agreed to visit Suriname with me, to look at the plight of individuals living in Suriname whose homes are in a perilous state, as a result of slippage. On that occasion I showed the Minister

three lots at Tourville Road, at the corner, almost obliquely opposite the former Police Station, that the National Housing Corporation was able to get planning permission for. It is a vacant piece of land, but the National Housing Corporation has already obtained planning permission to subdivide that land into three lots.

I suggested to the Honourable Minister that it would be prudent, firstly, to see to the relocation of these individuals in Suriname, and in an effort to indicate where it might be suitable, I suggested that Tourville Road might be suitable.

I do not wish to put the Minister on the spot, but he would be forced to agree that over the last months he has received several reminder letters from me, because the situation has worsened. On the occasion when the Minister and I went, we saw that two houses were challenged. It is now increased beyond two houses. The challenge of slippage is not only in Suriname. For a long time there has been slippage issues in other parts of my Constituency, Cane Garden, and also Parks Road.

I am happy that Branchbury is being seen as a possible location for housing development in St. Joseph. While the Minister wants to sell these lots at \$5 a square foot, I really would like to make a plea on behalf of the individuals who are at Suriname, under threat of slippage every night.

It is a precarious existence that they lead, when they are fearful of sleeping in their house at night, because they do not know what fate will befall them in those few hours that they lay their heads down to rest. We have situations where, what you call the back props are not propping anything anymore, because all the land under it has slipped.

H A41 11.20 a.m. Sequence 8

Tuesday July 14, 2009

House A41, Sequence 09, 10.30 a.m.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, these individuals need the urgent intervention of the Government of Barbados. The Ministry of Housing has a fund called, The Relocation Fund, whereby they will give to individuals who need to be relocated \$25 000 to assist them in the relocation.

The individuals in my Constituency would love if the Government would come and give them a new house, but my constituents have always been proud and self-sufficient, and in every case, Sir, all that they have asked for is the opportunity for relocation, the assistance in the sum of \$25 000 with the relocation grant, and they would do the rest themselves.

This has already been our experience because there are individuals, one family I can think of from Chapman Village, who was moved to Blackmans Development, purchased a piece of land there and got the Relocation Grant and did the rest themselves.

Sir, while the Minister has in mind that this land at Branchbury could go for \$5 per square foot, I would like to urge that the Ministry of Housing use its good offices with the National Housing Corporation, so that this land at Branchbury or parts of it, can be used to resettle those individuals whose homes are being affected by slippage.

I asked the former Minister to send his team down to Parks Road. The team came. I think they found about 12 or 13 houses that needed relocating. The Government changed and that is now the responsibility of this Administration.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: The relocating of Barbadians who are affected by plight or nature's wrath, does not represent a favour that anybody on That Side is doing for my constituents. It represents, Sir, the carrying out of governance. It is not a favour that is being done for the people in Parks Road or Suriname.

All Governments have an obligation to see to the welfare and care of their citizens, and all citizens have a right to expect that.

On behalf of the people in St. Joseph, Sir, I am asking, perhaps even demanding, that this Administration sees to the relocation, as a matter of urgency, of those people from Suriname and those people from Parks Road, Chapman Village and other areas. Sir, very soon, we are going to hear of another tragedy because of the movements of nature.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is similarly afflicted, Sir, but Branchbury is of particular interest because in most cases, these individuals say: "Mr. Marshall, we do not want to move out of St. Joseph. If you can find us some place else in the Constituency, we would feel happy." I see that Branchbury represents a possibility of that.

In relation, Sir, to the \$5 per square foot, that is this Administration's pledge and we will see how they Honour it. Certainly in relation to the lands at Ginger Works, it was just about three acres of land that the Government bought. They paid \$380 000 for it, which works out to about \$3.91 per square foot. Sir, because it is a narrow strip of land, it would not, as far as I can tell, require the provision of a road, because there is already a road there. It's cost really would be limited to surveying costs, and there might be some costs in relation to water.

Sir, in relation to the land at Woodbourne, just about five acres, this was purchased for \$553 000, which is \$3.99 per square foot. Sir, it was bought at \$3.99 per square foot. The Government is pledging that they will sell it to Barbadians for \$5. I am expecting the Government to keep their pledge but I believe that any right thinking person will recognise, Sir, that development cost in Barbados was at \$1 per square foot, probably 20 years ago. The cost of putting in the infrastructure in the way of roads, including water, electricity, are tremendous, all part of development.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: The former Minister of St. George North tells me it is about \$5 per square foot. I am happy, therefore, to see that the Government is going to buy land at \$4 per square foot, incur development costs in the region of \$5 per square foot, which would make the total cost, putting it there, that does not even include the administrative cost of the National Housing Corporation of \$9, and sell it to Barbadians for \$5.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that any time a Barbadian has an opportunity to benefit from the patronage and largess of the Government, they should do so, but I want the Minister to tell us how many lots they expect to get out of this land out of Woodbourne, and how many lots they expect to get out of this land at Branchbury? I would like him to confirm what the development costs are, and let Barbadians know what is the true cost to them of providing them this land at \$5 per square foot.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: We have always fought for subsidies in relation to land. I think the Honourable Member for St. George North would know that. In the early 1990s, when we came to power, when they were having that conference, the national agencies were saying to us that subsidies should be transparent and we should not even subsidise land for Barbadians, we should not subsidise properties for others, and we took a principal stand that Barbadians needed the Government to stand in the breach and intervene in relation to housing prices. That has always been the way we saw it but we did not fool people.

I think that the Minister should say to Barbadians that this land, by the time it is ready for the market, will have had a cost of \$9 or \$10 per square foot, and then say you are selling it for \$5 - that is up to you - but I believe that Barbadians are entitled to know how their dollars are being spent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to the Minister taking some urgent steps in relation to the issues of slippage. It has always been a matter really which fell to the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing. The Ministry

of Housing has traditionally been responsible for those relocations. I am happy that he has found 18 spots of land, I assume in Blackman's Tenantry, and I look forward to seeing the St. Joseph people, "Josephines", benefitting from those opportunities.

Sir, I understand that there are a lot of people from St. John, who want to move into St. Joseph, and I want to tell the Honourable Member that it will be their loss and our gain.

With those words, Sir, I am obliged to you.

Asides.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I came here this morning really to deal with housing, as it relates to the West Indies' Cricket Board, but it so happened that I was held up otherwise and I could not deal with it, but I am still dealing with housing. It is time that the Caribbean Governments recognise that we need to find some land to house the West Indies' Cricket Board and the West Indies Cricket Team.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to recognise that cricket and housing are important to our people. They are related, and if we do not provide proper housing for our people in the Caribbean, it will embarrass us, and the same thing for cricket. That is why we need to take charge of our cricket and our housing and make sure that we house the cricket in the right places, and deal with the Boards and all other cricketers who are messing us up in this Region. It is becoming very insulting.

Sir, it is also very insulting to hear a former Attorney-General, the second most important position, after a Government has been changed - because you name the Prime Minister and then you name the Attorney-General - coming in this House to say what he had hoped for his constituents, what should have happened for his constituents and what is available at the National Housing Corporation for his constituents.

I am now hearing that flying fish were sold very cheaply this year and everybody in Barbados do not want to buy flying fish any more, because they have too many flying fish, according to what the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is telling me. Sir, he is now saying that he now understands why they did not want an agreement, and spent 14 years searching for one, and could not get one.

Anyhow, I am saying, Sir, if we do not charge for cabs, we hear charge. But if we charge on gasoline, we hear, subsidise. If we do not charge a high price on land, we hear that we should have charged. I am always saying in this House that the Barbados Labour Party is a foreign led Government. They can only think of propping up anything that is imported, but when it comes to anything that is local, it should not be charged or anything on it, Sir.

House A41, Sequence 09, 11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very funny that they want to subsidise all imported stuff such as gasoline, but they allowed land in this country to be out of the reach of the poor in this country.

Sir, if it is one important thing that they should have said to Barbadians is that they will subsidise the cost of land for poor people in this country, but instead of subsidising the price of land, they want us to subsidise the price of imported stuff such as gasoline.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud of this Government. Sir, if you go back to previous debates, you would see that I have always said in this country and in this Parliament that the Government should buy large tracks of land and put in the amenities.

I have always argued that when the Government builds a road or puts in amenities in an existing tenantry, they should not charge people for it. My argument has always been that if you could do that for people who already have properties, you should be convinced that you need more so to do it for persons who are now looking to own properties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why I am proud that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and the Cabinet of Barbados did not take the advice from the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and charged market rates for the land. Sir, instead of charging market rates, the Government is only charging \$5.00 a square foot for that land.

That means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that poor people now stand a chance of not only owing a piece of land in this country, but this is the first opportunity you could really speak about low-income housing, because when you charge persons \$20 000 for a piece of land, they still have something in their pockets that they could start building the foundation and something to take to the bank that they could borrow to get a home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you speak about low-income housing, this approach...

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is saying, They like percentages. They like hiding the real increases. I understand that the lowest water bill would be \$30.00 and if you increase it by 60 per cent, it moves to \$48.00. Could you imagine that, Sir? Sir, for 13 years, you only paid \$48.00 for a total water bill which was \$1.60 per day to have a bath, to wash the car, to water your lawns, to cook food and all of that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I never heard that argument from that Honourable Member who helped introduced phone cards by Cable and Wireless in this country where people use \$10 a day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said in this Parliament, and you could look in Hansard and see it, that I thought gambling was bad, but phone cards are worse because at least for gambling you stand a chance of winning back something, but with a phone card you will just talk it out. The Honourable Member for St. James North would confirm that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not hear the Honourable Member for Christ Church West complaining about the cost of phone cards, but now that a poor person only has to pay \$1.60 a day.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: No, no. Do not insult my people. The people in St. Lucy will pay their water bills because they understand that it is only \$1.60 a day, and when they cannot pay it, I will send them to you to pay the water bills.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the first time in the history of Barbados after the 1970s, that we are now having a parallel land policy in this country. This is something I have been asking the Barbados Labour Party to do and they refused to do it. Sir, there is no doubt that they have a proud record of buying land in this country.

Every Tuesday they brought two or three resolutions for the acquisition of poor people's land and put it in a bank. Sir, instead of putting it on the market, they reduced the land available to poor people and increased the cost of land. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is their record.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only will the Democratic Labour Party take the land out of the land bank and give it to poor people, we will also acquire more land and put it on the market at \$5 a square foot, so that poor people could finally get something in this country to live on.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: This is not a contradiction. Go and read Hansard and see that this is consistency.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, he should be charged for contempt of the House because he does not know the meaning of consistency.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, give me a minute please. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, I want you to reduce your shouting across the Chambers. Thank you. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy continue.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can assure you that...

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, please continue.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not questioning your judgement, but that is one piece that should be left in the record, because when his children see that, they would not believe that is something their father would have argued in this Parliament.

All I said, Sir, is that the Honourable Members on the Other Side acquired the land and kept it in a bank creating a scarcity and that this Government is now using the land along with some more that we are acquiring...

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is saying that I am not paying...

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy continues to mislead the House because obviously, when you acquire land, it takes time to develop the land. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of the land being developed now in Barbados is land that was acquired by the Barbados Labour Party, because it takes time to develop it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is obvious that when you acquire land, you cannot develop it the same week because you have to put in the roads, the electricity and the water and you have to get Town Planning permission. You have to get the certificate of compliance for the sub-division and

you have to put in the wells and all of those things, so obviously it has to go into a holding pattern. Therefore, for the Honourable Member to suggest that one side acquires land just to put it in a land bank and does not do anything with it and when the Other Side acquires land they develops it immediately, is not true, so the Honourable Member continues to mislead this House.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: You done now, sit down now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the Honourable Member is saying is that it is justifiable to acquire land for 14 and 15 years and leave that land because you are waiting for it to be developed. The Honourable Member is a newcomer to this House.

Sir, if you look at this land you would realise that some of this land was acquired by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: On a point of order. Again, the Honourable Member continues to constantly mislead the House. First, to consider me a newcomer, when this is my second term, is misleading. Apart from that, the Honourable Member knows full well that it takes time to develop land.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, you rose on a point of order and have said the same thing over and over again.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas, when the Chair is speaking, I want to hear no person at all speaking. I must have absolute silence. You have to show respect for the Chair.

House A41 Sequence 10

11.40 a.m.

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Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me make it abundantly clear. Points of Order are not used for persons to make speeches. They are used if persons have said something that they feel is misleading, but you cannot use points of order to continue getting up to say the same thing over and over again.

Honourable Members, I will have some sort of decency and decorum as I sit in this Chair, and I speak for Both Sides. When the Chair is speaking, I want to have absolute silence in these Chambers. Thank you. Please continue, Honourable Member.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want you to know, in all due respect, that they are not attacking me, they are attacking the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. Sir, it was the Honourable Member for St. Andrew who was the first Minister of Housing and Lands, when the Government changed. It was also the Honourable Member for St. Andrew who brought a large number of land acquisitions to this Honourable House. Sir, if you would call for the Record, you would see that the majority of land that went into the land bank, land that is now being used by the Democratic Labour Party, can be found in the St. James areas, like Landcastle and Apes Hill.

Sir, if one were to go by the argument taken by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, you could not only accuse the Barbados Labour Party of keeping the land in the land bank, but for also holding back the cost of development for when the cost of that land got higher....

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I have made no argument. I have not yet spoken in this debate, apart from points of order and what little I did speak was struck from the Record, so the Honourable Member cannot refer to me or to any argument I made.

The Honourable Member is continuing to mislead this Honourable House by making that statement. I have not yet spoken in the particular debate, apart from points of order, which have been struck and therefore, the Honourable Member cannot relate to any matter I have said. Therefore, I would ask that those words be struck from the record.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West, on the first point of order the Chair ruled that it be struck. On your second point of order, the Chair did not rule that it be struck from the Record. Please continue, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear that some of us do not understand Parliamentary procedures and that a point of order is also included in making a contribution. It is also recorded.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that we have to be serious about this housing debate and that it does not make sense for any Member of Parliament, whether on This Side or on the Other Side, to criticise the present Government's housing policy, when we all stand to benefit from it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, can you imagine there are people here making speeches, asking the Minister of Housing and Lands how much is it going to cost to develop the land? Persons are also saying that they hope we would sell it at \$5 a square foot, when it has already been stated that they will be sold at \$5 per square foot.

Sir, the only conclusion that could be drawn is that some people just do not like to see poor people with anything, and that land should only be sold to people coming in with large suitcases, who could pay millions of dollars so that the fees could be high and charges could be made.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to be serious about this. We have to recognise that we have an opportunity now for persons in this country to get the opportunity to own land. Sir, I am happy this is not a policy where only a "too-few" Constituencies will get this policy. It is a policy that goes right across Barbados.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party has not practised the habit that they are only going to do things within their own Constituencies, but that they are doing those things throughout all Constituencies in Barbados. Sir, when the parish of St. Thomas was mentioned, I was proud because I believe that St. Thomas, St. Joseph and all other Barbados Labour Party Constituencies are deserving. I am happy I did not hear from any Honourable Member on This Side saying that they are only going to do work in the Constituencies they represent and that the Opposition should not get, as we were told when we were in Opposition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember Sir Harold having to scold an Honourable Member who was also Minister, when she made that statement in this Parliament. I am happy that we are at a stage where maturity has now come to Parliament. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North knows exactly of whom I am speaking who made the comment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am also saying that I want the Minister to understand that there are other Constituencies in Barbados that have lots of available land and that because these constituencies have lots of land available, does not mean that they should be punished and not given the necessary housing lots that should be allocated to them. If a man has been starved for 14 years, at least he is entitled to eat something after the 14th year.

Sir, with regard to the land that was left at Cottage by the Honourable Member for St. George North where, for some reason, after the Honourable Member left the Ministry and the plantation left the land, there was nothing growing on it for all those years.

Sir, I believe that land at Cottage should be included, because the plantation was quite prepared to give up that land for housing. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James North would know about that land which is opposite the dump, going to the Rock Hall side. If you pass there walking, you would recognise that nothing has been planted in that field for about 10 years because of the fact

that the Honourable Member for St. George North had applied for it to be taken out of production. Sir, those lots were to be allocated with a certain amount of space, some of which would be used for agriculture. Sir, 10 years after, there has been no action.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying you cannot blame the Honourable Member for St. George North because he did his part, just like the Honourable Member for St. George North understood rural and housing in rural.

When the Honourable Member went to Mount Poyer, he said it was a good idea, that no housing developments should be built, but that these lots should be allocated for low income houses. Sir, the Honourable Member's portfolio was changed and everything else changed also. Sir, all of a sudden, instead of poor people having the opportunity to build from the back and come forward, contractors moved in, the prices of houses went up and some people who had applied had to back out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that if we are serious about housing the poor, we have to understand that the best opportunity of housing the poor is to provide them with land. Sir, there are many houses in Barbados that are of good construct that are carried to the dump on a daily basis because people cannot find house spots.

Sir, I think it is unfair and wrong that you could have a Government who was supposed to be representing the interest of the people of Barbados, and we have the Land Acquisition Act in our power and do not use it to ensure that poor people get housing. Sir, I am saying that the opportunity is ripe for us to correct this problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is too much land in this country that is landlocked. I have said it in this Parliament before, and I am serious about it. Sir, I am so serious about it that I am even prepared to do my personal piece to ensure that wherever I have a portion of land and it can stop that land from being landlocked, I offer that land to help release that person's land from being landlocked.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that poor people own a lot of land in this country and that we need to do a survey about it. Sir, it is not that poor people do not have land, but where they have land, that land is landlocked.

Sir, the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Housing and Lands must carry out a survey on the amount of land that is land-locked that belong to poor people. They must put in the necessary road and amenities to ensure those persons could get access to their land, so that they could build.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that we have to be serious. We have to understand that it does not affect the

rich because the rich knows how to buy the adjoining piece of land which would stop that land from being land-locked, but poor people cannot do that. Sir, we need to open up Barbados and to open up opportunities for the masses of people of Barbados. We as a Parliament cannot stay here and do nothing about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a belief - and I was told already by officers - that the Ministry of Public Works cannot build roads where there are no houses. Sir, I am saying if that is a Law, then that Law is outdated. I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there is a Law stating that you cannot build public roads where there are no houses, that Law is outdated. It does not make sense and it needs to be changed.

