
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES (Recommitted)

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

1. Resolution to rescind the allocation under Account Codes 206, 207 and 212 in Subprogram 7085 under Head 57 - Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport, appearing in Resolution 37 of 2008, approved by this Honourable House on December 22, 2008.
2. Resolution to approve the allocation under Account Codes 206, 207 and 212 to place the said codes under Subprogram 7065, under Head 57 - Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport, appearing in Resolution 37 of 2008, approved by this Honourable House on December 22, 2008 and to make the consequential amendments thereto.
3. Resolution to rescind designation Head 43 - Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the grant of \$126 000 thereunder as appearing in the Resolution No. 21 of 2008, passed by this Honourable House on November 4, 2008 and substituting therefor Head 54 - Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.

9:30

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it shall now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Committee is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, when I was speaking yesterday I believe we had a little problem on the Government's Side.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I am glad that the break overnight has smoothed out the situation again.

It would be remiss, given the circumstances in which we broke, for me not to compliment the quick action of the Officers of Parliament, TMR and, indeed, the Fire Service and to reflect on that in a way.

Sir, I was speaking at the time we broke of the need to bring the new legislation covering the titling of land, foreclosure suits as we would refer to them in Law, in order to assist those Barbadians who have had land passed to them, seed to seed, to be able to get title to the land so that they can raise money, and use that land in a more effective and efficient way to assist their own family circumstances.

In addition to that, I think it is also critical that the Minister of Housing report to us on his status of the titling of land and the need to be able to get the registration system back on stream. We would have had a suspension of that registration and I think the truth is, the transactional cost of land in Barbados, driven largely as a result of the absence of an effective island-wide registration system.

It is important, because in these Estimates here, there is an amount for the Land Registry which has responsibility for that. I certainly would want to hear of the Minister of Housing's proposals for us to reach that goal of registration across the entire system.

I also noted in these Estimates a matter that concerns me. Apart from the subsidies which, as I indicated earlier, in my view, are too small given the fact that we have foreign financing from the Inter American Development Bank in the Housing and Neighbourhood Upgrade Loan, there is also a reduction in the amount being given to individuals under the Tenancies Relocation and Redevelopment Programme. This is to help tenants who have, due to no fault of their own, had to be relocated and this sum had been cut from \$5.1 million to \$800 000.

Sir, as I said yesterday, we can only view these Estimates against the current economic conditions. It is against that context we feel that those who are least capable of assisting themselves should be the prime beneficiaries in these Estimates.

I have already spoken to the fact that I do not believe the Minister has an aggressive programme to house poor people, because none of the people who are really poor in this country can access mortgages at the level at which the houses are being sold, \$140 000 and up. I think there has to be a dedicated effort in order to target this group of persons who, invariably, are the ones most vulnerable and have the least options in relation to choices.

Many others on This Side have already spoken to some issues pertaining to the National Housing Corporation and I would want to speak to one or two.

Sir, when the developments at Piedmont Park and Friendship, what is known commonly as “behind Bim”, were completed in the early 1970s, persons were given the opportunity to buy their houses. Even though it was a National Housing Corporation development, one of the things that was not put in place was an appropriate framework for the maintenance of wells and drainage. It has fallen over the years between the Ministry of Public Works and the National Housing Corporation.

I do not believe that you can continue with that kind of ambiguity. I myself would have expressed my own views over the years. It has not been resolved to my satisfaction. It is not a ministerial issue. It is an issue in relation to the bureaucrat and the officers down the line, both in terms of the Drainage Unit, the general Ministry of Public Works and the National Housing Corporation.

I really feel that all of these developments are going to come more to the fore now that conveyances are being given in traditional housing estates. The truth is, wherever the Ministry does a housing development and there are common facilities such as wells, et cetera, there has to be some kind of protocol of how these things are to be maintained over the years.

Sir, if it is that the National Housing Corporation is going to give the Ministry of Public Works that responsibility, then the Ministry of Public Works needs to know and clearly so accept it. The residents of Piedmont Park and Friendship continue to be bedeviled by the ambiguity surrounding these things.

In relation to the units themselves, our position is very clear on This Side and we have stated it. We do not believe that it is fair that it is morally right for you to offer to a class of persons, namely all persons who lived in units for 20 years or more up until April 16, and then say to those who had paid deposits, but to whom no conveyances were ever given, that they cannot get back their deposits. We do not think it is morally right, Sir. We believe that the Ministry has a moral obligation and the Minister has a duty to see how they can make things right with these persons. People have been penalised for being assiduous in their desire to own property.

Now if the conveyance had been completed to them, then they would have no case, but in most instances there were no completed conveyances. It was just simply a question of persons paying in money then to hear, and I have gone back carefully and I have researched the Minister’s words when he announced the programme - I have researched the words of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West when he spoke to the programme, and at no stage did the Minister say two things: (1) that anybody who paid down money will not get back their deposits and (2) at no stage did the Minister either indicate that it was a 100-day offer. We thought, like the rest of Barbados, that the offer was opened to who got 20 years.

Sir, I am sure that when you go through Gall Hill and Silver Hill you will be assaulted verbally, and let us hope that it is only verbally, by persons who would have accrued their 20 years in July 2008, October 2008 and in January 2009. As I keep reminding the Minister, he has a whole housing area in Church Village where the people will only get their 20 years in 2011, on the eve of an election. Sir, it is not fair for those persons not to benefit in the same way that those benefitted purely because of an election gimmick have benefitted. That is a separate point but, at the very least, I believe that the first point needs to be resolved, and that is to give back the people who paid their deposit. It is morally wrong not to do so.

Sir, I go further. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph, yesterday, spoke at length about the need to correct the legal situation. The Housing Act is very clear in terms of the powers that it gives the National Housing Corporation to deal with land and how to dispose of the land.

9.40 a.m.

Equally, the Guarantee of Title only exists where there has been a sale and, if therefore, the persons who are now being given these units are to be afforded all of the guarantees that would otherwise have been given to them, had they bought them, the Government needs to bring an urgent amendment to the legislation ensuring that people do not receive less than proper title.

By that I mean, Sir, if for example one of our constituents who benefitted wants to go and sell, and for some reason there is some problem with the title, they cannot then give the person whom they want to sell to good title. This means that they are either not going to be able to sell the land or, indeed, Sir, they are not going to get the price for the land that they would have wanted. It requires a simple amendment. I can understand that the Government might be a little embarrassed about it, because they went off trying to rush through the gates like if they were doing the greatest thing.

The reality is, Sir, that it is all right to do a good thing, but it has to be done properly. It is often said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. I know, Sir, that the Minister is not like other Ministers because he is a lawyer. Therefore, he would appreciate the finer points and will have a higher duty placed on him to ensure that he acts appropriately in making sure that the beneficiaries of these units receive proper title. The Opposition will support any such amendment because other than that, the persons receiving the title are receiving less than proper title.

I also want, Sir, to speak to the fact of how best we are going to treat to the modernisation of the financing of houses and properties in this country. We have been talking too long about the other options in terms of reverse mortgages and transfer mortgages. I feel strongly, Sir, that there is a need to see how best we can assist people, particularly in these difficult economic times, but it requires the development of the appropriate instruments and the appropriate legislative and the regulatory framework.

One of the things that can be done, very often in difficult economic times - because you have the staff, even if you are going to have cuts in your actual programmes - is the research to be able to develop new products and new legislation to ensure that Barbadians can now, at the personal level, have options. A good example would be options for retirees that may allow them to unlock some of the equity in their homes, to make the evening of their days a little more comfortable than it might otherwise be but, equally, what it does is to create a secondary market, which allows for some level of trading.

Sir, the problem in the United States of America is that those markets were allowed to operate without any form of regulation. I have no such fear in Barbados

because, for the most part, we understand the need for conduct to be regulated, particularly, when you look at what are the three basic reasons that you regulate.

Sir, you regulate to avoid systemic contagion, problems across the entire system. Sir, you regulate to protect consumers, the individual person who otherwise may not have any kind of protection when they are dealing with a formal financial system, and you regulate, Sir, to avoid criminal activity.

Sir, once we understand that, we understand that it is not necessarily a bad thing for you to introduce new products that will ease some persons, who already have houses, but who need to unlock equity particularly because they do not have the working capacity to earn in the evening in their years, as they would otherwise have, when this is taken against, Sir, the background of the continued escalation in prices.

Last year, as I said, inflation was at 8 per cent, as opposed to 4 per cent the year before, and food, in particular increased by 16 per cent. Therefore, if you have an individual who is locked into a pension - and it is not only the ones with pensions from Barbados but as you would know, Sir, there are numbers of Barbadians who have come back from the United Kingdom and who, in particular, are facing hard times because of the value of the Pound Sterling falling as, against the US Dollar.

Whereas those persons up until a year ago were getting as much as nearly BDS\$4 for one Pound Sterling, those persons today in Barbados, on the same pension are drawing \$2.80, \$2.90. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East, and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter should know, because there is a high concentration of returning nationals in those constituencies.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir.

They have effectively had a 25 per cent reduction in their earnings through their pensions. They invariably own their houses and they are therefore the ones who, in my view in Barbados, would be one of the prime beneficiaries for reverse mortgages, in order to be able to assist them, so that they are not reduced either into a state of penury, or that they do not have to sell their houses, in order to be able to keep body and soul together.

I do not think it is an unreasonable request. As I said, my own experience, being in the Other Place in the early 1990s, is that when you have situations like this, you still have staff. Therefore, your staff can be deployed to do research into these areas, so that the Government is in a

position to bring a framework by the end of the year that will allow persons to benefit from such a system, in terms of the reverse mortgages.

These are just a few comments at this stage, Sir, and I thank you for the opportunity to complete them this morning.

Asides.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a contribution on Head 38, and in the first period of my submission, to look to appreciate two elements of the debate. The first element relates to what is the Government's position when it comes to housing in Barbados, Sir, and secondly, to look at what has been the position taken by the Opposition.

Mr. Chairman, the Government's position with respect to the performance of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, Sir, has been that within 14 months of being the Minister of Housing, the Member has performed admirably. He has a record that has been spoken to and that I will also speak to a little later.

What is the position with the Opposition? Mr. Chairman, the position of the Opposition is that the Member is a failure. Therefore, we have two juxtaposing positions and evidence has to be brought one way or the other to determine who is right, and to determine who is wrong.

Mr. Chairman, let me first make it quite clear that perusing the data, I would be the first to admit that because this Administration has always seen housing as a responsibility of Government, it has always seen housing as a public good, we have always taken to the position, Sir, that we have to subsidise some elements of housing in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, when one now looks at the history of housing, the numbers of applications that would have gone to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, in particular, the National Housing Corporation since 1965, we have had a total of about 56 000 applications, ranging from between April 1956 to January 31, 2009, but we have only, Sir, been able to satisfy 11 246, which suggests that we have had a 19.8 per cent success rate. Therefore, it is quite clear that there are mitigating reasons why this is the case.

Sir, what we can say openly is that there is also evidence that sets the Democratic Labour Party apart from the Barbados Labour Party, and that has to do with the

allocation of monies available to the National Housing Corporation over the years. What is the evidence again?

9.50 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, in 2002/2003, the Barbados Labour Party allocated \$3 585 000 to the National Housing Corporation. In fact, up to 2008, the allocation was \$8 624 000. Sir, interestingly enough, for that financial year they had a supplementary provision of approximately \$38 million to deal with the relocation of persons from Emmerton as well as to bring to account a National Housing Corporation loan of \$33 million. Mr. Chairman, between 2002 and 2008, the average amount of money allocated to the National Housing Corporation to deal with the type of housing situation that we have been speaking to was \$5 million.

Mr. Chairman, the Democratic Labour Party in its first year, 2008-2009, allocated \$19 million to the National Housing Corporation, in the context of a world crisis. We recognise the difficulties that we have with respect to our expenditure and creating controls with respect to our fiscal deficit problem. Mr. Chairman, even though the elders on That Side have argued that there was a cut, we are still providing \$15 686 000 to the National Housing Corporation which is, at least, twice what the Honourable Members on That Side have projected.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Mr. Chairman, the previous Administration in 1999 floated a bond under Settlement 2000 for \$50 million which was given to the National Housing Corporation and the present Government is still paying the interest on those loans. To suggest that the Government only gave an average of \$5 million per year...

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Settlement 2000 had nothing to do with the Warrens Complex. The Minister should explain that because he has the files. Settlement 2000 was supposed to do lots and terraced units as well as to help the General Workers' Loan Fund, so it is not true.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, that intervention is an indictment on the Other Side. Sir, to go and create a loan of \$50 million on the back of an institution that has already been mired in debt where its revenue could not at all carry its ongoing recurring expenditure, is an indictment on the Other Side, because that has led to a position where this Administration has to look for the interest payments within this financial year to deal with that.

Mr. Chairman, that has not changed my original position that we have given the National Housing Corporation on average three to four times what that Administration has given to the National Housing Corporation or its recurrent operations over the last five to six years. That is the critical point here, Mr. Chairman.

Sir, I need to go back and explain two things. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North has two working committees, an infrastructural committee and a social policy committee, both of which he is a part. Mr. Chairman, these are two Cabinet committees that assist in helping to craft out our housing policy within the context of an overall social and economic policy. That is the fundamental difference between how we approach housing, because we see it as a social good, so it must fit into how we perceive our social responsibility...

Sir, that is the reason why the Prime Minister in his wisdom would have reorganised Cabinet so that we can now have an infrastructural committee as well as a social policy committee of which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is a part.

Sir, let me proceed and give the evidence. I will use the period 1994 to 2008. In 1994, we had a Minister of Housing and Lands that was not only short in stature, but short in performance. Mr. Speaker, between 1994 and 1998, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew built 127 houses, an average of 32 houses a year. Mr. Chairman, do you imagine that?

Mr. Chairman, we then had the cantankerous one, the former Honourable Member for St. James South, who between 2003 and 2006 carried about 7 000 Barbadians down to the National Housing Corporation in the hot sun to see a model house and made Barbadians sign up for houses right, left and centre.

Mr. Chairman, I remember seeing this new ad in the newspaper, the Honourable Member comes good with two big teeth smiling and how this person has performed, she has proven everybody wrong, and all that time the Honourable Member built 31 houses. What record are they telling me about?

Mr. Chairman, let me proceed further. Mr. Chairman, you had another one from 1998 to 2003. He was a little better than the others, but he was not very good either because between 1998 and 2003, which is five years, he built 69 houses per year. What record are they telling me about in this Honourable Chamber?

Mr. Chairman, within eight months the Honourable Member has produced 77 houses, the people will get the keys, and 247 are under construction. What record are you telling me about, Mr. Chairman? What are they saying?

Mr. Chairman, we would have to call ourselves the protagonists to deal with errant antagonists. Mr. Chairman, they claimed that between 2002 to 2007, they had 916 housing solutions. Sir, I do not know what is a housing solution. Sir, if you are talking about solution that fixes tyres, that is the only solution I know. As far as I am concerned, Barbadians either want a house spot or a house. I do not know about any housing solutions. That cannot be defined.

Mr. Chairman, they had 916 housing solutions, so let us disaggregate this. Out of those 916 housing solutions, they built 102 homes and provided 814 lots in five years. Sir, let us do the mathematics. If you break the 102 homes and divide it by five years, that will give you 20 houses a year and when you break the 814 lots over the same five-year period, that is 163 house spots they provided in Barbados.

Sir, this is why at this particular point in time, we find ourselves with a situation where 60 per cent of Barbadians cannot access what is considered as low income housing in Barbados. One has to evaluate the difference in income between those persons in the lower income bracket in the public sector versus those persons in the private sector.

10.00 a.m.

What we must understand, Mr. Chairman, is that the low income bracket in the public sector, the average person works for \$475 a week but, in the private sector persons work for between \$120 and \$150 weekly. There are several individuals who take home less than \$200 on average weekly. How could they qualify for a mortgage? Therefore, we cannot lump the low income category. We have to understand that the problem is more so with the private sector as opposed to the public sector.

What is even more important - that is why I have to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Philip North - is that when the Honourable Member moved to the Rent-to-Own Programme, it allowed those individuals in the private sector a better opportunity to own a piece of land and a house in Barbados.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, within the two minutes I will make two comments, then I will reserve my right to return. Sir, this is a position about which I feel very strongly because I have a number of tenancies in my Constituency. Sir, I would want to say to my comrade, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, that we have to find a way to ensure that when plantation tenancies are sold to the private interest, those individuals

who have a right to ownership, which is not in anyway negated, undermined nor extinguished when that tenantry is sold, within a prescribed time frame, those individuals should be sold those lots they have been renting over the years, as is their right under the 1980 Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. It would mean that we would have to stop the sale, correct the problem first before we could sell, or that we would have to put in place measures that would ensure that private sector owners move with greater speed to ensure that those persons get access to those lots to purchase.

I am saying that my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, is aware of this situation and I would only want to implore that he would try to see how he could rectify that situation, as I have constituents at Hannays Valley, Phase 1 and Phase 2, who are suffering under this situation, as well as constituents in Chapel and Carrington, St. Philip.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Before you commence, I want to take this opportunity to welcome to the House the students in the Gallery. It is always good to have you all here. I want also to compliment the teacher for bringing you all here to witness the conduct of the people's business.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I want to join my colleagues on This Side of this Honourable House in congratulating the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Minister of Housing and Lands, for the mighty contribution which he has made in the short space of 14 months to the housing problems faced by low income Barbadians. His has been an aggressive assault on the problem of low income housing and, based on the trend already set by this Minister, it could confidently be expected that over the next few years, Barbadians would see some alleviation of the distress which they had been suffering and to which my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, just pointed out with such clarity and precision.

Mr. Chairman, it can, therefore, be understood why Honourable Members on the Other Side of this Honourable House would look to see how best they could cast doubt on the achievements of the Minister of Housing and Lands, how best they could derail the programme on which he is set. Mr. Chairman, yesterday I listened with interest to the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North and was flabbergasted at certain comments the Honourable Member made in that speech.

Sir, what distinguishes this Government from the Opposition on the issue of the transfer of units in Government housing estates is that this Government believes that if you are going to buy a unit in a Government housing estate, you should pay for it once. Honourable Members on the Other Side, by their policy, obviously believe it should be paid for twice, that is why the Honourable Member for St. Michael North yesterday was pointing to the fact that there are deposits lying in the National Housing Corporation, which should now be returned to those depositors. He pointed to a constituent of his who has a deposit of \$6 000 lying in the National Housing Corporation, which he is seeking to recover. Mr. Chairman, you could only pay a deposit of

\$6 000 on the purchase of a property, if that property is being sold for \$60 000 because \$6 000 is 10 per cent of \$60 000.

Mr. Chairman, only this morning before leaving home, I was careful to check with a client of mine who lives in Bonnetts, who bought his unit before we came to power. Sir, that client said he paid \$65 000 for his unit, and this is having lived in that unit for more than 20 years. Therefore, for all practical purposes, according to the Honourable Members on the Other Side, he should pay for that house twice. This Government and this Minister believes that you should buy the house only once, and that you buy it once by having all the rent you have paid over the last 20 years totalled up and that rental figure be used as the consideration to be put in the conveyance for the purchase of the property.

Mr. Chairman, I sat in here yesterday and saw the Honourable Member for St. Joseph taking up the Housing Act and reading the Functions of the National Housing Corporation. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph also claimed that this Government giving the houses to tenants of the National Housing Corporation was not contemplated by Section 9 of the Act, which deals with the Functions of the National Housing Corporation, and that we might have to amend the legislation to validate what the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and Government are trying to do for tenants of these housing estates.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East joined with the Honourable Member for St. Joseph in this absurdity, which is not surprising because it was, indeed, an absurdity. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph read Section 9 of the Housing Act and zeroed in on 9(a), where it says:

“The function of the Corporation shall be:

(a) to acquire, hold and manage land and other property of any kind whatsoever and sell, let, lease or

otherwise dispose of such land or other property, on such terms and conditions as the Minister determines.”

10.10 a.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph actually further mentuined the wording on the words “or otherwise dispose of” and basically said that these words had some inferior or ethereal or esoteric significance, and that we might have to go to some special rule of interpretation to see what these words mean.

Mr. Chairman, while the Honourable Member spoke, I kept asking myself whether I was hearing correctly. I have always distinguished, Mr. Chairman, between an attorney-at-law and an attorney-at-large and I could not help feeling that, based on what I was listening to, I was listening to an attorney-at-large. I, therefore, went where every good and thoughtful lawyer should go, that is, to the Interpretation Act of Barbados, which is Chapter 1 of the Laws of Barbados. Sir, I went to the Interpretation Act and Section 45 of the Interpretation Act deals with how you interpret legal language and references relating to land.

Mr. Chairman, Section 45.3 of the Interpretation Act reads as follows:

“Where an enactment, passed or made after the 16th June, 1966, provides that a person may dispose of land that person may deal with the land in any of the following ways:

- a. sell it,
- b. lease or let it,
- c. exchange it, giving or receiving money for equality of exchange,
- d. if leasehold, surrender it,
- e. grant a licence to use it for any purpose or for such purposes as are specified in the licence,
- f. grant by way of sale, lease, letting or licence, any easement, profit or right in respect of it.

Mr. Chairman, that is clear enough. The Government, on the issue of the transfer of units in Government’s housing estates, is selling these units to the tenants for monies they paid over the last 20 years, which the Government is regarding as a proper, a fit and a fair purchase price for the property. The Government does not believe that they should buy the units twice. Therefore, that is why every draft conveyance in circulation and every conveyance that has been completed identifies the National Housing Corporation as vendor of the first part and the

particular tenant as purchaser of the other part because it is a vendor/purchaser transaction.

The money has already been paid and we do not want people to have to buy the units twice. You could even use 45.3(c), that the Government is exchanging the units with tenants for monies which they have already paid but this befuddled and confused the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. He had to pour over this as a mighty legal problem. Sir, this is straightforward English and that is all the Law is. Sir, before you get to the Law, you start with English. You do not go to the Law first and then get to English. You start with English first and that confused the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Mr. Chairman, this made news last night and news again this morning because it is some mighty, mountainous problem that was identified by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. Sir, it is a straightforward problem of the distinction between a Government and an Opposition based on the fact that the Government believes if you buy a property, you buy it once and the Opposition believing that if you buy the property, you should buy it twice.

Mr. Chairman, in relation to the \$6 000 deposit being held by the National Housing Corporation, I could not believe my ears either when my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, accused workers in the National Housing Corporation of being criminals and highway robbers. He said that it was highway robbery and that it bordered on criminality that the National Housing Corporation was holding this \$6 000 and his constituent or client could not get it back.

Mr. Chairman, could you imagine innocent, defenceless workers at the National Housing Corporation being classified as highway robbers and criminals? I could not believe my ears, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. F.J. STUART: I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North yesterday said that the National Housing Corporation was holding the money, that it is highway robbery and that it borders on criminality. How could you say that? Sir, people pay their deposit and the deposit predated the coming into effect of a programme introduced by this Government, and that transaction must take its course. There is no highway robbery, or there is no criminality on the part of the National Housing Corporation and, ultimately, the National Housing Corporation is staffed by human beings so they would have to be the criminals and they would have to be the highway robbers.

Mr. Chairman, we have had that but I thought that I had to clear this issue up because I could not believe my ears when I heard it yesterday that we have to amend the Housing Act. to deal with this big problem identified by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, a simple problem rendered confusing to him by the fact that on That Side they believe that you should buy the property twice while, we on This Side believe you should only pay for it once.

Mr. Chairman, I really want, again, to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Philip North for the aggression which he has shown in dealing with the problem of low income housing in Barbados. Sir, Marchfield speaks with its own mute eloquence to the fact that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North means business.

Workhall speaks with similar eloquence and there will be other developments across the country that will mutely testify to the commitment of the Government to ensuring that the problems of low income housing in Barbados are resolved to the satisfaction and pleasure of those people in the country who rely on these services.

Mr. Chairman, I am coming back to deal with other issues relating to low income housing, but I thought I had to deal with this one first since it got a prominence out of all proportions to the importance of the point that was raised.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I will be rather brief. It is fairly obvious to me that Honourable Members on the Other Side are waiting to hear what Honourable Members of the Opposition have to say and then comment on it.

10:20

It is fairly obvious that they are aware of the fact that there is nothing in these Estimates for housing they can be proud of. We are simply asking certain questions. The Barbados Labour Party is not the Government, and we want to hear from them about the programme of the Democratic Labour Party Government in this year, as set out in the Estimates.

Sir, it does not make sense, speaker after speaker, I do not know if it is because we have a few guests in the Gallery, and Honourable Members are probably trying to impress those guests, but in the final analysis nothing that I have heard this morning tells me anything about the programme of the Democratic Labour Party for this year.

Sir, to spend 15 minutes commenting on something which a former Honourable Attorney-General, his colleague - I do not know if that is the way how Honourable Attorneys-General behave - has nothing to do with these Estimates, and referring to the former Honourable Attorney-General as an "attorney-at-large". I mean that is unfortunate. I believe at the appropriate time the Honourable Member will, if he does not want to go as far as to make an apology in the corridors, we are accustomed doing this, it is nothing unusual, at least would try to explain what he meant.

I do not think that you can refer to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, a distinguished attorney in his own right, a Queen's Council and, as I said, a former Honourable Attorney-General, as an 'attorney-at-large'. I would not refer to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South as an "attorney-at-large". He is a distinguished member of the Bar, even before he was the Honourable Attorney-General. I do not mind what anybody would say about the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. I would not get with anybody to refer to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South in that light.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is probably one of the most distinguished lawyers in this country, as I speak, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is fully aware of that. He has distinguished himself in many areas of Law. I always say that when you touch certain persons who I know are not deserving of disrespect, I have to defend. If you touch the Honourable Member for St. Joseph in that light, you touch me. Do not spend 15 minutes. Let us hear about the programme.

I was listening to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, when he was referring to what we said about the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. It shows that the Honourable Members on That Side are searching for words. Nobody over here said that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is a failure. Nobody said that. We were speaking about the Government's programme.

The Honourable Members on That Side have been able to come to terms with the fact that there are certain promises that were made on the political platform, which were imprinted in their Manifesto, which have not been fulfilled. To come and say because of the fact the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is a very enthusiastic and active - he is one of the few Ministers that actually would go to work, because I understand that there are some Ministers who do not go to work. They just walk about and give orders. I do not mean the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. We have not said that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is a failure.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, in his presentation, asked a number of questions. With

respect to the terraced units, I am even putting it simply, in all that has been said by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, castigating the Honourable Member for asking certain questions on the terraced units, backed up by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

All we are asking, you have indicated that you are going to transfer the units to the tenants in the terraced units free of cost. That is what you have indicated. All we are asking is, the people who have paid their deposits, we are asking a question. If it is ridiculous get up and say it is ridiculous.

Sir, the people who have paid deposits, all we are asking is, we want to know, because we have to go back and tell them. Will those people be reimbursed? That is all we are asking.

Sir, you can say, no, they are not going to be reimbursed. We will go back and we will tell that, that is it.

Do not come and talk about two conveyances. We are not saying the land is being bought twice. You have a number of people in a development, you are coming in with a policy and you are saying that you are conveying the land to people free of cost. There are a few law-abiding citizens who have been paying rent to the letter, every month on time. The opportunity arises for these people to own their lots. These people go in and make a deposit. That is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was speaking about, legitimate deposits.

Then you have people who have not been paying any rent. Some of them had the houses rented out and would not pay the National Housing Corporation. I know about that. Sir, you will tell me that you are going to give those people who lagged behind, who decided that it does not make any sense, since I buying the land - Do you know why some of them did not buy the units? Do you realise that when they buy the units, then the question of land tax on a monthly basis will come into play? All of these things stopped them, prevented them, from pursuing their sale because they were not paying the rent. They were lagging behind in their rent.

Those people who have paid their deposits, good citizens, are being called upon to pay. What are you going to do? Their rent is up-to-date. They have paid their deposit. All we want to ask you is, forget the fact that we are saying that they are entitled to the deposit, forget the legal fact. We are just asking what is your position, because we are going back to those people and we are going to tell them what you say. As a matter of fact they are listening to you.

These people have paid their rents up to date. Their rents are up to date. They have paid a deposit and you are

telling me they cannot get their deposit. We want to hear it from you. I want to hear it from the Minister of Housing that is all. That is all the Honourable Member for St. Michael...

Hon. F.J. STUART: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew may be misleading the Chamber. There are persons who have paid deposits. They paid those deposits when the previous Administration was in office, and they paid those deposits pursuant to the policy announced by the previous Administration. There are even persons who bought the units outright, as my client in Bonnetts did, for \$65 000, pursuant to the same policy. My client, let me confess, also asked me whether he can get back his \$65 000 as well. The position is, the deposit was paid pursuant to an understanding that you were going to be buying the house for \$60 000, in the case of the \$6 000 deposit and \$65 000, in the case of my client in Bonnetts.

To suggest we have some big question to answer is really way off mark.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Member for St. Andrew, please proceed.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Sir, the Honourable Member cannot confuse a deposit people whose title have not been completed with those that have been completed. If your lot is complete, you are free to do whatever you want to do with it. You are not paying rent anymore. Your lot is completed. You have paid \$65 000. You could make all sorts of alterations to your property and you do not have to pay rent, but the people who have made deposits still have to pay the rent up to the time the matter is completed. It is completely different.

Hon. F.J. STUART: On a point of order. A deposit in Law means proof of the earnest of the person making the deposit to complete the transaction. Rayner V Preston is the case, and Lysack v Edder is another case. It is proof of the purchaser's earnest to go through with the transaction.

10.30 a.m.

Equity in the property passes from the person who pays the deposit, and once the deposit has been paid, you will just go through the transaction. I do not know what the Honourable Member is saying.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: With respect, I have been doing conveyancing all my life. I am aware of the fact that the rent is payable up to the time the matter is completed. The other attorneys, your colleagues on That Side, have nothing to do with equity because there are situations where people refuse to complete the purchase. Then, the deposit could be forfeited in such circumstances. Therefore, I do not know

what you are talking about. It is only when that transaction is completed.

I want to get back to you, on the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. There are a few Constituency matters I want to raise, but I do not think I could let you get away, even though I dealt with what you said about the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

I think that dealing with the legality of what the Honourable Member said and what you are purporting to say, the Honourable Member was not dealing with the propriety of the conveyance when he read the Act. The Act places a duty on the National Housing Corporation and what he was speaking about had to do more with the Board going outside of its mandate. This is all the Honourable Member was dealing with, Sir.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph read, Section 9. (A) of the Housing Act. He said that nothing in Section 9.(A) gave the National Housing Corporation the power to give any tenant of the National Housing Corporation a unit, and that the words otherwise disposed of in the Section, are subject to a special interpretation, and that the Government, in light of Section 9.(A), and in light of what the Government is saying it is doing with the units, would have to amend the legislation. He invited me to look at it and if I need to amend the legislation, do that, Sir.

I said this morning, Mr. Chairman, that when I listened to the Honourable Member yesterday, I was flabbergasted. I said I can distinguish between attorneys-at-law and attorneys-at-large and I thought I was listening to an attorney-at-large. I could repeat that, and I am not ashamed of that because the point did not make contact with the reality.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Please proceed.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, as an attorney, the Honourable Member should be aware of the fact that there are situations where a conveyance, if you look at the analogy to a private company, or a conveyance from a personal representative of an estate, the title passes, but it does not exonerate the parties who have actually entered the transaction, from liability.

All we are saying is that the actual conveyance is a good conveyance. We are not saying that the conveyance is not a good conveyance but that the directors did not act in accordance with the Act. It is like your Chief Executive Officer at the National Housing Corporation making a decision against the policy of Government. You could

sanction that officer, but the actual decision that the CEO makes in that situation stands. Therefore, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph was perfectly correct in his submission.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to make a few interventions with respect to the Constituency which I represent. I do not know if I might get the opportunity to come back with all of them, because so much work was done in St. Andrew, that it would probably take me a whole day to talk about them.

Asides.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North, only yesterday, complemented me, because he wanted to know how I managed to get so much done in a short space of time. I did not thank him then, but I am going to thank him now for that observation.

Sir, what I would like to know from him, is about the Deane Town Development Project. This is a project that took a lot of time. We have a lot of officers involved. It was over a year of planning. We were looking at a development with about 1 500 houses, units and house spots. It was a complete development. It was like a town centre, with a shopping centre and recreational facilities, and that Development Plan should be in the Ministry.

I would like to know, because I know for a fact, that the Minister had seen the plan. I do not know, and I cannot swear but, I believe, that he would have had access to that, the first day he came to office. I would like to know from him, what are the plans in the Ministry for the Deane Town Development. Sir, if the Government is not proceeding with the Deane Town Development Plan, when we come back to Government, we are going to implement it for sure.

Sir, I want to know what is the plan of the Government for the lands in Lancaster, Apes Hill, Deane Town and the surrounding areas. I heard the Honourable Minister speaking about acquiring lands all over the place. I had not seen him come to the House with any acquisition.

I would also like to know from him, what lands had been acquired by Government since January 15, last year. I would like to know from him why he would want to acquire lands in other places, when there is land in St. Andrew. A lot of people are waiting in the St. Andrew's area for their lots.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East Central.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, apart from the usual punctuations of comedy that we get when the Honourable Member who just took his seat normally speaks, I want to start on the same note that he started upon, but putting the record straight, Sir, in the unlikely event that anyone chose to believe the point he made.

I am not even sure if he believed it, but this idea that we have not been dealing with a housing programme, during the course of this debate, presumably by extension, during the course of our term to date, is far from the case.

I had a chance to speak on some of this during my Second Reading Speech, but I hope to expatiate a bit more and, maybe, touch on some Constituency matters simultaneously, so that I could get my points across.

Mr. Chairman, I think for the first time, in a decade and a half, we are having a debate in this Chamber and we are actually talking about real concepts, designed to break the back of the housing problem in Barbados, particularly, the vexing issues of affordability and availability.

We have not heard terms like In-filling used in housing debates in this country. We have not heard terms like the Zero Hot Line concept, used before. Even the Rent-to-Own concept being put and packaged, in the manner that it is being packaged now. Sir, we have really made a paradigm shift in so far as dealing with the housing question, even with respect of how we are integrating the work of the National Housing Corporation (NHC) with the Urban Development Commission (UDC). We are even talking in terms of housing communities.

The entire debate has been taken to another level. And so, I enter on that note, setting the record straight and maybe dealing with some of these programmes that are planned by the Government and how they may impact my Constituency directly or even indirectly.

Sir, I want to speak on In-filling, but before I get there, there is a broader point.

10.40 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, I firmly believe that Barbados must accept that with our limited land space, and our relatively high population for this limited land space, that we have to go the route of urbanisation. We have to accept that we need to go high-rise in order to house our people. I know that the jury is out on that, but it is a view that I had when I was on the Opposition and I am not about to change it now that I am in Government. I think that we can have high-rise

housing, but not necessarily compromise the quality of life of persons who live in these complexes.

I know that the Chief Town Planner, and perhaps correctly so, is a little wary of going to high-rise building generally for fear of the offence to the environmental, aesthetics, the streetscape and the impact it can have on those factors. I think we need to bite the bullet and realise that we need to go the way of high-rise buildings if we are truly going to confront the issue of the near 30 000 people who are looking for somewhere to live, what we apparently now call housing solutions.

Mr. Chairman, it is for that reason that I have no difficulty at all with the concept of infilling providing it is planned correctly. We have to accept the reality. Sir, the simple reality is that many of our housing estates have been developed in phases and, as a result, there are vast open unused areas. We can very carefully build units in those areas to house people but, at the same time, we must plan it so that we can still have those open areas, the lawns that the old people could go and sit on and reflect, rest and read a newspaper, a play park for the children and a hard court for the young men and women to get adequate exercise.

Mr. Chairman, once we are cognisant of those ontological needs that we have, we can still have increased densities in some of our housing estates, including the ones that you have the honour of representing in this House. I see no reason why it cannot work.

Mr. Chairman, in going the route of infilling, we may have to go up as well. The advantage of that, apart from creating more solutions for the heavy demand out there, is that you would avoid a situation of rupturing communities as families expand.

Sir, you could take a housing estate like Haynesville or Pinelands that is very old, and you can then aspire to receiving a housing opportunity within the community from where you are from. This is one of the strengths that have typified many rural communities. The problem in urban Barbados is that you are forced by necessity, when you come into your own and want to have your own family, to move far afield from the extended family. Sir, by trying to keep communities together, I think it could even work positively, and not negatively, as some may try to suggest, in terms of developing community life.

Mr. Chairman, I am all for increasing our density, the whole concept of high-rise buildings and for infilling, but I am also all for having the appropriate planning to take care of all of those needs.

Sir, in some cases, even parking has to be a consideration because we have reached a stage as a society

now where there are, I believe, 100 000 vehicles, including commercial vehicles, on the road.

The Honourable Member for St. George North normally has those statistics in his head. He is very proud of his work of trying to increase the number of vehicles available. Sir, parking and those considerations can be taken into the adequate planning and we can still have all of those contexts.

Mr. Chairman, that is why I supported the whole concept because I believe that even some of those hard and sacred rules that the Town and County Planning Department has been governed by, need to be looked at if we are going to be going forward seriously recognising the dire circumstances that we are in with respect to housing.

Mr. Chairman, I think that the whole idea that you can have many individual lots but have more houses per acre is something that should be pursued. In fact, we should again congratulate the new thinking that is obtaining with respect to the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the National Housing Corporation. The excitement that many Barbadians feel I do not think is misplaced because we are actively working at dealing with this situation.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to use my own Constituency as an example, the old great house and the surrounding areas at Vallery. Unfortunately, there was a fire recently and while it is a very grand structure that one could have seen maybe had some heritage value in it, unfortunately given the situation, it would have to be grazed to the ground. Having said that, it provides an opportunity for us to do exactly what I was just talking about. In fact, the Minister of Housing and Lands, officials from the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the National Housing Corporation have toured the site.

Mr. Chairman, what I would like to see again is not just grazing the great house to the ground and putting up houses because we need houses but rather we stop and look at what we have. It is a beautiful site. When you are standing up on that pasture under the shade of those trees, the breeze is licking you down literally.

Mr. Chairman, apart from having the housing solutions now, you can set up some commercial activity as well. We saw a bit of it at Pondsides. What I am suggesting is maybe an area with some spaces to be rented to the aestheticians who do nails and hair and that kind of thing, or maybe a barber, or a local bakery or whatever, and you would have that opportunity to bring some very real economic activity to the community as well.

Mr. Chairman, that is the whole concept which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has when he talks about a housing community and not just a housing estate.

You would take care of those economic needs, the housing needs by having the recreational areas, and those social and other needs as well so that you develop the whole person.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, I think Vallery is a prime candidate for that type of development moving away from the ad hoc way we may have operated, master planning the community, if you want to call it that, and taking care of all of those considerations.

Mr. Chairman, this situation has developed because of some natural attributes, but also because of circumstance. The building has had a bad fire and it needs to be taken down. So we have that opportunity to do something in St. Michael South Central that could be a beacon for the progressive thinking that is now obtaining in those responsible for housing under the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. Mr. Chairman, I think that is definitely a very positive thing.

Mr. Chairman, I have already spoken about Stewart's Lodge. Unfortunately, it is a very tight site bounded by Tweedside Road to the east and other land owners on other boundaries, so we might not have as much opportunity to do quite that type of activity as we may do in Vallery. However, I still look forward to seeing some creativity come to that development as well.

10.50 a.m.

The Honourable Member must be given full credit for making houses more affordable and so I would encourage full development of the rent-to-own concept. Sir, in spite of the fact that we are a small country and land has a premium, Government has directly intervened and determined that, in essence, land can be given to people upfront, so that people could get their house going, where that land can be paid for at a later date. Sir, this shows the sort of State intervention that is necessary in any progressive, democratic, socialist society.

Sir, having said that, nowadays States all over the world are intervening in all kinds of right-wing activities and so I do not know any more if those distinctions are relevant in these times. Sir, nonetheless, I think it shows the sort of social responsibility we have come to associate with the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. Sir, that can be looked at, along with the concession of VAT up to \$150 000.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, this is a Minister who is determined to make housing more affordable. Sir, let me say very quickly by way of response, an Honourable Member had raised the issue of the Lloyd Erskine

Sandiford Centre and its completion. The Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre belongs to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, hence they are the landlords. It is only operated by the Barbados Conference Services Limited.

I happen to represent the shareholders' interest in the Barbados Conference Services Ltd., which is the Government of Barbados. Sir, I would want to say that the reason you would not see any provision made in these Estimates for the extensive work is that BCSL, as the project execution arm is, in fact, sourcing private financing for those works and that process is very much in-train.

The plan is that we should have in excess of 40 000 square feet of office space provided, which can be used for Government or even leased to the private sector as has happened at the Central Bank and other buildings but we will also retain the hybrid use of the facility. It will continue to have the conferencing elements as well.

Mr. Chairman, we look forward to the completion of that building, but because a query was raised during this debate insofar as why was the Estimates silent on that matter, I thought I would give that clarification, and once again just commend the tremendous work done by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. Mr. Chairman, if necessary, I will return. I thank you.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a very short intervention to address a very serious problem that is developing in Barbados. I am saying that against the background that all of us know that housing is a very important item on this country's social agenda. Sir, more than a year ago, I had a conversation with a gentleman and I asked him what was the major problem confronting Barbados, to which he said we have three problems, which are basically, housing, housing and housing.

Mr. Chairman, against that background, I want to bring to light to this Honourable Chamber a very important and serious development that is happening in Barbados. There are some unscrupulous landlords who are charging exorbitant rents for derelict structures. Sir, each time those particular tenants ask the landlords to repair these houses, or to do minor work to these houses, two things happen. Sir, the landlord either raises the rent more or asks them to vacate the house. Sometimes those persons who are mostly affected by this sort of anti-social behaviour, in my view, are normally single women of large households, old people and - you would not believe this - even Guyanese.

What is hurtful is the fact that when you talk to these individuals and realise that they are particularly single women of large households and they bring these cases to you, you cannot help but wonder if these landlords really have a heart. Sir, here it is that these landlords are renting a derelict structure that is not fit for living in, where, in some

cases the toilets are in the yard, the doors and windows are broken or there are no proper locks, and when they ask for the necessary repair work to be done, they are then threatened with eviction or asked to pay increased rents.

Mr. Chairman, I believe this indiscriminate raising of rent, in my view, is more of a penalty affixed by the landlord to the tenants. I am also very aware of the fact that landlords have their rights, but I am speaking of cases that have been reported to all of us in this Honourable Chamber, about this kind of anti-social behaviour by these landlords.

Mr. Chairman, it is against that background that I would want to make an urgent call in this Honourable Chamber for the establishment of a rental control board in Barbados. I am saying that against the background that it is critically necessary now because these landlords are just doing as they like.

Sir, even the court processing system has far more compassion on these affected persons than the landlords because there are many judges and magistrates, when the cases go before them, where these tenants are given an ultimatum to leave the house, persons could always return to the Magistrate Court, or enter dialogue with them, explaining the predicament that these persons are trying to find a house or land. Sir, in such circumstances, the Courts give you an extension of time to see how best you could solve the problem.

Mr. Chairman, on the other hand, there are mercenary tactics being applied by some landlords across Barbados, where these landlords are exacting sometimes \$800, \$900 or \$1 000 for a one-bedroom structure that is virtually in a state of disrepair. Sir, as I said, as soon as that tenant makes a complaint, they are asked to leave.

Mr. Speaker, another troubling feature I am noticing is that a lot of these eviction notices being issued are coming from family to family, for example, where one sister is giving eviction notice to another sister; where mothers are asking their sons and daughters to leave the house, thus applying to the Court to have them evicted. Sir, these matters could be settled in a family atmosphere. Mr. Chairman, what I have begun to realise is that in relation to land, it has no friend or family. Therefore, the Court is then saddled with a responsibility that could be settled among the family.

Mr. Chairman, it is against this background that the present Honourable Chief Justice, who I consider to be probably the most revolutionary of all the Chief Justices who sat on the Bench, because of the fact he has brought forth justice. Sir, I did not know anything about the Law, but to hear the Honourable Chief Justice talking about Law

in an open forum, I clearly understand what he is talking about.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that the system that we are looking for to penalise persons in cases like these are more open and willing to cooperate with Government and individuals to deal with the plight of these poorer people who are suffering. That is why a rental control board or authority is critically necessary at this time..

Mr. Chairman, we cannot have landlords raising rents willy-nilly, because they may be vex at the time and determine that the poor people whom they are penalising will pay for such. Sir, it cannot happen. We must control them. We know they have their rights but no landlord in Barbados should rent a derelict house, or a house in bad condition, that landlord should be aware of the fact that house should be habitable and fit for living in.

11.00 a.m.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, Government is doing its best to provide good houses for the poor in Barbados, but the private landlords too also have a responsibility to the tenants across Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, another thing I want to look at is the fact that sometimes there are large pieces of land being auctioned off by the Land Tax Department. Sir, the Land Tax Department has the right to put the land up for auction, but the Department should enter a discussion with the Ministry of Housing so that we could have this land put into the land bank and have it available to the poor. Sir, if you put it on the open market for auction, the person with the most money will get the land and, eventually that land is going to be sold to people of a different pigmentation of our skin, a different texture of hair that come from East India and different parts of Europe rather than Barbadians. Sir, we have to protect Barbadians when it comes to land in this country.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, the fact is, a person that would normally buy a piece of land for, let us say, \$21 000 and you could bet your life that persons who have money would outbid them and pay triple the amount for the land. We now have to bring a level playing field. We have to make sure that if a government department is auctioning, the Ministry of Housing and Lands should be given the first option rather than putting it on the open market.

Mr. Chairman, I have learnt that the painful way because there is an industrial estate adjacent to the Pine Hill Dairy and I wanted at least two people from my Constituency, because it is in St. Michael South East, to get a spot out there, but the spots are all gone simply because

they were purchased by people who paid a higher bid because they had the money. Sir, we have to be very careful.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say to the Honourable Minister that when I checked, we have land in Roberts Tenantry and land in Pasture Road, Haggatts Hall, a picturesque view and we are in danger of losing it to the Land Tax Department because the owners owe a lot of money to the Land Tax Department. I would certainly like the Ministry to acquire it and enter into dialogue with the Land Tax Department because I have always said in this Honourable Chamber that the development of this country cannot and should not be measured only in dollars and cents. Sir, to me, it must be more measured in sense than in cents.

Mr. Chairman, if we are talking about creating the necessary social revolution that is being brought about, we have to deal with those persons, who have “nuff, nuff, nuff”, but still want to outbid the poor man down here. Sir, the rich man is in his castle, the poor man is in his den, so we have to try to provide some little castles for the poor man too. Sir, we have to examine it and deal with it.

Mr. Chairman, someone said yesterday in this Honourable Chamber that Parliament could do almost anything; that all of us could transcend the social landscape, the financial landscape and the economic landscape of this country. Sir, the only thing we cannot do is change a man into a woman, or the reverse and, Sir, I even doubt that. Sir, this Parliament could do anything it chooses to. We are in an era now where people are talking about genetic engineering, cloning and all sorts could happen, but the fact is, we have to address these economic and social imbalances in this country.

Mr. Chairman, these pirates that we have in Barbados masquerading themselves as landlords in this country, we have to unmask them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: We have to put the necessary legislation in place. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I will take my seat at this time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, I wish to make another contribution to this debate. Sir, one of the questions that was asked was what was the policy of this Government relative to housing and, Sir, the policy is clear to us. We are not pushing a housing programme. We are pushing a housing policy and the housing policy peels itself

out in different housing programmes. Sir, the truth is that the speaker who just took his seat talks a lot about the social revolution and how the instruments of Government must assist in achieving those things.

Sir, truth to tell, any Government's housing policy is a social investment in the upliftment of its citizens, particularly those citizens at the base of the socio-economic ladder, who also have the right to be able to climb up and to achieve some level of social mobility and attainment in the society.

When the Government invests socially through housing, for example, what happens really is that it should result in social empowerment. It should cause people to have a fresh set of hope that because of the Government's policies that they would have a chance to be able to achieve some of their dreams and goals. I really believe sincerely that the Honourable Minister of Housing, along with the hardworking members of the staff at the Ministry are really committed to assisting the Government in achieving this policy on housing and, Sir, the policy is stated in the Manifesto with the acronym "HELP" - Housing Every Last Person.

Mr. Chairman, that is the policy of this Government and whatever is necessary in terms of innovation and in terms of creative housing programmes, the Government is prepared to do in order to be able to achieve that objective. Mr. Chairman, it is not an easy view, if I may say it, so when a person looks across the horizon and cannot see himself or herself being able to achieve shelter. We have established yesterday that shelter is not just a social desire, but shelter is a developmental milestone that every single individual looks forward to achieving across the lifespan.

Therefore, the housing policy of this Government is to find creative ways to depart from the norm and find creative ways to achieve its objectives through its programme and the infilling concept is one of those innovative ways.

Mr. Chairman, if you go through the housing estates across Barbados you will find, on occasion, that there is space unoccupied and unused, what we call dead space, so to speak. Sir, what the infilling programme intends to do is to identify those spaces and come up with creative housing solutions that we would be able to provide additional space for individuals.

For example, in Sayes Court that I mentioned in my last presentation, where there are a number of persons, there is a lot of generational occupation of estates, where you find that the grandmother lived there; the mother lives there and now the grandchildren are living there, and they have built a family network.

What the Honourable Minister of Housing is doing, through the planning process, is identifying those spaces, where you could add additional housing units, whether you go high-rise, duplexes or whatever the case might be, and continue to facilitate the needs of those persons.

Mr. Chairman, this is not just a nice-to-have option. This is a must-have option.

11.10 a.m.

If we are going to house every last person, it means that we have to be able to accommodate the housing needs of persons in these particular areas.

We talked about affordability and availability. We also must talk about accessibility. This is where I would want to encourage the gatekeepers at the National Housing Corporation to continue to be vigilant in how they treat to those persons who enquire about housing needs, because very often you will find that very desperate persons, perhaps, who have had applications in for 20 years, would tend to be a little insensitive to the stresses and strains of the staff of the National Housing Corporation, and what they termed to be an unpleasant encounter would turn out to be a war between themselves and members of staff.

As you go forward with this ambitious programme, ensure that those persons who are gatekeepers in the system are sensitive to the journeys of those persons who have been searching for a very long time.

Sir, I have a list of persons in my Constituency that we have generated since we have been elected, and these are persons who have applications in for many years. We try to insist that they are patient, insist that they are sensitive to the workings of the National Housing Corporation and that when there is a need for additional information, my task, as their representative, is to intervene on their behalf. What has to happen is, a certain type of service culture must be encouraged, not only encouraged but rewarded.

I find that very often persons working in these areas in ministries are asked to do so much and achieve so much but, sometimes, they are seldom recognised for going beyond the extra mile to allow ordinary citizens to achieve the objectives of their dreams. Therefore, I believe that working with the affordable housing and the available housing, we also have to work on the issue of accessibility that not only deals with financing and so on, but also deals with the capacity of the general public who have housing needs to work with those persons at the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation.

I also want to make mention, while I am on my feet, that this Government is seeking to have a more integrated

approach to governance, a more integrated approach to resolving some of these social issues and advancing its own policies. What do I mean by that? I know that there is a history, for example, for the National Housing Corporation, or the Ministry of Housing, to be able to get the kind of responsiveness from, for example, the Barbados Water Authority and other agencies of Government.

I believe that it is my remit and responsibility, as the Minister for the Environment, that also has responsibility for the Barbados Water Authority, to ensure that a partnership is developed where those struggles and protracted conversations that go on back and forth between these agencies are minimised, so that when the National Housing Corporation, through the Ministry of Housing, decides to launch a project, all of those issues relative to amenities are brought to the fore, and that agencies come together and work together for the common good, that is, housing every last person in this country. Therefore, I think we need that integrated approach in terms of our planning process to forecast those things we need to have done up front and to bring the agencies together, like, as I said, the Barbados Water Authority.