Sir, I am saying that you cannot only build public roads to houses in this day and age, you must build public roads to stop lands from being landlocked and for future housing developments. Sir, it makes sense when you move in and you are building a road in a tenantry and there are other persons who have lands beyond, because of the fact that future development may occur, you should take that road down to those other lands. Sir, if you have to come back to put in roads when those houses are already placed there, that process would cost more.

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His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am saying that we have to be innovative, recognise what has to happen in this country and make the necessary changes. I expect the Minister of Public Works to discuss with the Minister of Housing and we get some action Sir, because there are too many areas in Barbados where poor people got the land and cannot put houses on the land because there is no accessibility. Sir, there is something called the landlock rule, that stops them from being able to build, et cetera.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have three minutes more.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Thank you, Sir. I am saying, that if the Minister takes my advice, St. Lucy can provide him with over 3 000 house lots, with ease, and that is not interfering with agricultural land.

Sir, I strongly believe in this country, that we first must interfere with the rab land before we interfere with agricultural land, and Sir, this is consistency. because the Honourable Member for St. George North would tell you, that I have always made that point to him, and I am making it now to the present Minister of Housing, because I have also said in this Parliament that there is a solution to the

problem. Sir, that is, there are some plantation owners who have good land, but they are making losses on those good lands. There are some who have rab land and would like to get some good land, and Sir, I believe that this Parliament, Sir, should accommodate a swap.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it does not make sense building houses on good agricultural land and asking somebody to plant sugar cane or food crops on land that is not suitable, when you can easily ask the two farmers to swap, where one could go and put the houses on the rab land, and the farmer that has the rab land can easily come and get the plantation, do the necessary swap and Government ignore certain charges, et cetera, so that we can continue to protect our food bill in this country. Sir, we would understand this point more so in this year, when there is a crisis to the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look back at the history of 1991, you would see that after 1991, every single food crop increased in quantity. Sir, I am saying that likewise, it should happen in this period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they say that Barbadians are crisis people, but at least they know how to respond. I am proud of my people for responding in times of crisis, but we should also know how to help them, to not only do it in crisis times, but to continue to do it. Sir, I do not believe that Barbadians are crisis people. I believe that Barbadians understand exactly what to do because when one looks at the size of Barbados and sees how we have developed, we have done well. Sir, the only thing is that we could have done better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Thank you very much Mr. Deputy Speaker. The second last point raised by the Honourable Member, who just took his seat, is not a point that has never been on the Floor of this Honourable House before. Sir, that point was already canvassed by a former Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central in the form of Dr. Richie Haynes, as he then was, now Sir Richard Haynes, who maintained an argument, consistent with the argument of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, that where you encountered two or three huge plantations with rab land, you should capture them and put them in the national land bank.

I am always very hesitant and cautious when speaking about a land bank because you have some, who would recall, that I have made rather pejorative comments, not only on certain banking institutions, but on certain land banks because of special circumstances, where sometimes,

I was of the view that the banks accommodated deposits, but did not unleash withdrawals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a very real problem which two Ministers or three Ministers would be able to help you with. It is a very serious problem in the Constituency of St. James North. Sir, between 1992 and 1996, successive Governments recognised that there were Crown lands at upper Bakers in the parish of St. Peter, now in the Constituency of St. James North, and a former Honourable Member for St. Lucy was the first Member of Parliament, that I am aware of, who identified that land at Upper Bakers. Sir, I speak of my former teacher, Mr. Evelyn Greaves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, by 1995, after the Weston floods, people were moved to this property at Upper Bakers and moved to Crown lands, which ultimately have to be vested in the National Housing Corporation, or I believe some have already been vested in the National Housing Corporation but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would horrify you what happened.

Sir, between 1995 and 2001, after lands at Upper Bakers were vested in the National Housing Corporation, starter homes were built at Upper Bakers including a house owned by a chap we used to call Anthony "Tuk War" Richards, including a house that was not really a starter house, but was a house that moved because the occupant was given notice to quit. Lo and behold, what transpired is that at Upper Bakers, housing development was put on Zone 1 and that housing development on Zone 1 at Upper Bakers had to be abandoned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the scenario now. Anthony "Tuk War" Richards has been told that he has to wait for a suitable location. Sir, there is a worse case and I have the authority of the person affected to speak on it. I am not going to speak pejoratively of the person and, therefore, do not need to get special permission to mention the name of the person.

The records of Government would show that a lady with two or three severe challenges related to Dr. Waldo Ramsay, related to Forbes Lyndon Samson Burnham, a lady called Vita Burnham has had approval for special state help for her house to be fixed, but she has been told that because she is occupying part of Zone 1, she has to relocate in a situation where her chattel is in such a state that it needs immediate repair. Sir, only last week, she got a letter from a Government agency telling her that she had been identified to go to Lancaster.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West would tell you that Lancaster cannot be 18 months away or two years away. Sir, Lancaster is going to be several years away and, in the meantime, her house is deteriorating, the

quality living of her household is suffering and poor Vida herself, is challenged, in consequence of a medical condition and herself challenged because of having to raise a challenged grandson, is awaiting repairs to her roof and the sideboard. Sir, it cannot be right that she be told every time that she is on Zone 1 property, that she has to move and that she has to wait until Lancaster gets going.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a lot of questions about Lancaster that still have to be resolved. Sir, going back to the time of the Barbados Labour Party, I have to be frank. There have been issues concerning Lancaster that have not been satisfactorily sorted out before this new Government has come into office.

Sir, what do we need then? We need a social conscience to be so aroused as to disregard any technical argument that public officers might advance, that because she has been identified to move, she has to wait to move and, in waiting to move, the elements are descending on her house. She is being drenched because the roof is leaking. She has no steady means of income. There are at least six occupants in the house and, as I have said, there are two with challenges, one caused by diabetes and the other caused by the unkind hand of nature and, Sir, this poor woman has been told repeatedly that there has been approval for her to get help out of Poverty Alleviation, but that she has to wait.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the house cannot wait to be fixed. She has a brother called Oscar, a carpenter, who says that if the State could provide her with materials that he, Oscar Burnham, would come as a carpenter and help fix the house. I am going to have to appeal both to the Minister of Housing and the Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban and Rural Development, who know me in another incarnation.

Sir, both the Minister of Housing and the Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban and Rural Development know me in another incarnation and who ought to feel rather obligated to me.

H/A41/12:00 noon Sequence 12

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: I am appealing to them to do something to alleviate the plight of Miss Quida Burnham of Upper Bakers, St. Peter. Sir, Quida takes comfort in linking with other people in a similar situation. There is another lady who resides in one of the Christ Church constituencies, in the same position as Quida.

As our diabetic problem in Barbados worsens, and as there are more challenges facing us in consequence of the dread things that happen to some of us who are diabetics,

we cannot permit non-political personnel to advise the political class how to proceed when it comes to social policy, never.

I am not a member of the Democratic Labour Party Government. I am sitting over here in Opposition, reflecting the will of the nation. The nation has willed that I sit down here as an Opposition Member, but at the same time, the nation has empowered the Government to embark on programmes and policies that would alleviate poverty in the greatest possible way, and I am pleading with the Government to do its utmost to alleviate poverty and to disregard the technical advice of those persons who do not have to face the electorate, who will never face the electorate, who cook up excuses: "Minister, this cannot be done", or "Minister, this can be done but it would take a decade".

Sir, one very good civil servant once told me, "Minister, a decade in the Public Service is a short period of time. Why do you not learn to wait, Minister. A decade is a short period of time." Sir, two Elections, you know. A senior public officer once told me so: "learn to wait". Sir, they do not have the responsibility that we in this Parliament have in respect of representing people.

Similarly, Tuckwart Richards, who has had to endure a lot of misery, his house has been identified as a house to be removed, and every week he wonders when he is going to move. The short-term solution, Honourable Member for St. Philip North, is to look at the starter houses at Bakers, below Highway 2A, the seven or eight houses, which the former Honourable Member for St. George North built, and assign people to occupy them. The former Honourable Member for St. George North actually allocated some people there.

Sir, below that cluster of starter houses at Bakers, there is land that might have to be acquired for Quida, Tuckwart, and many other residents. That land immediately below the starter houses at Upper Bakers, St. Peter, is not Zone 1 land. It is in a canefield now, but to tell the truth, the productivity and the yield from the canes, compared with the yearning and known need for housing in the area, put us in a situation where I do not see anything wrong with delineating a couple areas out of agriculture, which is doing badly in the area anyhow, and having housing for St. James North, in a situation, where like your Constituency, the open area in St. James North are all Zone 1 areas, which means that my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, and myself are constrained. Just where you pass open land, you cannot do anything with it because of Zone 1 restrictions.

I want briefly, in response to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, to make one or two points. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is enlivened, and part of

the reason why the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is so vivacious, is that the Democratic Labour Party is once again in office, and nothing would have pleased the heart of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy more than to see His Side win a General Election.

He has waited. He has been in here a long time and he is really enlivened and full of energy, still celebrating and savouring victory, and as he does so, you should see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the projects and the programmes sprouting up all over St. Lucy, and going on at a rapid pace. I believe that some of us on This Side can do with one-tenth of the miracles happening in St. Lucy, and the things happening that would definitely strengthen the presence of the ruling Party in St. Lucy.

Sir, let me mention this. About 20 years ago, I encountered an attorney-at-Law who asked some serious questions on the requisition of titles coming out of the National Housing Corporation. Sir, this is a very serious point in which, I believe you have an interest.

About 20 years ago, I encountered an elderly Lawyer, who wrote a series of requisitions in respect of titles conveyed by the National Housing Corporation. My initial response was, as a responsible quasi-governmental agency, the National Housing Corporation would be in a position to come forward with a good marketable title.

Alas! Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have lived to see a situation where there were so many judgements recorded against the National Housing Corporation, so many encumbrances confronting lands owned by the National Housing Corporation, that we would have had a situation where many responsible persons, including Lawyers, would have been alarmed to know that lands that were to be transferred by way of conveyances from the National Housing Corporation to citizens, were lands that were actually encumbered. I am sure that the National Insurance Scheme has successfully won judgements against the National Housing Corporation.

Sir, If a man called Jordan, a simple honest man called Jordan, has \$80 000 to purchase land from the National Housing Corporation, and his attorney goes and searches the title, to realise that exact land is fixed by a charge, an encumbrance, a judgement against that land, then Jordan's Lawyer is not going to recommend to Mr. Jordan to go through with the sale, because you would not just be buying a pig in a bag, you would be a pig incapable of producing proper pork. That would be the consequence.

I am pleading with the Honourable Minister, who through an international funding agency, would have been given a little elbow room, and I am referring to the \$30 million boost that the National Housing Corporation would

have received - I am appealing to the Minister to put things right at the National Housing Corporation.

I have heard too many people complain that in a situation where the National Housing Corporation has been badly indebted, in a situation where their conveyances were being questioned, in a situation where judgements were repeatedly awarded against them, in a situation where there is frustration among those who really want to work at the National Housing Corporation, to ensure that the stage is set where a new breath of life is injected into the National Housing Corporation.

Sir, I conclude by just reminding the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, as he mentioned the question of people being able, happily, to get land at \$5.00 a square foot, that This Side, as a policy measure months ago, had decided in the context of particular lands, the highest money to be asked of a poor person would be \$2.50, and that if, for example, the land was being marketed at \$7 and a proper valuation had been done, then Government would make up the difference between \$2.50 and \$7.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by cleverly giving the impression that we are dealing with the same type of land. Sir, what the Honourable Member is speaking about is tenantry land, where people are living already on that land and had been living for many years. Sir, what I speak of is about new lands and new opportunities.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Sir, much as I hear the objection coming from the Other Side, and to say this to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, let nothing get in your way, Minister of Housing, when it comes to identifying that huge amount of non plantation tenancies island wide, which we had in contemplation as far as the \$2.50 per square foot is concerned, and let nothing happen to increase the poverty and the absence of enfranchisement, especially in the wider parish of St. Michael.

H A41 12.10 p.m. Sequence 13

Tuesday July 14, 2009

House A41, Sequence 14, 12.10 p.m.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the parish of St. Michael sits on a veritable abundance of non-plantation tenancies and what has happened is this. The Urban Development Commission has power, as far as its mandate for urban Barbados is concerned, to grant title, but there are non-plantation lots that do not fall under urban. The Rural Development Commission is yet to find itself with the power to transfer lots in rural Barbados, so any transferring of lots in the absence of the cooperation of a

landlord in filling out a Form 1 Notice, under Chapter 239B, has to go through the Ministry of Housing.

For example, if my good friend from Christ Church South is having an area that is classically rural Barbados, he cannot go to the Rural Development Commission for help. The way the legislation is structured, he has to approach the Ministry of Housing, the central Ministry. Then, he has to find somebody there with the will to carry out the compliance and wishes of an elected Member of this Honourable House.

Sir, some of us, as elected Members have had to face the indignation, the insults of particular individuals who do not answer to the electorate, who at the same time, either offer misleading advice, or simply travel in very slow coaches, in an era when the coaches in which they travel have nothing to do with vehicles made in Japan, air-conditioned and things like that, but the old time coaches that were mule-drawn and horse-drawn, and that were often mule-drawn and horse-drawn on very poor horse power.

The speed with which the Transfer of Title in rural Barbados is occurring, is demonstrably and manifestly too slow for any politician of any hue or any persuasion to tolerate. It is a serious thing and, unlike the situation at the Urban Development Commission, the central Ministry of Housing, through the Crown, has to work with the Registrar of Titles, in respect of rural tenancies, and there are many.

Sir, in the context of tenancies in St. Michael, I know of one Honourable Member in this House whose Constituency has in excess of 35 known plantation tenancies, yet to see their occupants receive title. Sir, I am going to plead with the National Housing Corporation and its Minister. I am going to plead with the Minister of Housing to allow for the energy that he has demonstrated since taking office, to so carry and guide him to do a rapid inventory of tenancies.

If he starts in St. James, he is going to encounter tenancies in North Cemetery Lane, South Cemetery Lane, three tenancies in Weston in the Doughlin Road area, two tenancies, one owned by a lady called, Ida Kellman deceased, and above that, another tenancy. Sir, he is going to encounter Trents, among others.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Trents is a fascination and the reason is that not only the history of the acquisition of the Trents Tenancy is linked up with something called the Panama Estates and such like, but the cruelty of Trents is this. People who live inland at Trents Tenancy were, for the most part, never the original inhabitants of Trents Tenancy. The original inhabitants of Trents are on Highway 1, but those who moved inland, into the hinterland of Trents Tenancy, Sir, have for the most part,

got their conveyances, after a surveyor well-known for his contribution to Barbados' ceremonial Independence function, and its re-enactment in recent times, was able to carry out surveys of inland Trents.

Sir, on the front road of Trents, between where Mr. Straker lives and going down to Porters Corner, there have been no conveyances done, the reason being that the surveying has not yet been completed.

Sir, while talking about surveying, there was a time when the Government was short of surveyors. In recent times, we have seen an increase in members of that profession and I believe some of them are interested in working with Government. Indeed, the profession has also seen females coming in.

There was a time when surveyors were almost exclusively males. Certainly, in the days when they used to call themselves, "Sworn Surveyors," I do not know whom they swore to, how badly they swore, and whom they offended swearing, but suddenly, they are no longer called, "Sworn Surveyors." They are now called, "Land Surveyors."

Sir, in a man-dominated profession of years ago, we now have a situation where females are coming forward as surveyors. They are qualifying. Some of them will like the Security of Tenure in working for the National Housing Corporation, or the Central Ministry, if the Central Ministry has work for them.

Sir, we have to make every effort to ensure that we as politicians carry out the various mandates that we have. Each of us in here has a mandate. We are supposed to be supported. Those of us in Government on That Side are supposed to be supported by a professional class of people, who should offer advice in a certain proper way, who should not mislead, who should not obstruct, who should not obfuscate, who should not at all stop Government's policy.

Sir, the files at the Ministry of Housing, the files at the Land Registry and the files in the National Housing Corporation can be checked over the last 15 years, and the Minister will discover that a lot of what has to be done, had already been applied for, and had been applied for, over and over again.

Sir, there were one or two people, who will never face the electorate, who decided that where an MP writes a letter about the same topic more than once, that MP is a nuisance.

I even uncovered instances in a certain Government department, where a particular officer who was showing me a good face, was actually suppressing the letters that I

was writing, as the MP. I came across that evidence, and it was confirmed by a colleague of his. The man said I was a nuisance to keep on asking for the same thing over and over again, and some of us learn the hard way. Sir, if Honourable Members of That Side feel that it cannot affect them, that a circumstance of obstructionism in a Government Department cannot affect them, then they would be misleading themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this matter of vesting is a matter that we have to look at again, too, because when we finally vest in the NHC, we are actually vesting in the NHC, out of Crown property, and there is always a time lag between the acquisition by the Crown. In fact, before the acquisition, there is always a lot of time taken, then the acquisition process, time is taken, and then to vest in the NHC, more time is taken.

I am wondering, Sir, if the time has not come for us to find a formula by which no Law is broken but Law, so reformed, as to allow for a faster means of vesting in the National Housing Corporation, in circumstances where, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy implied, the people of Barbados, especially the poor people are really looking to Government for housing solutions.

Indeed, up to 1965 to 1970, there would have been a core of people constituting a middle-class, who would have gone on the private market for housing purposes. Between 1965 and 1970, middle-class people, teachers, policemen, nurses, did not rely on the National Housing Corporation for housing solutions, but the way things are now, people even in the upper middle-class are expectant that Government will provide for them, the housing solutions which they need.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy will tell you that he has been the champion of promoting the cause of the poor.

House A41, Sequence 14, 12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has a very simple way of putting it. He said that when the National Housing Corporation Act was passed, it was passed to facilitate housing solutions and related matters for poor people. That is true, that is in the Act.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy lamented the fact that we have reached a stage where poor people were not accessing housing as readily and as easily as they ought to. What he said now is that we have an opportunity to permit Barbadians who qualify to have proper housing.