We are also incorporating the National Corporation Commission, because we believe that as we begin to construct housing areas, areas to house Barbadians, that we need to also be conscious of matters relating to energy efficiency, matters relating to environmental friendliness and the very appearance of communities.

I had the privilege of living in the United States of America and one of the things that always startled me, is how orderly the physical appearance of communities is, very orderly, and it is about how they are designed. It is about how they are maintained. It is about the integration between Public Works and Housing, the Water Authority and Housing, et cetera. One of the things we hope to bring to the process is a more integrated approach that would allow agencies across Ministries who can contribute to the emergence of a new housing experience in Barbados to come together and work together to achieve that.

Again let me say that this Minister of Housing has to be complimented. Some would call him ambitious, some would call him whatever they wish to but, at the end of the day, if Barbadians who have been waiting for housing are getting housing, that is what you will judge this Minister by. So far, he has passed the test, because he has not only been talking of housing, but getting houses in the air.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I was not planning to speak again, but I think the Honourable Attorney-General raised some issues in relation to comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph as why there is need for an amendment to deal with going and putting beyond any doubt the quality of title that would be given to those persons who, in fact, have been the beneficiaries of the free units in the National Housing Corporation's estates.

Sir, there are two simple points that I would like to make. I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph was going to make one, but I would start on that first one in relation to the interpretation that can be applied to Section 9 of the Housing Act. For the purpose of clarity I will repeat it:

“ The functions of the corporation shall be to acquire, hold and manage land and other property of any kind whatsoever and sell, let, lease or otherwise dispose of such land or other property on such terms and conditions as the Minister determines.”

Sir, the key section there is “or otherwise disposed of”. The issue in relation to statutory interpretation, there is a rule in Law known as in juris generis which allows for a very clear interpretation. If I may quote from Maxwell on the Interpretation of Statutes:

“ The general word which follows particular and specific words of the same nature as itself, takes its meaning from them and is presumed to be restricted to the same genus as these words. For, according to a well established rule in the construction of Statutes, general terms following particular ones may apply only to such persons or such things as are “in juris generis” with those comprehended in the language of the legislature. In other words...” and this is the key point. “the general expression is to be read as comprehending only things of the same kind, as that designated by the proceeding particular expressions, unless there is something to show that a wider sense was intended. Where there is a provision specifically accepted, certain classes clearly not within the suggested genus.”

Sir, it is very clear that, “or otherwise disposed of”, can only be interpreted in the context of sell, let or lease, which are all transactions involved in the consideration of money, and that is the key point.

I also believe that not only is that to be considered. Let me just give an example of the application of the Rules. In an Act imposing on unqualified person navigating:

“Any ... lighter or other craft...”. The last word would include only vessels of the same kind as lighters but not steam tugs which neither carry passengers nor goods.”

The reality is, the case Law is clear that you have an interpretation that limits it to the class to which it is referring in the earlier part of the clause. It could not be.

11.20 a.m.

Therefore, it could only be any form of transaction that involves some form of consideration. Sir, even if we were to be in doubt there, the fundamental point was not simply the power of the National Housing Corporation to give away the things, because we accept that the Government has the power to set policy, but it needed to tidy it up, and tidy up the legislation with a small amendment.

Sir, what is, perhaps, of more concern, is that the Crown normally can and will give good title. The National Housing Corporation is a Statutory Corporation. Section 17.(a) at Sub section (2) clearly exempts it from the provisions of the Property Act in Barbados, in Chapter 236 at Section 50, which deals with the route of title.

The simple point is that because of that Section 17.(A)(2), a person getting title from the National Housing Corporation, has a good, and marketable title. They have guaranteed that the title is good. Our simple point is that it will not happen in every instance, but it will happen in some. The Minister for Housing is the first one to admit and concede that he is having nightmares and headaches with the Pine and Wildey because of all kinds of encroachments and unauthorised buildings, particularly those older housing estates.

In the circumstances, Sir, it means therefore that a person who does not get a conveyance, as prescribed in this Act...and let me read 17.(a)(2) to you, Sir:

“A conveyance made under the authority of and in the form prescribed under subsection 1, shall vest a good and marketable title in the purchaser, notwithstanding that he has not investigated the title of the Corporation for the period of years required by the Property Act.”

Sir, what does Sub section 1 say? It says that where the Corporation enters into a contract to sell land, it shall make the conveyance thereof in the form prescribed in the Second Schedule.

Sir, what does the conveyance in the Second Schedule say? The conveyance in the Second Schedule clearly establishes that...

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I listened with interest to the learned Leader of the Opposition and I was really hoping that I would not have to rise on a point of order to say that she is misleading the Chamber.

Sir, candor dictates that she should disclose to the House that Section 17.(A)(1) does not stop at its Second Schedule but says: “...or as near thereto as the Corporation’s Attorney-at-Law determines.”

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: You did not read that.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, if a Member is going to behave like an attorney-at-large, and stop me in the middle of a sentence, then he is liable...

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: No. No. No. You have gone on.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: No. I have not gone on.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, just as in Grammar there is a concept called parsing, in Law and in argument, there is also a concept, where you pause and refer persons to the particular section and come back.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, but that does not change the fact that, once again, the Attorney-General is in trouble, because when you look at the Second Schedule, it clearly is a conveyance for consideration. It therefore means that “...or, as near thereto, as the Corporation’s Attorney-at-Law determines,” means that you can change a word or two, but it does not mean that you can change it from a conveyance of sale to a Deed of Gift.

In Law, Sir, a conveyance of sale is completely different from a deed of gift. The reality is that there are two separate instruments. Now, I understand why the Attorney-General may feel the need, having not spoken yesterday, to defend the Government politically.

The reality is, Sir, that the legal position ought to be such, that he does not leave persons receiving title under these gifts, in a worse position than a person who would have bought the unit and received a conveyance of title, a bona fide purchaser for consideration. The reality is this. Mr. Chairman, we believe that there has to be the protection of persons.

The object, Sir, here is not the Law. The Law is merely evidence of the fact that the Government, in its

desire not ever to say or concede that it may not have done the right thing in the right way, is so adamant that rather than bringing a simple amendment here to put the issue beyond any doubt, wants to engage in an exercise that will leave them at the mercy, Sir, of any problems in relation to title.

We have already heard the difficulties in estate after estate. In your estate too, Sir, in Gall Hill and Silver Hill, there are issues of encroachment. Sir, let us remember that there are 1 600 people who have benefitted. Are you going to tell them that they are to get a lesser title, and they are not to receive the Guarantee? The Guarantee is only given by Statute. The Guarantee is only in relation to title that has come as a result of a conveyance made in a form, which makes it even worse.

Sir, whereas 17.(A)(1) gives the attorney-at-law, the option to be able to change a few words in the conveyance, for a conveyance of sale, the guarantee title is limited, Mr. Chairman, to the form prescribed under sub section (1). The form prescribed under sub section (1) is, in fact, the conveyance at the Second Schedule.

Sir, in here is not a court of law, and you are not a judge. The simple point, therefore, from the Opposition is that if we, as lawyers, can see it, there are certainly going to be other lawyers out there who will see and take the point.

Does this Government believe that it is appropriate to leave those persons at the risk and at the mercy of other lawyers' interpretations, such that they will have to go into their pockets and spend money, or lose the opportunity for a sale, when they have the right then to sell the unit to somebody else?

Sir, that is an unacceptable risk because all that is required is an amendment of less than 20 or 30 words.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Which is what all they would have brought for the year is right.

The Opposition has already told you, there would be no objection to it, because we believe that this is as morally wrong as refusing to give back the persons who paid in their deposits. They did not have a completed conveyance, and are being told that even though they belong to the same class of persons, namely, those who lived in their houses for 20 years and their rents were up-to-date, that they should continue to be the victims of a government who refuses to give them back their money.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir.

Are we talking about 10 people? Are we talking about 20 people? Are we talking about 100 people? Sir, we are talking about hundreds of Barbadians in Gall Hill and in Silver Hill. I thought the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East was going to get up and speak on the fact that the people in the Pine and Wildey want back their deposits too.

I am also talking about the people in the Farm. I am talking about the people in Rosemont. I am talking about the people in the Ivy. I am talking about the people in Belleplaine. I am talking about the people in Haynesville. I am talking about the people in Thorpes. I am even talking about the people in Kensington Lodge.

11.30 a.m.

Sir, I have quite a few of them on my desk because the reality is that it is a form of discrimination. Our Constitution does not allow for a broad discrimination claim to be brought. That is why I say that it is morally wrong. Sir, we will treat to it as an abuse of power because we believe that any act which is morally wrong that creates a legitimate expectation on the part of persons that...

Sir, you can go and read the Nation Newspapers of April and February last year, and see the Minister for Social Care and the Minister of Housing and Lands... They did not tell the people all except who paid deposits. They said all who had 20 years and the only qualification was that you had to pay your legal fees.

Mr. Chairman, there are now hundreds of Barbadians who have paid from \$2 000 up to \$8 000 and \$9 000 who cannot get back their money. Mr. Chairman, we say it is morally wrong. We say that the Government has an obligation to give the deposits back to them. They are being penalised simply for being...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: We will keep repeating it and repeating it because it is morally wrong. Mr. Chairman, if we were to say and exclude and discriminate on the basis of Parliamentarians in here, it would be wrong. If we were to do it in relation to all public servants, it would be wrong. If we were to do it in relation to private sector workers, it would be wrong.

Sir, I say to you that the Government must have a conscience on this one. Yes, we can test the matter in Court but, quite frankly, this is not a matter for the Court. This is a matter for the political conscience of the Democratic Labour Party Government. Mr. Chairman, we therefore call

upon them in the strongest possible way to return to the people the deposits which were legitimately paid.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, when one listens to the debate from the Other Side, one can only be confused.

Sir, it is clear to me that in one breath the argument is that to take a deposit from the persons who paid in the deposit is illegal, yet an argument is now being placed on the table that the Government should take a deposit to make this legal.

Mr. Chairman, I want clarity on this matter because it is clear to me that all we need to do then, based on what the Honourable Member is saying, is to make the people feel they are paying something for the property and charge them \$1 for the property. Mr. Chairman, if \$1 constitutes the deposit, then nobody can quarrel.

Sir, there is precedent to this. Sir, do you remember the free school meals that cost 10 cents? Clearly, nobody can fault us if we charge \$1 for the property because when we said we would give free school meals, we charged 10 cents for it. This is Government policy from the Democratic Labour Party. It is as simple as that.

Mr. Chairman, up to now I have not heard from the Other Side that This Side will not refund the balance of the money paid as a deposit after the legal fees and the other costs have been taken out. Sir, if they were to say that they had a case where we said we were using this money to cover the cost, and then the cost was less and we had taken the money, I could understand their argument. Sir, not one of them could present that argument to this House, and until they have a natural case where the Government took the deposit, completed the conveyance and everything and did not refund the people, there is no evidence to that charge.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard the Other Side every minute speaking about a problem at the National Housing Corporation of 30 000 solutions. Sir, I am told that what is required right now is 30 000 solutions. Whenever I listen in this House and I hear anybody speaking about immigration, I am hearing 30 000 too.

Sir, I want to know if there is a relationship between the 30 000 solutions that are needed at the National Housing Corporation and the increase in population as suggested and sanctioned by two former Ministers in the past Government. Mr. Chairman, if there is a relationship

between the two, then one can understand that the problem at the National Housing Corporation is not a natural homegrown solution, but a matter of Government policy, as done by the previous Government.

Mr. Chairman, I want to warn the Minister of something because it is a matter I have raised many years ago. Mr. Chairman, the financial problem facing the National Housing Corporation has to be studied. The National Housing Corporation does not pay for any land. I want to make that point very clear. The land is given to the National Housing Corporation by the Ministry of Housing and Lands which is paid for by the Crown. The sale of the land remains within the National Housing Corporation's revenue, which means that they do not have the matching expenses to deal with.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the same person who is now saying that is right argued with me when I was on the Other Side making the same argument, but all of a sudden today now I am hearing that is right.

Mr. Chairman, what is interesting is that the Honourable Member was Minister of Housing when they kept a land bank and knew that the National Housing Corporation would have wanted the sale of the land in the land bank to run its operations. Sir, that is why they had to float the bond because they starved the National Housing Corporation because the revenue from the land sales...

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Get up on a point of order and say it is not true.

Mr. Chairman, everybody knows that the National Housing Corporation gets its revenue from rents and land sales. Sir, if you give the National Housing Corporation the land and you keep it in a bank and it cannot sell the land, the only thing you could be doing is starving it of money. That is exactly what occurred. They starved the National Housing Corporation of the money.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North saying that the loan and the bonds had nothing to do with the National Housing Corporation, or the building at Warrens. Sir, if that is true, what the Honourable Member for St. George North is admitting is that the money that built the building at Warrens was the money that the National Housing Corporation was supposed to run its operation with, because there would have been no other financing to satisfy that.

Mr. Chairman, I was told in this House that the \$50 million bond was to build the office complex, but the

former Minister is saying the opposite. Sir, you could now understand that the reason why poor people could not get housing solutions in this country was because the money that was supposed to be used for housing solutions was used to build a building.

Sir, we have to be very careful in this country as politicians how we expect the masses of people in Barbados to pick up Government's obligation. Poor people have no obligation to the poor in natural terms. It is the Government of Barbados that has the obligation to the poor to house them.

Sir, we have to be very careful how we use this Parliament because we did it when we came to this Parliament in the 1980s under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which was supposed to be only for plantations, and then we used that Act to deprive poor people of their land to give it to the poor.

11.40 a.m.

We have to be very careful, when we speak of rent controls that we do not come now and commit the same problems. We have to be very careful because the majority of those houses that you are now speaking about - and I live in a real world - many persons have houses they want to repair first before renting them out.

Sir, because of the fact that these persons have no intention of renting out those houses in that state of disrepair, there is the situation where people come begging to rent those houses. Sir, as soon as those owners put that person in the houses, that person could be telling you how bad the houses are in need of repair. I know it, I saw it, I saw a case in Checker Hall where the man had no intention of renting the house to anybody but a lady from St. Joseph and others came enquiring about renting the house. Sir, as soon as the lady moved into the house, she was calling the Public Health Inspector for everything that was wrong about the house, even though she had begged the man to rent her the house in the same condition.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be very careful how we deal with these cases. We cannot relieve the National Housing Corporation of its responsibility. The National Housing Corporation was set up to do that, not the private individual. In that case, if you want to have rent controls, then you have to have rent controls for hotels. I know many hotels that charge very high room rates and do not deliver the services.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, are you asking me to get up and make a point of order?

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Of course not, Sir. I know you will not get involved in this debate. You know full well I was speaking to the Honourable Member for St. George North, who is butting in like a Spanish station, who cannot speak to anything I am saying because he knows I would "lick" him up.

Mr. Chairman, we have to be very careful when we come to this Honourable House seeking to bring social policies that are anti-social in nature. I can understand those tenants whose landlords would put their properties up for rent and then after the persons move in, they charge them the high rate and would not repair those houses. That is a different matter. Let us deal with something like that, but we cannot come here with this blanket policy that has been left to us by the Barbados Labour Party and believe that we could adopt it.

Sir, we know that any policy the Barbados Labour Party brings, would be anti the masses of Barbados, but that it would not have the counter to deal with the "too-few". We, as the Democratic Labour Party, have to provide a balance. That is why I do not understand the argument about 20 years and all of that. We are not a piecemeal Government. We are not a short-term Government. Whenever we bring policies...

Mr. Chairman, we heard this same argument when free secondary education was introduced in this country. We heard it could not work, that it was only for a few people. What is happening now? Free secondary education is still with us. Sir, they went all over Barbados telling people that it was only for a short time, that it was only for Election. Sir, as a Party, when we come with social policies, we do not bring those policies on short-term bases but we understand what we want to give to the people of Barbados.

Sir, we need not worry about what the Opposition is saying. We understand that is good Opposition politics and that they want to create the impression that we want to create some "too-few", but a man could only speak of what he knows and that is exactly what is occurring on That Side. They want to create confusion among the masses that we would pick out a few people to help and not others. Mr. Chairman, that is not the Democratic Labour Party of which you know well. It is true that you cannot speak from that position, but I will speak on your behalf and look after you.

Sir, if the Barbados Labour Party feels comfortable and a \$1 deposit is all they need, then let them charge the people \$1 and nobody could quarrel because when we offered free school meals we charged 10 cents. Mr. Chairman, I would feel better as a politician selling those persons houses for \$1, than to give them for nothing. Sir, I

want them to know that they have to pay something for something.

Mr. Chairman, there is a psychological connection to that. We have to be very careful, when instituting our social policies, that we do not create the impression that we are equal to, or that we are the same as the Other Side who creates the impression that you could turn up at an office and receive \$500 cheques and that it would be tied to a vote before Election time. We are not about that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I only want one second to complete this. When we have social policy, it is social policy that is not matched with an expectation for a political vote. It is social policy because we generally believe that we have to help the masses of people in Barbados. Sir, our social policies are not tied to a vote.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, originally I had not intended to participate in this debate again, but I want to compliment all those who did, because I believe that on This Side all Honourable Members have fully explained the policies of the Democratic Labour Party, the initiatives that we intend to pursue and how they are going to be implemented. Traditionally, on the Other Side we would have seen very typical Barbados Labour Party politics, a preoccupation with an unattractive past, a preoccupation with telling Barbadians about all the things they were going to do that they could never get done. It includes apparently everything that we are doing. Sir, even if we acquire land where they did not intend to acquire it, their argument would be that was in their contemplation as well.

Mr. Chairman, nothing is wrong with that, but there is another characteristic of the politics of the Other Side that Barbadians need to understand. It is ingrained in the political blood of their members. It stems from a perception that over there is the Party of professionals and we are a Party of last-class operatives, who do not understand Law, despite we have the same advisors that they had.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying today in this Honourable House that the Barbados Labour Party fundamentally opposes our policy to give to the tenants of those houses in housing estates those houses. It was never their intention to do it that way. In addition, they have consistently found all kinds of unnecessary, silly, legal arguments to do the usual, to give the impression that they had read the Law and that nobody on This Side has the capability, the standing in life, the brand-name titles, to understand what the Law says. Sir,

they want to argue now that you have to give some consideration for the purchase and so the rent that was paid cannot be a consideration.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, having just arrived, I believe that perhaps the Honourable Member has not heard the whole debate. Mr. Chairman, the reality is that what we have said is that in the absence of consideration, what is required is a simple amendment to the Housing Act. We have said that both yesterday and today, so that you could choose. You could either amend the Housing Act, so that persons get good and marketable title that is guaranteed, or you could choose to have some limited form of consideration. What is also clear is that under the Law, past consideration is no consideration.

11.50 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, there is no need for any of that because that is not even layman's law. It is less than layman's law and I cannot say in this House what I would like to say about it, and coming from an attorney-general. It is true that I have never seen the Honourable Member's signature on a conveyance yet, other than one for which she bought land herself. I have never seen her drawn and prepared signature on any, but that should be no disqualification and it is never so for Honourable Members on the Other Side because they will wax...

Asides.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, we had this experience before. This is nothing new with the Barbados Labour Party. We had one of their members saying that you cannot convey them except under the Condominium Act. Sir, 90 per cent of lawyers in Bridgetown, who have familiarity with the Condominium Act, are running from the Condominium Act because they understand the difficulty inherent in conveying under it. At least the Honourable Member for St. Joseph should take that Member in the Other Place aside and explain to him that there are ways to do it. Sir, Clermont Green is a good example, where you provide for party walls and other arrangements.

Mr. Chairman, I know that cannot be the advice of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, but there is a Senator for the Other Side who, every time this issue comes up, he is on about the Condominium Act and that people are not getting good title. We are satisfied and, from the outset, we said to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North that if there are deficiencies in the Law, we will create a new law like the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, but we are determined that the people will own those houses and you are determined to do everything in your

power to frustrate that policy by the Democratic Labour Party.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and cannot accuse anyone on This Side of frustrating, when all that we have said is how it could be done properly. If you do not do it that way, the persons who are getting title this way will have a less than good title and will not have the guarantees provided for by the Housing Act that other persons who buy will get. Sir, if that is frustrating when you point out the way to him that it could be done properly then, Sir, he clearly has a different understanding of the word “frustrating”.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I do not engage in sharp practices, and even though I am covered by the Parliamentary Privileges and Immunities Act, I would warn anybody who is taking advice from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to look for a lawyer.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is imputing improper motives and would suggest that a person who has been trained in the Law cannot give legal advice. Sir, if he has to hide behind a sharp tongue in order to deal with legal facts, I can perhaps better understand why Sam Lord’s is before the Courts in June this year, in relation to that matter.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: If you want to talk about that, you should talk about it. It is before it because your Government pretended you were helping a black business man, never helped him and we had to get other people, while we were in Opposition, to come and save his enterprise and save his future in this country because he was given assurances by the Honourable Member for St. Peter, time and time again, and none of them were met, just like Julie’N and all the other black businesses in this country. Sir, that is what happened, but we are not going into that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us not go into that. That is correct. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I do not mind what attacks are made. You make them throughout this entire debate. We heard about a house in Miami, coming from somebody whose parents own two beach front properties in Miami, pictures of which are in the Moneylaundering Authority Report.

Asides.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: You do not know about them. You need to go on the computer and read. When you go on the computer to read the Central Bank of Barbados’

statistics, I will give you an address to go to and you will see the photograph of the two houses but you were so caught up with what the Honourable Member for St. James South owns that you do not know about your own backyard.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I want to refocus the debate back to the matter that we are dealing with. I do not want to encourage us to go too wide in relation to housing.

Honourable Member, are you on a point of order.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Yes, I am, Sir. I made a point of order in here on the imputing of improper motives and you are yet to rule on it, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the improper motive?

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, that I was used as a lawyer for improper motivations to advise this Parliament for political purposes. Sir, that is the clear imputation, but since we are on assets, I want the Prime Minister to declare his assets too, the ones that he has in Miami and elsewhere too.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please. I do not like to be over-spoken, when I am trying to rule.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I apologise, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have asked me to rule on the question of improper motives. I think I heard the Member say that he would not advise any person to use the Honourable Member as a lawyer, to look for a lawyer but that does not necessarily impute an improper motive. He said he would advise them to look for a lawyer other than the Honourable Member but that does not impute an improper motive. Had the Member gone on to say other things, perhaps but that alone does not impute improper motive.

Please continue Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am going to reiterate the point that from the time the policy was announced, the Barbados Labour Party went as far as to hold meetings with tenants raising all kinds of concerns. They did not have those concerns when they had announced a policy in which they were going to give them some kind of concession. The concerns only arose...

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. It is not true to say that the Barbados Labour Party did not have concerns when it was dealing with the issues of conveying the units to persons. In fact, the

Ministry of Housing could tell you about the issues and the files that speak about the encroachments; the difficulties of conveying and all the other encumbrances that would cause the persons to get less than good title. Sir, it is not true.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Law is clear. Sir, encroachments are not insurmountable and people deal with encroachments every day. The Law is very clear, both in the legislation that the Honourable Member sought to quote, as well as the Interpretation Act, as well as all the other relevant Laws, the Properties Laws of Barbados, on how matters of that sort are dealt with.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to repeat. Sir, no meetings were held with tenants to raise any of the concerns which have now surfaced. Mr. Chairman, no meetings were held and tenants were told we are going to amend the Act to perfect your title.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Barbados Labour Party, under the previous Ministry of Housing, had meetings with the tenants in relation to the whole process of conveying the units and what would have been the difficulties in conveying the units, so that is not true either. The Honourable Member has come in here for the first time for the day, clearly has not spoken for the week, and wants to keep noise, but I understand.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I only speak when I have something to say. That is my philosophy. I do not speak to remind myself that I am alive. I speak when I have something to say and I am going to repeat very carefully what I said. Sir, nobody did not say that meetings were not held, no doubt, meetings were held. Sir, the Members of the Opposition were taskmasters at Town Hall Meetings and holding meetings with people.

I am saying that at none of those meetings were the legal issues that we are now hearing since January 15, 2008, raised with the tenants of the National Housing Corporation units. We never heard anything about consideration. We never heard anything about the Condominium Act. We never heard anything about the imperfections in the title arising out of legislation.

12.00 a.m.

We never heard that a deed of gift could not constitute an effective disposal of the land under the Law but, all of a sudden, since January 15, all of the legal brains in the Barbados Labour Party that spotted none of these concerns ...

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is once again misleading the

Chamber. You cannot make that assertion in circumstances where what is being proposed by the Government was not being proposed by the previous Government, therefore, the legal concerns only arise in the context of the Housing Act.

I really am amazed that this is generating this heat, when all that is required is a simple amendment to guarantee people's title. I did not know that the Government would want people to have an imperfect title or even the risk of an imperfect title, when we have said that we would support the amendment too.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, there is no need for any guarantee of any title. That is legal "gobbledegook". The Honourable Attorney-General will deal with that. I am not going into that now. We have already looked at it and I am not taking any advice from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East on the Law, nor on education, nor on economic issues. The Honourable Member for St. Peter put paid to that last Thursday.

I am going to deal instead with the fact that the Barbados Labour Party is saying that this was not their policy, but they are not telling the public clearly what their policy was. It was never, and is not now their policy to give the tenants of the National Housing Corporation units free. It is now and it never was.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Far from that, we have contended that the persons who were supposed to get the units free, but for whom deposits have not been returned must get them, therefore, we support it. We also said...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is further misleading the House because we have said that the constituents in St. Philip North, and the constituents all around who have not reached their 20 years, should get their housing units free, as was articulated by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, yesterday. They are now being discriminated against because the Government gave a 100-day offer. It is not about the people in the housing units. It is about a 100-day offer.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I repeat. It was never the policy of the Barbados Labour Party, and they are now opposing it, to give the tenants the units free.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot say what is now the policy of the Barbados Labour Party. He cannot. Sir, for the last eight months we have maintained that it is morally wrong. Indeed, one Honourable Member referred to it as

criminal, not to give the people their deposits so that they can get their units free. Further, it should not stop on April 16, as the Cabinet had and did, having made the public believe that anybody reaching 20 years would get their units free. Let him deal with that.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: All I can deal with is that it is too late, after eight months, for the Honourable Member to get a conscience.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot impute improper motives. The fact is, I say that he does not have a conscience in returning the money to the people.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would ask both Honourable Members to withdraw the comment.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I withdraw it.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I withdraw too.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, the conscience of the Barbados Labour Party was only stirred eight months after the Government changed and they are now saying - in fact, you do not really know what they are saying because the Honourable Member started by saying, "far from that". That was her opening response to that point of order.

What the Honourable Member's Party was proposing is far from what the Democratic Labour Party is proposing and, in fact, implementing. I repeat, the Barbados Labour Party did not in the past, and does not now support the conveying of these units to the people in the National Housing Corporation's units free of cost.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Hold on Honourable Member. The Honourable Member has two minutes to wind up.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. We repeat that we support the return of the money to the people who paid deposits so that they can get their units free. We also repeat that we support that other persons with 20 years since April 16, must now also get their units free. That is what we support, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Honourable Member.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East cannot have it both ways. You cannot say it was your policy to give the units free and yet say give back the people their deposits. What did they pay their deposits on? It was your policy to extract deposits from the people and to extract payment for those units. That was your policy.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Sir, the Government having established a policy to give people units, we made a position known that it is now our policy for them to be given free. We have said it.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: It is now your policy. Sir, that is pathetic and that is the quality of leadership that the Barbados Labour Party now has, opportunistic politics.

The Honourable Member for...

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot accuse persons in here of having leadership that is opportunistic politics, and what is more...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member?

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is imputing improper motives by so doing. I go further and make the point that once we have determined that a policy is in existence, we have the right to say that people should not be discriminated against.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please withdraw.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I withdraw it, Sir. The Barbados Labour Party, led by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, is pursuing opportunistic politics.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is imputing improper motives. I make the point to repeat again that the Honourable Member cannot impute improper motives for us calling for people in this country to get back their deposits. I am not going to call it robbing the people.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am going to rule on it now that you have raised it a second time. I do not believe to say that leadership is opportunistic without going further is to cast aspersions, or to raise any issues as to character or integrity. The word "opportunistic" means to take opportunity, but in the context in which it is used I do not believe it is giving of improper motives. Please, continue.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I am going to repeat that the Opposition, constituted by the Barbados Labour Party as a whole, is pursuing opportunistic politics. They have seen the shining light provided by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, so much so that people have forgotten that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew was ever a Minister of Housing. They do credit the Honourable Member for St. George North. I would not deny that, because I know his standing in his Constituency and even in St. John. The one thing about him when he was in here and on This Side, he always sought to get cooperation on

the policies that he sought to introduce. He was fair, because it was not until the Honourable Member for St. George North was Minister, that he saw that the lots at Gall Hill, St. John, the 54 lots that had been acquired prior to 1994, were allocated to the tenants.

12.10 p.m.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North, to his credit, allocated them to the people who had previously applied and did not follow the typical Barbados Labour Party approach and the approach of the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, who now pretends that he was above all politics in a debate in this Chamber. He was the worst of them in that regard, and his records are there for the public to see.

Sir, I am saying that what they saw was this Minister pursuing his objectives. They want you to sit in an office all day. I heard the debate very carefully. They want the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to sit in the office like them. Get out among the people. Do the work you need to do.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Hand out the conveyances. Get the bouquets and kisses. Receive the positive endorsement of the public. When you come in here and talk, do not talk to the Opposition, talk to the people. They do not support this policy. They do not support any of our housing policies.

If you look at the kind of capacity that they were building for the past 14 years, it was not for ordinary Barbadians. Check across the landscape of this country and see who was benefitting substantially from the projects that were being undertaken, that is why they worry about that, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir.

When the Honourable Member spoke in the Second Reading, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East did not list any Government housing projects that had shut down. She listed all the private sector projects that she was most concerned about. Do you know why? Because we have even done more than they did and what they were going to do when they were in office.

Hon. M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members I am going to say this only once. Please, take your seat. We are in Committee of Supply in relation to the Estimates, and while I will entertain some points of order in relation to an allegation of misleading, I am not going to encourage constant points of order. What they do is that they impact on the time we have to debate the Estimates in Committee.

Honourable Members have, at large, 15 minutes and 15 minutes and 15 minutes to do all kinds of things. I am not going to entertain constant points of order where they relate to an allegation that the Member is misleading. Therefore, I am going to ask the Honourable Member for St. John to wind up and we are going to proceed.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir.

The point I was making is that nobody has criticised the Honourable Member for St. Philip North for stopping a project at Work Hall, for stopping one in Marchfield, for stopping them in St. Peter, even. In fact, the Honourable Member has been criticised for the work that he has been doing. I say it is a credit to the Democratic Labour Party and the Ministry of Housing, under the leadership of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, that people in this country think that they will, once again, get houses over others, Sir, and that is a credit to this Administration.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Honourable Member. Before you proceed, I just have two further observations which are for the benefit, I believe, of the entire Chamber.

We have two Standing Orders, one in relation to Members not reading newspapers during debate. I am not fingering anyone in particular, but I would want to encourage Honourable Members to adhere to that because, I think, there is a good reason for that being there.

The next one is that there is a practice and a Standing Order, I believe, for Members who enter and leave the Chamber, to pay due respect to the Chair. Now, it is my observation that some Members are not doing that. I would want to encourage conformity.

I think the practice is that once you do that the Chair recognises you. If you do not do it, you might find that the Chair does not recognise you when you stand up to speak. Therefore, please let us conform with these very good practices and encourage and uphold the high traditions of the House.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

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

Mr. Chairman, like the Honourable Prime Minister, I thought that this debate would have concluded by now, even though we have said, time and again, that the issue of housing is a very important national issue. I think that we, certainly, over the last day, would have ventilated significant portions of the discourse in relation to housing. Sir, some good suggestions have come from Both Sides of the House.

Mr. Chairman, I was a little surprised though at the debate late yesterday evening and this morning. Sir, being a person who has been elected on the strength of constituents in four housing areas in my Constituency, I think it would be remiss of me not to add my voice to this matter and, in particular, to really pour scorn on the Opposition Barbados Labour Party's position on this matter. I think the Prime Minister correctly articulated the issue, as it stands.

This is not an issue that we should reduce just to the intricacies of the Law. We understand that there are legal issues that will pertain and obtain whenever there is title to be transferred on anything. Sir, that is a fact, but the more fundamental point is the objective of what you are doing and why you are doing it.

The objective of the Democratic Labour Party in this matter has always been clear, to ensure that persons who have been in these NHC rental units for a substantial period of time, set in this instance at 20 years, should be entitled to enjoy the benefit of having some title over that property. Sir, that is the simple objective but a laudable, humane and equitable objective.

The reality is that the majority of those persons, if not all of them, would hardly have the opportunity to own a piece of the rock, to have a house, or to own land, but it seems as though the Democratic Labour Party Government is being criminalised - and one Honourable Member mentioned the words, criminal, stealing, highway robbery - that we could try within our collective wisdom, not only within the Party, but in the society, to introduce a just and equitable policy, to bring some level of egalitarianism to social policy in Barbados, and we could be considered as criminals in this society. Well if that is how a criminal is being adjudged, I plea guilty to helping residents in my Constituency to own something.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: They cannot own houses in Miami. They cannot do like some other Members of the last Administration and buy estates and plantations and talk about how you have driven half mile off the main road to get to the house.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: They cannot do that but, at least, they can have the opportunity with the assistance of the Democratic Labour Party Government of Barbados to own something, and that now is supposed to be some type of criminal act by this Government.

The fact is that every major social initiative that the Democratic Labour Party introduces, down through the years, the Barbados Labour Party has opposed them, every one.

When it was free school meals, somebody in the Barbados Labour Party said that they will take the pots out to sea, punch holes in them and stop the children from getting free school meals. They even went as far as to introduce 10 cents.

When it was free education, a big hurrah about if you educate a population, who are going to cut the canes? Do you remember that? A story is told in this country, anecdotally, that a former Prime Minister of Barbados, the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, when announcing free education, a permanent secretary said to Mr. Barrow, that we have to put together a Cabinet Paper. We have to do a study. We have to bring a Green Paper and a White Paper to get free education done, to which the former revered leader of this country said: "I will tell you how to do free education. All of the persons that you are taking money from this year, do not take any money from them next year." That is free education.

Asides.

12.20 a.m.

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, we want to complicate things because hidden behind the veil of complication is the fact that the Barbados Labour Party, as the Prime Minister has said, does not believe that the people in these housing areas should get those houses.

I distinctly remember that when the Town Hall Meeting was held at Deacons Primary School, the former Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, before his Damascus experience, went down there and made the point that, given the amount of money people would have paid over the years, that they should get the units for free.

He was harassed out of that meeting by the then Minister of Housing and Lands, the former Honourable Member for St. James South, so much so that he almost became the co-leader of the Barbados Labour Party and could not convince them that they should change their

policy in relation to selling the people the units. That is a fact. They even got him to change his mouth in the Election and he told the people to buy the units that they are getting a good deal, after being the person largely responsible for helping the Democratic Labour Party frame that policy.

I am trying to locate the antecedence of your inequality and the fact that you all do not believe that people in Barbados should own anything once they are poor. That is all it is. As the Prime Minister said, you hear about this Condominium Act, but it was none of that when they were selling the units.

Mr. Chairman, I too feel a little bad for the people from Rosemont and the Farm who have made the deposits, who the Other Side did not deliver conveyances to. They left office and not one conveyance was given to them. In fact, there is some issue over the land because it is possible that the land may have to be properly vested in the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Chairman, I said to my constituents in a town hall meeting that we had, the Minister of Housing and Lands was there, I did not make the point flippantly, that they should not pay for those units because we felt that the number of years they were paying rent, some of them 30 and 40 years, that they had, in fact, made the request to get those units.

Mr. Chairman, I always make the point that if you go down to Courts and buy a television for \$800 and four weeks after you buy the television you see Courts selling it for \$100, you cannot go back and tell Courts to give you back \$700. It does not work so.

Mr. Chairman, we have said to the people that we would utilise the deposits which have been made to meet the legal fee and to assist the Government's general upgrade, including the electrical upgrade and the things that need to be done to the units that have to be done in terms of maintenance.

Mr. Chairman, if you are selling a unit for \$30 000 and a person paid a deposit of \$6 000, and you now come and tell them they would get the unit for free under our policy, it means that you have saved that person \$24 000 because, under the Barbados Labour Party, they would have to pay \$30 000 and under us they would only pay \$6 000, if you want to call it that. Mr. Chairman, that is not what it is?

The Barbados Labour Party Opposition should be ashamed to be fighting this policy every step of the way. Last week we heard that they are going to put together some big legal team to examine the Constituency Councils. The Bill was out. They had no big legal team to explain anything, but given what has happened in here in the last

few days in relation to the interpretation of the Law, I agree they should get a legal team to advise them before they speak on matters pertaining to Law.

Sir, our policy is clear in relation to this. I hope that over time more people can qualify to receive these units. They are in your Constituency, Sir, just as they are in mine. The fundamental problem is that the Barbados Labour Party has wasted so much money over the years. When the National Housing Corporation should have been building more terraced units to take pressure off people, they were building a building at Warrens on a cave. Mr. Chairman, if that money was available to us, maybe we would have been able to give back the deposits.

Mr. Chairman, the biggest deposit we have to give back right now is to Barracks Construction, a wash pan of money. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew knows what is going on. Sir, we are now to be harassed out of this Chamber because we are trying our best to do something in the good name of the people of Barbados. I reject it, and the people reject it.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North better be careful because I am going to go up there and allow the residents in Eden Lodge and Grazettes to know that he does not want them to get those units. They need to be told that. We are going to have a meeting because we have to let people know. You are not going to hide behind that.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I am not going to be sidetracked by that because given the performance of the Leader of the Opposition in the last week, she should give back the salary.

We have to be serious in Barbados about what we are doing to empower... This Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands is trying his level best in most difficult circumstances to alleviate a problem that was created in large measure in the last 14 years, only to be harassed and harangued by the Opposition because they are trying to get a toehold into some argument that they cannot hold on to.

Mr. Chairman, we will give the units to the people that are eligible and entitled to them in spite of their objections. We do not do it for bragging rights. We do it because this society needs to be brought to some level of egalitarianism and equity. We are not creating a society of the haves and the have=nots. We have to bridge a gap to creating a homogeneous society in Barbados in which every citizen believes that they can have an opportunity to get food, shelter, clothing and security. That is what this Government is about, and if that is not what it is about, we could go home.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should use the opportunity to wind up.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I will wind up, Mr. Chairman. We could go home and stop coming here playing these legal games about this body interpreted this Law and somebody interpreted that Law. That is not the point.

Mr. Chairman, I end as I begin. The objective is to help ordinary people. If the Opposition is not about that, that is what we are about and we would continue to do so in the name of the people of Barbados, so long as they allow us the opportunity to serve in the Government of this country.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

12.30 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the DEPUTY SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER assumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: 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.

12.31 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (resumed)

Hon. R.D. JONES: I beg to move that Item 11 be postponed for further consideration.

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

The question that Item 11 be postponed for further consideration was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 13(A) – RESOLUTION TO RESCIND THE ALLOCATION UNDER ACCOUNT CODES 206, 207 AND 212 IN SUBPROGRAM 7085 UNDER HEAD 57 – MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS & INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT APPEARING IN RESOLUTION 37 OF 2008 APPROVED BY THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE ON DECEMBER 22, 2008.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution so mentioned be now passed.

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

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

ORDER NO. 13(B) – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION UNDER ACCOUNT CODES 206, 207 AND 212 AND TO PLACE THE SAID CODES UNDER SUBPROGRAM 7065 UNDER HEAD 57 – MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS & INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT APPEARING IN THE RESOLUTION 37 OF 2008, APPROVED BY THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE ON DECEMBER 22, 2008 AND TO MAKE CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS THERETO.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Resolution so mentioned be now passed.

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

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

ORDER NO. 14(A)

RESOLUTION TO RESCIND DESIGNATION HEAD 43 - MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND THE GRANT OF \$126 000 THEREUNDER AS APPEARING IN RESOLUTION NO. 21 OF 2008, PASSED BY THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE ON NOVEMBER 4, 2008 AND SUBSTITUTING THEREFOR HEAD 54 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Resolution so mentioned be now passed.

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

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

ORDER NO. 14(B)

Hon. R.D. JONES: I beg to move that the Resolution so mentioned be now passed.

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

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

ORDER NO.11 (resumed)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the Suspension was taken, this Honourable House was in Committee of Supply and to that it will now revert.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. S.A. LASHLEY, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Committee is now resumed. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We have had a very long debate on the issue of housing, admirably led by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and very well supported by Honourable Members on This Side, who recognise that the Honourable Member has, in fact, been doing great work on behalf of the people of Barbados. It has already been stated that housing is one of the primary needs and just like food and shelter, comes very high on the totem pole. This Government recognises that and has, in fact, been working to satisfy the legitimate demands of the people of Barbados for housing.

Mr. Chairman, we have been speaking a lot about housing for the working-class even though all of us are, in fact, working-class but, based on the economic stratification present in Barbados and in many other countries, we are particularly looking at persons who are working for salaries below \$2 400 or \$3 000 a month.

We have calculated, very deliberately, the impact of 40 per cent of their salaries towards repayment of a mortgage and one has recognised that there are several persons, as stated by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, who will not be able to own a house just based on the simple principal of obtaining a mortgage from any of the lending institutions in Barbados. Mr. Chairman, that is why the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has been very well supported on the rent-to-own concept, being part and parcel of the various tools brought to deal with the issue of housing in Barbados.

I know that the Other Side has argued that they had before a rent-to-own concept relative to land and, as per usual, they would not want to give the kind of appropriate explanation as to what they are talking about while, on This Side, we have, in fact, given the explanation as to what we are talking about. Mr. Chairman, we are not talking about a rent-to-own piece of land. We are talking of rent-to-own total properties, where persons could be sheltered in their various houses.

13.50 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, there is always a great divide between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party particularly when it comes to profound social issues, issues of education, issues of health and now issues of housing. It has been shown that the aggressive approach - I wanted to say "assertive", but it is an aggressive approach, because the Honourable Member has recognised that he has to move with speed and haste, because of the substantial backlog of persons who have been requesting housing for a number of years.

Sir, the social democratic State has to behave differently to a strict capitalist State and Barbados, under the Democratic Labour Party, has always demonstrated a strong commitment to the social democratic ideal. That is why we have always intervened in a very purposeful way to the provision of certain social goods in the building up of social capital within this country.

The transformation of Barbados has been led by that particular thinking, which has encouraged people and the State to work together in harmony to bring about all of those things which are necessary. Nevertheless, I want to insert that there is a group in Barbados that, sometimes, even with our best intention is left to the vagaries of the marketplace. That is what we call in Barbados the middle-class. I have always stated that the middle-class in Barbados can sometimes be two pay months away from disaster.

Most of the middle-class in Barbados do not have large reserves, a lot of shares and investments in Government Paper, Debentures, Treasury Bills or Treasury Notes. They are two pay months away from disaster, from having their properties sold. We do not necessarily want to force them into that marketplace in the private sector, where there is a heavy price to pay for housing in Barbados.

I continue to be amazed at housing 15 years ago, not new housing in this country, but 10 years ago housing could have cost \$150 000, \$160 000 or \$170 000 on 6 000 or 7 000 square feet of land, with a footprint of maybe 1 500 square feet for a house. Today people are asking \$750 000 or \$800 000 for that same property.

I do not think there are many persons who consider themselves to be part of the middle-class, who can get a mortgage for 30 years at \$1 500 a month to achieve that mortgage. I will have to pull a figure out of my hat but even if they qualify for a mortgage of \$800 000, they have to be paying over \$6 000 or \$7 000 a month to satisfy that particular mortgage. I did not do an accurate calculation, but that would seem to be the case.

Therefore, the State, as well, has to be able to make some provision to take care of that particular group of persons whom we are talking about. I am talking about teachers, and there are different categorisations of teachers according to the Education Regulations, or the Act that we have.

We can have teachers who start at Z36, at the bottom of the scale. We can have the graduate teachers whose maximum is Z2 in this scale, unless they act as a Head of a department or a Senior Teacher in the system whose salary might be around \$5 000 a month. Those persons, certain ranks of police officers, maybe some nurses, Staff Nurses and those Sisters, and other persons within the community, who one might want to classify as being part of the middle-class because they may be part of a profession, they too need that help.

I just want, as a colleague of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, to encourage him to look at that particular group as well so that they too can find shelter. You do not necessarily want to encourage them to get into competition, even though I know there is a particular demarcation used by the National Housing Corporation of just over \$4 200 to get a lot of the benefits which come from the National Housing Corporation. That group needs a hand-up as well so that they can satisfy their legitimate needs for housing.

I want to encourage the Honourable Minister of Housing, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, not to be dismayed. You will have those because they need to prove a point now as a result of their own failures in whatever form. They would want to argue that the Honourable Member is not doing anything. He is just appearing to be busy.

I have been able to visit Workhall, one Sunday morning, in the company of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, and a friend of his. We visited Work Hall and Marchfield and I was extremely pleased by the amount of houses that were constructed in a short space of time. I know we have been in Government just over 14 months but I want to make the point that the programme did not begin until September 2008.

If you spread it over the 14 months, there were a lot of preparatory phases - the actual construction would have

started in September, and the delivery of those two sets of houses is a demonstration that if, in fact, we are able to achieve a full year and the same process is in place, what can actually happen over that period. If you are able to deliver 80 or 81 houses between September, October, November, December, January, February and March, seven months, and that was at a pace that can be picked up four-fold by more persons in the private sector becoming involved with Government in the construction and delivery of these houses.

I would therefore want to encourage persons in the private sector in Barbados, to do like many of those who have been using the model that has been developed by the National Housing Corporation. You have access to capital, the National Housing Corporation has access to land, you work together to deliver solid housing solutions for the people of Barbados.

I am aware that there are other persons who are looking, because they care, not necessarily about the Government or the Party, those people out there care about the people of Barbados and they want to make that commitment to the people of Barbados, recognising that a disenfranchised person, a person who is placed on the periphery, or on the edge of the mainstream of Barbados can become a burden for us all.

Therefore, if we go into the truly inclusive concept of embracing all of our people by saying that you too must have shelter, you too must have food, you too must be given love, the basic ingredients necessary for the true evolution of a democratic society, then we would be making a sustained and a substantial mark.

It has been said in many of the speeches that the Honourable Member for St. George North, has possibly, in his short tenure in the Ministry of Housing, sought to make a mark. I am one who does not take anything away from an individual. I recognise that during his tenure of five years he did 345 houses or there about.

I know that there are many who speak of preparing housing lots. I represent a constituency that many persons argued is a middle-class constituency in the main, but dotted throughout that Constituency would be many vacant lots which create severe problems for those who were able to construct their houses next door.

2.00 p.m.

You have to call the Ministry of Public Works, persons from the Ministry of Health, persons in the NEED Programme, even citizens contributing to clear the lots, because during the rainy season, a lot of trees, bush and grass and other foliage grow at an extremely rapid pace. Then, you know that rodents - and I do not want to sound

like the Honourable Member for the City - but where there is a lot of foliage, rodents tend to develop a particular habitat for those particular areas, and residents become quite concerned.

I want to compliment all of those who have gone out from time to time and have ensured that at least 10 feet back from their homes have been cleared. This is not something I necessarily want to encourage.

I want to suggest, and there is reason for that, because I came up in a village where anybody who wants to build a house, and they had the land, on Saturdays and Sundays people used to go out and you would see how quickly these houses went up. Of course, there was always the presence of sugar cane juice and corned beef and biscuits early, so there was a constant movement of hammer and wood and galvanise in those days. Sir, there was also a constant movement of good Eclipse biscuits and good corned beef from Brazil or Uruguay.

I remember those days on Sunday mornings, and there was that culture in the country. Then later in the evening, there was a mass of beef stew and quickly tossed together rice. The white rum was always present. Sir, persons worked hard to ensure that somebody else in that village had a house.

I am sure that has not disappeared in many parts of Barbados, but it is suited to those parts that it can be developed. The self help model, and approach suited to certain areas where that strong community spirit still exists, Sir, within an economy where the commercial activity is still very much present, let that happen. In other areas, we still have to develop the full houses for those who want that solution.

Therefore, we have to work it together. Those who want lots to quickly build on, let them go ahead and construct their half and half houses, half timber and half stone. They are beautiful housing solutions. Many of us came up in those houses. Many of us were part of the environment where we worked from the back until we got to the front. We worked forward and we never considered it to be a discomfort, Sir, because at least we had shelter, until you had what used to be called a board bungalow. It is an interesting concept, but it is a concept which was used within the various villages of Barbados.

We know we are going through a transformation in how housing is being delivered, but we need most definitely to accelerate the pace. I am urging the Minister, all of the technical people and the administrative people in the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and the National Housing Corporation, to look at even more innovative techniques and models.

I am not satisfied. I looked at some documentation passed by the Minister of Housing, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, and I am a bit concerned that building the terraced units, as you call them, can cost an astronomical amount of money to get one unit.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Sir.

One has to look at bringing down that cost, particularly if it is a rental unit. Bring it down. It has to be brought down and I know that the Honourable Member and the Members of the National Housing Corporation will take that on board. Get building techniques that will bring down the cost, particularly the rental units, and the single units. Therefore, persons could still be able to rent and pay a good rent for those terraced units and those single units, also that persons would be able to satisfy their need for housing.

One would also want to encourage the architects to come up with designs that fill the eye and would say to persons, even though these are rental units, there is reasonable space for maybe a family of four to be accommodated, three bedrooms and whatever else that can be satisfied within those houses. They do not have to be 1 500 square feet in one of those houses. They could be 800 or 600, once they are comfortable, and people can have their esteem built up, as a result of the kinds of solutions that are being delivered by the National Housing Corporation.

I am sure that all those persons in the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing and Lands are now seeing and feeling a difference. Sir, people want to be motivated to produce. I am commending the Minister for providing that motivation for persons to think outside the box, to become creative, and being able to produce to bring those solutions that we so need in Barbados.

I would also want to encourage the Minister, as well, to do a complete relook of all those persons who, over the years, have been going to the National Housing Corporation to say that we want a terraced unit, we want a plot of land or we want a house. Do a proper and careful audit to see if, in fact, the numbers are 30, 40, 50, 60 or whatever, because people get tired after a while and they too, come up with solutions to satisfy their own immediate needs, even though some of those solutions might not be the best solutions that we would want within the country.

I have seen in places where persons use plywood to construct houses, and then put something outside of them. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West would

tell me what they put, if it is trowel plaster or something else. They are coming up with creative solutions, which are not always the best solutions for their housing. Just remember as well that we live close to the hurricane zone, and it is shifting more and more south every year. Therefore, we have to build houses that can, in fact, withstand winds of particular categories. Category five tends to be the highest.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up, please.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Sir.

Therefore, we need to do those solutions to satisfy the people of Barbados and, at the same time, protecting them and giving them adequate security within their homes.

Thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I must confess that the last speaker spoke very quietly, but he has made many substantive points, and I want to pick up from where he left off. He has spoken about the concept of self help housing, which was a concept that was used several years ago in Barbados, where communities got together to help each other, and this has helped to reduce the cost of labour.

Sir, in most developments today, the input labour cost is about 50 per cent of the building and it is very important that we do that concept. I endorse his speech because I made the point in this House yesterday that we could continue to look, historically, at who built this and who did not do that but, at the end of the day, we are not speaking to these Estimates.

Therefore, I want to say from the outset that these Estimates here represent what we will do in this year's programme. I want to say further, that when we look at the terraced units which are being built, we were told that we only built 178 in our time. Sir, but 178 units at that time, represented a considerable sum of money. Sir, look at what is happening today. The Honourable Member made the point that the cost of terraced units seem to be very high. Sir, 56 units at Country Park Towers were estimated to cost about \$12 million about two years ago.

2.10 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, five years ago, the cost to rent one of those units was approximately \$400 per month. It will cost the Government 45 years to get back the investment if it was done by the private sector. Mr. Chairman, the

Government has to make a value judgment. Do I want to build units at \$215 00 or do I want to build starter houses at \$90 000 per unit?