Sir, I feel that in a situation where the Chinese, through the many contracts and companies that they have had here, and as a nation that is friendly to Barbados, should be approached and told: "listen, we are your friend oh great China, you are at this time in the history of the world emerging to be a great economic power, in Barbados you have won many a contract and you have earned money in Barbados, oh ye Chinese, help us with soft funding for housing". There is nothing wrong with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Chinese should be approached and told that they have made substantial sums of money out of contracts they have had in this country and they should be put on board at the diplomatic level, to help Barbados find its true path with housing solutions. I believe that we can be as diplomatic as anybody else when it comes to clinching deeds with persons like the Chinese in respect of funding housing at a cheap cost.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had a very unfortunate experience one time where, many years ago the Venezuelans, as part of a programme that involved energy, had also injected road repairs, road maintenance and housing in that programme, hence the name Venezuelan Project in the Constituency of St. James South.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a number of things went wrong there. The specifications were different. There were difficulties with the two different languages. We deal in English, they deal in Spanish, we deal in certain standard measurements, they were dealing in other measurements, and after a while the whole thing collapsed and then Barbadian builders had to solve that problem at the Venezuelan Project. Sir, even in the Constituency of St. Thomas, there was evidence that the breakdown in relations between Venezuela and Barbados on the Venezuelan Project did occur and things had to be put right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have been most attentive to me. You have been so tolerant as to permit me an extra two minutes and I shall not trespass further on your generosity, but I have deliberately sat up here and raised particular points, and I want the action to start at Upper Bakers with comfort and relief for Ovida Burnham and Tuckwart Richards. Thereafter, I want to see areas in St. James North where proper housing can be facilitated and where, as time beckons, I would be able to sit back in my rocking chair, relax and say, in addition to the many other things, housing has indeed come to the constituency of St. James North.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to lend support to this Bill before Parliament this morning. It is indeed a continuation of the wonderful work being done by this Government and in particular, by the Ministry of Housing and Lands in respect to bringing affordable housing solutions to Barbadians who have been complaining for well over a decade in respect of the challenges of housing in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph to a large extent, and the Honourable Member for St. James North who just took his seat, clearly have joined with us in recognising that this Democratic Labour Party Government has been bringing innovative housing solutions, which certainly would have escaped their own imagination during the 14 years they were in office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to give the Honourable Member for St. James North the assurance that the same way in which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North journeyed from his Constituency to St. Joseph to identify solutions, which clearly the Honourable Member for St. Joseph could not identify himself, that such would be done for the Constituency of St. James North as indeed is being done for the Constituency of St. James South, that I have the honour of representing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us make it abundantly clear that what has been happening with this revolution in housing in Barbados, has been driven, not only by a commitment on the part of Government to get it right in this much needed sector, but also by the commitment and the leadership of the Minister of Housing and Lands, and indeed, this Administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I hear the Honourable Member for St. Joseph speak to land slippage in St. Joseph and that individuals in his Constituency are fearful to go to bed at night, I begin to wonder what was happening when he served in the then Government in respect of finding solutions there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to reiterate these things, because the impression would go out there that it is through the efforts of the Member of Parliament for St. Joseph that things are now being done in St. Joseph. The reality about it is that he fell asleep. It was a gross dereliction of duty on his part, so I do not want the people of St. Joseph to feel that the solutions that are being brought to bear for them in Branchbury have anything to do with their Member of Parliament. As a matter of fact, in spite of his own failings, we have pressed ahead and decided to bring solutions to that part of the island.

The Honourable Member for St. James North, who is a friend of all of us, though he sits on the Other Side, has got up time and time and praised this Administration for

our vision, but the people of St. James North would also know that whatever solutions are brought down there are in spite of his own failings. The Honourable Member for St. James North has admitted that his Administration neglected his constituents because he was not a favourite son of the Leader. That is the harsh reality, but in this Government there is no favouritism per se.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, housing solutions have been identified in the Constituency of St. Philip West at Marchfield in particular, in the Constituency of St. Philip South at Workhall and in the Constituencies of St. George North and South. Even in the Constituency of St. Peter where the Honourable Member for St. Peter who served as Prime Minister for 14 years and could not drive one eight-penny nail in a piece of wood in that Constituency, we have been able to come as a Government in 14 months and find housing solutions within St. Peter as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality about it is that when the records of this Chamber are written, and when our stewardship as Parliamentarians come to light, I do not want the impression to go out there that the revolution taking place in housing in Barbados has anything to do with the Barbados Labour Party. IC does not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you what has happened in respect to housing under the former Administration which we are correcting. We had a situation developing in Barbados where priority was given to the West Coast developers, those rich expats who could afford to be facilitated in terms of the acquisition of property in Barbados. We also saw a situation where poor Barbadians started squatting much more than ever before in this country.

Do you realise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Constituency of St. Peter has the largest squatter location in the entire Barbados? Up there at Rock Hall in St. Philip South, the former Honourable Member for St. Philip South watched a few houses evolved into a large community of squatters.

House A41 Sequence 15

12.30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the constituency of St. Michael Central, some squatters were removed and some politicians associated with the Barbados Labour Party encouraged more squatting to go on in that constituency. That was the mind-set of the then Government, that providing housing solution for poor Barbadians was not a priority.

Sir, what have we done? There is no need to reiterate the fact that we came and those who were living in National Housing Corporation units for more than 20 years got the chance to own their units without them having to pay the \$50 000 or \$60 000 that the former Government wanted to charge, a Government in which the Honourable Member for St. Joseph played an integral part.

Sir, not only is there a matter of ownership, but there are those also, like the 157 families in Haynesville and in St. James South, who no longer have to pay rent to the National Housing Corporation. Sir, when you join with that, the fact that their children no longer have to pay bus fare, you can see that the social revolution is taking place in this country under the Democratic Labour Party Government. Sir, we can very well hold our heads up high and be proud of the work this Government is doing in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in his presentation earlier today, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph speaking to the \$5.00 per square foot lots. The Honourable Member said the purchase cost is \$3.99 per square foot, it is going to cost about \$6.00 to put in the infrastructure and therefore, at least to break even, we are talking about \$10.00 per square foot..

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why is that analysis so important today? What is wrong with a Government saying to its people who have been suffering, who need to own a piece of the rock, that Government will provide them land at \$5.00 per square foot, when the former Administration, led by the Honourable Member for St. Peter and including the likes of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, found money to squander in the Urban Development Commission and in the Rural Development Commission, including millions of dollars spent on a new prison?

Sir, do you realise it is now costing taxpayers \$3 000 a month to keep a prisoner in jail? Do you realise the excess money that is being spent? Sir, for example, the Highway Improvement Project, where \$120 million was spent and there was no contract in place. Sir, this is money that could have been used to house the average Barbadian, and I did not hear the Honourable Member for St. Joseph raising a pip squeak about that.

Do you know how many poor Barbadians who could have been housed as a result, when compared to money spent in cost over-runs on the number of projects around the country? Let us look at the amount of money spent on the GEMS Project, a disaster of financial failure, by any thinking, to provide a few hotel rooms, when poor Barbadians could not get a chance to put a shed-roof over their heads.

Let us look at the amount of money spent on Hardwood Housing, where millions of dollars were spent on a project, merely to satisfy the ego of a handful of Barbadians, when thousands of Barbadians could not get a chance to own a piece of the rock. Sir, we have little or nothing to show for that venture called Hardwood Housing.

Sir, today there are Barbadians who are not even getting the chance to own Hardwood housing, but are getting the chance to own good solid concrete houses. Thanks to the vision and commitment of the Democratic Labour Party Administration. Sir, we certainly have a track record that has been developed over the last 14 months, one of which we can be very proud.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to turn my attention to an issue which I feel we have to have good robust debate about, and I heard the Honourable Member for St. James North speaking to it. Sir, the middle-class in Barbados also needs assistance for housing. I represent a Constituency that is predominately middle and upper income, and I can tell you there are second generation of parents who live in West Terrace Gardens, Husbands Gardens - the same Venezuelan Project - who today may be making \$3 000 to \$5 000 a month, but they cannot afford to own a piece of the rock just like that. Sir, many of them are forced to rent apartments for extended periods of time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no sense complaining. I am happy to note that based on discussions with the Minister of Housing and Lands, we have been able to start the process of identifying some housing solutions in St. James South, where I am now making the case that great consideration should be given to my constituents in this case. Sir, let me say that in identifying this solution, which is about 100 house spots, just as we have done for the \$5.00 per square foot lots and the other units, this is land that has been sitting in St. James South that is owned by the Government of Barbados.

Sir, the Constituency of St. James South had a Parliamentary Representative, who served as Minister of Housing and Lands in this country, but who could not identify not even two house spots in that Constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, within the first six months of regaining the reins of Government, we have been identifying more than 100 house spots in St. James South, which I believe are at an advanced stage of coming on to the market. Therefore, when people were being given a lot of wishy-washy excuses, we realised that resources were simply lying there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government has not imported land from St. Lucia, Guyana or New York. The land has been sitting here all that time. We recognised there are pieces of land sitting on the border of plantations that

we could acquire, where in the majority of cases, most of the sites and services are in already. That is not rocket science, but it is certainly a reflection of a commitment of a Government to provide affordable housing to its people, something that was not a priority for the former Administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I say that while this may not be a partisan issue, it will never be a priority for the Barbados Labour Party. They, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy always likes to say, take care of the “too-few”. This is a Government that is committed to taking care of the masses in this society. It is our intention to ensure that no one is left behind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing, I want to reiterate the fact that the housing revolution taking place in Barbados, the social revolution taking place in Barbados, is a reflection of the deep divide between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party. It is a reflection of a Government that is committed to moving the majority of people forward.

All of us know there is nothing more that pleases the heart and soul of a Barbadian than being able to push a key in his front door and say: “This is my piece of the rock. I am the man or woman in here.” Sir, there is nothing that brings greater joy. There is nothing that can ensure that a second generation does better than the first one, than the fact of ownership of real estate in this country. Sir, that ownership of real estate in this country must not be reserved for the domain of a few of us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government recognised that the demand has been there. We have been able to find the solution and to provide these house spots, as we have done before us today in this Resolution at Branchbury, St. Joseph and Woodbourne, St. Philip. Sir, this is another part of our grand plan to provide the majority of Barbadians with affordable housing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I certainly support and commend this Resolution before us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 1.40 p.m.

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

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

12.40 p.m.

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Honourable House is resumed. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is important in a debate of this nature to take the opportunity, to firstly congratulate the Honourable Minister of Housing for a fine job he is doing, in respect of addressing the Manifesto pledges of the Democratic Labour Party, and bringing real life solutions to the housing of the Barbados populace.

Sir, today, we are dealing with a Resolution which sees us vesting lands at Branchbury, St. Joseph and Woodbourne, St. Philip, for the purpose of providing housing by way of lots.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is significant. I think Members have made this point before, but it bears repetition, by way of providing lots for Barbadians to purchase at a reasonable price, at a price they can afford and small enough too, that one can be comfortable and at least have a piece of the rock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course we will continue to hear the chidings of That Side because, if you plough the field side-ways, they would tell you to plough it up and down, and if you plough it up and down, they will tell you to plough it cross-ways. If you plough it cross-ways, they will tell you plough it up and down because that is their practice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not cease from quoting the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who said in her reply to the Budget:

“When you are in Opposition, you can spend the same dollar as many times as you want.”

Sir, they are committed to this philosophy because, as you hear them say, \$5.00 is too much, that it should be \$2.50, even in the face of being corrected by the Honourable Members, on This Side, about the origins and differences in terms of the \$2.50 regime, as against the \$5.00 regime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an acquisition and vesting of lands which have not been specially identified before. Sir, it is a commendable effort, and I have already had the opportunity to take the Minister of Housing and his officials, and I would join him in thanking his good staff

members, who has obviously been rising to the rallying call to provide housing for Barbadians, a neglected activity in the 14 years of the Barbados Labour Party plenty.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they can boast of no significant record in this regard. We have been able to visit areas in my Constituency in Christ Church South - I am sure this is replicated with all the Members on This Side, I do not know about the Other Side - because in our clinics the rallying cry by Barbadians is, of course, for housing. Jobs, yes, but housing even more so and this ranges from rental units to provision of housing, as eluded to earlier, for the middle-class, as we call them sometimes, but even the upper middle class can approach for housing solutions.

We are saying on This Side that we will provide rental units. We are going to provide houses that can be purchased at reasonable prices for low-income earners in Barbados, and we are going to provide lots for persons to move on to, in the case where they are allowed then to build their own structures.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a feature of the Barbadian culture because, we like to build our own housing. We like to build them, as they say, bit by bit, and keep growing as the family or the opportunity arises. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is something of dire need and I am urging the Ministry during our visit to Christ Church South to look at some lands in the area of Harmony Hall.

We have identified an area of land which is not immediately obvious but, to my untrained eye, it could provide six or so house lots facing on the eastern side of the road which enters the South Coast Sewerage Project. It is, therefore, upwind and, to my mind, would not present any kind of immediate hazard if it were to be occupied as a residential area. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the need is so great that we have to look beyond the normal solutions for ways to provide housing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other thing we have to do of course, is to persuade Barbadian land owners to enter into meaningful partnerships with the Government, the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation, that can also realize solutions to our housing needs.

H/A41/1.50 p.m. Sequence 17

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Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I am also contemplating such a partnership in some areas in the Christ Church South Constituency.

Sir, a number of people in the past would have taken the approach that there is nowhere to put housing, but we in

this Democratic Labour Party Administration have been stretching our sinews, and we are creating these lots in already existing housing areas, like the Pine, where we have already been identifying areas where we will carry out an activity which we call infilling.

Sir, infilling is a new term for the Honourable Members on That Side. They will steepse. Why was it not done? I can sit down and let the other Honourable Members make their contributions. The facts are, we are finding solutions to housing in Barbados where the Honourable Member for St. George North found none, where the Honourable Member for St. Andrew found none. These are the kinds of situations which we are dealing with daily.

We are going to infill in areas like Sayes Court, for instance. We are going to infill in other housing areas where lands have been left idle for years, and we are going to cause the Town and Country Planning Department authorities to make sure that every avenue is properly exhausted in the quest to provide a solution to all Barbadians.

It is in our Manifesto, our promise to house every last person. It is not an empty promise. It is a document by which this Administration is going to operate and is committed.

I am delighted to be part of this discussion today, because it means that I can go back to those residents in Christ Church South, who have approached me about land for moving houses on to and tell them that, here is a concrete example of the direction the Democratic Labour Party Government is going.

This is it in black and white. This is what has those Over There confused, the fact that we have gone the step in providing the solution. I can take this document, as they say, to the proverbial bank, because it means something. They on That Side will always say, we were doing nothing.

Sir, every week in this Assembly we are vesting new lands, we are making sure that housing solutions are provided, we are opening new areas for housing, things that they could not do for 14 years. We are providing the solutions in difficult, challenging, economic times, and that has to be underlined, because they, Over There, said, what can you describe it, a floral garden of excesses.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew reminds me that he even championed the National Housing Corporation away from its mandate. He steered it carefully away from its mandate to provide housing for Barbadian people to build an office block, and we know the outcome of that. That is the greatest wrong ever wrought on the economy of this country by a sitting Minister, in my opinion.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is probably right in his determination not to come in here very often, because he should be ashamed, anyhow, to come at all, and should hang down his head when the history of Housing Ministers is written in Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew has to hang his head in shame and accept willingly last place. I wish there was a Law that would force the Honourable Member to have to contribute to the settlement of the matter now facing this great country, because of his stubbornness and incompetence.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Honourable Member for St. Andrew, let me reiterate, when the Honourable Member is speaking, I will have no other person speaking. Just let me remind you of that. Honourable Member for Christ Church South, could you withdraw those remarks?

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I accept your ruling and withdraw unreservedly any remarks and any offending words, and ask that they be struck from the record. Sir, you know it is not my intention.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those remarks are to be struck from the record.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: The Honourable Members on That Side chide because that is their style, and whereas we set about the work of the people, and whereas I was saying earlier, we can go back to our constituents with a master plan of solutions for housing, we have to do this within and amidst the taunts and almost the deliberate interference, sometimes, from the Honourable Members on That Side.

I am pleased and look forward to the Honourable Minister raising the question of many other areas, where he has already identified the potential for this same kind of activity, where we will delineate areas outside of already existing developments, and this is important, so as to take advantage of the sites and services already installed. This means that by so doing, we are allowing the householder, the cost of the project to be significantly reduced. Again, this is revolutionary, to say the least in Government in Barbados, certainly in the Ministry of Housing.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James North was at pains to point out how many times he tried to solicit action on behalf of his constituents, tenancies and otherwise, while they, the Honourable Members on That Side were in Government, the Honourable Member for St. George North and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

He tried his best unsuccessfully, his own words, to try and solicit assistance to provide these kinds of solutions, and when we now come in here and provide this hope for Barbadians, the Honourable Members on That Side will resort to all kinds of criticism. They can take absolutely no credit, and that point must be reiterated.

The Honourable Member for St. James South made the point this morning. The public of Barbados has to appreciate that the Honourable Members on That Side can take no credit for this kind of initiative. It was never in their sight. It was not part of their programme. If it were, in the times when they were in Government, it would have been long done. Their focus was on big Barbados.

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House A41, Sequence 19, 2.00 p.m.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Their focus was myopic and they would operate at the expense, clearly of all others, to make sure that special needs only were constantly satisfied. This is not the approach of this Administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes, we know there is a need for the big projects, the continuation of the Apes Hill project of that size, and the big hotel plant that we will contemplate from time to time. Sir, at the same time, we have to provide solutions for young Barbadian girls and boys who want to leave their mother's home, who want, like any decent person growing up, to build a home of their own, who want to be able to sit on an evening and enjoy the pleasure and satisfaction of being at home, in their home. This is an important philosophy by which the Democratic Labour Party is grounded and inextricably bound up, in the realisation of the ambitions of the Barbadian public.

Sir, I therefore want to, once again, commend this Resolution to this Chamber. It should really pass without any kind of dissent.

I look forward to the Honourable Members on That Side applauding at the end of the day, the Resolution, and joining us in our numbers to make sure that this Resolution is passed, and that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Minister of Housing has the mandate and the blessings of this Chamber, as he goes forward with his programme to house every last person in Barbados, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a noble objective by any measurement.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want first of all to support this Resolution and to say that I believe, as the last speaker, there will be no divide as far as supporting this Resolution is concerned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we in the Barbados Labour Party believe that the acquisition process is essential in order to create lots, housing and, indeed, to provide Barbadians with a number of opportunities, not only housing and other areas of activity, but the acquisition process helps to move forward the economy of the country. It should lead to employment, especially in the construction industry. It should lead to employment for those persons related to building in the building industry. Therefore, we on this side support this Resolution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last speaker made the point that we on This Side can take no credit for a number of initiatives that are being introduced by the Government. It is a fact that we cannot take credit on this side for the high unemployment that now exists, and we cannot take credit for a number of things that the Government is doing, which seem to be working against the people of Barbados.