Mr. Chairman, that is the judgement that was made by myself and this Party several years ago. We had to provide lots. Mr. Chairman, that is one of the reasons we decided in 1994/95 that we had to acquire land. I heard Honourable Members make the point that we acquired a land bank, but the land bank is now paying dividends. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy keeps saying that we had a land bank but nobody built on it. We have lands at Lancaster.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by trying to give the House the impression that the land bank increased the number of lots that were available.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I have said, Mr. Chairman, that we had to acquire land. We acquired the land at Kendal Hill in your Constituency, Mr. Chairman, that will now pay dividends.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member said that they acquired land in your Constituency and that they will now pay dividends, which means that if you had 20 lots in your Constituency, because of their actions you would now get 25, so I want to know where are the additional lots.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, the first act of any housing programme is to acquire the land, and we had to acquire the land. We acquired almost 1 000 acres of land all across this island. The Minister of Housing and Lands could contradict me if he so desires, that it takes two to three years to move from conception of the land until the land is properly developed. Mr. Chairman, when I hear the Government bragging... I have made the point over and over again that the present Minister of Housing and Lands is doing a programme that he has inherited. When we left office in 2007, there were 876 lots and houses being developed at various sites across Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I would not be party to anybody who says that the Minister has done nothing. He has contributed. Mr. Chairman, I do not think that anybody from This Side is saying that the Minister has not done anything. We left in place, Mr. Chairman, 320 lots that were developed and 556 houses that were at various stages of development and 876 lots in all were in place, therefore, the Minister is continuing that programme just like the Minister of Transport and Works.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Transport and Works is continuing the ABC Highway. It has taken him 15

months to complete the ABC Highway, but it is our programme. I would hate to know that the Minister of Transport and Works could get up and say that he started the ABC Highway.

Mr. Chairman, we have to continue to do housing in this country for our people. There are several hundreds of people, and I heard the Minister say there are thousands of applicants at the National Housing Corporation that are requesting homes. In my Constituency, there are several persons who have a variety of problems. There are poor persons who are looking for house spots but they cannot find any. We need the Government to continue the housing programme as they say they would do at Hamblin's Land where you have 11 hectares of land which could give us another 150 housing solutions.

I have spoken to the Honourable Prime Minister who has given the assurance that he would approve the development at Groves, St. George because we have a number of persons... I hope that most of those solutions could be house spots rather than high-rise housing because I do not think we would need high-rise housing at Groves. We would need single lots and site and services to be given to persons who have problems.

Mr. Chairman, I have written the Minister about a situation where we have persons living with HIVAIDS, disabilities and all types of problems who need housing solutions, but they cannot find any. Only two days ago I interviewed a family that was put out of their home and they cannot find a housing solution. I know for sure that the National Housing Corporation does not have any housing down there, so there is no sense sending them at the National Housing Corporation. They do not have any units anymore.

I am of the view that we have to be able to find solutions. The self-help solution that the Honourable Member spoke about a while ago is important because, if we could find a lot for this family, then the community would get together and find housing for that person.

Mr. Chairman, I can speak about all the lots that were created in the past, but it does not help this situation. I could speak about the General Workers' Loan Fund and how we created a situation that people could obtain loans for their homes. All of these are things that we did to help empower poor people. We have, as a government and a Parliament to ensure that all of these solutions that we are speaking of become a reality.

The other question that the Government needs to look at is that of minimum housing. I think that there is a need to look at a standard housing where persons who are now occupying substandard housing could be improved. I think that the Government has to set standards. The

Government has to insist that rental standards should be a certain height, size and so on.

You cannot have a situation, Mr. Chairman, of persons who are renting a lot of derelict properties at very high cost, which is unfair to the poorest section of our people, so we definitely need minimum housing legislation. I could speak on that because several years ago we had a consultancy and initial work had been done in the Ministry of Housing and Lands to look at minimum housing legislation. That is what is necessary at this stage. There are still too many people who are renting very small rooms at astronomical prices and we have to do something about that.

Mr. Chairman, the whole question of infilling is another one that has been talked about here. Both Sides have done infilling at some time or another, whether it is a previous Democratic Labour Party, or This Side. We have done infilling at Grazettes, Deacons, the Pine, St. Barnabas and Flat Rock. Mr. Chairman, infilling is nothing new. All it is that the Government is doing is taking some additional lands that belong to the Government, or even land that does not belong to the Government... There are certain lands like Parish Land, St. George that was left by the vestry system that do not really belong to the Crown. The Crown has to now come and get title for it.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, the point is that in-filling is nothing new. We have already done in-fillings across Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We have done in-fillings across Barbados, for example, at Deacons. It has always been done and we will continue to do it, from time to time, but you have to have permission from the Town Planning Department.

Sir, there is the urgency to find house spots and therefore, left to itself, the National Housing Corporation might very well put up units that are not highly desirable in certain places. Therefore, approval should come from the Town Planning Department to look at, for example, how you are going to let green spaces remain, or what are you going to do to have a very worthwhile environment. Mr. Chairman, in-filling is nothing new. I will support it, but everyone does not like it because sometimes it leads to overcrowding. Sir, at the same time, it has to be done in a sensible manner.

Sir, when we talk about these things, we can look at the Inter-American Development Bank Programme, the Neighbourhood Upgrading Programme, which are giving poor people a subsidy. This was a pilot project that could

lead to a situation where persons could use the subsidy to provide housing for themselves.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, a subsidy is also given indirectly at the Urban Development Commission. When you build a house for a poor person, that is a start in itself and therefore Governments, over the years, have provided subsidies. Mr. Chairman, we are taking it a stage further by giving persons a direct subsidy so that they could use that self-help programme in order to get housing within a community setting. That was the aim of that particular programme.

Mr. Chairman, all those programmes that we are now hearing of have been used at some time or the other. They have been used in different ways. It is, as I would say, cold soup that has been warmed over, but we support any initiative to provide housing for the poorest of the poor because it is for those persons that Government has to provide housing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please wind up at this time.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. The Honourable Member is trying to give the impression that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is doing something they were doing before. Sir, it is clear what was said about the Honourable Member for St. Philip North cannot be warmed-over soup. I know warmed-over soup when I see it and this is not warmed-over soup. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North is bringing a new programme, new energy and different solutions to solving the problems for the masses of people.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that most of the concepts that are being used have been used at some time in the past. For example, if you look at our 2003 Manifesto, it speaks about rent to own. It speaks about homes for all. Sir,

I heard Government speaking about the various concepts which have been used to provide housing solutions and this is what we were saying since 2003. If you look at our Manifesto, page 23, it talks about homes within the reach of all, which is a similar idea to the HELP Programme that is being used by this Government.

Sir, we followed what was being suggested. I am not saying that we have achieved all of the things that we set out to achieve in 2003, but the programmes and policies were enunciated then within the framework of homes

within the reach of all Barbadians. In that programme, we talked about the rental of lots, leasing of lots for 25 years, about access to land. Sir, all of these things were done within this framework.

Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt that we will see more and more housing solutions in the next number of years. I am looking forward to housing solutions from the Government in St. George North. I am looking forward for more General Workers' Loan and at easier terms. I am looking forward for the revolution in housing, as we have heard. Therefore, I believe that if this is so, we should not have a problem with housing within the next five years.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, the manner in which this particular Head has evolved a debate forbids me from being eloquently mute on it, and so I enter this debate to agree with certain things said by the Honourable Member for St. George North, and also to make some observations about the question of housing in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I hailed from an area which, at the time of my birth, was a classic rural area, an area known for cane production at Lascelles, at Trents, at Porters, over the hill at Greenwich Village or Morgans, at Lancaster, at Blowers, at Sion Hill and Upper Carlton. Along with those areas of production, there were also efforts made by small people to supplement their incomes by raising what they called "stocks", whether they were goats, sheep, cattle or hogs.

Mr. Chairman, having provided that background, I must say what has struck me is that there is still a rural Barbados. One former Member of Parliament has said that if you take into account the size of Barbados and the speed with which you can traverse one part of Barbados to the other, then there is only one Barbados. Nonetheless, it has become politics for us to have a Rural Development Commission looking after rural affairs and an Urban Development Commission, to which I will refer later, looking after what is seen as urban Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, in my time as a youngster, the average Barbadian from rural Barbados wanted to own his or her own house, without necessarily approaching Government. I grew up in a Barbados where, despite the fact that incomes were comparatively small, individuals were still able to get hold of a piece of land and put a structure on it.

My only regret is that many people, over the years, went on to land and never perfected their titles to those land. They were what I would call the beneficiaries of processory titles. In rural Barbados, too much land has been subject to processory title, that is why almost every

week you would see in the newspapers applications to the High Court for a Registrar's conveyance to properties that should have been titled 40 or 50 years ago.

Mr. Chairman, in a situation where there were those who had access to land, as has been said in this debate, you could mobilise an entire community to do weekend work, free of cost, but subject to libation. That weekend work would very much end up in seeing structures erected at little or no cost to the owners. In those days, when Barbadians were able to access help to build on their own lands, there was a particular ethic, ethos or norm in Barbados, where community living was very much an expression, and very much in evidence.

2.30 p.m.

Sir, communities were able to rally behind members of the community and these were the days, Sir, when very few things distracted people from helping each other.

Mr. Chairman, the point I would like to make is this. The average country man or the real, real village man from the outskirts of metropolitan areas, given their own situation, rather go for a house spot and house on the house spot for themselves than expect housing out of Government.

However, in recent years persons tend to approach the National Housing Corporation, and even sometimes the Ministry of Housing as a matter of first resort for reasons, which I may not necessarily go into now. The point has to be made, Sir, that there is no question that the National Housing Corporation is, to many Barbadians, an institution that ought to offer hope to persons accessing housing.

Mr. Chairman, we in rural Barbados, given our own way, would definitely opt for house spots. You have heard the Honourable Member who spoke last said that the cost of establishing even a single terraced unit is phenomenal and astronomical. I believe that Government would be well advised to try to locate house spots at affordable rates. I am not going to enter the debate at the level of what policy should inform the acquisition of terraced units by occupants, but I want to see a greater thrust towards identifying parcels of land as house spots. "Own Your Own House" should be the slogan as far as securing your title and securing your right to occupying a house.

Mr. Chairman, during this debate, I heard one Honourable Member mentioned that one of the curses that has been inflicted on Barbados is the dry pit culture, a culture that just would not go away. Sir, that dry pit, much as it must be attacked and extirpated, is a culture that has evolved in some places in the metropolitan area simply because landlords refused to allow tenants to have proper water-borne facilities.

I believe it is not beyond us in this Parliament to bring a constitutional amendment, insisting that in the public interest, insisting that in the interest of proper sanitation, that landlords be made to permit people to have water-borne toilets without prejudice to their landlord rights of ownership. This has to be done if we are to beat the dry pit culture.

Mr. Chairman, not only is it outmoded, not only does it lack sanitation but in heavy rains, if you see what water can do when it interacts with a pit toilet, you would be amazed that we have escaped cholera for many years. This water-borne policy, initiated by the Rural Development Commission some years ago, encouraged by the Urban Development Commission more recently than the Rural Development Commission because the Rural Development Commission actually preceded the establishment of the Urban Development Commission but, these matters to do with sanitation went before both the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission.

Mr. Chairman, I am as hurt as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and the Honourable Member for the City that in a modern era where certain international indices suggest that we are developing, that we have to be fighting over something as basic as a water-borne toilet facility. I will, therefore, join with any Member or Members who would launch a broadside on dry pits and I would favour seeing more water-borne facilities island-wide.

Mr. Chairman, in rural Barbados, when certain people, as they say, catch themselves or catch their hands, they would invest either in the extension to their houses or invest in water-borne facilities. Sir, I did a few estimates out of curiosity to see how much it would take to install water-borne facilities and, Sir, it is not that costly.

There are people in Barbados, out in the country, who have been able to add the necessary facility and install the equipment necessary for the plumbing at less than 5 000. It is not too much for a government that will subsidise efforts like that to pay between \$3 500 and \$5 000 in the interest of proper sanitation; in the interest of ensuring convenience but also in the interest of launching a broadside against poverty because one of the measures of poverty has to be the continuing existence of dry pit toilets.

Sir, dry pit toilets equal poverty, and other things equal poverty too but, in circumstances where we are trying to modernise and move the society forward, we need to take care of our citizens. I apprehend that there are districts in this very parish where we are, which are very much prone to seeing effluent come up after a very heavy downpour.

Sir, Baxters Road and Mason Hall Street are sometimes flooded, not because there had been rain in the City, but because there had been rain elsewhere, it comes downhill and ends up in these places. Then, as I have said before, when that water interacts with a dry pit toilet, the flood waters then change character from being a nuisance and being a problem to being a potential catastrophe in an era where we would like to encourage as much possible sanitation as possible.

Mr. Chairman, relevant to all this about house spots and such like would be Cap. 224 of the Laws of Barbados - Chattel Building Security. Let me read from parts of this Chattel Building Securities Act that first had its genesis in 1913 and then was revised in 1954:

“Every such chattel mortgage, when duly proved and recorded shall, as regards the building thereby charged rank prior to all judgements of all courts, whether confessed or obtained before or confessed or obtained after such mortgage and it shall not be necessary to institute any interpleader or other proceedings for the purpose of protecting or serving such charge.”

Mr. Chairman, that is saying that where a chattel mortgage is in conflict with a judgment, let the chattel mortgage prevail. It also goes on to mention particular things that have to do with bankruptcy and such like. Sir, this piece of legislation, which remains on the Statute Book is a piece of legislation that I have seen used successfully in Barbados. However, too many financial institutions, some which ought to know better do not recognise chattel mortgages.

I have seen one of the bigger institutions in Barbados give the chattel mortgage; I have seen institutions with the poor man's interest at heart render chattel mortgages and, in response to those who do not like chattel mortgages on the grounds that you cannot really control where the chattel, which is being mortgaged is located, that they, therefore, cannot lend. There are commercial banks and other institutions which will not lend on the security of a chattel mortgage for fear that the mortgagor is going to keep moving the house around.

2.40 p.m.

I do not see why greater use should not be made of chattel mortgages in circumstances where there are people whose relationship with their banks and financial institutions, would normally qualify them for an amount of money to be secured, either by something that is powerful, collateral or certainly by something of value. I would like to see our return to chattel mortgages in the interest of raising finance and such like.

The last person I saw with a chattel mortgage got it and never moved or thought about moving. In circumstances in this small country where you might have heard that searches have been done for properties which are found, it is clear to me that there is not as great a risk attached to chattel mortgages as some would make out.

I conclude by looking at the Urban Development Commission's role to do slum clearance. One expressed provision in the Urban Development Commission Act says that the Urban Development Commission is empowered to do slum clearance. That is a revolutionary clause because it invites us to modernise the place by clearing away slums. Not every unoccupied building is part of a slum.

There are unoccupied buildings that are pretty new. It is just that nobody is in them, but derelict buildings cannot be defined as buildings where people do not live. Derelict buildings must refer to buildings which are decapitated, buildings which have rotted, buildings which are so bad that they pose environment threats and such like.

I welcome any measure that would see us do something about slum clearance, especially as we seek to position ourselves as the lead small developing country in the world. We should have particular systems in place supporting that perception that we are going places, and nothing should happen to hold back Barbados' development, but to see other States push ahead of Barbados when there are certain minor things that we can do locally in the interest of our people.

I conclude by looking at a matter that has already engaged this debate, the question of housing for emergencies. It is a part of every Member of Parliament's being to have to deal with house fires. I would not want to see a hurricane touch here to the same degree as hurricanes touched other parts of the Caribbean, then the Member of Parliament's being would be multiplied six hundred-fold.

Sir, it is every Member of Parliament's experience that when there is a fire, notwithstanding the excellent work of the Police and the Fire Department, all rest with the Member of Parliament, not just in the short-term but, certainly, to the medium-term and sometimes to the long-term as well, and we therefore have to work out systems by which we have housing for emergencies, not far-fetched, not too costly, but where people are evicted, there is also a ground for having housing available for such evicted people. Where people's roofs are badly affected by a hurricane then, certainly, we should have housing capable of accommodating these people, and where people are served notices to evict because the landlord or landlady says that they need the property, we should have sufficient housing stock to accommodate people on sensible terms.

The Barbados Labour Party established a temporary facility at Lancaster to house fire victims and, unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the Salvation Army which runs that facility, it is very hard to get out people who go into those temporary shelters.

Another shelter has been proposed for the old St. Thomas School. I do not know how far that is, but the problem is, when there are emergencies, whether through eviction notices, fire or hurricane, a lot of us who have sat in this Chamber for any length of time experience horrors trying to put the fire victims back in the position which they were in before the fire.

Sir, I have recognised that you have been quite liberal and quite generous to me and I will not trespass on your generosity any further.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, I rise to wrap up the debate under this Head. First I want to thank all Honourable Members of this Chamber for their contributions to this debate. We have heard a lot throughout this debate, particularly this morning we heard some mouthings from the Other Side in relation to the programme of the sale of the terraced units and the transfer of the terraced units.

Sir, before I get there, I also want to state to this Chamber that it was drawn to my attention, and I have discussed it with the Honourable Prime Minister. Information reaching me suggest that during the year 1998 - 1999, leading up to the Election of 1999, a number of \$5 000 loans were given at the National Housing Corporation. In fact, all you had to do was to deliver a promissory note. It has now been brought to my attention that in more than 90 per cent of the cases, those persons have not paid up.

Sir, let me draw this scenario to you. The Honourable Member for St. George North was not the Minister of Housing then, but I draw this scenario to you. People brought in letters, job letters and estimates as part of the condition to get loans. The procedure is, the Inspectors now have to check and verify the information. They were prevented from carrying out their duties in terms of verifying whether the conditions were met.

Sir, when the job letters were checked, some were unemployed. When the work addresses were checked, they could not find the people. They disappeared like Winston Hall. It took the Fund from a surplus to a deficit, 1998 - 1999, leading up to the Election. I said to the Honourable

Prime Minister this morning that we have to launch an investigation into this matter.

I am also concerned about what took place and the circumstances in which the contract was awarded for the Warren's building, that is the Al Barrack fiasco. I am not blaming the contractor. He is an innocent one in this matter.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I am suggesting that this file does not have a rosy smell and it offends the nostrils. I want to launch an investigation into that matter. Sir, some \$50 million was thrown down the drain, climbing daily, at a time when Barbadians were asking up and down for housing solutions.

Sir, if this is the housing solution that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew referred to, I would not like to see other housing solutions that he had, because his major claim to fame was the Warren's Building, which is now a strap around the necks of the taxpayers in this country. Again, \$60 million and the strange thing, Mr. Chairman, about it is that the Project Manager suggested that the contractor who received the contract, should not have been given the contract, but the contract went forth and now we are left, as a government, to grapple with that problem.

I will now turn further, Mr. Chairman, to the transfer of the terraced units. Now, of course, the foundation was laid that if you lived in a terraced unit for 20 years or more, and you were fully paid up in arrears, then you received your title.

Mr. Chairman, the stark reality is the difference between the two Parties. Could you imagine that a government at the then time, asked a pensioner of 67-years-old, who lived in a unit for more than 26 years, to go to a finance company and secure a mortgage to purchase the unit?

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, a government asked a 67-year-old pensioner to proceed to a finance company. Yes, it is here and I read.

"Dear Mam,

Proceed to a finance company with a view of securing a mortgage."

Sir, at 67 years old, and who lived in the unit for 26 years, Mr. Chairman.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, should be familiar with this matter, but we will speak to it after.

Not only that, Mr. Chairman, and this is the difference between the two Parties. The pensioner paid a further \$10 000 out of her pension and gratuity, to the Barbados Labour Party, under the Barbados Labour Party's policy.

Mr. Chairman, the Democratic Labour Party came into Government, went through the list and sent her a letter that said, you qualify and you are entitled to your unit, free of cost, not knowing that the woman had paid out her pension money to the Barbados Labour Party.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: This is a government with a merciful hand that believes in justice.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is not about blowing a trumpet. You all blew away the woman's pension money.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, but a pensioner who would have contributed directly and indirectly to the development of this country, worked hard for all those years, and paid rent for 26 years. Not only that, but they said to her that as soon as she paid her pension, pay \$500 in rent monthly, and try and pay another \$21 000 in four years, so at age 71, she is still paying. Therefore, this is the difference between the two Parties.

Sir, my heart is burning me on this matter that a government of the day which said in its Manifesto that every Bajan is a winner, obviously, they did not mean this 67-year-old woman. She was not included in this category that every Bajan is a winner.

Mr. Chairman, I have some further conveyances here too, that the purchase price, when people live in them is \$72 000. They had paid up and the conveyance recorded by Duguid, at Bonnetts, again, for \$51 000.

Mr. Chairman, I will speak to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, who is my good friend, because he was not a member of the Cabinet. I will also speak to his friend, Mr. Abed.

Sir, you know that in their 1991 Manifesto, they said that they would offer the tenants of the National Housing Corporation, the opportunity to purchase their homes, as condominium units, with the rent being credited back to the purchase price?

Mr. Chairman, if I was not a Minister today, I would go back to my office, take up my bands and head to the High Court to work on behalf of that pensioner, pro bono, against the injustice that was carried by the then Government.

Sir, they are coming in here talking as if This Side does not have attorneys. I practised in every single Court in this country, the Magistrates Court, the High Court, Court of Appeal, Tribunals, everything I practised in, and I did conveyances, too. Mr. Chairman, I do not understand the Other Side's pronouncements.

It is also interesting that if they made tenants pay for the units, but come today and said that they support our policy, so what they are saying is that they want us to indirectly correct their bad policy. It was indeed a confession on the part of the Opposition that what they did to the tenants, was wrong.

Sir, I am going to visit this 67-year-old pensioner. It is a travesty of justice. I am sorry that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is not here because, again, an investigation will be launched into the award of the contract at the Warren's Building.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, then they further proceeded by asking what land was acquired by this Government. Mr. Chairman, under the Land Acquisition Act you could acquire land by private Treaty. They probably thought that the lawyers on This Side did not know that you could acquire land by private Treaty.

Mr. Chairman, if you receive a conveyance for Woodbourne, Clifton Hill or Branchbury, is that not acquisition? It is now Crown land, so to come in here... Mr. Chairman, I have two former Ministers of Housing and Lands shadowing me now. I can take them on. When I was in Opposition, I shadowed the Ministers of Housing and Lands by myself.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: They are criticising a revolutionary concept, to use the word of the Honourable Member for St. James North, of "rent-to-own". Mr. Chairman, every time you bring a social programme to lift up poor people, it is being criticised. We brought the rent-

to-own concept to assist the poor and needy to ensure that they become property owners in this country.

Mr. Chairman, we did not introduce in Barbados a rent-to-room concept. We did not aid and abet a rent-to-room concept in Barbados. That concept was not aided and abetted by our policies.

When I was in Opposition, poor people were looking for housing, or for a piece of land, and they could not get any. We had landlords putting out people because they believed that if they put out Barbadians and include the Guyanese, they could rent out the properties room by room and put five beds in a room to the detriment of Barbadians out there seeking house and land. That type of approach was not aided and abetted by us.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, what we need in Barbados, and I heard the Attorney-General with it, is serious tenant education. Mr. Chairman, I do not understand how a landlord can rent a premise in a monthly tenancy and then give persons one week's notice to leave, and then using the eviction notice like a court order. You cannot evict unless there is a court order. Mr. Chairman, tenants are coming to us trembling and wondering if it is true that this notice to quit is so powerful that the landlords could get them out.

Mr. Chairman, the Attorney-General and the Ministry of Housing and Lands are looking at this matter in terms of amending the necessary legislation so that we can protect the right of tenants. Mr. Chairman, the amendments will not impact negatively on the rights of landlords. Sir, there must be a balancing of the rights of the tenants and the rights of the landlords.

Mr. Chairman, we must also look at minimal standards in terms of accommodation. The Ministry of Housing and Lands will address those matters in the next financial year.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. George North says that it takes time to acquire land. Mr. Chairman, we have acquired land within the year by private treaty and the land would be surveyed very shortly, so I do not understand this three-year and four-year thing that the Honourable Member says it would take.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: The Honourable Member for St. George North would know that well because he acquired land at Constant in 2002 and I brought it to this House in 2008 when the formal acquisition process was completed in this House.

Mr. Chairman, I asked the Honourable Member for St. George North what the other Minister of Housing and Lands did with the Constant file because...

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I had to actually retrieve the Hamblin's Land file. I had to look at it and I am wondering what caused the delay. It was not me that said that the former Minister of Housing and Lands was only interested in Latin dancing and real estate.

Mr. Chairman, we have to look at some serious concepts in housing. Sir, the infilling programme is a programme that we have to move forward with. Again, Mr. Chairman, the infilling programme was criticised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. I did not know he had so much mouth because I remember going to the Law Courts and seeing him and I never heard his voice yet. Mr. Chairman, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North could criticise an infilling programme...

Mr. Chairman, the infilling programme would not be a reckless approach. We would engage the various agencies connected to housing. In fact, we met with the Town Planner, the Barbados Water Authority, the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage and other interested parties. Mr. Chairman, we journeyed to Silver Hill, The Pine and other areas and the Town Planner said to us that we cannot get this area of land because that land must remain as an open space in terms of whether there is an emergency, for recreation or whatever, but that we could utilise this other part which would not negatively impact on the existing housing estate.

Mr. Chairman, we decided that there is a necessity for rental units and Cabinet recently instructed the Ministry of Housing and Lands to acquire the building at Mason Hall Street in the City to start the construction of rental units.

Mr. Chairman, we also looked at the fact that there were some inactivity in St. Andrew in terms of housing. I challenged the Honourable Member for St. Andrew who got up in here and said that he delivered some 3 000 housing solutions...

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, from the time the Honourable Member made the speech, I got calls from people as far from as St. Andrew. Sir, all this morning people were asking me: "Mr. Lashley, I want to know where is the 3 000 housing solutions that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said that he delivered to Barbadians." They said that they are suffering in St. Andrew. I said to them that the HELP Programme will be coming soon to St. Andrew.

Mr. Chairman, Cabinet instructed the Minister of Housing and Lands to acquire land at Greenland, St. Andrew. Only yesterday the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation...Sir, again I want to congratulate the Staff at the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the former Permanent Secretary, the present Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Lands for their hard work over the years and for they continued hard work so far.

Mr. Chairman, when we could have agreed to look at acquiring land in St. Andrew, where we could at least deliver 272 houses in St. Andrew, I could understand why the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would be so scared and concerned.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am not getting into how many votes the Honourable Member for St. Andrew wants to buy, but I understand why he is so concerned. Sir, rest assured we will be constructing houses in St. Andrew. The lawyers for the vendors have contracted the Ministry of Housing and Lands and they are now into negotiations. This is being done by private treaty and only this morning we sought the permission of the vendors, through their attorneys-at-law, to move in on the site to start the construction of the roads to get the infrastructure in. Sir, that is a process that we have to get permission from the vendors attorneys-at-law and also the beneficiaries of the particular estate. Sir, once we get that in writing, once there is a Letter of Intent from the Crown that they will be compensated, then we can move with full haste.

Mr. Chairman, there was a lot of talk about throwing out Manifestos and promises, and I can go back to 1994. I remember getting up in this Honourable House and asking the Barbados Labour Party what had become of their promise to institute a form of compulsory home insurance, in which the Government would take responsibility for the aged and infirmed. I asked about that social contract.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: The former Prime Minister said his Manifesto is a working policy, a document of the Government of Barbados, and so they would be guided by their Manifesto. I can go into their Manifesto...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has five more minutes.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, let me go to the matter of emergency housing. Mr. Chairman, a former Government, which was in power for 14 years, could suddenly, like Rip Van Winkle, wake up and say: "You

know something, we need emergency housing; one-quarter of the housing stock should be emergency housing."

Mr. Chairman, what foolishness am I hearing? It was only a couple of months ago that we, including the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, met on a Friday up to 8.00 p.m., stopping me from having my fun as I normally do on Friday evenings, and we decided that we would conceptualise a programme on emergency housing. In fact, we identified a site for that emergency housing programme. Sir, it did not take us 14 years to decide that we needed an emergency housing programme, neither did we put the land into a land bank.

Mr. Chairman, once again, for the Leader of the Opposition to say that we have not done anything for low income earners when we have started the acquisition process... In fact, we have already plot land for the \$5 lots programme and these lots will be given to first-time homeowners. Sir, people who never had the opportunity under the former Government can now buy a piece of land at \$5 a square foot.

Mr. Chairman, if that is not visionary, then I do not know what is, but everything this Government has done is now being criticised. The Opposition is trying to put up a number of stumbling blocks, like pulling up and reading the Housing Act for the first time in their lives. They had to ask the Attorney-General for the Chapter. Well, I called it out of my head. They looked at the Housing Act, yet read it wrong. They tried to put stumbling blocks in the path of ordinary Barbadians who suffered under their leadership.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that it is the issue in relation to that pensioner that is hurting me. Sir, I am using the phrase of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. Sir, this 67 year-old pensioner who, in the evening of her years, had to take up \$10 000 out of her pension to pay for a unit, after living in it for 26 years and paying rent for all of these years. Sir, this lady was asked to pay a further \$21 000 or else.

What is that, Mr. Chairman? I believe that any right-thinking member of this society, any good or any decent politician would get up in this Honourable House and apologise to that lady. We on This Side will visit her and will apologise to her on their behalf, for that grave injustice on that pensioner.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

On the motion of Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, seconded by Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, the question that Head 38, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 66

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, WATER RESOURCES AND DRAINAGE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$131 825 505

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

3.20 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to lead off this debate on this Head. As you would recall in my second reading presentation I sought to lay a broad framework for our Government's thinking and policy on matters relating to the environment. The Ministry of Environment, Water Resources and Drainage was created by the Honourable Prime Minister to ensure that Barbados joins with countries the world over to place at the heart of its sustainable development efforts the importance of protecting our environment, our natural resources, both land-based and marine-based resources, so that in going forward we do not find ourselves in growing a population at peril because of the degradation of our environment.

Sir, the environment of Barbados, as is the environment of many other countries, continues to face the challenges of global warming and climate change; challenges that, if not confronted and if not managed effectively, could leave us at peril of passing on to the next generation a society that is not what should not be passed on, or bequeathed to those who follow us. The Honourable Prime Minister commitment to this Ministry is demonstrated in the fact that \$131 825 505 has been designated to fund the programmes of this Ministry that include 12 different departments and statutory corporations in total.

Mr. Chairman, the remit includes the following: Create a road map that would place Barbados as the leading green economy among Caribbean and Latin American countries.

The Ministry of Environment, Water Resources and Drainage will be involved with exploring with a view to introduce an aggressive emission testing programme beyond a specified age as part of their road worthiness and design, develop and deliver a menu of related services aimed at promoting the green economy, protecting our water resources, effectively managing the production, disposal and treatment of waste and develop, and implement adaptation and mitigation strategies that would enable us to respond more effectively to environmental degradation resulting from climate change, flooding, beach erosion and the like.

Mr. Chairman, it is true that if we contemplate where countries are today globally, in their assault on climate

change issues, we would discover that the perils of seeking to maintain a certain quality of life for our citizens can sometimes fall in conflict with our commitment to maintain a solid environmental protection policy and practice.

Mr. Chairman, we know that human activity intended to meet our growing demands for food, water, energy, commercial development, transportation, global warming, green house gases emissions, life style choice and consumption patterns all contribute to the climate change degradation of the environment.

Mr. Chairman, what we have to do, and what we intend to do in the Ministry of Environment, Water Resources and Drainage, is to ensure that we have a tightly integrated process for managing the affairs of this country, where once we pursue those things that are necessary: food, water, air and all the other things that we do not pursue them at the detriment of the degradation of our country. Sir, that is at the heart of how we wish to pursue this whole matter of environmental wellness and environmental protection.

Mr. Chairman, we have to recognise that there are a number of persons in the past, who would have contributed to our country standing on matters related to the environment, and we acknowledge the contribution of those persons, but this Government has brought to the fore an innovative and creative approach to taking this country forward.

It is not our intention to do business as usual, but if we are going to be able to combat the challenges of the economic meltdown and the challenges of climate change, it means that we have to find creative ways in these challenging times to be able to keep our country moving forward and moving forward at a sustainable pace.

Mr. Chairman, I am confident that as we go forward with the vision of this Ministry, that we would be able to see the kinds of activities that would lend to our economic sustainability and activities that would also lend to the sustainability of our environment. We do not see ourselves as so removed from the perils of the global situation that would allow us to be comfortable where we are or where we found this country.

We have to pick up the country from where it was left. We have picked up the pieces. We have to try to re-instill in our people the kind of hope that this Government has the ideas; that this Government has the courage to take bold steps to move this country forward, and we intend to do so, Mr. Chairman, with the help of the Almighty.

Mr. Chairman, we understand that to prevent the most catastrophic outcome of global warming and to build a sustainable society that we must incorporate

environmentally sound values, embrace, social, economic and lifestyle systems that promote green economics, social and physical environments where all of us could live, work and play.

We must also advance activities that are environmentally sound. We must advance activities that are socially just and we must advance activities that are economically viable. Sir, whether it is China, Poland or the United States of America, all of these Governments are seeking now to convert their economic base to a green economic base where they could find new job opportunities, create new technologies, find alternative sources of energy and are able to move their country forward while, at the same time, sustaining a high quality of life and the viability of their economies.

Mr. Chairman, we are now talking at a time where the challenges of these times are most perilous. We are now speaking at a time when we contested the Election, the outlook was not as it is today and, therefore, we hear the criticisms of what we promised, and what we are delivering.

3.30 p.m.

Our Honourable Prime Minister has had to take the kinds of judgment calls to ensure that while we must seek to move the country forward, at the same time we must sustain a quality of life for our citizens, and we must sustain a kind of environment that protects the interest of our citizens. Therefore, we have nothing to be ashamed of.

As a matter of fact, we have done well over the last year and anticipate that once we stay focussed, once we continue to press on, we will be able to achieve greater heights as we manage this country forward. We do not expect to be embraced by the Opposition. If they embraced us they would have been over here. The fact that they are sitting over there, they almost have to oppose. As we have seen today on the debate that proceeded this debate, they sometimes oppose for the sake of opposing.

Sir, we understand that the Ministry's response to this remit would be bold, and we would be driven by the leading edge research and development. We are not driven by hunches and we are not driven by following what other countries are doing. Barbados has to take a position that is grounded in research technology that allows us to use our systems that are domestic and indigenous systems to improve upon where we are going. That is why the Ministry is so cogently created, if you will.

We have the Water Resources, Drainage, Coastal Zone, Water Authority, the National Corporation Commission and we have the others that are working together to create an eco system approach to how we

manage the country. I am pleased and honoured to have the opportunity to be managing this Ministry at this time.

Sir, we have to combine short-term strategies with long-term investment; short-term strategies that include conservation, efficient use of resources and the use of renewable resources, as well as long-term investments in clean technology research and sustainable development strategies.

The emerging transition to a low carbon and sustainable green economy holds great promise for economic growth, prosperity and innovation and the creation of green jobs. Sir, the world over, leaders of developed and developing countries, are now seeking to understand how they can convert the old ways of doing business to a new way of doing business. When we choose to do business from a green perspective we are, in essence, on the one hand advancing the way we live and move while, at the same time, sustaining an economic base that allows persons to be gainfully employed, to find new employment options, to develop new skills and to be able to live comfortably in their society.

Therefore, we believe that we must be bold in pursuing this new green technology and new discoveries, coupled with forward-thinking public policy that advance sustainability and encourage public green partnership in investments, that would transform our economic landscape and products, services and jobs as well as moving towards that greener future.

Sir, that is part of the total bed rock of this Ministry. It certainly can be more comfortable to just come and talk programmes. I made the point earlier in another discussion that this Government does not simply operate from a position of programmes. Our programmes are steeped in the principles of a philosophy and that philosophy teaches us that we must always put people first in whatever we do. We must not just simply move because one country is moving in one direction, and another country in a different direction. We must move because we fundamentally believe that the actions of Government must lead towards a higher level of living and a more sustainable kind of lifestyle.

Sir, let me zero into some of the programmes. I want to start with the whole matter of drainage. I have said before and would say again, this Opposition has made it a practice of trying to "pooh pooh" the fact that there is a Drainage Division in the Ministry of the Environment, and that this Honourable Minister is the Minister for Drainage. I am, and I am proud of that.

The former Prime Minister made a declaration in this country some years ago, that flooding would have been a thing of the past. Yet, every single time the rain has fallen

in this country, hundreds, perhaps thousands of Barbadians have been inconvenienced because of flooding issues across the country. Let me make the point that we are not suggesting, by no stretch of the imagination, that as we start this journey we are going to resolve all of these problems right away, but we can tell you that this Government is committed to revolutionising how we deal with drainage management in this country.

I assure this country that we will stick to the task to ensure that all of those avoidable circumstances resulting from flooding will be fixed in this country, from the North to the South and from the East to the West. It is the remit of this Ministry, and we are committed to that. That is why we have designated over \$12 million towards the Drainage Division for this particular financial year.

Sir, the vision that drives this Division is to establish and execute a sustainable Drainage, Management and Flood Prevention Programme, that successfully remediates the perennial flooding problems around the problem. It is a total embarrassment when the rain falls and the City floods. Some of the key areas are where people reside.

It is an embarrassment that after all of these years, after the last 14 years, eight successive years of economic growth, exorbitant returns from VAT, the last Administration did absolutely nothing to fix the flooding problems in Barbados.

I have to compliment my predecessor in this area, not in this Ministry but in the Ministry of Public Works who once managed the Drainage Division. I have to compliment him because in his efforts, he sought desperately to bring some life to the whole matter of flood prevention and drainage management in Barbados. I assure him and the rest of the country that we will pick up from where he left off, and we would make this system work and make it work well, because it is priority for this country.

Sir, the objectives are, to remediate the incidents of flooding around the country; to mitigate disaster risk that result in flooding in populated and non populated areas of the country, to ensure that there is a fully operational Drainage Division equipped with the personnel, skills, technology and equipment necessary to effectively and efficiently execute this mandate, and to deliver a national response and prevention policy that would see the continuous work programme that aggressively seeks to mitigate all of the conditions that cause incidences of flooding to occur.

This continued work programme is a programme where we are not only going to clean wells and so on at a certain time of the year, but putting in place a year round programme that we would continuously provide that kind of watchful service when it comes to cleaning wells and

constructing new wells; when it comes to clean drains and so on, water courses and the like that there will be continuous effort put in place through the staff of the Division, to ensure that those services are executed.

We will also establish a zone-based deployment system, where five zones are established, Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central zone to allow for the allocation and management of resources, manpower, equipment and finances.

Sir, we realise that you do not just fix drainage challenges by cleaning wells. You do not just fix drainage problems by cleaning water courses. There has to be a systematic effort, a programme that allows us to go around this country. We should know where every well exists. We should know where there are hot flashed areas in the country where flooding occurs. We should know whether the water courses are blocked. We should know whether it is illegal dumping that is affecting our water courses.

15.40 p.m.

All of these things, we should have under our control. We have to modernise and upgrade the system to ensure that we have our finger on the pulse to be able to deal with those issues as those issues emerge.

Mr. Chairman, in order to fix the flooding problems in Barbados, we are going to start with the City of Bridgetown. We have already started some important work in the place popularly known as Headleys Land, but it is called Brathwaite's Road, and has been a project that the last Administration rained on its parade. They picked at it and I remember one of the first things that the Honourable Member for St. George North said to me when I was designated this portfolio, is that Minister, you have to go and get that project finished.

The truth is that unlike what they would have done with Sherbourne Centre, now the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, we moved immediately and established a work programme of more than half a million dollars to restart that project. I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. George North told me since these debates started, that he passed there to see what kind of progress is being made, and he brought a glowing report on the progress of that project.

Those residents have suffered for years. Every time the rain falls, it floods in that area. Now, I can say to the country, with 100 per cent assurance, thanks to the abled service and leadership of those who are manning the Drainage Division, that this problem in well on its way to being completely fixed.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: I should remind the Honourable Member for St. George North that I have only been on the job since December, but the point is that we are so serious about these issues, so that we are not just going to sit and talk about them and make any national declaration about the flooding being a thing of the past.

Sir, we are going in there and get the job done. It is the commitment of this Government to the people of Barbados; that in lean economic times we will try to handle and manage our monies in such a way that those critical things which become discomforts to the residents and the citizens of this country, we will get those things sorted out.

Mr. Chairman, that is not the only project we have started. There is a Hometown Flood Mitigation Project that we have started. This Project entails reinstating approximately 250 meters of watercourse channel. I have been there to visit with the workers, and the problem down there has been serious. It only presents itself next to the road on the Hometown area, but the problem starts way up the watercourse.

Therefore, when I was taken on a tour we saw that people had thrown debris and had obstructed the watercourse, and that in cases where the water should have been flowing and mitigated in a way, the water was coming continuously down, bringing down all the debris, filling in the basin in the Hometown area, and affecting how the water was getting into the drainage system.

The workers had gone down there and, in the shortest possible space of time, the first phase of that Project is well underway. I cannot tell you how many calls we have gotten from property owners and from persons in the area, complimenting us on our immediate response to the issue there in the Hometown area. Sir, that is going to be a continuous project, because we have to do Phase 2 and Phase 3, and we will work to make sure that the problem is completely alleviated.

Mr. Chairman, we have set a cost of \$500 000 for that project, and we have set a time-frame of six months. I have been assured by the officials there that it will be a project on budget and it will come in on time. Sir, that is also important, in how we manage our processes.

Sir, we know what we have to do, because fixing flooding is not only cleaning wells, clearing watercourses and the like. It is also about building an education system, where citizens become a part of the maintenance of these services.

I believe it is important, Mr. Chairman, that first of all, developers cannot be allowed to continue to engage in developments that come into conflict with watercourses in Barbados. I have spoken already to the Chief Town Planner

to ensure that when developments are coming on stream, the Drainage Division is given a say, so that we can insist on the standards that are put in place to protect our water sources.

Sir, what we have now, are builders who are coming, and they are building on the coast. They are erecting huge buildings, and that has created complications for us, in terms of the watercourse system in Barbados. This is not only happening on the West Coast. It is happening on the South Coast, and wherever you go in Barbados, if you are not careful.

As a matter of fact, the Honourable Member for St. George South raised an issue in this debate already, where people are buying parcels of land on ridges and to expand their land, they are filling in the gullies, so as to create more space. This is not something that we can allow to obtain in this country.

Sir, what we are saying is that we are going to examine the forces that influence incidents of flooding, whether they are obstruction of watercourses due to illegal dumping; the blockage of existing drain systems; inadequate wells; soil degradation; the reduction of land cover, where people unscrupulously remove trees and so on and put the soil at risk; the erratic weather patterns, which we cannot do anything about because they are the products of climate change, and so on. Sir, whatever the circumstances are, we are going to ensure that we respond in an aggressive way to make sure that the circumstances do not deteriorate any further.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has five more minutes.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, we also have to look at the construction of wells. In the past, unfortunately, we have had individuals who have engaged in very unscrupulous practices in terms of fulfilling their contracts, relative to wells. What we have asked our officials in the Division to do is to ensure that they set new standards, and that any well contractor who comes on board meets those standards, and that the supervision of that work is something that is done consistently. Therefore, when a project is finished, it meets a battery of tests to ensure that it can do the job that it was designed to do.

We are not just going to let people come with machinery and dig holes and say they dig a well, case a well and then ask for a cheque. That is not going to obtain. We are going to run a very tight system in terms of being able to ensure that the persons who are contracted to deliver these services, deliver them at the standard that they are supposed to be delivered.

What are some of the consequences of poor flood management? We have soil disruption and dislocation, social, soil erosion, the damage of crops, livestock, and the like.

I grew up in St. Andrew, Mr. Chairman, as I would have mentioned before, and I remember the days when flooding was a major challenge. I also remember how people would lose their houses, cars, appliances from their homes, their livestock, chickens, et cetera, all because there was no flood prevention management structure that would have protected the residents and citizens in those areas closest to river banks and those kinds of things.

I am glad that we have passed that stage, to some extent, Mr. Chairman, and now we have a bona fide Drainage Division that will be looking after many of those issues that would have affected citizens in the past.

What kind of response is required? An integrated response - The Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Town Planning Department, the Coastal Zone Management Unit, the Ministry of Transport and Works, and the MET officials, et cetera. All of these agencies must come together at some point in time, and decide on an integrated response that would allow us to be able to achieve our objectives in that regard.

3.50 p.m.

A year-round flooding prevention approach, the application of technology and a highly technical approach in terms of coastal defenses like protecting our sea walls, beach nourishment or the replacement of sediments, sea barriers like long strips of land in the midst of the sea and employed water harvesting techniques like damming and mobile collection of run off water are some of the things we have to do in order to be able to succeed in this effort.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Prime Minister has designated this Ministry to take on this challenge and we are going to take it on by engaging the public. We are going to go to communities. We are going to hold Town Hall Meetings with residents and get them to inform us of the things that we need to know about their community, and we are going to set up a flood prevention hot line where we invite the public to call in areas that they know that the Ministry needs to be aware of so that we can respond to those kinds of issues.

Mr. Chairman, whether it is in the City or in the country, this Ministry is ready to get the job done relative to drainage and flooding in Barbados.

I thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 66 stand part.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, there can be no doubt that in the last 15 years international attention has been correctly focussed on matters to do with the environment. Time was when, in the pursuit of a number of activities, little or no attention was paid to issues like global warming. In fact, if you spoke about the environment 60 or so years ago all that would have been mentioned would have been pollution, whether pollution on land or marine pollution.

The Honourable Member who just sat started his speech by referring to the phenomenon of global warming. Global warming, Mr. Chairman, is real. Global warming is not only real, it represents a significant threat to particular places especially coastal States and small island countries as well.

Sir, one of the effects of global warming, as we contemplate events in Antarctica and possibly events that would emerge in the Arctic, is the whole question of the extent to which global warming can lead to a number of occurrences including sea level rise. Sea level rise is one of the consequences of global warming.

At the same time, evidence in countries like Germany, Sweden and other countries in Europe, North America and Canada, shows that not only has there been global warming, but that weather patterns have become entirely unpredictable. Mr. Chairman, looking at the whole question of the effects of global warming with its consequential sea level rise, we in Barbados cannot be complacent. We need to truly understand the problem and, having understood and located the problem, we need to look for solutions.

Picture, Mr. Chairman, the situation on the coast coming from Atlantic Shores and going right down to St. Lucy. If it happens that sea level rise is not checked, and if the work of the Almighty, along with work by others is ignored, then we put ourselves in peril. Our coasts, including the East Coast with reference also to the South Coast, the West Coast and the North Coast, have not escaped developments and a lot of our hotel plant is located on the coast.

Picture, Sir, a situation where there is sea level rise sufficient to come in from the narrow shore right on to land and undermine the foundations of a whole set of buildings on the coast. Sir, picture situations where, through soil

erosion, you can have destruction to property including property that has an economic value and sentimental value to those people who live on the coast.

Sir, This Side of Honourable Members have no difficulty in supporting measures that would deal and treat to the whole question of sea level rise and global warming. It is at this stage, Sir, that I want to pay special tribute to the Coastal Zone Management Unit and its works. The Coastal Zone Management Unit has not, as a public service provider, been tardy or lax in its responsibility to Barbados. Sir, it is through the Coastal Zone Management Unit that a number of interesting occurrences have taken place. Our Coastal Zone Management Unit has been able to do beach enrichment at several sites along the coast.

Mr. Chairman, I take it that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East understands that some Inter-American Development Bank funding had been made available to the Coastal Zone Management Unit in its fight to protect the coast.

Sir, I recall as a boy going to a place called Crane Beach in St. Philip, a lovely beach it was, certainly between 1960 and 1980 and then...

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Like you, Mr. Chairman, I am forbidden from hearing asides, but anybody familiar with the beach erosion that occurred at the Crane would tell you how one lovely beach suffered the consequence of beach erosion.

Mr. Chairman, it is a tribute to the Coastal Zone Management Unit that restorative work to bring back that beach has started and the beach enrichment programme has been paying dividends. This is not a programme that started since January 2008. This is a programme that has been ongoing.

Mr. Chairman, picture also a situation where when the seas rise and the temperature accompanying the increase in global warming comes about, and picture a situation where those creatures who live beneath the seas and who would have been accustomed to one temperature suddenly being at risk...

There is no question that we no longer see some of the sea creatures, if we want to call them sea fauna we can, which were well-known in Barbados over the years. For example, in the sea you hardly come across a rockhind, and a chub now is relatively rare. Similarly, with the decrease in the number of waterways, we no longer see gaulins, yellow breasts and canaries which we have had in Barbados.

4.00 p.m.

They have actually been victims of changes in the environment.

Sir, this question of sea level rise must be foremost in the minds of both Government and Opposition because if we continue to experience erosion at the rate that has been occurring, we are going to regret it. Sir, we, therefore, have to strengthen the hands of the Coastal Management Unit to do its utmost to ensure that protective measures are implemented to ensure that our coasts are not compromised.

Mr. Chairman, in dealing with our coasts and our seas, we should also encourage those who go to sea, to use discreet systems of fishing and not to resort to the type of desperation that we would have seen - and I have to be candid with this Parliament - over the years, particularly people dynamiting fish.

It has happened in Barbados but, I believe, the incidence of it occurring is going down. Sir, people have dynamited fish and, in the process, have affected the sea in a great way. Mr. Chairman, I remember someone actually dynamiting fish very close to a police station and getting away with it.

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Sir, in a situation where recently we are hearing that we need to protect our marine environment as being an economic environment, in a situation where we need to protect the coast because of the economic value, where we need to ensure that we have proper beaches, both for use by locals and non-nationals, we should do our utmost to make sure that we do not compromise what we have been given by way of a blessing from the Almighty.

Mr. Chairman, I am always heartened when tourists can tell me that we still have beaches, in circumstances where when they go to other Caribbean countries, they can come across the sea meeting mud, which is evidence of erosion. There are some Caribbean countries that do not have a proper beach front and so we here in Barbados, we must make sure that our beach front, that strip between where the sea ends as it comes up and where properties are established, is kept in pristine condition for our people to be able to go to the beach to swim, to relax and also for those tourists who would be very disappointed when they come to Barbados and develop an impression which is not right.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of tourists come here innocently and would ask questions such as why does the rain fall in Barbados. They said that when Barbados was marketed,

they heard that Barbados was full of sunshine. They would also ask, when they come across instances of rock heads meeting the sea, why is it that they cannot get access to a proper beach in those areas where the sea is coming in and large stones are naturally located in the particular areas.

Mr. Chairman, the practice of groyning has not gone unnoticed, and unsupervised, and unauthorised groyning has to be discouraged on the beach. We, therefore, have to ensure that we pool our resources, that we invest our resources properly to make sure that the effects of global warming and climate change do not do their worst in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I take it that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is aware of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), an international agency which provides technical support for environmental purposes.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, as you have cautioned me that I have but little time, let me just focus on one more area that cannot be disregarded, and I am speaking to our gully ecosystem. Our gullies have been abused by unscrupulous people who see them as dumping grounds but our gullies, if well-kept, do bear potential to diversify our tourist product because of the fact there are tourists who like wildlife and who would want to go on gully tours. Sir, I would want to say that no amount of obstruction by technocrats should stop us from pressing our gully ecosystem into the grid that is called our tourist product.

Mr. Chairman, I would have hoped to have said some more things but, unfortunately, time has run out on me. Sir, with your kind permission, I shall return later in this debate, a debate I believe is important, bearing in mind where we are and where we want to go.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this Head and to state that I am very happy, as the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, that the Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. John, in his wisdom took what I would call a bold, a very creative and forward-looking initiative to formulate and establish this new Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage.

Sir, I support the abled Minister who has that responsibility, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, who I have worked with since assuming office. I know the Honourable Member has the mental and other

capacity to ensure that this new Ministry fulfils its mandate. I support him in disassociating this Government from the ridicule of the Opposition who tries to suggest that this Ministry is substandard.