I believe that if the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was as enthusiastic as he speaks and, as enthusiastic as the Minister of Housing, one would have thought that the construction industry would be booming.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, today we find that even though the Government's record has been so good, according to them, in the last 14 months the record is so great yet, Sir, in my constituency, for the very first time in 20 years I see, once again, highly trained workmen on the block.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The success of this Resolution, the success of this acquisition today will be judged according to how many people in my Constituency, and how many people across Barbados will find employment. Would it redound to a success, in terms of providing employment in the hardware stores, the lumber yard, and the hundreds of people who are now on the brink of being laid off?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that when we look at the success of this Resolution, one has to ask the question, when we create lots, and the Government says that they are going to create the lots at \$5.00 per square foot, we have no problem with that because the records will show that over the past, and of course, one of the things that we cannot deviate from, is records.

Sir, records are here to stay and they will be here long after the Government is in office. If you look at the records, you will see that over the past 14 years, whether

you like it or not, the Ministry of Housing had a premier activity in that period. I have not seen it in the last 14 months, so much activity in terms of acquisition.

If you ask the people in the Legal Department, the Registry, or the Ministry of Housing, they will say to you that during the period 1995 to 2003, we had a lot of activity at the Ministry of Housing, and indeed in 2008, acquisitions, vesting process and activity.

Sir, when you look at the number of lots that were created, you will see that the Barbados Labour Party created more than 2 000 lots in less than 10 years. I am not saying that the record of the Democratic Labour Party so far is not a good one. I do not want to look at records now because both political parties have done a lot of work in the area of housing, but we have to go forward.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why I made the point that the records of the Government will be judged, not only on how many house spots you create, or how many houses you produced. Sir, it will be judged on if you are able to sustain a level of economic activity in this country, that will keep ordinary Barbadians working. I am saying that the Government has to come down off its high horse. The Government has to come down off their mountain tops and go to the trenches, come back down to land and you will see what is happening in this country today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, are you satisfied? I am saying that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said that he is satisfied with what is happening in his Constituency. A number of people cannot find work. Is the State going to provide employment for all? Can he find employment for all the people at the Ministry of Public Works? Are you in a position to ask the Minister of Finance to provide you with more funds for those people in your Constituency and mine, who cannot find work?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not a good situation to be in because I am saying for the very first time since 1994, when we came to office, I have seen that hundreds of people are unemployed once again. Therefore, the Government has to find a way of providing employment for Barbadians. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is in housing and that is why we support this Resolution, because we believe it will lead to employment generation.

I want to find out from the Minister because the Minister made the point before, that there were a number of persons, who will be finding employment in terms of contractors. How many contractors will be involved in the Joint Venture Programme of the National Housing

Corporation? How much employment will be generated from these activities?

House A41, Sequence 19, 2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I heard a lot about these acquisitions, but I am not hearing about how much money the Government is going to put into this venture and the ventures that were announced by the Minister in order to sustain employment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Government is serious about creating employment in this country, it has to look to construction. It cannot only look to these political social programmes like the day care centres and the Constituency Councils. Those are necessary evils and are necessary for political Parties, but they cannot help persons who cannot find jobs in the street.

I am asking this question: Is the Government satisfied that the various camps across Barbados, that the free bus service and all of these things that they have generated over the past 14 months would lead to employment generation? Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the answer is yes, then continue with your programme.

Sir, I am of the view that these things will not sustain employment generation. The Government has to find a way of improving construction in this country. Structural employment is important at this time. The Government has a number of programmes within the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Drainage and the Ministry of Housing and Lands, but they are only batting on one leg. Where is the Minister of Transport and Works? Where is the drainage programme? Where is the bridge programme? I am saying that a number of activities can be created through the Ministry of Drainage and the Ministry of Transport and Works. The bridge work on Possum Bridge and the bridges in St. Thomas and St. Joseph can be done by the Minister of Transport and Works bringing programmes to this Parliament to help create employment.

The Minister of Transport and Works must put a programme in place in order to create that activity in construction, because it is construction that will lead to the recovery of this economy, because every construction activity employs hundreds of people such as engineers, carpenters, steel benders, electricians and even the lumber yard people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, regardless of what the Government does in terms of providing land access, which is a good thing, it needs to put money in construction. I have said a year and a half ago, that I have noticed that the Government's emphasis is not on providing long-term

employment generation by putting money into construction activity, and this is what we need to look at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other area that I would want to spend some time on is this. I have spoken at length to the fact that the services that are being offered by the National Housing Corporation are good. The Minister mentioned a number of persons who go beyond the call of duty to do an excellent service.

I recognise that there are good officers at the National Housing Corporation, indeed at the Ministry of Housing and Lands and all across Barbados, but when we announce policy and we put programmes in place right here in Parliament, we need to go beyond just putting programmes in place. There needs to be institutional strengthening across the Ministries in order to carry those programmes.

I recognise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the goodwill that is being exercised at the Ministry of Housing and Lands, but they definitely need more capacity within that institution in order to carry the programmes of the Government forward in a meaningful time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talked about the Inter-American Development Bank programme, and under the Inter-American Development Bank programme there is a package in there for institutional strengthening. I want to find out from the Minister what is really happening because too many people are saying that the conveyance process is taking too long.

Sir, from 2003, land has been acquired and earmarked, and persons have lots in their possession, but they cannot get the conveyances, so something is wrong. I am not blaming That Side and not This Side, I am saying that there needs to be capacity within the Ministry of Housing and Lands to carry them forward.

In our time, we had to put two or three individuals. I could talk about a man named Mr. Goodridge who was put in place to fast track the programmes within the Ministry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need persons to carry the programme of the Government and programmes within the Ministry forward. It takes too long. I could talk about the Land Registry and the Registration Department. We were able to computerize the Registration Department.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Where are we on it? It simply takes too long. In some developed societies, you can get a conveyance within two or three days and in Barbados it is taking three and four years in order to get a simple conveyance through the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Housing and Lands relies heavily on the Town Planning Department and regardless of whatever they do here, they rely on the Town Planning Department. Sometimes the Town Planning Department would say that the land is not suitable for housing even though it is acquired.

A case in point is Hamblin Land that the Honourable Member spoke of today which was acquired in 2002, but the Town Planning Department is saying it is purely agricultural land even though next door land has been approved for development. That land was approved and acquired for road development and housing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have appealed to the Town Planning Department that they must be consistent, that if they approve site A which is a similar condition, they must approve site B. Right now there are hundreds of people who want to live in the beautiful Constituency of St. George North.

I heard the Minister talked about land that is being acquired at Applewhaites and Roach Village, but all of these lands were sited some years ago, but I am glad that he is pushing forward the acquisition process because people want to live in an environment that is friendly. Clearly, the development of St. George, St. George North in particular, is important because it is a friendly community, and we look forward to all of these developments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when one looks at the National Housing Corporation today, one has to look carefully at what is happening up there. The Minister has good intentions, but who is helping to push these programmes forward? I could talk about applications at the National Housing Corporation for loans from the General Workers' Loan Fund. It does not take political will or politicians. Certainly I do not intend to go up there and sit down over anybody's shoulder.

I believe that when you apply for a loan, it is a loan, not a gift, and once the person has met the criteria, then they should be notified in good time. You cannot keep persons waiting for a whole year to get a loan of \$10 000 to put a roof on a house, to repair a flooring, or to get a window and so on. It is not fair. From time to time we need to put systems in place so that the Minister would get a follow-up on these things.

There are so many activities within the Ministry of Housing and Lands that no ordinary person would not be able to follow through on all. You have to be able to have these regular interventions. I am saying that, yes, these activities exist and yes, the National Housing Corporation has done yeomen service over the years, but it is time now for us to look at different approaches to do the things I am talking about.

House A41 Sequence 20

2.20 p.m.

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Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could also talk about the Tenancies Freehold Programme. I know there were people in the Planning and Priorities Unit who were looking at the back-tracking of plantation tenancies. Sir, that process is taking too long.

Sir, from 1981, when the Tenancies Freehold Programme was passed, there is a situation where only 6 000 lots have been approved so far, which is less than 70 per cent. Sir, in that programme, persons were able to buy land at either 10 cents or \$2.50 per square foot. I am saying that something has to be done in order to get the programme moving at a swifter pace.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke about land-locked parcels of land. Sir, there are many parcels of land across Barbados that are land-locked. I speak particularly to the parish of St. James and, to some extent, to the parish of St. George. Sir, off Highway I, has a lot of land-locked parcels of land. Sir, landlocked parcels of land is where persons do not have road access, they cannot drive up to their homes or there is no foot path.

Sir, I have made the point before that it is the Ministry of Public Works, through the Chief Technical Officer, who has the power to unlock these parcels of land. We did a pilot project at Halls Village, St. James. Sir, there were a number of persons in that village who could not have access to land. The same can be done at Rock Hall, St. George and across Highway I, stretching from the Lazaretto into St. Peter.

Sir, every lot across Highway One is landlocked and that needs to be looked at. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe the Ministry of Public Works, in conjunction with the Ministry of Housing and Lands, should be looking carefully at this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak to another arrangement that needs to be put in place. For example, there are many persons who are in the process of constructing their homes, but are finding access to financing still a bit difficult. Sir, the legal cost of building today can be a burden to many people. The financial arrangements, whether bridging loans being advanced by the banks - of course, I was told this morning by a young lady that she had to pay 10 per cent interest rate for the bridging loan. Sir, this is unfair. Sir, these are things that Government needs to look at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were able to introduce 100 per cent mortgage in this country. Sir, with that 100 per cent mortgage, it means that prospective home-owners were able to acquire their properties. That includes legal fees, as well as other payments that sometimes persons would have to encounter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognised that many persons were not able to pay the down payments, but were able to pay the monthly installment. Sir, I want to find out what is the focus of Government. Is the focus of Government to empower people to own land? Is the focus of Government to provide opportunities for persons to own land? In our time, we were trying to provide access to land.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member for St. George North, but the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, the Honourable Member seems to be suggesting that there has been a change by this Government with respect to 100 per cent mortgage, which is still available. Sir, this Government does not fix interest rates on bridging loans. In that regard, I believe the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We were able to introduce 100 per cent mortgage. I am not sure what is the focus of Government. Sir, if that is not the focus of Government, then the banking institutions and the other institutions across Barbados would do as they please. Once again, I am saying that the bridging interest that was introduced is still being continued by some financial institutions, especially banks, and that persons have to pay 10 and 12 per cent bridging interest, which is very high.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the legal fees payable on mortgages are still too high. Sir, if one wants to convey his property from "A" to "B", where "B" then wants to convey his to "C", they would have to go over the whole process once again. Sir, I was at pains to point out that these things need to be changed at this time. We need to look at them. We need to look at the way we do business. Sir, it is simply taking too long, conveyancing is not a high science. It has taken four years.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying it is simply taking too long.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Lawyers would always disagree with me and this would not be the first time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want you to understand. You are a Lawyer and I know that you would disagree with me too,

but it is simply taking too long. Sir, when you have a conveyance that is taking six years.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Cottage Retreat has started since 2003, and has not yet been completed. When you ask a question, you are not getting the Certificate of Compliance from the Town Planning Department. Sir, something would have to be wrong. Mr. Deputy Speaker, how do you expect to have a construction industry that is booming and you cannot have conveyances? It is a simple thing that needs to be addressed, as conveyances take too long.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at the Land Registry, - Sir, we came in and found a situation and we were hoping to address this through introducing a new modern facility at the Land Registration Department. I want to find out where is the process? We were hoping that people would be able to go online and see how conveyances are within the shortest possible time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to ask the Minister if the costs of conveyances, since we have modernised the Land Registry, are cheaper today than they were five years ago? Are they cheaper? Sir, it was the intention of my Government to have the Land Registry and the Land Survey Department modernised. Sir, this was done. They are now in good condition.

When we came to office, the Land Registry and Land Survey Department were in a depressed state. Today they are in better accommodation. The process has been computerised and they should be better off. Sir, it should be cheaper and faster, but we find the reverse and this is what is hampering its development..

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not blaming the lawyers, I am not blaming the financial institutions. I am saying that Government needs to focus on where the humbug exists, which is in people having access to that 100 per cent. We believe people may even be asked to pay 10 per cent because some people believe that persons must put in some sort of equity in the property now. I know there are more classical conservative approaches on the part of the Democratic Labour Party.

We were more liberal in our philosophy where we are saying that people should acquire that 100 per cent with all the various fees attached, once persons are qualified to have that 100 per cent loan.

2.30 p.m.

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Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It seems as though we have gone back to that approach but something needs to be done at this time to beef up construction once again.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Sir, this Government has not brought any amendment to this Chamber which changes the down payment on land. There has been no measure whatsoever by this Chamber. Sir, in that regard, there has been no change, so the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, it seems to me that some Members are new to this Chamber and they do not know but the Honourable Member for St. Andrew was the person who brought in the concept of 100 per cent mortgages in this country at 6 per cent. Sir, we continued it and that has helped to propel a number of persons, especially at the Barbados Mortgage Finance. Sir, it has helped a number of persons to acquire land, but is the Government's focus now on the concept of rent-to-own?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the late Sir Harold Bernard St. John always felt there was a different philosophy between the Other Side and This Side. It started from 1965 when the Democratic Labour Party continued the Freehold Tenancies Development Act and gave persons the right to rent their property for life and to rent their property always, but the Barbados Labour Party is saying that you should acquire and own your property. Sir, that is where the difference lies, because we believe in property owning democracy, where people could own the property by owning the land and building their homes.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you please wrap up now?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am of the view that the test of time for this Bill would be how many people it would employ and, if it would generate employment for the hundreds of those people out there, who cannot find employment. I want the Ministry of Housing and the various Ministers who spoke today, to tell us how it would impact on the hundreds of people out there who cannot find work in the construction industry, and if this Bill would help them.

Sir, I want to tell some of my people at the Glebe today that this Resolution is significant and that it would help persons in the construction industry to find work. I believe it would help, because I want answers to come from them. How would the Resolution help? Because there are too many persons coming to my office asking for employment. Sir, it is now employment rather than housing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to say that the way some Honourable Members on the Other Side spoke today seems to give the impression that Rome was built in a day and that in 14 months they have done all the glorious things but I want to state emphatically that the Government of Barbados now has instituted some policies that have destroyed what would have been done in 14 years in 14 months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to refer to comments made in the debate by the Honourable Member for St. James North about landlocked situations. I speak particularly to White Hall Tenantry in St. Thomas and some areas of Shop Hill, where persons have been landlocked for a while and efforts were made to have entrances or egresses available to them, and there are still tremendous challenges.

Sir, you know of situations where property owners have exerted their authority, by setting up guard walls and have other areas blocked off to inhibit the free access that these people deserve. Sir, when it comes to emergency situations, it makes it even worse.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no one should be living in an enclosure by a landlord or any other person, where there is no free access to ambulances, the fire service and equipment in case there is a disaster. Sir, I would want to ask this Government that has taken over the mantle of governance in this country, to treat to that issue sooner rather than later because it is going to lead to a number of serious challenges in this society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no Government can treat to the issue of housing development alone. There has to be private/public partnership in respect of meeting the needs of Barbadians. I have witnessed over the many years, public partnership where hundreds and thousands of houses have been built across Barbados as a result of that relationship. We heard earlier from the Honourable Member for St. James South, who spoke about West Terrace, but we could even speak about Oxnards and about Cane Garden, St. Thomas where those lots were bought at \$5 per square foot in 1995/1996. The private/public partnership would lead us to West View in St. Thomas, Shop Hill Terrace, Cane Hill Terrace, Hopewell Terrace, Hope View Terrace and a number of other communities where there are thousands of houses.

Sir, I do not want us to make Barbadians feel that the only solutions that could be offered are through the Government, because the partnership by the private sector and the public service would also help to alleviate some of

the challenges for housing. Sir, that point needs to be made clear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not referring to the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party because I do not want to delay this discussion, but one could check the housing aspect of this Manifesto that speaks to the excellent work that was done by the Barbados Labour Party over the 14-year period in relation, not only to the Government working with the National Housing Corporation in the construction of houses and access to spots, but it also speaks to the private partnership in this country that we have seen across the length and breadth of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish for the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to tell us about the General Workers' Fund and its activity over the last 16 years, to tell us about the Housing Credit Fund, to tell us about the Barbados Mortgage Finance Department and how it is a happy marriage of these institutions to look after the needs of Barbadians.

The Honourable Member for St. George North spoke about the injections and the creativity of the Barbados Labour Party in helping persons to be able to access small loans of \$10 000 for windows and upgrade to houses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the past, I received a report for the parish of St. Thomas on a quarterly basis, so that I got to know and to continue to work with constituents, who made application to the Ministry of Housing, but that was curtailed unceremoniously when this new Government came to the fore but, Sir, that cannot stop me from getting to know what I need to know. I will get the information, but I prefer it to be formalised so that I can work with the agencies to help with some of those solutions we all speak about.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to engage the attention of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North in relation to road side garages. Sir, we keep talking about the expansion of housing communities and so on, which is very pertinent, but when you look at those road side garages where persons use that as a livelihood, as auto body repair persons, as welders, as mechanics and so on, we know of the tremendous complaints that are received when this business continues in communities, especially when they start to develop.

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Miss C. Y. FORDE: People complain of numerous illnesses, and correctly so, because the spray painting of

vehicles will impact on those who suffer from asthma and other respiratory problems.

I believe that the work of the Barbados Labour Party in respect of the acquisition of commercial lots, to have those persons housed in a particular area that will eliminate some of the challenges in residential communities, should also be addressed with the same alacrity used for the expansion of housing. It is critical in any Constituency across this island for that matter to be addressed urgently.

Sir, I also want to indicate from the outset that the people of St. Thomas are taxpayers too, and whatever benefits are offered to the public of Barbados, my constituents, whether they voted for me or not, is insignificant right now. What is important, I have the privilege to look after their needs through their requests and through working with them to ensure that they too enjoy a good quality of life.