Mr. Chairman, when you look at the mandate, the issue of drainage, water resources and the environment, are all very important. Sir, the rest of the society can only function effectively if these key issues are addressed in a meaningful way.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, this issue touches the hearts of all residents of the City of Bridgetown because, as the Minister mentioned, we are aware of the perennial problems of flooding which exist in Bridgetown, be it the Emmerton area, including Chapman's Lane, Farnum's Land, O'Neale Land, Murphy's Pasture, Baxter's Road; New Orleans itself, including the area to the west of the primary school pasture, 8th Avenue, 9th Avenue New Orleans, Pickwick Gap. And when you go up town to Vine Street, River Road, the corner of Fairchild Street and Nelson Street and other areas, you know that these areas have been subjected to flooding over the years, threatening life and limb. In some instances, residents had to be rescued by boat. Indeed, your humble servant resides at Reed Street and with a heavy downpour, I am unable to access my residence there.

Mr. Chairman, I have publicly outlined the genesis of the problem, the inadequate size of the box drain which links Reed Street to Mason Hall Street, just east of the Salvation Army Complex. The last Government neglected this drainage network, where they allowed many of the drains to go into disrepair. Some of these drains were not properly cleaned or properly excavated in terms of fortified and increased in size. Therefore, as a result the people have suffered.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, this Ministry, as the Minister mentioned will be making it a priority to address these drainage issues in an aggressive, far-reaching; long-lasting manner. It is not a knee-jerk approach as applied by the last Government but seeking to have comprehensive solutions to these problems.

Sir, I look forward to touring with the Minister and his abled team to give our perspective in terms of outlining the critical areas of concerns within the Constituency, and suggestions which would include suggestions from members of the public, who are aware of these issues, where historically, parents and grand parents would be able to enlighten the technocrats in terms of the traditional escape routes of runoff water and so on and so forth.

Mr. Chairman, we are happy that finally, after years of neglect by the Barbados Labour Party Government, this new Democratic Labour Party Administration is providing real solutions to these drainage problems to the people of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned, in the area of Murphy's Pasture, there is a big box drain running across from the eastern end of Mason Hall Street, just to the west of St. Mary's School, down Murphy's Pasture, next to the Sewerage Treatment Plant in O'Neale's Land, down on to Fontabelle, linking up with the Pelican Pumping Station.

Mr. Chairman, I remember last year, during the rainy season, I think it was a Friday evening, you had unusually high levels of rainfall over a few hours and, if you remember, we had massive flooding all throughout the avenues in Chapman Lane, Murphy's Pasture and so on. I want to congratulate the Head of the Drainage Unit, who is a very well qualified and dedicated person. Mr. Chairman I called him up as I actually drove along the area to see where I could trace the route of the water.

I want to congratulate also the roving team, a team of volunteers, who took it upon themselves, having got the news of flooding in the Chapman Lane area, they went and I visited the area of the branch of Chefette on the Harbour Road, the roving team called me over and showed me the same Emmerton drain leading just to south of the "Drive Thru" area at Chefette at the Harbour Road location. It is just behind a wall, so you would not be aware of it.

They showed me a grill that went down into the drain and this had been cluttered with refuse like plastics and other debris that would have found its way into the watercourse. Sir, this was blocking the water from going into the sea and creating serious flooding in the streets all throughout Emmerton and Murphy's Pasture.

They took rakes and cleared the refuse and then, further on, they pointed out that there was a mechanical issue at the pumping station at Pelican. I called up the Head of the Drainage Unit late in the night and he was there until midnight ensuring that the technical personnel from the private sector were deployed to fix the problem to spare life and limb in Emmerton.

Mr. Chairman, again, the debris often can go into the pumps at Pelican and cause a breakdown. Sir, I am appealing to Barbadians to be more responsible in the way in which we dispose of our litter. Do not throw litter out of vehicles, be they public service or even expensive privately owned vehicles on to the streets of Bridgetown. We should not blame residents alone for dumping because Bridgetown is the nation's capital, and thousands of people traverse the streets of Bridgetown, and there is indiscriminate littering from persons who do not reside in Bridgetown.

Mr. Chairman, we as a country must start from the schools and engender this sense of pride in our nation to keep Barbados clean. I call upon the law enforcement agencies to monitor this and even prosecute those people found blatantly littering the streets of our country because, as I have said, flooding could result endangering the life and safety of people including young children and old people be they disabled. Sir, this should be a bipartisan approach, in my view.

Mr. Chairman, I am very happy. There are several other areas throughout the country, including in Bridgetown the Fontabelle Road, Kensington Road, where we have a lot of open drains that should be covered and widened. Sir, even vendors who may be frying fish, we discourage from throwing their old, stale oil into the gutter because, according to the technocrats, this oil could cause the drains to clutter.

Sir, business persons as well, be they street vendors or big business owners would be discouraged from dumping their refuse indiscriminately. They can coordinate with the Sanitation Services Authority to ensure that the refuse is properly packaged and secured from stray dogs and persons who may be having drug addictions and other challenges who may displace the garbage looking for pep bottles and so on. This litter is unsightly and unsanitary. You have the build-up of vectors, be they leptospirosis carrying vermin, mosquitoes, flies and cockroaches, which are serious public health issues.

I congratulate the team of the environmental officers, last year's group of students, as part of their final year's practical, they engaged in a rat eradication programme in Bridgetown. While the Opposition was making sport at my call to clean up Bridgetown and eliminate the rats, these environmental health officers understood their public duty in terms of keeping high sanitation; reducing the spread of leptospirosis, which kills people and the Opposition is making sport at this.

Sir, the rest of Barbados will not be distracted by their immature approach to these serious public health issues. Sir, Bridgetown is the capital of our country and if we have a dirty Bridgetown, what image are we giving to the tourists? Do you think they would be repeat tourists coming back? Sir, I do not think they would. Sir, this Representative makes no apology for continuing to ensure that Bridgetown is kept clean.

Mr. Chairman, talking about that, I look forward to this Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage working with myself, the residents and the private sector to wash down those alleys. Sir, be it Amen Alley linking Marshall Street to Spry Street, where there is the stench of the urine from men primarily, in my view, very recklessly urinating in this Alley and providing a

serious stench that is, again, a public health hazard and a nuisance.

Mr. Chairman, we need to keep them clean, especially in the dry season and I look forward to a very robust and aggressive cleaning up of these alleys. Sir, the Government could only do so much. If the men do not urinate in public, we would not have that stench. We are a modern society. We are a civilised people so we must act in a civilised manner. I agree that the Government and private sector could look to see how we could get more public conveniences in operation, well-managed and well-maintained and not neglected as occurred in the Barbados Labour Party regime. I want to say to members of the public that if nature calls that they should go into a store and, or what have you, and use the facilities provided and not to recklessly unzip in public because this is awful.

I am asking the women of Barbados to call upon our men to be more decent. If you see your boyfriend, husband, brother, father or uncle doing this, you should chastise them and let them know that they are disgracing you and your family and you will see how fast they stop this because women have tremendous influence on men and most men like to please our women.

Mr. Chairman, let me go further to the issue of the

Waste Water Treatment Facility which is commonly known as the Sewerage Treatment Plant. I am happy to understand that this Government has been able to aggressively look at the treatment plant at Emmerton, which was sadly neglected by the Barbados Labour Party Government, and as a result there were numerous mechanical breakdowns.

4.20 p.m.

I am reporting that we have three of the four blowers currently operational and two are normally required. I understand that Treatment Tank, No. 2, which had totally broken down under the Barbados Labour Party regime, should be ready at the end of April 2009. We also look forward to the reintroduction of the sea water supply system, where sea water is used to feed water to the chlorine generating units.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: We look forward to the West Coast Sewerage Treatment Project coming to fruition. Sir, this had been poorly undertaken by the Barbados Labour Party regime. This Project was in the stages of introduction from December 1995. In 2001, the Barbados Labour Party Government had been talking about implementing changes to the system and all sorts of hiatuses occurred, but this

Government has been able to get the cost benefit analysis presented to the Board of the Barbados Water Authority, and we are looking forward to revised proposals being submitted to Cabinet, so that we, as a government can ensure that the people in New Orleans who were not provided with link-ups to the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant, although they had to endure the stench under the Barbados Labour Party Government...

I know that one proposal with the West Coast Sewerage Treatment ensured that the people in New Orleans and Chapman Lane would be linked up to that West Coast Sewerage Treatment Project.

I may have to come again. In concluding, let me state that I look forward to the public baths at Concrete Alley, Green Park Lane and Light Foot Lane, which were terribly neglected by the Barbados Labour Party Government, that they will be rebuilt by this Democratic Labour Party so that the people in the City who rely on this facility, those people who do not have modern water toilets and bath facilities would not have to bathe under the stand pipe, as was required under the Barbados Labour Party's stewardship.

I congratulate the Ministry of Transport and Works' officials who built a wonder plant, who did the design for the recently opened Reed Street public bath facilities, the Depot of the Sanitation Services Authority, with toilets being tamper proof. The tanks are behind the walls so they cannot be destroyed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up. Hon. P.M.T. TODD: I look forward to such modern amenities being provided to replace the Concrete Alley, Green Foot Lane and Light Foot Lane public baths.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, I have always spoken, and I like to speak. Sir, the Minister who is responsible for this Head started today by saying we on This Side are "pooh poohing", I think those are the words he used, this important Ministry. I want to say from the outset we on This Side believe this is a very important Ministry.

We have never said that the environment is not an important Ministry, because the last Minister of the Environment on This Side spent considerable time, and she was even recognised by the United Nations as one of the leading lights on the environment. In fact, she spent more time on the environment than anything else. We have a proud record on the environment. It is not true to say that we are "poohing" this Head at all.

I would not contribute to this, because when one looks at this Ministry which comprises the environment, water resources and drainage, it is important. I want to say from the outset that I want to speak to two important Departments in this Ministry of Drainage and the National Corporation Commission.

These two Departments are ably managed by persons who are knowledgeable in the field, especially the Drainage Unit. When I was a minister, Mr. Charles Yearwood and his team did a wonderful job, in my time, and indeed to move the Drainage Unit, which was established in 1995, to combat and to help alleviate flooding from its inception.

The Minister is of the view that he could completely eradicate flooding in Barbados. I am not sure...

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: I do not want to put anything in the Minister's mouth.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: I know he said something about eradicating flooding. I must say that I was a Member of Parliament for St. George North from 1994, and we experienced the worst flood since he became Minister of this important Ministry. There was no flooding when I was Minister of Public Works. Charles Rowe Bridge had the worse flooding last year in decades, under the Minister and the Democratic Labour Party.

His Excellency D.St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member knows that it was not since the Honourable Member became Minister, but it was when permission was given to Chefette to build on a water course, and we were not in Government at that time, Sir.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, I do not want to go into that. I know that Chefette was there for the last 10 years and it only flooded in the last year.

The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown spoke, but the truth of the matter is, Bridgetown is becoming a very dirty City, which should be cleaned. I was appalled a couple weeks ago, driving by the hospital and seeing the amount of garbage all over the place.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, before you proceed, I want to tell you exactly what I said when you were not here.

His Excellency D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, please.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please, I am making a point. In Committee, because of the time allocated, I am not going to be tolerating so many points of orders because Honourable Members have a right to speak. I am just telling you what I have said to the others. I would encourage you to make this point of order but bear that in mind going forward.

His Excellency D.St.E. KELLMAN: I accept the Rules of the House and I will follow them, Sir.

Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, and I of 14 years standing in this Honourable House, know how Members can attribute blame to political Parties that are not to be blamed. I have been in here for 14 years and ever since the last former Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown had been making the same point over and over, about how dirty the City has been. I think it is wrong for this Honourable Member to give the impression that the City is only dirty now. That is the point.

Sir, if these incidents come up, one of the things I would beg you to tell Honourable Members not to create points of order when they are speaking, in order for us to finish the House early. I will have to follow the Standing Orders of the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, I am guided by your direction. The point I am making, we have paid special emphasis on keeping the capital of the City clean. Over the past 14 years efforts have been made by the former Representative of the City of Bridgetown, who was very proud to represent the City of Bridgetown. During her tenure, a lot of work and resources were spent on the City, and she was happy to represent the City for so many years. I am saying that this is the first time I am hearing about so many rats, all types of vermin, and about all kinds of people peeing over the place. I am hearing about these things for the first time.

Sir, for example, the Honourable Member spoke about the Reed Street public bath. The former Honourable Member was instrumental in its construction.

4.30 p.m.

Sir, look at what is happening between the Bus Terminal and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital up to the Park Gate. Sometimes it is a shame to pass there. I have spoken at length to the Drainage Unit. As I said before, when I was there, I used to pay special emphasis to ensure that the drainage was cleaned almost every two months.

Sir, within the last two or three months, I have seen a lot of grass, bush and trees growing up there. The only thing I have not seen there is monkeys, because that is the next thing that is going to happen. I am saying that the sludge has to be done.

We have been doing a lot of work, and a lot of money has been spent in canalising that drainage. We have also done a lot of work in the City and I want Honourable Members to understand that because we have the facts. We have been able to spend money on the pump house. Two new pumps were installed in the pump house, after 50 years. The Drainage Unit installed two new pumps to ensure that the Princess Alice Highway is not flooded again.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: If they were installed under our time, he came into office and he does not want to power them. I do not understand this. The Minister must come to work.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I was saying today that the Minister is working hard, but I am not sure now that he does not want to power these things. The Minister has to come to work and do his work.

I am saying that this Unit has been doing work and the Minister responsible for drainage must understand that Headley's Land, Phase 2, is only the second phase. The first phase was completed. I believe that we spent more than \$6 million on Headley's Land. We spent a lot of money in the Hometown area on the Lagoon, the Lime Grove Project, Speightstown, and the Sailor Gully Project.

The Barbados Labour Party, when in Government, spent a lot of money helping to alleviate flooding. There was a time when in Wotton, Christ Church and Goodland, Christ Church, and the Minister for Christ Church South would know that there was a lot of flooding there all the time, and we spent a lot of money to alleviate flooding in Wotton, as well as the Goodland area. Therefore, a lot of work has been done.

There was a time when every time the rain fell, Speightstown and Hometown would flood. A lot of money, resources and engineering techniques were brought to bear in the western step from St. Thomas Parish Church down to Hometown. We spent a lot of money on resources and the technical capacity.

We were able to bring in the Japanese at one time to give us ideas, and we spent lots of resources there. Therefore, work has been done in the last 14 years, on the

projects in the Drainage Unit. Sir, not only did we spend money on wells, box drains and so on, but a lot of money was spent in terms of providing the technical capacity to upgrade the Drainage Unit.

Sir, it is true that I believe the Drainage Unit will need more resources. I must say, I believe that whatever the Minister wants for drainage he should get, in terms of providing more human resources, because it is something that you will find, that you have to clean in the dry season, and you may clean today, but tomorrow the rain comes again and washes down all the debris from the upper hill, and you have problems again. Therefore, you have to constantly clean and the Minister will get to understand one day that because you spend money this year, it does not mean that you do not have to spend money next year. It is recurring. It is like saying 3 into 10 is like 3.33. It goes on and on and on, Sir.

Sir, I keep hearing that we did not do anything in 14 years. Sir, we spent money and the resources are here. The Government has to spend money, but it has the Ministry itself, technicians, labourers and other persons working in the Unit, who must be able to carry out their functions. Sir, I know that on a day-to-day basis, you need positive supervision in order to carry forward this programme.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Thank you, Sir.

The other area that I want to speak on quickly is the Barbados Water Authority. Mr. Chairman, I am aware that water is a very important aspect of people's lives. We need water every day. I think the Barbados Water Authority has been doing a good job over the years. Sir, from 1898 when the Bridgetown Water Department was established, it has been providing good water for our people.

Sir, I think that the time has come for the Barbados Water Authority not to turn off people's water, who are two months in arrears of approximately \$30 or \$40, and then say that you are here to protect the poor people.

I am saying that, at least, what happens in North America and the other developed societies, is that they send out notices or a card. If the people do not see that notice, they send out a red letter to inform people that their water will be turned off.

I do not think it is fair that a person should go home on evenings, and find that their water is turned off, because they only owe \$30. It is unfair to people and it has to stop in our development and, especially, in these hard times.

I never encouraged the Barbados Water Authority to turn off anybody's pipe for owing only \$30, when they have situations, where the hotels and so on, sometimes owe thousands of dollars, and their water remains on.

Mr. Chairman, finally, I want to say that the NCC is doing a good job. They are trying to beautify the country. They need more resources and they need help. The Drainage Unit needs more resources and they need help in order to carry out this big programme that the Government expects them to carry out.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just rise to make a contribution on this particular Head. I think that the determination by this Government that the environment is very important, and to have the Ministry constructed such that the agencies, which are chiefly responsible for protecting our environment are put together, the Coastal Zone Management Unit, as well as the National Conservation Commission, along with the other agencies responsible for the management of our solid waste and our liquid waste.

The Barbados Water Authority and the Sanitation Service Authority are very good. Sir, we can see from the initiatives that we have been able to get going in a short period of time that we are, in fact, trying to correct many of the ills that have occurred, with respect to the treatment of our various eco systems.

I have heard that there is some record of note that the last Government left, pertaining to the environment, but I am not so sure that the facts would bear that up. For starters, I do not think the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would agree with that. In fact, he is on record for quoting probably the most important activity, with respect to the treatment of our solid waste, which is probably the most difficult environmental problem we have to deal with as a nation.

He described the solution by the last Government as environmental madness.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: We all recall that and if we look at the issue of the dumping in our gullies, we looked at some corals being destroyed by reckless vessels. We looked at even effluent going into the ocean by a certain corporate entity. Maybe the last Government did have the right thinking about the environment, but the policing was lacking, with respect to how our environment is treated.

Therefore, I think the efforts that are being led by this new reconfigured Ministry with responsibility for the Environment, are very good, and so, I am very happy to see the way in which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has embraced this whole task.

In other parts of the world, when you have an interest in the environment, you can be accused of seeing green.

4.40 p.m.

In the United States of America, the environmental lobbyists dress a little different. Their hair is long and they are seen as being part of the fringe unless, of course, you are Al Gore. Al Gore has written "Earth and Balance" and produced a movie recently "An Inconvenient Truth". Outside of Al Gore, it is not really a mainstream topic.

Mr. Chairman, as the Honourable Member for St. James North said, it is a mainstream topic for us as a small island developing State. The issue of the rising sea level due to what is happening in the Antarctica as well as the Arctic with the melting glaciers has the potential to seriously impact our main source of income, our tourism industry. Mr. Chairman, that is why it is so important that we get the coastal protection programme going.

Mr. Chairman, the lesson that we can learn from that very lovely boardwalk from Rockley to Coconut Court is that coastal protection works need not be unpretty. We can actually do it in a way that we can have a very attractive boardwalk.

There is no need to jump up on a point of order. Yes it was the last Government that started the project. We do not mind giving some credit. It was a good project. It has added.

I am only suggesting that going forward with respect to the West Coast and the Holetown area, that we need to also make sure that we do what we are doing in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to note that global warming also impacts weather patterns. It is a proven scientific fact that the warming of the ocean is also responsible for the strength of the hurricanes we have been seeing in this part of the world, as well as the cyclones in the Indian Ocean and the typhoons in the Pacific Ocean. The hurricanes that are coming off the Atlantic are stronger and stronger because of global warming and, therefore, we have to continue to lobby hard.

Mr. Chairman, I sincerely hope that at the event in Trinidad and Tobago next month that the delegates of the Caribbean who are more impacted by the stronger hurricanes, and by the rising sea level, will allow President

Obama and company to understand that they really need to sign on to the Kyoto Protocol and start to do what they can do to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and so on that are causing this phenomenon.

They are the chief source of the gases that are causing the global warming, but they are not necessarily as impacted as other States, certainly the ones in the Caribbean, and so I think that again we have to push that agenda.

It is my understanding that it is one of the areas that should be addressed at the Summit of the Americas, and I hope that message is firmly entrenched, and we can get it across because it is of prime importance to our future development.

I also want to comment on the efforts of Harrison's Cave again under the Ministry of the Environment. A huge developmental programme for that area was started under the last Government. It has been continued. I believe that it has been refashioned in some respects. I think that is good and I sincerely hope that we can have Harrison's Cave once again fully functioning. It is an important attraction, and it is also a fundamentally unique feature that we like to market.

Sir, the concerns about the contamination and so on of the features and the water that runs through Harrison's Cave would all be dealt with. I think that this Ministry in its present configuration would place the whole question of the future of the Cave at the forefront.

Again, this is something that there is no partisan divide on as such. I am happy to see that the project was adjusted downward in terms of its cost because one of the things I could never understand is why Harrison's Cave used to chalk up such impressive losses, if it is such an attraction.

The Caves of Barbados Inc. has really and truly struggled with its balance sheet. It is most unimpressive really if you had to look at it on the basis of the figures. Figures are not everything, but I would certainly think that if this is our number one attraction, it should be minting money, to use the expression, and not losing it.

Mr. Chairman, hopefully, again with the redevelopment programme concluded and the necessary improvements to the various services being offered and what not, we could see the Caves of Barbados contribute meaningfully to the St. Thomas community where it is located and, of course, Barbados at large.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak on the efforts of this Ministry to deal with solid waste. I mentioned earlier that it is one of the more challenging issues that we have to deal

with because of the nature of our eco systems. Mr. Chairman, because of how densely populated we are and because of our relatively high standard of living, we generate a lot of solid waste per capita and the challenge is what do you do with it. This has been a big problem now for a number of years.

Mr. Chairman, I like the direction we are going in with respect to reducing the volume of the waste as much as possible and looking at the various alternatives. The mere fact that we are talking about the waste-to-energy programme as well and the Mangrove Landfill and looking at ways and means of using the gases to generate some energy which, in itself, would have a further spin-off of moving away from fossil fuels, you are dealing with an environmental problem and, at the same time, dealing with the need to conserve energy.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, the cross ministerial approaches that this Government is taking can be seen coming to the fore with efforts like that, and shows the sorts of progressive thinking that we are trying to bring to the governance of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, along with that, if we can have an aggressive recycling programme and try to do what we can do to recycle, I think that we can get closer towards dealing with the whole issue of our solid waste and making sure that we do not have to confront all of the attendant problems with having excessive waste being stored on the streets and so on.

There was a discussion in here just now about our capital city with the Member of Parliament for the City of Bridgetown and the Honourable Member for St. George North. Mr. Chairman, in spite of the daily collections in the City area, there is so much refuse to be collected that it provides a challenge and further impacts the conditions that the Member of Parliament for the City of Bridgetown speaks about all the time.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes we like to make light of it, but I think he should continue to push for that because apart from whatever residential garbage is generated, there is obviously a lot of commercial activity and the type of commercial activity it is, there is a lot of solid waste being generated. Sir, we need to look at our capital City and the general way that we can collect, separate and recycle our waste as much as possible and then, of course, the landfill management.

I suppose the Minister will speak about the future of our landfilling operations in Barbados as well. I am quite happy to see that we would do all that we can do to preserve our national park or the areas so designated. It has not been formerly legislated as such, but I think that we are

going in the right direction and that this Minister is going in the right way.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak to our liquid waste and our water resources. Again the Ministry expressly refers to that activity in its name, water resources. Sir, as a water-scarce country, we need to ask a number of pertinent questions.

4.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, the zoning situation is being looked again while, at the same time, having an aggressive main relaying programme. Sir, we need also to deal with the fact that our aquifer is being contaminated by our very own activities, as we build up and build out more as a developing country but also agricultural runoff in terms of fertilizers, including the whole encroachment from brackish water. Sir, clearly the way of desalination has to be embraced and expanded upon.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, we are very happy to see that those concerns could be looked at around a table in this new Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage, so we could look at the challenges to our various eco systems; that we could do all we could to maintain the biodiversity that we have come to associate and to expect with our island, while, at the same time, ensuring that we have an adequate source clean, potable water for our population; and that we could ensure that we have all of the necessary physical attributes that we all enjoy.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to see what we have here in terms of a programme, and I will encourage the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and his entire team to continue the work they have clearly adopted with much enthusiasm and energy.

I am obliged to you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to start where the last Honourable Member finished, in respect of the enthusiasm of the Minister. Sir, I certainly believe that his speeches reflect an enthusiasm. I am not so sure that he has necessarily been given the tools, once again, to be able to execute. Sir, I start with the issue of drainage.

Mr. Chairman, having listened to the Honourable Minister, I would have thought that we would have had an aggressive drainage programme, certainly one that would have been designed to meet the needs across Barbados with this dedicated approach to drainage.

Mr. Chairman, I thought that we would have seen an expansion of improvements in the number of wells to be dug and cleaned. I thought we would have seen an expansion of the box drain work that has to be done across so many different parts of the island. I thought we would have seen all of that.

Sir, were I perhaps just in a general debate, I might have left the matter at that point and at that point alone but, Sir, this is an Estimates debate and this debate cannot be disconnected from the figures which we are being asked as a Parliament to approve.

Therefore, in the circumstance, it has brought me back to the maintenance of drainage to prevent flooding and to look at the fact that last year we were able to spend \$1.92 million on that particular Head of structures, to facilitate the work to which I have just referred - the construction of box drains, the digging and cleaning of wells, et cetera.

Sir, the reality is that the Vote for this year is \$1.1 million less, at \$863 000, so that there is a disconnect between what the Minister is proposing and what we are being asked as a Parliament to approve.

Mr. Chairman, if I were to be fair fully to him, I looked at the question of maintenance of property. Maintenance of property provides for the maintenance of culverts, wells, bridges, upkeep of paved drains, rivers, pitfalls and water courses, reconstruction of paved drains and sea defences. Sir, that has gone up by \$100 000, therefore, the net loss to the Drainage Unit is in the vicinity of almost \$800 000.

Mr. Chairman, I am a little perplexed in those circumstances, because I too feel that drainage is a serious issue. I do feel though that you cannot disconnect the issue of drainage from the behaviour of people. Sir, to the extent that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown spoke about an anti-littering campaign, we will support it because the truth is, we have to change our culture in this country in relation to how we dispose of garbage at the household level, when walking on the streets, or all of those things.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. George North spoke about the two pumps that were bought to be installed down by Pelican Village. Sir, if you would go behind there, you would see that the large drains that are there, very often are blocked by all kinds of "tetrapaks", plastic bags from chips and styrofoam from food containers and all of those things. Sir, with the best will in the world, no Department of Drainage is going to be able to mount a massive programme to counter the behaviour of individuals who are not participating in a way that does not add problems.