Sir, I want to refer to the Bible. I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would want to hear me refer to the biblical statements, where we have learnt about Naboth's vineyard. We know the story behind Naboth's vineyard, where that man had one little vineyard and the rich man sought as best as he could to acquire that vineyard that was fertile, and that assisted helping that poor owner to be able to hold his or her head above water. We also know about Lazarus and Dives, how Lazarus had to eat the crumbs from the feet of the rich man.

Sir, I am appalled and disturbed that at this time in our history, when a Barbados Labour Party Government in 1981 determined that the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act should come into existence to afford poor people and others living on plantation tenancies to acquire their lands at 10 cents per square foot....

Sir, as I speak today, there are no less than four situations in the Constituency of St. Thomas, and I believe there are many others dotted across Barbados, where poor people living in these Constituencies have been disadvantaged by some conglomerates, people who own plantations and large businesses, who have taken advantage of poor people.

Sir, when the politicians get to know, despite what Honourable Members on the Other Side will say, they too will meet it, if you do not bow down to some of these rich people, and I nearly used an expression that would have been unparliamentary, and kiss them. It means perhaps you would not get a little something for a campaign or you would not get little things done in a Constituency. I would prefer to suck salt than to receive a gift from a business person to the detriment of poor people in this country.

Sir, today I am upset because poor people in the communities, which I will not identify now, but for whom I have been working for the last few years, having learnt of their plight, have signed their death warrants unknown to families because people perceived them, or perhaps they too, are lacking in an understanding and in aspects of education to let them know that you cannot sign a document over to somebody to take away all of your land, in an instance, almost two acres, for 2 000 square feet of land, for those poor people to move their houses many metres away from where they were before, to accommodate the sale of land for a developed community, where the land would cost more than \$500 000.

Sir, today, when I pass I see a few little houses being constructed for one of those families. Then I look into another community where the poor woman was told: "You cannot pay me for that house spot, Madam. You have two house spots. The time is ripe for me to get the money from you." She did not have the understanding to know that this is ten cent per square foot, and if she had a 1 000 square feet either way, for the two spots, 2 000 square feet, she was told: "You cannot pay me for this. Give me one of the spots and you can take the other one." Sir, two upstairs houses have been constructed on one of those spots.

Sir, it hurts, and each of those houses, I am sure would cost more than \$200 000. That poor woman is begging the Government of Barbados and the people to sell her a house spot, because she has children. That is what bothers me tremendously. I am not going to be any lucky because I am in the public's eye for any business person, or any poor people who want me to support them in any ill doing. I am sorry. I cannot renounce the Christian principle that I came to this Honourable Chamber with.

Sir, therefore, I have sought the assistance of Lawyers, having learnt of the plight of those families, and action is taking place. I have a problem if the Town and Country Planning Department has given permission for those houses to be built where there is a serious depression, less than six feet behind where the houses are going up.

Sir, something is wrong with the psyche of some of my people when we sit idly by, while poor people are being taken advantage of. As has been the case in the Bible, and for generations, but we talk about people who have come through slavery, who should be empowered. The permission was given under this new Government and that annoys me most. The only time I know is when I pass, as I normally do in my Constituency, to see with my two eyes the challenge.

Sir, I want the Honourable Minister, through his Ministry, to help investigate this matter. I am going to call on the Lawyers on This Side, and any lawyers on That Side who offer his or her assistance, I will be only too willing to

accommodate them, because poor people must not be down-pressed, in a society where we speak about democracy with people receiving benefits because we care.

We cannot only talk the talk, we must walk the walk and empower the poor people of this country who are taxpayers in their own small way, but who deserve the best away from that slavery mentality that we were faced with for so many centuries.

Sir, I wish to lay that complaint. No name, no lock up, but I am going to stand up for the rights of my constituents, or the constituents from St. Philip, who would call me, or those from St. Andrew, St. Joseph, Christ Church South, or wherever, because their rights must be respected. We cannot live in a society where people are disenfranchised as a result of the greed of few among us, who feel that they have arrived and they can make it all, and nobody else can say anything to them. I do not want my palms greased because I am accustomed to living without. In Opposition I will live without before I accept anything from anybody, because I am to keep these two lips that the Lord has blessed me with, closed.

Sir, I have the documentation of which I speak, and I am extremely saddened today, that in the year 2009, people must be faced with a similar situation, as I have witnessed in the Constituency where I live.

Sir, I wish this Government to tell me what would have happened to people in Barbados, particularly poor people, people who are disabled or living with AIDS HIV, because I have been hearing the song and dance in this Honourable Chamber, that the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, have not done anything for the people over the years.

Sir, there is proof across the length and breadth of urban and rural Barbados that thousands of people have benefitted, whether it is a roof over their heads, a new house, house repairs, a well being sunk, a loan, or whatever area.

I challenge this Government, after 16 months, to tell us what has happened in rural Barbados to change the plight of those poor persons or senior citizens, who cannot help themselves because they do not have the wherewithal to repair their houses, build a little ramp, to install a water-borne toilet, or to do the other things that are important to their continued existence, especially in a structural adjustment situation.

I am not going to talk about Rockhampton Road again in here, but the same way that CBC is sanitising its news, I want the media with me, in a week's time, if I do not get a response, because poor people live in

Rockhampton Road, Jackson, who for the last four years, are suffering as a result of inaction by this Government,

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House A41, Sequence 24, 2.50 p.m.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: with a consultant being paid thousands of dollars when the months come, a Director in place, a new Board and nothing is happening. The hurricane season is here and folks at Rock Hampton have pools of water in front of their houses. They too are inhibited from getting in and out, if there is any emergency in that road.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not making this into a discussion about the MTW or the Rural Development Commission, but I want to move forward by lending my support to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, because we have the Scotland District and various locations in the parish, where there is land slippage. It has been growing at a phenomenal rate because some people are just putting houses where they feel like, not looking at the contours of the land and how waste water and even drainage that might be instituted, and wells that are being sunk can impact on the soil and cause land slippage.

Sir, I support the Honourable Member for St. Joseph regarding the amount of \$25 000 for the relocation of persons who are living on land prone to slippage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the land at Farmers, Phases I and II, were acquired and specifically designed to accommodate persons who suffer from land slippage, particularly in White Hall and Mount Hillaby in St. Andrew, and in other communities. A lot of that land has been used otherwise for ordinary housing.

I want to commend the Minister for the efforts he is making, but I also want to chide him, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that he needs to urgently look at the acquisition of a couple acres of land that will be left exclusively to accommodate those people living in land slipping areas, and persons with eviction notices.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, right now, I have about 14 letters - the last one I have in my handbag from last week Wednesday - where persons with a little chattel house have been told to take up their bundles and go. We heard a debate in here about three weeks ago, where persons said chattel houses are things of the past. We cannot afford to look at life in that way. We have to creep before we can walk.

Sir, persons who have been allowed to do the rental of house spots for decades, I acknowledge that families want their land. We cannot fault them for that. What measure has Government put in place beyond Farmers Phases' I and II to facilitate those persons with eviction notices?

I know that there are some house spots in Lion Castle that the property owner indicated in 2006, that the spots are there for the residents and their families. Sir, to this day I cannot get the Ministry of Housing to treat to my numerous requests, in relation to Lion Castle, because persons are there in Lion Castle with eviction notices. Where must they put their 'georgie bundle'?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want another situation like what happened in Deanes Village, St. Thomas more than a year ago, where the young man living on his grandmother's land had his house bulldozed in his presence and taken to the landfill because it was his money that he worked for honestly to be able to build the house. Therefore, I can see where people who would have been given until the end of March, April or May this year to relocate, cannot go any further, because there is no proper provision by the Government to accommodate them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would appreciate that if you have had bad experiences and you want your land because your children want to be able to do their own development, persons will have to say, I can no longer accommodate you, here is the eviction notice. I am not quarrelling about that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes more.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the situation with the eviction notices and nowhere to go.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North spoke about Forty Acres, and I want to thank him because that is a seven-year request. It already has the sites and services. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bus that goes to Shorey Village, already goes into Forty Acres, deposits its commuters and exits, going on into Ashford and so on. Therefore, I can see people from St. Thomas getting opportunities to have their houses constructed, and \$5 per square foot is very well agreed upon.

I want to remind the Honourable Minister of the various pieces of correspondence. I do not think they were put in File 13, but I will refresh his memory and that of his Permanent Secretary, in relation to Lion Castle, Airy Cot,

Canefield and Lewis Village in St. Thomas. The people of St. Thomas are taxpayers, too.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to refer to the housing neighbourhood upgrade that was a project conceptualised by the Barbados Labour Party. The preparation was done. The most this Government did, was to go and sign for the loan.

I am glad for the continuity of that project, but the folk of Allen View, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are still waiting patiently for an opportunity to have their homes upgraded, to have the access to their houses, roads put in place where necessary, to have waterborne toilets, because some of them still do not have access to running water because Allen View is in the “No Build Zone” of the area protecting Harrison Cave.

There were plans in it for the widening of the road to Harrison’s Cave. There were plans in it for employment for the residents of the area so that they can set up their kiosks, those who want to do refreshments, ply their trade and sell souvenirs to the tourists. It is now a year and a half later and the residents of Allen View are still waiting patiently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for an opportunity to take some of the offerings of this Government, and to be able to help raise their families.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would appreciate that as the result of the Harrison’s Cave “No Build Zone”, persons can no longer raise pigs and so on, and they can do limited agriculture because we do not want them to be using chemicals that will infiltrate into the Cave and have the water discoloured and impact on the stalagmites and stalactites, and that is understood.

Sir, these people have been waiting for a while and you can understand that they are becoming impatient. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I empathise with them and I would like to ask the Honourable Minister not necessarily to answer today but, at least, to afford me a status report on what is happening with Allen View.

It is up to the Honourable Member for the City to speak about Cat’s Castle and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West to speak about the Garden Land, but I speak for my residents because I understand. I grew up with most of them in Allen View. I know of their concerns and I would wish for them, like other taxpayers in Barbados, to be able to reap the benefits that are being made available to others in this country, because they are people too.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to thank you for the opportunity and I would always be able to speak, I know, with the Honourable Minister on issues that impact on the

lives of the residents of the parish, and I wish to thank you sincerely for the opportunity to vent my expressions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I rise to support this Resolution before this Honourable Chamber, the vesting of two parcels of land at Branchbury, St. Joseph, and Woodbourne, St. Philip to facilitate the Manifesto Pledge of the Democratic Labour Party Government to provide 500 house lots of land at \$5 per square foot, as seen on page 9 of our Manifesto.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would first like to respond to some points made by the Honourable Members on the Other Side.

Firstly, I was a little confused with the approach of the Honourable Member for St. George North because, as he rambled his way through his presentation, the Honourable Member for St. George North tried to attack this Democratic Labour Party Government, in terms of our approach to the Rent-to-Own concept.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am trained in Mathematics as I said. Sir, we were trained to think very logically, so it was rather illogical, the line of argument pursued by the Honourable Member for St. George North in this regard, because he tried to give the public and this Honourable Chamber, the impression that it is the Barbados Labour Party, which embraces this Rent-to-Own concept, whereas the Democratic Labour Party believes in the perpetual rental of units to members of the public by the State, but nothing could be further from the truth.

House A41, Sequence 24, 3.00 p.m.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I say is in black and white because in our Manifesto for the last Election “Pathways to Progress” in the section on housing, starting on page 8, which is entitled “Improving Access to Property Ownership” this Democratic Labour Party Government indicated on page 9 that we are philosophically committed to ensuring that every Barbadian resident has access to comfortable housing. On the previous page, we made the point that the housing should not just be comfortable, but affordable and decent, thus we have this concept of \$5.00 per square foot for these first-time homeowners, these working-class people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we said that in order to propel the HELP Programme (Housing Every Last Person

Programme), that we would pledge a number of issues. On page 10 we say that we will, and I quote:

“Commit to building and maintaining a pool of rent-to-purchase units for low-income earners, pensioners and the disabled who may not qualify for mortgages and loans.”

This Democratic Labour Party, in that last Manifesto has committed itself to introducing and propelling the rent-to-purchase concept, and true to form, this Democratic Labour Party regime, led in housing by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, recently piloted the rent-to-purchase concept at Arleigh Heights in the Constituency of St. Michael North.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, five victims from the Constituency of the City of Bridgetown, which I have the honour to represent, were the first recipients of those units at Arleigh Heights, so it is clear that the Democratic Labour Party is committed to the rent-to-purchase concept, where working-class people would be able to pay for their housing solutions over a period of time, in terms of a portion of rent going towards the mortgage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the public must understand that the Barbados Labour Party is waffling. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at the first response of the Barbados Labour Party to the opening presentation by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, we had the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. Part of the parcels of lands that we are vesting in the National Housing Corporation is in Branchbury within his Constituency. I am very familiar with that Constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because in the 1994 Elections, as I said before, I was campaign manager for the Democratic Labour Party candidate and I would have travelled throughout Branchbury. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that area is a working-class district.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, rather than be honest and man enough to adopt a bipartisan approach and praise this Democratic Labour Party Government's initiative, to provide more housing solutions at this very exciting rate of \$5.00 per square foot for his constituents, as the Honourable Member for St. George North to his credit tried to do initially when he started his presentation, by saying that he would support this Resolution, the Honourable Member tried to waffle about the fact that when you put in other improvements, the land may very well be valued much more than \$5.00 a square foot.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is wrong with the Government subsidising the cost of land to ensure that working-class Barbadians have affordable access to land?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you see that mixed signal coming here, but it does not surprise me one bit because under the Barbados Labour Party regime, when they were in office in the last 14 years, their Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, publicly promoted the concept that land should fetch its highest economic value, so the public library in Speightstown had to be resited so that the beach front property would be accessible to tourism, so access to land by working-class Barbadians was not a priority of the Barbados Labour Party Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I grew up in Dalkeith Road right next to the Garrison Savannah, so I would use some horse racing analogies to say that the realities of the last two Elections are that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph came home by a whisker, there was a photo finish and so the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is now shivering in his boots when he contemplates the fact that this Democratic Labour Party is going boldly forward in providing housing solutions for the people of St. Joseph. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Honourable Members have said on This Side, no credit must be given to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph in terms of promoting this initiative.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear the Honourable Member for St. Philip North mentioning that Tourville, another part of St. Joseph, is being identified for future land development. What would happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that as more residents of that Constituency realise the wonderful work of this Democratic Labour Party Administration, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph would be watching his political demise unfold before his very eyes as he will be removed from warming the seat in the next General Election.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member, who was the principal speaker for the Opposition this morning, could not last more than 15 minutes, and he returned to playing with the keys of his blackberry. I am really disappointed with the approach of the Barbados Labour Party to these issues. Their principal spokesman, the Shadow Minister of Housing arrived late and then started to mumble and grumble on irrelevancies because the Honourable Member was not here to hear the introductory speech of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I go further because the Honourable Member for St. George North talked about the need for capacity building, but within the same Housing and Neighbourhood Upgrading Programme, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, as I understand it, there is room for capacity building in terms of providing more staff and more training for the staff at the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and the National Housing Corporation, so that they would be in a better position to provide housing solutions to Barbadians, so this is in the works.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I therefore, can assure the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, that yes, under that Housing Neighbourhood Upgrading Programme, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, Cat's Castle and Greenfield within the City have been earmarked for massive development. I know that within this term of the Democratic Labour Party's regime, the Government extended an invitation to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to meet with consultants at the Ministry of Housing Complex at Country Road, because your humble servant was there and we were briefed fully in that regard, so I am confident that this Democratic Labour Party Government will ensure that this five-year project is fully completed.

Within that programme, subsidies would be provided for low and middle-income persons to assist them in terms of housing improvements, so we look forward to this project being implemented such that streets would be widened, drainage issues would be solved in a comprehensive manner. Persons with pit toilets would be able to get water-borne facilities and houses would be re-blocked so that they would not be so closely situated to increase the likelihood of fires and reduce access in terms of emergency vehicles, be they fire, police or ambulance. So this Democratic Labour Party Government is well on its way to providing serious and comprehensive housing solutions to the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me go further to another Honourable Member who spoke on That Side. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were very disorganised. One Honourable Member said one thing and another member said something that was totally opposite.

House A41 Sequence 25

3.10 p.m.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, for example, we heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West engaging the Honourable Member for St. Lucy suggesting - they are all out of their seats now because they are no longer interested in this serious matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember the Honourable Member for Christ Church West suggesting that the assertions from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that the Barbados Labour Party was concerned, while they were in office, with merely accumulating land and keeping it sterile and unutilised in their land bank, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West was disputing that fact.

Sir, it was the Honourable Member for St. James North in this Honourable Chamber, who agreed with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and said that the Barbados Labour Party Government had a land bank from which they did not make many withdrawals.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James North, while the Barbados Labour Party was in Government, complained publicly about the diabolical forces that neglected his constituency under the Barbados Labour Party regime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me advise, in the Addendum to this Resolution, it is stated pellucidly clear that the two parcels of land identified in the First and Second Schedules to this Resolution, that the conveyance for the First Schedule was dated March 10, 2009, where the Government of Barbados purchased the land from Cordover Enterprise Limited.

The second partial land at Woodbourne, the conveyance was dated March 18, 2009, between Carrington Estate and the Crown. Sir, this is land that was acquired by this Democratic Labour Party by private treaty. Sir, they want to fool the public that this land was there laying around and that the Democratic Labour Party is riding on the works of the Barbados Labour Party. Mr. Deputy Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. This is a Democratic Labour Party's initiative. Sir, within our Manifesto on pages 8 and 9 we had pledged, and I quote:

"To provide 500 house lots of land in five (5) months at \$5 per square foot for first-time homeowners. These lots have been identified and land will be acquired by private treaty, where necessary, to speed up the process."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is exactly what we are doing. We did not go through the process of compulsory acquisitions. We wanted to be fair to the people and we did an amicable private treaty, where the land was acquired rapidly, so that these poor Barbadians, these working-class Barbadians, the masses, would be able to access the land at \$5 per square foot.

Sir, we did that so that people would be able to access land, not 20 years from now, but within our first term of office. Sir, within less than two years we are delivering, and I think the Honourable Member for St. Philip North deserves tremendous credit for taking this wonderful initiative.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not just talk, we are acting, and the facts are there. Sir, this Democratic Labour Party Government will not, in any way, be deterred or slowed

down by any baseless rhetoric coming from the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party will oppose for opposing sake, because the writing is on the wall. They are seeing that the people of Barbados have embraced this Democratic Labour Party regime and they do not want us to succeed because they know that when this happens, the people of Barbados would vote for the Democratic Labour Party in the next Election and in the coming Elections. Sir, the Barbados Labour Party does not want that. They are not interested in the people of Barbados. They are only interested in narrow political gains. Sir, this is regrettable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me go on. Sir, do you remember on the platforms and since we have assumed office, the Prime Minister and Honourable Member for St. John has been piloting this effort, where we talked about the fact that to speed up this acquisition process, we are identifying plots of land along existing highways, along each side of the highway where we would have the existing sites and services, be they electricity, roads, water, natural gas, telephone and so on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I taught at the Alleyne School - I know you are originally from St. Andrew - and I know coming from Bridgetown, travelling along the countryside, we would have a number of highways where you would have the existing sites and services. Sir, along the highway you might have some cane grounds close by and we went a step further and acquired what we call a buffer zone, to ensure there is enough land between the house lots and the cane fields, so that you do not get cane fields in people's backyards, thus increasing the risk in terms of fires or rodents coming out of the cane ground when the crops are harvested and infecting the people's homes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are very far-reaching. Sir, the Prime Minister himself has led this charge. Therefore, credit must be given to him for being such a visionary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want to say that all the rhetoric coming from the Other Side, in terms of sites and services, are irrelevant, because we have specifically earmarked in this 500-lots programme existing roads, where the sites and services are already provided, so that we can get the land, sell it to the low-income earners and they can start to build almost immediately. Sir, this is realistic and fast-tracking. We are not waiting around like the last Administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was so saddened, this is an opportunity to be bipartisan and we are hearing the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, trying to pooh-pooh this in his less than 15 minutes presentation, where he talked about this

Democratic Labour Party getting involved in patronage and largesse.

Sir, I took the Honourable Member's contribution verbatim. Sir, the Honourable Member spoke about patronage and largesse in a derogatory way. This is not acceptable for such a very laudable initiative, but clearly the Barbados Labour Party's heart is not in the plight of the masses. They are more interested in the rich and affluent to whom they pander.

Sir, there is an ideological divide between two parties in this regard, that is why we have it here in black and white, our ideological commitment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me go further to show you that we did not just put it in the Manifesto but that bit by bit, one after the other, we are delivering. We talked about the fact that within the first 100 days of our Administration assuming office, we would remove VAT from building materials on houses valued up to \$400 000. Sir, we have done that significantly in budgets and legislations brought before this Honourable Chamber, thus enabling working-class and middle-class Barbadians to own a piece of this rock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we went on further to talk about the need to provide 2 500 house spots for sale to low and middle-income wage earners within our first term of office. Sir, we are well on our way in terms of providing 2 000 housing solutions annually.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at page 10, we talked about the concept of "build and live", where we give people access to the land and through community efforts and partnership with the private sector, they are able to build starter homes and improve their housing. Sir, this has been going on for years. I remember viewing some old Government Information Service programmes where such initiatives were introduced, where we saw footage of Barbadian artisans in communities engaged in building housing through Government programmes.

We even talked of exploring the concept of reversed mortgages. This is a far-reaching initiative. You are now hearing on the network, CNN and others, this concept of reversed mortgages where senior retirees, rather than their relatives fighting over their inheritance, they transfer the equity of their properties to funding agencies where they could get a monthly stipend, which would enable them to enjoy their senior years at a higher standard of living.

Sir, this is a modern state-of-the-art initiative and this Democratic Labour Party is already considering it.

Sir, there are other projects which I would not go into the details, but it is here in black and white within our Manifesto.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me say specifically with regard to the City of Bridgetown and housing, I would invite the Minister of Housing and Lands to seriously consider Government acquiring vacant house spots in the City and in urban and rural Barbados. Sir, in urban Barbados, the City specifically, because of the dense population there is hardly much open land available. Therefore, I can identify only two opened areas that are large enough to accommodate terraced units, namely at the corner of King's Village and White Park Road, and at the bottom of Wharton Gap/New Orleans.

3.20 p.m.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: The New Orleans plot is not that big, but still big enough to accommodate at least two high-rise housing terraced units. Sir, a few days ago, I was just driving along and right next on Bank Hall Main Road, right next to the Constituency office of the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, you have a small plot of land where two high-rise terraced units are accommodated and they look very aesthetically pleasing in the midst of that working class district.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to the Government acquiring these plots of land at Wharton Gap, New Orleans and White Park Road so that, in the shortest order, we could provide urgently needed housing solutions for the people of the City and the surrounding areas, so that we could have this pit toilet eradication, where people would not have to suffer the insanitary and inhumane problems of using pit toilets and "topsies" in these modern times.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes more.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very excited about that. Sir, apart from the area being big enough to accommodate terraced units, you have individual house spots that the owners may be away, or have died and do not have enough funds to build immediately. Sir, years have elapsed and the plots are just there filled with bush and debris and the Government could seriously look at acquiring these properties, so that we could build, sometimes, even duplex, units, as have occurred in Deacons Farm and other areas so that we could provide housing solutions, as we go up in the air, so that rather than a house spot, accommodating just one family, we could accommodate two or even more families, so that housing

solutions are provided in a far-reaching way to people who would want to remain in urban Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I congratulate the Government for keeping to its Manifesto's promise in the interest of the masses of Barbados. There are a number of people, who for generations live in the City and urban areas and find it very convenient, in terms of access to the business places where they work, in terms of access to school and less problems in terms of access to public transportation. Sir, by making sure we have this sort of infilling, where we make sure that vacant lots within the urban corridor are utilised for housing, more of these persons could be accommodated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing, I am saying this is a very revolutionary initiative of this Democratic Labour Party Government.

Sir, I was listening to the Heroes Day Lecture in this compound where a noted Barbadian PhD. historian was making the point that when we see Bush Hall and other areas in Barbados, well populated with houses, that this is a modern phenomenon.

When working-class Barbadians went and built the Panama Canal, nearly 100 years ago, that Panama money, the historians and older folks would tell you, enabled poor people to invest in friendly societies, credit unions and so on, and were able to purchase Bush Hall.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I learnt that Bush Hall was a plantation and that land speculators were so caught up to get hold of this Panama money, that they did not have the sight and service, or the proper road network. They just cut up the plantation into lots and Barbadians, with the money from Panama bought, in mass, these house spots and that is why we have modern Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bayville, which is made up of St. Michael South and the City was part of the Bay Plantation. You have the old Bay Mansion on Bay Street and, Sir, the whole of the Bay Land was a plantation that was cut up, I believe in the 1950s and poor people were able to get housing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is only a start, but I am sure that these 500 house lots will be accommodated and that we will be looking to acquire even more spots, as we go along, where the sites and services are there and rapidly, Sir, more and more working-class Barbadians would be able to access land and, therefore, build on it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I congratulate the Government for keeping to its Manifesto promises in the interest of the masses of Barbadians.

Sir, I thank you.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I really would have thought when I came here earlier today and this Resolution was laid by the Honourable Minister of Housing, that none of us could have anticipated that it would have delayed this House by attracting such attention as we have heard, certainly, in the early morning reply by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and then in the later reply, by the Honourable Member for St. James North and the attempted reply by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Sir, what is really a very simple Resolution has apparently given birth to the wings of a particular brand of political hypocrisy, that not even the most uninitiated could imagine would have emerged today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has become abundantly clear to all, even a blind man on a trotting horse, sitting down backwards, that any programme by this Democratic Labour Party Government, that is designed to serve the interest of working-class people in this country, ordinary folks like you and me, would bear the brunt of a Barbados Labour Party attack, a false attack, to try to cause Barbadians to lose faith in their own ability to achieve things in this country.

Sir, notwithstanding the fact that for 14 years the Barbados Labour Party occupied the seat of Government in the country and it has been, is now, and when it is chronicled by historians, would be deemed, determined and characterised as a period of abject failure, when it comes to the issues of housing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are some issues on which the Opposition, the Barbados Labour Party should not even dare to condescend to lecture anybody on in Barbados and Sir, one of them is housing. Sir, could you imagine that for 14 years, ordinary people in this country begged, pleaded and beseeched the last Government to at least demonstrate an ability to achieve an erection of policy?

Sir, to get an erect policy for housing in this country, there is a long list of names piling up at the National Housing Corporation in the thousands. Sir, people wanted housing solutions, whether it is rental units - I cannot say rent-to-own because the Honourable Member for St. George North has clearly demonstrated, that he cannot even connect with the policy of rent-to-own because, Sir, he is incapable of thinking in squares, so let me square the circles for the Honourable Members of the Barbados Labour Party Opposition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they built a show house and put it out in the yard at the National Housing Corporation, that not even a Japanese akita was able to live in. Sir, not even a simple canine, far less a human being could live in it. Sir, they paraded it on this country as the new solution to low-income housing in Barbados. The former Honourable Member who paraded it, got an award for saving the earth, but could not save the housing problem in Barbados. Sir, could you imagine it?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is why I spoke about the wings of political hypocrisy, adopting wings and flying all over Roebuck Street in this country to the extent where we have people now pleading and begging.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we came into office in 2008, there were 14 years of complete wastage in Barbados, when they should have been looking after the housing needs of Barbadians.

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Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Fourteen years of complete wastage in Barbados, when they should have been looking after the housing needs of Barbadians. This Honourable Minister of Housing, which we have, with as much energy, as you can imagine, trying to put a housing policy in place, and has to come here and seemingly be persecuted, harassed and harangued for details on matters which they themselves could not give when they were in Government - This selective political amnesia, as demonstrated by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Sir, they built a house out there, and they put one of the model houses on the Anglican Church's land, and up to now they have not asked for permission of the Anglican Church. The house is still out there on the Anglican Church's land. They have not asked the Anglican Diocese for permission to put the house out there, and it is still out there.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: There are certain Honourable Members of the Opposition who had a particular disdain for asking the Anglican Church for permission to put things on their land.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I understand the concept down there is Rent-to-Own. That is a Rent-to-Own concept, in St. George.

Sir, we are looking at what you are talking about. We have now started to work with the private sector to produce low-income housing. I do not want to call all of them - Work Hall, Marchfield - houses for the first time being built, and yet we have to sit in here and be lectured, seemingly lectured. Sir, Tweedside Road and Country Road, they started to build Country Park Towers, at Country Road and abandoned them. We came and found steel rusting in the ground and we had to pull it up and get that project going.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You better not let me talk about it. That is the other point I am coming to. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas stood up in this Honourable House, pompasetting and parading about Rockhampton Road. The Honourable Member ought to be ashamed. The Honourable Member was not even listening to what she was saying. She said, "This Government for the last four years refused to do Rockhampton Road." We were only in office for 15 months. I am going to tell you why Rockhampton Road was not done. I am going to tell you why Rockhampton Road cannot be completed.

Sir, the Honourable Member sat in a Cabinet that took a policy decision, which gave instruction to the Rural Development Commission to start 44 roads in 2007, 44 roads. Not even the Ministry of Transport and Works ...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I do not think C.O. Williams would dare to start 44 roads in Barbados at the same time, simultaneously, together. You do not understand that language. Get the Oxford Dictionary. The height of planning and financial irresponsibility in Barbados, and that is why Rockhampton Road cannot be completed.

I am writing a letter instructing the Director of the Rural Development Commission to write the residents, as I would write the Honourable Member, because the Honourable Member wrote me, and I am going to write back. We are going to write the residents of Rockhampton Road explaining to them why their road cannot be done.

There is no money in the budget, financial irresponsibility, lack of respect for Financial Rules, corruption, common theft. That is why you cannot get Rockhampton Road done. It has nothing to do with the Democratic Labour Party Government. Understand that fact.

I am going to clean up that mess. I have sent people in there, through the Board, to get all the information of how much money was paid to engineers and contractors,

who got underpaid and who, in my own sneaky suspicion, have been overpaid too.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Do you want to know about Rockhampton Road? Tell the people in Rockhampton Road why they could not get a road four years ago, because the Honourable Member for St. George North was capable of getting the majority of roads done by the Rural Development Commission in St. George North. They were not looking at the Honourable Member, because even though you may not wish to admit it, I can tell you there are even negotiations now to see if they can retire the Honourable Member from her seat, but I will fight against it. I am not going to allow them to put you out of here, because you did not come here in any wheelbarrow, you were voted in. So they have to make sure that you ...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Do not worry about that. Do not worry about how much money put me in the House of Assembly. I am here.

Sir, every programme of the Democratic Labour Party, the Summer Camps - They want to disrupt the Summer Camps. We are not to have Summer Camps. You are supposed to match a \$4 million programme with a housing programme. The folly of it is like comparing apples with oranges.

Barbadian parents are not to be given the opportunity to have somewhere safe to send their children at summer, because the Barbados Labour Party wants to have a camp in your Constituency, in which the Assistant Director is a convicted paedophile. Are we to stand for that in Barbados?

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House and I believe the Honourable Member has a responsibility to speak to the issue of any one in that Summer Camp who is an Assistant Director that is a paedophile.

Sir, correspondence was sent to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Family on June 25, 2009, indicating the person who was identified as the Director, having been told by the Police or whoever, that the person had such a character, that that person was removed and a new name submitted on June 25. Sir, for the Honourable Member to go there, the Honourable Member who is accusing someone of being a paedophile should reflect on his own experiences, because he knows that I know what I know, and I will go no further.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas rose on a point of order and I have to rule on it. I see no point of order. Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, please continue.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, this is not a Summer Camp debate, but we know what we are talking about.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew rose on a point of order. Let me here what is his point of order.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. In his comments he indicated that the Barbados Labour Party wanted a camp where paedophiles were participating in the camp. The Barbados Labour Party has no camp nor did the Barbados Labour Party seek to sponsor a camp.

While members of the Israel Lovell Foundation might be associated with the Barbados Labour Party, those two organisations are two separate and distinct organisations, and in the circumstances, I ask that those comments be struck from the record.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I see no point of order. Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, please continue.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Sir, on a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member, as I said, is misleading the House. The Barbados Labour Party was accused in the presentation...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Joseph, I spoke already this morning and said that when the Chair is speaking I do not want to hear any other person speaking.

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House A41, Sequence 29, 3.40 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph continues in this Honourable House to disrespect the Chair. Let me warn you that you might disrespect the Chair when someone else is sitting, but when I am sitting, I will tolerate no disrespect from any Honourable Member on This Side or That Side. I say that when the Chair is speaking no other person shall speak, and everyone is aware of the Standing Orders of the House.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, I have ruled on that matter. I have seen no point of order.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, please continue your speech.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, you cannot challenge the Chair or tell the Chair what to do. I ruled.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, please continue your speech.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Sir. When I was a boy we used to get a pink medicine in a little packet called "worm powder". We used to get it for the worms because it used to tickle you in your...

Asides.

(Certain remarks made the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER).

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, please continue your speech and stick to the Parliamentary language as prescribed by this House.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, I think Honourable Members know what I mean, the level of discomfort that you will feel during a speech, which I will deliver in this House, and I do not deliver many of them because I speak the truth and nothing but the truth. Therefore, you could split hairs over whether or not it is the Barbados Labour Party.

The people of Barbados know what is going on, about every programme of the Democratic Labour Party which they believe will give credence and credit to the Democratic Labour Party and its supposed election or electoral chances, they have sidelined to attack.

When you think they are attacking the Democratic Labour Party, they are attacking the people of Barbados, understand that.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Therefore, if it is transferring the houses to the people who lived in them for 20 years, as the Honourable Member for St. James South said earlier this morning, that is to be maligned, attacked and harassed, that the Democratic Labour Party is giving away something to somebody that does not deserve it.

If it is the Constituency Councils, they made all kinds of hue and cry and dance in here that we are going to handpick all of these people and put all of these people on it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, please stick to relevance in this debate, please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to stick to the relevance because Constituency Councils are going to have to find open spots of land to be acquired by the Ministry of Housing and Lands. They are going to have to contribute to the housing policy of the Government. They are going to be counsellors advising the State on things to be done in Constituencies in this country, including housing. So they play an important part in the framework of governance in this country, but they in the Barbados Labour Party do not want that, Sir. Therefore, we now come down to the Housing Programme of the Democratic Labour Party. It must pain even the laziest person to see that without even as much effort as raising the pen, or the stroke of a pen, that the Democratic Labour Party can institute a housing policy when, after 14 years -

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew who was elected to this House of Assembly as everybody else, but apparently does not like to come in here, has come into this Chamber, sauntered in here, after tying up this Government with millions of dollars in that building in Warrens. I go to work every morning in it, but I pray to God I am not in it if anything happens. I said it last week and I will say it next week too, that the over \$100 million that we would end up having to pay for Warrens, should have been building houses for people in Rockhampton Road...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Or completing roads.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Roads that your Government dug up, and you come in here to harass us for a road that your Government dug up and cannot get finished.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The residents in Rockhampton Road are taxpayers who deserve a quality road leading to their houses. I have a tremendous difficulty. The Rockhampton Road was started four years ago, of which one and a half years are under this Administration. Last year June I drew to the public's attention, the condition of the road and the South District Roads. Five of them that were started under the Barbados Labour Party as well have now been completed.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER).

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I do not mind for the little exercise up and down, but I know the people in Rockhampton Road need an MP, because if your MP could contribute to digging up a road by the Government...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I am not talking about Vault Road. I am talking about Rockhampton Road. The Rural Development Commission started 44 roads and to date, 37 are left of the 44, so that only seven roads are completed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to getting a regular budget voted by this Parliament in the Estimates, they were called back in here and given \$9 million in 2007, and still could not get the 44 roads finished.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Rockhampton Road? I am going up there because they need to get an MP. Therefore, I am not taking any lectures from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. The Honourable Member, as I said, has written to me and I have a beautiful response for the Honourable Member. I am going to mail my response to every resident in Rockhampton Road so that they understand, that their MP sat down in Parliament and in Cabinet and agreed to digging up their road with no clear pathway to get it finished, just as we will tell the truth on the housing policy of the Barbados Labour Party, that never existed. Sir, that is the problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of a sudden now, out of Government, they know everything that is wrong in Barbados. So the Honourable Member for St. George North could come in here and lecture us about mortgages.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will break a little piece of logic, which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas cannot come into contact with at any time, but I will break one of the rules of logic and beg the question, everybody knows about the perennial problems of mortgages, conveyances and interest rates. We have spoken ad nauseam, ad infinitum, about that.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: That is Latin. You would not understand that. You are a Spanish station, cutting across people when they are talking in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have spoken about this, time and time again. We know that there are problems. They could not solve them in 14 years, but the Minister of Housing is to solve the problems in the private banking system.

I have never heard such in all my time. Therefore, we are elected to Government and we are to solve every problem in Barbados in 15 months, because the Barbados Labour Party could not solve them in 14 years. I thank you for flattering us because to expect that is flattery, but we are realistic.

House A41, Sequence 29, 3.15 p.m.

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Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: We know that things take time, particularly in Government and we are working to put the building blocks of a proper housing policy in place. We have segmented the market. We know there are those who would be able to go to a bank and get a mortgage with the snap of the finger. We know there are those who will need a little assistance from Government and we are providing that with the various vehicles.

The Housing Loan Scheme has not shut down. People are still getting loans out of there. They are behaving as though that is closed. We know the people who will only be able to rent, so we are doing terraced units for them to rent and we know there is a category between there that can go from rent-to-own but you need to nurse them along the way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have devised this innovative attractive policy and it is hurting the guts of the Barbados Labour Party. It is hurting the Barbados Labour Party that somebody in this Government has used their brain and come up with a policy that they, the most brilliant people in the world apparently, could not have thought of in 14 years, so we are supposed to be harassed for it.

Sir, we have covered that in our housing policy. We have spoken about the 500 lots programme. The Honourable Minister has come into this Parliament repeatedly over the last 14 to 15 months acquiring land which has now been surveyed, sites and services are in, and we are ready to hand out the lots. They do not want people to get lots. It hurts them.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: They would want the speech to wind up, because it is hurting the Members of the Opposition because they are seeing action where there was inaction, decision where there was indecision, hearing where there was callousness and prudence where there was - I do not even know what word to call it. This is what we are doing and they come here to speak to the Minister of Transport and Works who does not have to declare himself the hardest working Minister in a Cabinet and then do not get hired. We put a stimulus package for roads in place.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: He does not have to say that he is the hardest working Minister. We show our credit and worth by action. The Honourable Minister has started more roads in one year that are currently being done, than the Barbados Labour Party started in the whole of the last term, roads in St. Philip, St. Lucy and St. Andrew. *Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You do not go to St. Andrew, drive through there sometimes. We are talking about getting people employed in construction, but the contradiction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that with this housing programme, will come construction and with construction will come jobs, so how could they say we are not producing jobs. We are not getting the construction sector going when we are trying to acquire land to build houses to give people work. The Honourable Member cannot come into contact with logic. If he sees logic on Broad Street, he would pass it and not recognise it at all.

The Honourable Member for St. George North is my friend. I like the Honourable Member, that is the truth. I think he is normally fair, but I was always taught by the late Sir James Tudor that if you get up and say in a speech that...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The former Honourable Member for St. Lucy identified you as a potential leader in the Barbados Labour Party and having done that, your star pitched and you have not recovered since then, but the former Honourable Member told me that any time you get up in a speech and begin by saying: "I did not intend to speak, then do not speak". I think that is what happened to the Honourable Member for St. George North. He did not intend to speak. He had nothing to say and brought forth absolute gobbledegook in the Parliament of Barbados.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is misleading this House. I never started my speech today by saying: "I did not intend to speak". I never said that, so he must withdraw those remarks since we are in the habit of withdrawing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I sat here today and I do not recall hearing the Honourable Member for St. George North saying that he did not intend to speak, so I want you to withdraw those remarks.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, my apology for misleading the House. I thought that he probably should have said that he did not intend to speak and then sit down, but for what it is worth, I withdraw the remarks.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes more.

Mr. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I want to say to this Honourable House, that given what we have had to deal with, given the financial mess of the last Government, given the global economic recession, and given all these factors, to have a Government that still sits every day of the week long hours to devise and have devised and implemented policies to the benefit of the people of Barbados, is instructive of what can happen when you apply yourself. There is theory and there is application.

The last Government for a small period of their office had application, by the end, they were all theory, fancy concepts, big policies and not one ounce of implementation worth its salt, and it has come on us and we are trying our best to bring along people.

Sir, we have had to make changes. I have had to grapple with some serious issues at both the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission. We are going to make changes, because changes are necessary to get the ship right. The Honourable Member spoke about the Urban Development Commission.

Sir, in six months, with our rapid response unit of 12 persons, we have been able to produce 75 housing solutions that are in various stages.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are now having a fantastic relationship with the Town Planning Department in which we can get drawings out of the Town Planning Department in the shortest possible time that are reasonable and responsible drawings to start people building. These solutions are in place and those would come to the Rural Development Commission too. Sir, we have had to make changes and we made those changes and we are satisfied that this Government is on course.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Honourable Minister, to press on with his programme. If he was not doing anything constructive, you would not hear from them. They would smile with him and tell him how nice he is and all of that,

and then they would say behind his back, Michael ain't doing anything don't bother him.

The fact that they are attacking him means that he is doing it right, so he should continue to do it and demonstrate to the people of Barbados that Government and governance, is not as difficult an exercise as the last Government made it to be. The Honourable Member has the full support of this Cabinet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the cacophony of noise which emanates from the Barbados Labour Party, not in here, because you have control of this debate, will not dissuade us from the path of righteousness.

House A41 Sequence 30

4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate the Honourable Minister and to say that when the Honourable Member has any opportunity to bring Resolutions such as these before this Honourable House, the Honourable Member can count on my fullest support for those Resolutions.

Sir, when the time is ripe, we will invite the Opposition to tour the housing developments that we built, but like the Constituency Councils, which they have yet to respond to me with their nominees to sit on those Councils, I have no confidence that they would turn up. Sir, I would want to say that by not turning up, by being absent on the job, will not dissuade this Democratic Labour Party from its mission and mandate on behalf of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me draw your attention to the Standing Orders. At page 41(3) it says:

“When a Member rises on a point of order, or on a

point of elucidation, and any statement then made by him is ruled not to be a point of order or a point of elucidation, it shall be in the discretion of the Officer then presiding to require such statement and any comment or statement thereon by any other Member to be expunged from the records of the House.”

Honourable Members, this is what the Standing Orders say and when I sit in this Chair, I am guided by the Standing Orders. I read this for the benefit of all

Honourable Members, today and thereafter, when I am to reside in this Chair.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of this Resolution. I would also like to compliment the Minister of Housing and Lands for his efforts in trying to house every last person in this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to do this by taking a look at the fact that when we look at the question of the involvement and the role of the private sector, as far as housing is concerned in Barbados, we recognise that as we try to house every last Barbadian, we must do so from the perspective that there must be a partnership between Government and the private sector.

Sir, that must be a role that is played that helps to ensure that the objectives that we set out within the Party are achieved in a manner that ensures that we do not, at the same time, compromise the ability of this country to look out for everyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, during the reply of some of the Opposition Members, they referred to the question of the 100 per cent mortgages. Sir, while the 100 per cent mortgage serves a purpose, I do not think a lot of people have recognised that. In truth and in fact, the 100 per cent mortgage only serves the society which the Democratic Labour Party in itself is trying to reach.

Sir, when you look at it, you are talking about a situation where you get a 100 mortgage. When you look at the associated fees connected with such mortgages, you would recognise that it is only persons of a certain income bracket, who were able to take advantage of that 100 mortgage. Therefore, to suggest that continuing the 100 mortgage puts a large percentage of the Barbadian population at a disadvantage, really does not run with the truth.

Sir, sometimes when you look at the fees that you have to pay Lawyers, sometimes \$10 000, you would find a situation where the ordinary person who is trying to acquire a home cannot afford those fees. Therefore, in that regard, I want to say that we should not confuse the issue of the 100 mortgage with what we are trying to do, in terms of trying to ensure that the ordinary Barbadian is able to at least, afford decent housing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also heard talk about the question of trying to ensure a property-earning democracy. Sir, one of the things we have noticed in Barbados is the fact that land values have continued to increase. Sir, under the last Government we saw the greatest acceleration we have seen in history. Sir, we are not responsible for this. In addition, if we are to take seriously the whole question of

providing housing to Barbadians, in a sense we are doing more by this provision we are implementing here, to try to ensure that ordinary Barbadians are able to afford homes.

When you compare that to the track record of the previous Administration, it is clear that they did not have a leg to stand on.

Sir, under their policy, let us look at what happened. Under their policies, land was pushed out of the reach of the ordinary Barbadian. Sir, under their policies, we saw large tracks of land instead of being used for the benefit of Barbadians, we saw them being sold to foreign persons. We also saw houses being constructed which were out of the reach of the ordinary Barbadian.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, as far as I know, the National Housing Corporation, whether under the Democratic Labour Party or the Barbados Labour Party regime, has never sold land to foreigners. It is the stated policy of the National Housing Corporation from its inception, not to sell land to foreigners and that land must be sold only to first-time homeowners. Sir, we have never sold land to foreign interests. Mr. Deputy Speaker, land has been sold at \$2, \$4 and \$5 a square foot.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for St. George North for that explanation, but the Honourable Member did not give the full picture. Sir, if we are to consider a housing policy purely from what Government is doing, and not take into consideration what the private sector is doing, we would be failing in our responsibility to give a full analysis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we are to give a full analysis, what we recognise is that very often what the private sector was doing, was actually compromising Government's housing policy. Sir, I am sure you would agree, because not every ordinary Barbadian can afford to pay \$500 000 for what we call a condominium, which is mainly a two-bedroom house.

We have to be realistic when we bring these packages to Barbadians. We have to try not to convince them that they are getting something good, when in truth and in fact they are not. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition, some of the best sites, some of the most desirable sites where people would like to live in Barbados, do not go to the ordinary Barbadian, they go to someone from overseas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I heard the Honourable Member trying to say is not true. There is nothing wrong in trying to give ordinary Barbadians the best. It should not be reserved just for persons coming from overseas. Therefore, Government cannot be blamed when we have a policy that

tries to ensure that the ordinary Barbadian is afforded the best.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are living in difficult times. I note there was some talk about the fact regarding where do we see ordinary people benefitting as a result of what Government is doing. Sir, we all recognise that we are living in difficult times. I know the Honourable Member for St. George North would be the first to admit, that the present conditions we see happening in Barbados cannot be blamed on this Government. Sir, the Honourable Member knows that, therefore, for the Honourable Member to give the impression to the Barbadian public that because of the fact, there are persons who might be unemployed, that is not totally our fault.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the Honourable Member should take into consideration the fact that at least he could give Government credit for the fact that it is now trying to come up with projects from which the ordinary Barbadian would be able to find employment. I think we must be given credit for the fact that despite the difficult conditions, we are still trying to ensure that we are able to sustain employment at certain levels and that we are not letting that level of employment drop.

4.10 p.m.

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: Sir, I also want to turn to something else in terms of the future directions in which we need to go. One of the things that I think is very important in our country today - and again, I emphasise - is that we need to have balanced development. We could have development that goes too far one way and then compromise it in the other way.

One of the things I would want the Ministry of Housing to look at is that, in future, when we develop residential areas, that we allow for those persons who live in residential areas to be able to carry on agricultural pursuits.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the most disgusting things in this country is that we have a situation, where there are persons who live in areas and they cannot carry on agricultural pursuits, or they feel intimidated from carrying on agriculture pursuits and, maybe, we need to have some compromise as far as that is concerned. Even in these difficult times, when it is becoming absolutely necessary for persons to engage in some form of agriculture, so that they would, at least, be able to supervise themselves in something and to engage in some form of backyard farming.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only that, there are some animals that persons could keep, even in residential areas, which would not compromise the environment in which they live. I really think that one of the things we need to do, as we seek to develop new residential areas, is to give allowance to the fact that we live in a tropical country.

We need to recognise that the standards we seem to want to adopt that the more developed countries adopt, such as the United States of America and Europe, that do not wholeheartedly apply in this country because, in truth and in fact, Barbados is only 166 square miles.

Sir, if we have residents in areas who might want to engage in agricultural pursuits, and once it does not compromise the environment, I can see nothing wrong with allowing it to happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a situation where in some residential areas, a person may want to keep a few black belly sheep, but there is a situation where he could be told that he cannot keep these few black belly sheep in the area. Sir, I think that is ridiculous in a country such as Barbados which is so small.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a person may want to keep a few fowls in the backyard or in the pen. Sir, not a few, but three fowls, four fowls or five fowls and you have a situation where he is intimidated by the fact that there is some covenant that prevents him from doing it.

Sir, we have a situation in the more developed countries, where you have persons turning to what we call urban agriculture, where because of the fact that persons within urban areas are recognising, that first of all, they want to be more assured of the food they are consuming, they are attempting now to grow more of their own food.

Sir, in a country like Barbados, which is 166 square miles, we have this artificial distinction between town and country, and sometimes there is no need to have these artificial distinctions, and we are telling people that they cannot engage in these activities even though, when they engage in these activities, they do not compromise the environment and in many ways, they could add to the environment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only that, but it could be a means of trying to ensure Barbadians that they could at least, consume safe food and food that they grow. We go back to the saying: "Grow what you eat and eat what you grow" and, Sir, these are the kinds of things that we could look at for the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am suggesting that instead of us trying to prolong the efforts of the Minister of Housing, these are the kinds of suggestions that we need to advance

for the future, that we could engage in and not try to suggest that the current situation in which we find ourselves in Barbados, is totally the responsibility of the Government, when we have the Minister of Housing trying his best to address the core problems.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to go back to the whole question of physical development. Sir, I know that we have made a commitment to deal with sustainable agriculture within this country. Sir, one of the things we have seen under the past Administration is that where we have had agricultural settlement, it has not been properly done. We have an opportunity to provide for those Barbadians who really want to engage in agriculture and, at the same time, who want to do it in a manner that at least, assures them that they could have land on which to do it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while I want to compliment the fact that we are giving land, at an affordable price, to persons who want to build a house on that land, there is the question of farming. Sir, we have a situation in this country today, that in order to buy one acre of agricultural land, the least you could pay for that is \$100 000.

Sir, again, this was caused as a direct result of the policies of the previous Government and the Barbados Labour Party Administration. Sir, they have to take the responsibility and stand up and say that they are responsible for that situation. I really think that we need to look and see how we would be able to provide farmers with land that they could own.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not understand that generally the price of the land goes into the cost of production of any agricultural products. Therefore, when we question ourselves why the cost of products produced in Barbados is so high, it is because of the fact that we have set in place trends that cause this kind of thing to happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to recognise that projects that afford land to Barbadians, who want to engage in agriculture, at a reasonable price, that we need to look at areas at which we could provide that land to them and maybe, impress this upon those large landowners, who may have large amounts of lands.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to look at the whole question of what we call rab land in this country. Sir, when you go to a country like Israel and you see the areas where agricultural produce is actually cultivated, you ask yourself if we really have any rab land in Barbados. Sir, the Israelis have perfected the technique of cultivating agricultural produce and engaging in agricultural production, in areas that we would regard as hostile or impossible in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that large land owners operate in a manner that suggests to me that they want to

follow the dictums of the previous Administration where land should go to the highest economic value, that we need to have the policy that encourages those large land owners to be able to provide land to those persons who want to engage in useful agricultural pursuits, and not do that in a manner that makes it impossible for those persons to make a reasonable return from the investment they have made. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are the kinds of things we need to look at, in total, in terms of our housing policy and, Sir, these are the things we need to address.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to encourage the Minister of Housing to press on in his efforts, as far as trying to ensure that we provide those persons in Barbados who need housing, with adequate housing. Sir, not only that, but we should not forget that we need balanced development as we move forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is one last point I want to make relating to our urban areas. We have a situation in our urban areas where there are certain environs, which for long have been neglected, where the owners live overseas and it is totally covered in bush. Sir, we need to move aggressively in trying to determine from those owners of the land, who live overseas, exactly what they want to do with that area, because in some cases these areas of land are relatively large. Sir, even in St. Michael West Central, we have some areas such as Stuart's Land on Fairfield Road, which is a large area, but the problem is that the owner lives overseas.

H/A41/4.20 p.m. Sequence 32

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: Sir, I am thinking that the Rural Development Commission could have in those areas, such as Stuart's Land and Marshall Parkinson Road - that address not only the need for housing, but the need for recreation.

We often forget when we deal with the whole question of housing development, the need to ensure that residents in the area enjoy a healthy environment. We need to cater to the children who live in the area, and the need for a place where they can exercise. Sir, these are the things that we need to address as part of our housing policy.

I want to encourage the Minister of Housing to continue to seek out aggressively, those areas in urban communities overgrown with bush, where in many cases, persons living overseas with no idea of what they want to do, are not really looking after their lots properly, but we have people in the area who may need somewhere to live.

Sir, I am referring to the environment, trying to ensure that communities have healthy environments. In St.

Michael West Central, we have two large properties, quarries, where people continually dump rubbish causing a lot of discomfort to residents, in Murray Road and Dear's Land. As a matter of fact, the spread of the African snails, was caused as a result of the presence of those quarries in that area.

Sir, housing developments generally, are the kinds of projects we need to look at in terms of managing our space, the whole question of derelict housing, whether we can encourage or give some incentives to owners of derelict properties, to repair and return those houses as rentals at reasonable rates. In this country there is no rental accommodation available.

Sir, we also have a situation which needs, not to be restated, where rooms are rented at \$150 or \$200 a week to accommodate a family, that is a mother, father and a child. These are the kinds of issues we need to start to deal with in this country. We should encourage the Minister of Housing to deal with these issues, so that ordinary Barbadians are afforded decent housing and to discontinue the situation, which happened under the previous Administration, where decent housing could only be guaranteed to those persons coming from overseas with all the money available, but at the same time, neglecting the housing standard for Barbadians.

Sir, I want to commend the Minister of Housing for his efforts and say to him, to move full pace ahead with the HELP programme. I am sure that Barbadians will recognise him for his efforts.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Sir, I do not intend to be very long in this debate. I must say that I have been very disappointed with the manner in which Honourable Members on That Side, the Government's Side, have conducted themselves in this debate so far. It was expected.

I have been in this Honourable House for some time and in debates of this nature, it is not normal for Resolutions of this nature to peter like this. While there has been criticism of the spokesman on This Side, who replied to the Minister of Housing, I would like to commend him for a very excellent presentation in which he did not curse anyone. I cannot say the same for Honourable Members on That Side. He did not attack anyone and he dealt specifically with the issue at hand.

I was somewhat disappointed with the contribution which was made by the Honourable Member for St.

Michael North West, in particular. I am serious. When I listen to him...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, as I presided here all day, I did not hear any Honourable Member in this Honourable Chamber curse any person. So will you please withdraw those remarks.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Sir, if you are asking me to withdraw those remarks, I withdraw them.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, let me repeat. I sat here today and I heard no one curse anybody. I am asking you to withdraw those unqualified remarks.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: What remarks are you asking me to withdraw?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The remarks that you said other Honourable Members on the Other Side cursed people.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I said that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph did not curse any one, but if that...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, I asked you to withdraw the remarks where you said that Honourable Members on the Other Side have cursed people in this Honourable House. Can you please withdraw those remarks now, please.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: You are asking me to withdraw remarks which I do not recall that I said, and if those remarks are what I said, I will withdraw those remarks.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, you are challenging the hearing of the Honourable Member of the Chair. I said that I sat here and heard you made those remarks, and I want them withdrawn without any comments at all.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I said that I withdraw those remarks.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are a senior Honourable Member in this Chamber and you must behave in that way.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I said that I withdraw those remarks.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member you can continue, and behave yourself in a proper manner.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not participating any further in this debate.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, please.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: My humble apologies, Sir. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to wrap up this debate after the shortest speech on record by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. We were looking forward to hearing his contribution, but I will move forward to wrap up this debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions to this debate today. As I said from the outset, when I open this debate, the parcel of land is basically the beginning of part of the programme we promised in our Manifesto, that is the provision of lots at \$5 a square foot for Barbadians. Sir, sentiments were echoed by Honourable Members from This Side that this policy is designed to assist particularly those in the working class and those who have an ambition to own a piece of this rock. Certainly, we must realise their ambitions, and that is why we have come to Parliament today to debate this Resolution and vest the two parcels of land in the National Housing Corporation.

H A41 4.30 p.m. Sequence 33

Sequence 33

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House A41, Sequence 34, 4.30 p.m.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, I sat and listened. I heard some very valuable contributions being made to this debate, particularly from This Side, and I want to commend those Honourable Members from This Side who participated in this debate and made their contributions, particularly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at the Opposition's performance. The Honourable Member for St. James North gave a full and frank confession of the failure of the Barbados Labour Party's Administration.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North, please speak into the microphone.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Thank you.

The Honourable Member for St. James North said that the programme of the then Administration was carried in a cart, a mule cart, with some very weak horsepower, Sir, and to use those words, to me that was very apt, in terms of the description of the performance of the Barbados

Labour Party's housing programme. Again, he said it was a mule-driven cart and it moved slowly.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North spoke. I recognised the hurt in his voice. Sir, as a senior Member of the Cabinet at the time, and as a senior Member now of the Opposition, the hurt in his voice echoed that here was a man who could have made a contribution to his constituents, and who should have gotten something done for his constituents in terms of housing and the provision of house lots. This particular Honourable Member's hurt echoed in this Chamber this morning, when he said that he was completely ignored by his colleagues.

Of course, knowing the Honourable Member and knowing his ability, not only as an attorney-at-Law, but also as a politician, I know that he would have made strong representation in Cabinet and outside of Cabinet on behalf of those people. Therefore, if you could treat your own like that, you could imagine how others were treated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to assure the Honourable Member for St. James North that very soon I will meet with him, along with the officials at the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and the National Housing Corporation to see how we can solve the particular situation that he mentioned in this House today.

Sir, I could not believe that such a matter existed for so long. It is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he did not contact the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the National Housing Corporation under my watch but, Sir, he contacted the other agencies. Of course, the Minister of Housing at that time would have been seized of the facts of that particular situation and so should have acted accordingly.

Sir, this Administration being committed to solving the problems in all constituencies throughout Barbados and those situations that need urgent attention, we will assist the Honourable Member for St. James North. Sir, we do not believe that politics should play a part when it comes to the provision of housing and house lots in Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph came out and supported the vesting and then in another breath, he started to question the cost and many other things, which I will not go into. This is the first time that the Ministry of Housing and Lands has identified lands in St. Joseph. This is land that was not identified by the Barbados Labour Party, but identified by the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, we are giving these immediate lots to his constituents to assist the people in St. Joseph, and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is questioning this policy. It was a very heartless submission, like a man without a social conscience.

Sir, we are assisting poor people in Barbados, because the Government has the sole responsibility to assist the poor working class.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph got up and turned his back on them, by posing those questions. Sir, what a heartless response, what a merciless response.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not assisting people who walk down with big Hitachi cases and suspenders and cigars. These are poor ordinary people. The poor people of Barbados must benefit from the housing programme of the Democratic Labour Party. I do not understand.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph is on record, and was the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, and never made a request for these poor people to get this land in Branchbury. Sir, his good friend was the Minister of Housing at the time. Therefore, he had access to the Minister of Housing and he had access to the National Housing Corporation.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, if we want to talk about neglect, that is gross neglect.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph presided over what happened at the Warrens Building.

House A41, Sequence 34, 6.40 p.m.

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Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and must be asked to withdraw those remarks.

At the time when I Chaired the National Housing Corporation, there was no matter of the Warrens Building. The Warrens Building came after my Chairmanship, so it is not possible for me to have presided over anything at all at Warrens.

At no time at all while chairing the National Housing Corporation was the matter of the Warrens building or any property at Warrens before any Board that I chaired. That

remark is misleading the House and I ask that the Honourable Member withdraw those comments.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was conceptualised by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am not aware that the Honourable Member has the capacity to go into my brain and say what was or was not conceptualised. I have said to this Chamber that during the time when I chaired the National Housing Corporation...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me say again that when an Honourable Member is speaking, I want absolute silence, so that I can hear, so that my ruling would be fair and just, okay? The Honourable Member for St. Joseph please continue.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: I continue, Sir, by saying that during the time when I chaired the National Housing Corporation from 1994-1997 the matter or any matter of Warrens or any building at Warrens was not addressed by the National Housing Corporation. If the Honourable Member wishes to posit otherwise, he must bring the evidence that he has. If he is not prepared to do so or is not able to do so, he must withdraw his comment.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand why the Honourable Member for St. Joseph wants to distance himself from the building at Warrens.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take it that there is no ruling on my point of order. I did not hear you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I see no point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North, please continue. Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know full well that there is a principle called common design. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would go no further than that. I am just saying that you as an attorney-at-Law knows the principle of common design. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that principle was set out in a case called Davey, but I would not go any further. I will leave that matter to another debate. I will just go on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph should apologise to the people of St. Joseph, because if after 14 years, he could now get up in this House

in a very happy tone. Sir, I visited the area with the Honourable Member for Joseph as Minister with responsibility for housing. Sir, he was in power for 14 years. What happened that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph could not have gotten a problem solved in those 14 years or during the period 2007 to 2008?

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph had ample time to do it, and now he is up and down saying he wants this done, he wants to see this done, and this thing was in contemplation. It was the most reckless act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph that, we as an Administration, will press on with whatever housing lots we have in St. Joseph and we will assist the people in St. Joseph, because we know that they were not assisted for 14 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. George North for supporting the Resolution. The Honourable Member for St. George North said that this acquisition process is a necessity in terms of the provision of housing in Barbados. The Honourable Member said that the success of this Resolution depends on whether employment would be provided, particularly for the hardware stores and a whole set of other things that he mentioned. The Honourable Member for St. George North said that records are here to stay. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if it was not so late in the evening, I would spend some time on the record of the Honourable Member for St. George North and the Barbados Labour Party. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know back in your time we had records, LPs, and 45s.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to the infilling programme, we have started the infilling programme at Sayes Court in Christ Church. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East could attest that the infilling programme has started there. We also want to start the infilling programme within the other housing estates. The Honourable Member for St. George North did some infilling. That infilling programme is not costly to Government, because the land is already owned by the Government and once we get Town Planning permission we will move ahead. Sir, you could even utilise the National Housing Corporation workers to build those units.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have toured all of the housing estates with the Town Planner to get a feel as to what areas we can move ahead with, and he has given us some conditional acceptance in terms of the areas that we have to look at.

Sir, there was another matter that was raised by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. I want to state to this Honourable House that when we went and visited those sites, officials from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Land and Surveys Department, the Town and Country

Planning Development Office, the Land Tax Department and the Barbados Agricultural Development and Management Corporation went along with us to identify the areas. When we visited those sites, the Chief Town Planner would ask us to submit the application and then he would give his views on those sites, or the acceptance after a matter of weeks or months. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we toured those sites. On one occasion the Honourable Prime Minister went along with us on the visit to see the areas that we are looking at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to state to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that institutional strengthening has started at the National Housing Corporation as part of the Inter-American Development Bank's programme.

The Honourable Member for St. George North spoke to the fact that...

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. I want to raise this matter having reflected on it briefly. I believe it is a convention of this Parliament that we do not make any statements that can be considered to be condemnatory of public servants. Perhaps the Honourable Member who has just spoken might wish to consider that he has spoken in error. Certainly, to suggest that the Chief Town Planner, a senior public officer, would go on a site and would, base on the course of those discussions, and even without an application coming to him, make a decision on a planning issue, is clearly a statement which the Minister ought not to make about a public department where there are certain rules and expectations, the Town Planning rules on applications that are made to him in a particular form.

House A41 Sequence 35

4.50 p.m.

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Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is suggesting that the Chief Town Planner would have ruled on the spot.

Sir, I think that is a statement which should be withdrawn as being entirely negative and reflecting very poorly on the functioning of the Town Planning Department, when all the rest of Barbados put in their applications and wait, and people do not even know if they are going to get permission, but that is governance "à la Chris Sinckler."

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: On a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I see no point of order. I heard the Honourable Member for

St. Philip North saying that the Chief Town Planner would give certain instructions, they would put in the application, which would then follow a normal course of action. It would then be approved.

Please continue, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not understand the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. In fact, I would not even respond to him.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me move on.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I cannot raise my voice at you? Who do you think you are?

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please withdraw that statement.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I withdraw the statement.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me draw all Honourable Members' attention to the Standing Orders. Section 33(6) of the Standing Orders speak to the behaviour of Members not speaking. It says:

"A Member whilst present in the House during a debate -

"must maintain silence except when called to speak by the Chair.""

Honourable Members, let us operate as per Standing Orders. Please continue, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would have also had discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in relation to certain parts of non-arable plantation land. In fact, we have met with officials from that Ministry and we hope that we could have some ongoing discussions, in terms of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development transferring some of those non-arable lands into the National Housing

Corporation, to provide a number of housing solutions. Sir, for example, at Sedgepond, St. Andrew, River, St. Philip, there are some areas that obviously the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development would have to meet with us, so that we could use that land for further provision of housing lots.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James South also mentioned the fact that we have to provide housing developments, in terms of the middle income bracket. Sir, officials from both the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the National Housing Corporation have toured with the Minister of Health and I. I believe they have assured the Honourable Member that areas identified would be earmarked for housing development for that category of persons.

In relation to Coverley Phase 2, I am respectfully submitting, that also, would be a mixed development, as we would try to cater to the low income and some of the middle income persons in that development. Further, we are looking at the area of St. Michael. We have to look seriously at acquiring some available land in the St. Michael area, to provide both rental units and high-rise units to that category of persons who cannot service a mortgage, but who would be able either to pay rent or to enter into the Rent-to-Own Programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my other concern - and this is something that we might have to deal with in the future - is the fact that I have witnessed, even in my practice and outside of practice, that when prospective homeowners go to a financial institution, that prospective homeowner has to absorb the legal fees of that financial institution. Sir, this places an unnecessary burden on the prospective homeowner or landowner. Sir, from my research, I understand that such a practice is not practised in other Commonwealth jurisdictions. Sir, we may have to look at the issue of commitment fees, because they obviously, in some instances, act negatively towards the prospective homeowner or landowner.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question has been asked many times, why is it that in purchasing land, persons have to go through a bank, when they have their own attorney? Why do they have to pay the bank's attorney's fees? Sir, from my research, I know it is not practised in other Commonwealth jurisdictions. Again, this places unnecessary financial burden on the client.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is that we have just started this \$5-lots programme and very soon, we want to have this programme launched in terms of getting the conveyances out.

In my opening remarks today, I also said that we have acquired land at Clifden, St. Philip and Guinea, St.

John, and that we hope that Resolution could come to Parliament as soon as possible, hopefully next week. Sir, all things being equal, we hope that we could get that before this Honourable House next week, so that we can debate it further. We want to have this programme officially launched very soon because we understand the importance of placing land into people's hands and assisting them in the social upliftment of this country. We understand the importance of providing them with some hope that they, the poor working class of this country, could now own land at \$5.00 per square foot.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now adjourned until Tuesday, July 21, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House be now adjourned until Tuesday, July 21, 2009, at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

5.00 p.m.

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CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
DUGUID, Dr. W. F. (Christ Church West)
EASTMOND, Mr. R. C. (St. James North)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
INNISS, Hon. D. O'N. (St. James South)
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KELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
PAYNE, Mr. G. W. (St. Andrew)
SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
THOMPSON, Hon. D. J. H. (St. John)
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. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Ministerial Statement, St. Joseph Hospital. The Minister gives the Commission of Inquiry's expenditure at 31st August, 2008 as '\$3 513 726.78', and later says that 'by 2009, the actual expenditure was \$3 524 226.78, or a 100 per cent increase' on the \$1 647 200 approved. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Order No. 4. After Hon. R. D. Jones seconds the second reading, the record notes 'The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division', and the same question is recorded again after Mr. Jones's speech and the Prime Minister's reply. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 4. The Bill is introduced at first reading as the 'Arts and Sport Promotion Fund Regulations, 2006 (Validation) Bill, 2009' and headed 'THE ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION FUND REGULATIONS, 2006 (VALIDATION) BILL, 2009'; on third reading it is cited as a 'Bill' rather than an Act. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 3, Mr. G. W. Payne. During Mr. Payne's points of order the Deputy Speaker twice addresses 'the Honourable Member for St. Joseph', although Mr. Payne is elsewhere the Member for St. Andrew. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 3, Minister's reply. Part of the Minister's reply ('Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know full well that there is a principle called common design...') is run into the Deputy Speaker's ruling under the Deputy Speaker's label. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 3, closing. The Minister's reply is seconded by Hon. F. J. Stuart addressing 'Mr. Speaker', although the Deputy Speaker presided throughout. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.10 a.m. on Tuesday, 14th July, 2009, with the Deputy Speaker, His Honour K. St.C. Best, presiding throughout; prayers were

taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood. The Minutes of Tuesday, 30th June, 2009 were confirmed. Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, Minister of Health, laid the Report of the St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry, and the Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, moved the first reading of the Arts and Sport Promotion Fund Regulations, 2006 (Validation) Bill, 2009.

In a Ministerial Statement, Mr. Inniss explained that the St. Joseph Hospital at Ashton Hall, St. Peter, bought by Government in 1986 for about BDS\$6.1 million, had closed on 31st March, 1995, and that the Commission of Inquiry appointed in 1997 had reported in 2005. It found among other things that the Ministry of Health had paid about \$2.9 million to the main contractor without a formal contract, and it recommended training for public officers and a code of ethics for holders of public office. Against \$1 647 200 approved by Cabinet in 1998, the Commission had cost over \$3.5 million; no one had been found guilty of wrongdoing, and a structural assessment of the buildings had begun.

After Standing Orders were suspended, the Prime Minister moved the second reading of the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund Regulations, 2006 (Validation) Bill, 2009, to validate payments made to the National Sports Council on 5th December, 2007 and 27th November, 2008 before the amended procedure had come into force, and asked that his remarks apply also to Order No. 2, the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund (Amendment) Regulations, 2009. Hon. R. D. Jones, Member for Christ Church East Central, spoke on the 83 sports played in Barbados and the state of West Indies cricket after the defeat by Bangladesh. With Mr. J. D. Paul appointed temporary Chairman of Committees, clauses 1 and 2 were passed, the Bill was read a third time and passed, and the Order No. 2 Resolution was agreed to.

Hon. M. A. Lashley, Member for St. Philip North and Minister of Housing and Lands, moved Order No. 3, the Resolution to vest in the National Housing Corporation Crown lands at Branchbury, St. Joseph and Woodbourne, St. Philip for residential purposes. He described the HELP Programme's lots in existing villages at \$5 a square foot, about 10 or 15 lots at Blackmans, St. Joseph, 21 lots at Forty Acres, St. Thomas, and other sites, and noted that houses at Marchfield and Six Roads had been occupied for years without the land being vested.

Mr. D. D. Marshall, Member for St. Joseph, welcomed the lots in his constituency but questioned their cost; His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman, whose remarks drew repeated points of order from Dr. W. F. Duguid, said St. Lucy could supply over 3 000 house lots; Mr. R. C. Eastmond and Hon. D. O'N. Inniss followed. After the

suspension, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce was ordered to withdraw remarks about Mr. G. W. Payne, which were expunged. Mr. G. A. Clarke supported the Resolution but said conveyancing took too long and drew points of order from Mr. A. D. Brathwaite; Miss C. Y. Forde spoke on landlocked residents at White Hall Tenantry and on Rockhampton Road; and Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Hon. C. P. Sinckler and Mr. J. D. Paul supported the measure. Mr. Payne, asked by the Deputy Speaker to withdraw a remark that Members had cursed people, withdrew it and declined to continue his speech.

In reply, the Minister criticised Mr. Marshall's questions on cost, prompting points of order from him on Warrens and the Chief Town Planner, and withdrew a remark when directed by the Chair. He spoke of talks on non-arable plantation land, mixed development at Coverley Phase 2 and the cost to purchasers of banks' attorneys' fees, and said Resolutions for land at Clifden, St. Philip and Guinea, St. John would follow. The Resolution was agreed to, and on the motion of Hon. R. D. Jones the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 21st July, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.