Mr. Chairman, I see it in my Constituency I see it every time there is an event at the Stadium, and there are quite a few water courses that come down from the back of the Stadium. There is a big drain just there at the sink in Bush Hall Yard Gap. I believe the Head of the Drainage Unit should know it well because he is familiar with that area, but the truth is that drain invariably is blocked up, more often than not, and as a result Perfection New Road floods almost every time there are two hours of solid rain.

Sir, many of the residents in the area have taken to help clean that drain. I see it also off Review Road as well. Mr. Chairman, the truth is that separate from that behaviour that is required, it is a problem that is going to need a change of culture. Mr. Chairman, I have been here long enough to know that there are certain forces that do not change, and the Honourable Member for St. James South would do well to remember. This is nothing now other than the need to be able to have a unified effort to change the culture of people's behaviour in relation to littering, and when it comes to preparing and taking care of the immediate environment around them.

Mr. Chairman, since we are into the issue, the Honourable Member for St. James South obviously wants me to remind the Honourable Member for Christ Church East that he is not getting the support to do the job. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James South clearly wants company, because the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has not been given the resources either to do the job. It also has gotten less money in these Estimates than it got last year. Mr. Speaker, I assume that these Estimates are to be a little more than just an esoteric discussion about who did what and about who would do what. I believe that it must relate to the reality of what is possible.

I also go further. I noticed that in relation to the Botanical Gardens, there has also been a cut in that Vote. Sir, that cut I can understand in these straightened economic circumstances, but I do believe that given the cut in resources, it is appropriate at this stage to launch a community-wide programme to see how best the community could work with you, given the fact that you have not received the resources that you would have received last year. Last year that project would have received just under \$1.2 million. This year it is getting \$677 000.

Sir, as Member of Parliament for the area, I would be the first to help mobilise the community to work with the Minister, to see how much of the 254 acres we could realistically start to make accessible to the people of St. Michael North, because the people of St. Michael have no huge, green space that they could go to. Sir, even Queen's Park is small in comparison to what is available there for the future site of the National Botanical Gardens. Sir, I would want to say that anyone who has not been there, I

would recommend that they go because it is almost a natural amphitheatre. You do not believe you are in the heart of St. Michael. Sir, in truth and in fact, it can provide significant opportunities for persons, not just in St. Michael to rest and recreate, but ultimately, I believe for persons to engage in economic opportunities.

5.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I say so against the background that I really do believe that over the course of the next decade to two decades, the areas of the environment and renewable energy are going to provide significant opportunities for Barbadians in terms of employment and economic opportunity. Sir, it is for the Ministry to be able to lay out the parameters for small business men in particular, who are more likely in this environment to take that kind of risk than an established business that has a guaranteed profit market.

Mr. Chairman, if that kind of guidance could be shown, working in conjunction with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Empowerment, those Barbadian enterprises, who are a little more willing to take risks, not just in the area of solid waste management but, in particular, in relation to the environmental issues that would confront us as a whole.

Sir, I once had cause to say to an American Congressman, who was visiting here and who took pride in the fact that the previous Administration of the United States of America Government was not signing the Kyoto Protocol, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was entertaining them, it was a group of Congressmen, and I looked at him and told him that where he was standing, in my lifetime, there was a distinct possibility that where he was standing would be under sea water.

I told him that for him it was an academic issue, but for people in this country, it was a real issue. Sir, there are people alive today, who would tell us about where Rockley Beach was and where the road was in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s and the road that we now know in front of Chefette, that is where the beach came up to.

Mr. Chairman, there are those of us, who will tell younger Barbadians of the fact that when we were growing up, there was no long beach in front of Government Headquarters going right down. Sir, in fact, the best beach in Barbados now, is really in Bridgetown. We expect that things will change, but we have to be prepared, Sir, to protect our environment because too much of Barbados' economic activity is derived from coastal infrastructure and coastal enterprises.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that it is the most important issue confronting the sustainable development of this

country. I believe that it is critical also to the restructuring of our enterprises and the areas of our private sector in terms of how we will earn a living in the future and, to that extent, Sir, as happens almost invariably in small developing countries, the Government must lead the way, ensuring that it is possible to make money from these areas, just as we had to do in the 1950s with manufacturing and tourism. Once that way is shown, once that path is identified, then invariably, the private sector in our part of the world will come along.

Mr. Chairman, I believe, however, that the bounty to be derived from going into these new industries is not limited to Barbados, and that the Eastern Caribbean, the southern Caribbean and, indeed, countries like Guyana and Suriname are equally ripe for enterprises to be able to go in and to make as much as they could because there is limited capacity in these new industries. I certainly see this as a tremendous growth area.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to ask the Minister as he speaks to the House to speak a little more expansively on the issue of solid waste. It is with some concern because, having not executed the leachate treatment that was in the Estimates for this current financial year, it is important that we know what the Government's plans are. I would want him to advise us whether the current cell at Mangrove has outlived its capacity and whether he is in a position to deal with the overflow, given the fact that especially around April, May and June, because of the weather, invariably as has happened in the past, you start getting some form of internal combustion there that leads to smoke and odours affecting the people of Arch Hall, Bennetts and also effecting...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The Minister of Tourism will speak to that and if it does affect them at the time when tourism is on the decline, I trust that he would want to speak to his colleague about it. Sir, the reality is that we do not have the luxury of allowing that cell to be there and not capable of taking any more garbage.

The truth also is that we are hearing that the Government wants to find another solution, but whatever that solution is, the Government needs to decide. If it is incineration, as I said earlier, we need to be assured that all options are being considered because the whole question of the disposal of the ashes can involve many toxic problems for the water table unless you are going to look at the possibility, which is possible, of building cinder blocks from the ash, as happens in Bermuda.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: There are options, but the country needs to know what it is in the Government's mind. There certainly is nothing in these Estimates that would suggest to us that you are in a position to carry out a programme either of building a new cell at Mangrove or, indeed, of pursuing alternatives in relation to the Solid Waste Programme.

Mr. Chairman, whatever the position is, I believe the Minister ought to take the country into his confidence. If he has not yet made the decision, he needs to say so as well, but the reality is that we stood here last year and voted \$9 million for a leachate treatment plant but nothing has happened with that \$9 million or with the leachate treatment plant. We want to be assured that what we are being asked to approve here today is capable of execution, is capable of bearing some relationship to the reality of the problem, particularly if the cell has outlived its usefulness. Mr. Chairman, my own understanding, not being an engineer is that to prepare any new cell it is 9-12 months at least before you could start receiving garbage in there.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

On the motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. F.J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 5.30 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 5.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

5.10 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

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

1. The Report of the Audit of the Account for the Catastrophe Fund for the year 2007.

2. Report on the Audit of the Accounts for the Severance Fund for the years 2004 and 2005.
3. Report on the Audit of the Unemployment Fund for the years 2004, 2005.
4. Annual Report of the Barbados Tourism and Investment Inc. for the year 2007.
5. Annual Report of the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation Invest Barbados for the year 2007.
6. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Express Crane Services Inc.) Order, 2009.
7. Value Added Tax (Remit McBride Caribbean) Order, 2009.
8. Duties, Taxes, and Other Payments (Exemption) (Salvation Army) Order, 2009.
9. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Sustainable Barbados Recycling Centre Inc.), Order 2009.
10. Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) Scotia Trust and Merchant Bank Limited) Order, 2009.
11. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) Edghill Associates Limited) Order, 2009.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Annual Report for the (Barbados Port, Inc.) 2007.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$218 563 402 from the Consolidated Fund, and to place that at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates for 2009, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 23, 2008/2009, which form the Schedule to the Resolution and that the Explanatory Notes to Head 13 and 52 be amended as set out in Schedule 2 to the Resolution.

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

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

When the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it shall now revert.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. S.A. Lashley in the Chair

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Committee has now resumed.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Sir, thank you for giving me the privilege to contribute. I want to emphasise we recognise that the question of the environment, especially in today's age, is critical. Very often we are not aware that if we do not take care of the environment it will have an impact on every economic activity within the country.

Sir, this country enjoys the kind of standards we have because, in the past, we made a special effort to take care of the environment. That is why we need to appreciate that the environment has to be a core concern, especially when you see new challenges developing on a continuing basis.

Sir, I want to point to the fact that while in the previous presentation, it was noted that the whole question of the budget in respect of the Drainage Unit had been cut, I note though that maybe one of the strategies that the Government could adopt and recognise is, that the question of drainage could not really be assumed to be the responsibility of one Ministry alone.

When we look at the real cause of drainage problems in this country, we find that there are a number of activities which actually cause drainage. For instance, activities that we might undertake in other areas and which actually can be dealt with by other Ministries might also need to be looked at if we are to tackle properly the whole question of drainage.

5.30 p.m.

Sir, I want to briefly revert to St. Michael West Central, because there are some issues in St. Michael West Central which have been negatively impacted by drainage. I want to emphasize the whole question of physical planning within this country. We seem not to recognise that unless we plan appropriately, we will see the results of that poor planning in the drainage problems that we face from time to time.

The problem we find is that, normally, we only pay attention to drainage, after the month of August when the rains come in and we recognise that our existing drainage channels cannot handle the amount of water that actually comes down through them.

In this regard, I want to pay special gratitude to the Drainage Unit, in the attempt that it makes prior to when those rains step in, to ensure that the wells and drains that

we have around the island are cleared. It is especially important for St. Michael West Central.

I will also want to plead with the Minister at this time, not to forget us in St. Michael West Central, and that we need to pay special attention to the areas of St. Stephen's and Grazettes. I know that this is an activity that we normally undertake, prior to the rainy season. I would hope again that on this occasion, we continue the same pattern in terms of trying to ensure that persons living in low lying areas, are not negatively affected by excessive water runoff.

Sir, I want to make the point that it is also the responsibility of other Ministries to assist the work of the Drainage Unit. I want to say, Sir, that you cannot put that responsibility totally on the Drainage Unit. Sir, while the amount of money allocated to the Department has been cut, I still think that if we have a situation where there is collaboration between the individual Ministries, a lot of the problems that you have, could be adequately addressed.

Sir, I also want to address another area and that is in relation to the garbage separation. One of the things I have noticed in St. Michael West Central is that we have a young man there, who is actually involved in garbage collection. Sir, what I really want to advance to the Minister is that we need to seriously start to enlist persons who are actually involved in collecting glass bottles and pep bottles. Maybe, we might need to consider giving them some form of a subsidy. I will tell you why.

Sir, when you look at the fact that we have an accident waiting to happen, in relation of garbage disposal in this country, I think this is something that we need to look at seriously, certainly when you look at the fact, that at many of our major events, you have a situation where people do not pay attention to the manner in which they dispose of garbage. I really think, Sir, that we need to pay attention to how we can find a system in which the Ministry can enlist private operators to help it in its work of trying, first of all, to help the consumers and citizens generally, to engage in garbage separation.

In addition, I note that one of the activities the Ministry wants to undertake this year, is in relation to the whole question of the schools. Sir, sometimes we really cannot change the practices of adults, but within the schools there is an opportunity for us to help young people to appreciate, not only the importance of garbage separation, but also to, at least, develop ways and means that help in terms of facilitating it. I am really saying that is important.

Sir, maybe we need to look at utilising institutions such as the 4-H Movement. Again, we talk about the whole question that we need the cooperation of other Ministries. I

note too, that the Ministry intends to look at assisting youth organisations with green houses.

Sir, we recognise that green houses, in terms of agriculture, are the way that we are going, as far as trying to facilitate the production of agricultural products. Again, I would like to compliment the Ministry for the direction it is going in terms of helping or getting youngsters involved in green house cultivation. Sir, I believe that we need to encourage young people in good environmental stewardship.

I think, Sir, that at this point in time in our country, when we might be challenged in terms of resources, that if the Ministry adopts networking as a principle with other Ministries, organisations, schools, and even households, I believe that the objectives of the Ministry could actually be achieved, even with the slim resources that we have.

Sir, we have to recognise today that Barbados is going to a stage where we need to enlist the voluntary cooperation of people within the community, if we are to protect our community as we go forward. In that regard, Sir, I want to say that we have to give support to the Minister, in terms of achieving the objectives that he has set out here.

Sir, I would want to say that in terms of St. Michael West Central, since we are in a very central area, and we are actually in the bottom, I am hoping that the same level of courtesy which was shown in previous years, would continue to be shown.

With that, I thank you very much, Sir.

Asides.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for allowing me to make a brief intervention on this Head. First, I want to congratulate the Minister for his vision in relation to matters that involve the environment. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I have noticed that, in relation to the Belle Treatment Facility.

Mr. Chairman, I remember while in Opposition, the then speaker at the time and Representative for the two areas, the Belle and the Waterford areas, questioned his Administration about when the treatment facility would be delivered, because of the problems that they were having in their Constituency.

Therefore, I was very pleased to hear from the Minister, the fact that work has started in the provision of a

treatment facility and so, I must congratulate the Minister for his extremely fast work.

Indeed, there were some 14 years that those residents and their Representatives were actually begging for assistance. Sir, you know, it is only a man who is determined and who is accustomed to hard work, that is the Minister and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, who who on that path and so, I want to wish him well and I want to congratulate him.

Only today, Mr. Chairman, I mentioned to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East that we have to look at developing our parks. It brings me to King George V Memorial Park. My discussions with the Honourable Member for St. Philip South are that we intend to bring a comprehensive plan for King George V Memorial Park to the Ministry and the Minister.

When you go to the King George V Memorial Park, what we call the Club House needs some renovation and the entire grounds need some work. In fact, it is an area that if we conceptualise it properly, and can use some part of it, whether it is where the existing house in the park is, that we can look at developing a mini gymnasium, so that we can entertain and hold cultural events in St. Philip, and can play a further part in the cultural development of Barbados.

5.40 p.m.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would ask the Minister to take a further look at Three Houses Park as there is some need for improvement there. I have full confidence that the Minister would attend to those two lovely parks, Three Houses Park and King George V Memorial Park.

Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate to the Minister that part of the Inter-American Development Bank Programme, that is, the Housing Upgrading and Neighborhood Project, involves a component in terms of having proper drainage in the areas of Greenfield and Cat's Castle. Mr. Chairman, we intend to work hand in hand with the Ministry of the Environment to see it through.

Mr. Chairman, the housing programme is linked to the Ministry of the Environment, Water Resource and Drainage. Mr. Chairman, we have started the process of acquiring land at Bushy Park and other areas, and we know that there is a problem with water to those areas. The Minister has met with us and he would bring a solution to the problem so that we can propel the housing programme forward.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your indulgence. Again, I want to say that we want to see the redevelopment of King George V Memorial Park and Three Houses Park

very shortly so that we could expose the talent in St. Philip. Mr. Chairman, whether it is the building of a mini gymnasium that we can have concerts, I assure the Minister that the project would be fully utilised by the people of St. Philip.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a brief intervention to indicate that all of us recognise that the environment, and the emphases that are placed on ensuring that our environment continues to serve all of us well, is paramount. Therefore, I wish to speak to some of the areas identified because we know of the impact of the human, animal and plant life and, indeed, the entire atmosphere and how it can impact on our existence.

Sir, I want to thank the personnel of the Drainage Unit and, indeed, the staff at the Bagatelle Depot in St. Thomas for the excellent work that has been taking place in the Parish over the last 10 years. I think this is significant because there was a plan in the past, and I believe the plan will continue now that the Drainage Unit has been removed and given another focus, to ensure that roads, gutters and different aspects of drainage were looked after. Sir, I can speak to the good work that has taken place in the Parish over the past few years.

Sir, I believe that the public has an important role to play in the policy and programme planning that has to take place if we are to continue to boast of a clean and healthy Barbados.

Sir, I would just want, through you, to speak to what we consider to be the eighth wonder of the world, Harrison's Cave. I want to be able to gather from the Honourable Member responsible for the Environment the status of the project there because when I checked the Estimates of 2008-2009, \$2.7 million was allocated, and I am seeing in the Estimates for this year an amount of \$200 000. Sir, I would wish for the Minister to please give me guidance as to what is happening because I know that the location for the trams is far from being completed and there is no way that amount of money can carry it.

Mr. Chairman, I know that some assistance would be coming through from the Housing Upgrade Neighbourhood Programme, but I would like to know what is the status of the projects to assist those individuals living in the Allen View community where they can be engaged in employment and, indeed, economic enterprise.

The residents there have been agitating for many years. We know of the number of challenges they have had. The fact that Harrison's Cave is one of the biggest money earners in this country when it comes to the tourism sector and indeed for locals to be able to enjoy the beauty, I believe that the residents need further engagement.

One of the biggest problems that has been in existence for quite a few years has to do with the royalties for the residents who are landowners where shafts have been placed on their properties. They have been indicating that there were times when they got their royalties and there were times when none was given, so I would want for the Honourable Minister to pursue that aspect of it to make sure that those people's needs are satisfied.

Sir, we know that the Parish of St. Thomas has almost 10 places of interest. I mentioned Harrison's Cave just now, but I want to speak of what used to be called the Future Centre Trust and the excellent work that is taking place there.

Mr. Chairman, before I get there I should really say how happy indeed I am as a Barbadian to be aware of the outstanding work that was done by the late Dr. Hutson at the Future Centre Trust. There are two young people who are functioning from that environment now. I think that their contribution must be highly commended because they have very actively engaged the shopkeepers and the canteen owners in the communities surrounding the Centre at Edgehill, St. Thomas as well as the school children at the Lester Vaughan School in a project where the cooking oil is being stored and used for energy purposes. I think it is very important because we know the damage that the disposal of cooking oil in the environment can lead to.

Mr. Chairman, those young people are working assiduously. I do not know if they get a subvention from Government but that would be a good route to go because they are really saving many of us from the degradation that would take place in the environment if we do not work towards getting the waste reverted to the use of energy.

Sir, garbage separation is another aspect. I know that some institutions have started it. I had the privilege of going to Canada once and I saw what took place at the universities and some of the schools there. I know that the Ministry of the Environment had started a project, though on a small scale. I witnessed it at Folkestone, where there are containers to put the plastic in and other containers to put other forms of refuse in. I believe that this is something that we should institute in the schools and other institutions so that the separation of bottles, newspapers and other aspects of garbage can be done.

Mr. Chairman, I know that it would call for a re-engineering of the psyche of Barbadians because most of

us are accustomed to just throwing things away forgetting that those persons who work in sanitation are really doing a wonderful service to this country, and that when we throw out our broken bottles and so on in the garbage without wrapping them properly, it could lead to dangers for those workers.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that over time communities getting involved in the garbage separation aspect of the programme would go a long way in educating Barbadians.

Mr. Chairman, B's Bottle Place is a location in the Parish that has been there for a few years now. That entity is playing a significant role in the collection of plastic bottles and metal, moving them away from the environment, from the dumping that takes place alongside the few gutters that are left and, indeed, the gullies in the country, and recycling them and then exporting them. I therefore would wish for us to continue to work in that aspect.

In the Parish of St. Thomas, Sir, as you are aware, illegal dumping takes place on a daily and hourly basis. That is another aspect of the education that I believe we need to pursue as a people. It is so near to the Mangrove Landfill, why does it have to be dropped there?

5.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, it is not the ordinary householders who are doing it in most instances, it is being done by persons with vehicles. We have photographs of persons who are doing it, but the policing component is not working to the advantage that we would want.

Sir, I want to reemphasise the role of gullies and the generation of funds and employment that gullies could have. Sir, when I look at gullies such as Jack-N-the-Box, Ashford, Vaucuse, Dunscombe, Stoney Gully and others, where there is natural vegetation, persons could develop employment as guides through nature trails. Sir, there is also the medicinal value that can come from the plants in these gullies and the area of research that students can undergo.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to say that the sinking of wells has been a plaguing exercise. As we speak, at Vaucuse, there is need for a well. There is a pond on the Vaucuse Road that is wider than the width of this Honourable Chamber. Sir, efforts have been made for a while to have wells done, as there is the need to have wells sunk. There have been a number of visits by high officials in the Ministry but nothing has happened. When that well is sunk, it will clear the passage for tourists and for all others using that road. I know in the past that plantation owners, who had wells sunk on their properties, had to have those wells cleared annually.

Sir, because of the mechanisation in the sugar industry, a lot of those plantation owners, perhaps not deliberately but through mechanisation, have closed off those wells which have resulted in more flooding in communities. Sir, this is impacting on the health and welfare of individuals.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy that a separate department has been established and I believe over time we would be able to work together with that institution, to minimise the incidents of flooding, including the other challenges we get with the Drainage Unit and with other aspects of our development.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to conclude this debate. Sir, like other Honourable Members, I certainly would have wished that there would have been more time to have a discussion on this Ministry, but let me thank all Honourable Members on Both Sides for their contributions to this debate today. Sir, let me start where I began at the beginning of this presentation when I sought to inform this Honourable House and, certainly, the country, that this Government has taken on board the pursuit of a green economy, and as a result has sought to bring together an integrated Ministry that will give rise to the emergence of realising that green economy platform for this country.

I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East when the Honourable Member suggested that as a way forward we should see the green economy as an opportunity for the emergence of new entrepreneurs who would have reason to participate in an enterprise that would allow us to realise some of the components of this new economic thrust.

As I said then, let me say it again. The green economy can be defined as being environmentally-sustainable because it is based on the belief that our biosphere is a closed system, with finite resources and a limited capacity for self-regulation and self-renewal. It is socially just because it is based on the belief that culture and human dignity are precious resources, that like our natural resources require responsible stewardship to prevent their depletion.

Thirdly, it is locally rooted, based on the belief that an authentic connection that must exist between humans and their environment is the precondition for sustainability and justice.

Mr. Chairman, I would wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of staff across the Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage, for their dedication to the business of helping this Government achieve its national objectives. They are part and parcel of

a group of the hardest workers in the Public Service. They are individuals who are at the top of their profession, in many cases, who demonstrate a level of intellectual capacity that is really a breath of fresh air and a joy to be associated with. Sir, from the Permanent Secretary, all the way across every Department, I wish to salute them for their continued dedicated service to the people of Barbados, where they put people first, as the Government seeks to put people at the centre of its programme.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of issues I would wish to be able to respond to, only by way of comment at this point in time.

Sir, let me begin with the whole notion of protecting our environment. Let me say that the Ministry has agreed that it will launch on April 15, Project Clean City, where we will be joining forces with the Sanitation Service Authority Drainage Unit, as well as the Drainage Division, and some of the NEEP workers, to unleash the energies and vision of the Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage on the City.

I do agree with those who would have suggested that the City must always remain in pristine condition because it is really the first stop for many of our visitors. It is also an everyday location for Barbadians of all walks of life, who come through the City for one reason or another.

Mr. Chairman, I believe if we are going to be able to achieve our national objective of seeking to sustain our environment, not only in terms of those things we have talked about, but also in terms of having a place to live, where all citizens and visitors could be proud of, we therefore need to continue to work these efforts together.

Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, there are a number of Departments in the Ministry, and let me start with the National Conservation Commission, because that is one of those agencies we believe could play a greater role, not only in the beautification of Barbados, but in the greening of Barbados. We believe we have the opportunity to bring together these workers to help impact on how we look at housing developments, and the Minister of Housing and Lands indicated such in this debate. We believe we have to incorporate the services of the National Conservation Commission, to help us to beautify our communities, regardless of who live in those communities.

Sir, where there are new developments going up, we are imploring the Ministry of Housing and Lands that they would allow the National Conservation Commission to come in and do work to assist them in creating beautiful communities, not only in terms of the structure of the buildings, but in terms of the quality of the landscaping that can be provided.

The National Conservation Commission has also launched an 80 000 tree-planting exercise, which is part and parcel of its commitment to help us in protecting the environment and in beautifying our country. We thank them and their leader for the work they are doing across Barbados.

Sir, one of the things we have introduced is the fact that the National Conservation Commission can now move into communities where developers have left parts unkept. Therefore, we have asked the National Conservation Commission to go in and provide assistance to communities in cleaning up those parts, to make them occupancy-ready and community-ready. We hope too that the communities would then take on board the responsibility for maintaining them.

While I say that, I should also speak of the Beautify Barbados Programme in the National Heritage Department. Sir, that continues to provide very solid work.

6.00 p.m.

As a matter of fact, cleaning our highways and helping to beautify Barbados from north to south and east to west is, part and parcel of the remit of the National Heritage Department and the Beautify Barbados Programme.

Mr. Chairman, these are the kinds of systems that this Ministry that has been so wonderfully put together by the Honourable Prime Minister, is intended to drive to ensure that the quality of life....

Asides.

Dr. the Hon D.S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, at the end of the day, what we are trying to do is to create an environment that would enhance the quality of life of people, and that Barbados is not only seen by others as a paradise but to be in Barbados, to live in Barbados and to be a part of Barbados would give you that kind of aesthetic experience where you would be proud to be a member of this society. Sir, that is why people come from all over the world and make their pilgrimage to Barbados and, at the end of the day, they could go back and speak of Barbados in the fondest of terms because the experiences of those persons are tremendously enhanced by these agencies.

Mr. Chairman, let me just quickly say on the matter of Three Houses and King George V Park that I agree with the Minister that there needs to be a lot of work done to upgrade those facilities. I believe that it is important that as we look at facilities like King George V Park and Three Houses, that we spend some time modernising those facilities and, indeed, not only in that area but in the area of St. John, Christ Church and across the country, wherever

there is an opportunity for the Government, through the Ministry to go out and to contribute to the beautification of green spaces in Barbados so that we could create a greater social outlet for Barbadians and others.

Sir, I think that is important. Mr. Chairman, I certainly do take on board the Ministry of Housing's point that we certainly have to continue to work on these things.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. James North talked about sea level rise and coastal degradation. I could not agree with the Honourable Member more that as a low-lying, small island developing State that has a tourist-based economy, it is absolutely critical that the Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage understand that to lose our beaches is like giving away our bread basket.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Dr. the Hon D.S. LOWE: We have to insure that whatever we do, we support units like the Coastal Zones Management Unit that has done a tremendous amount of work, and the boardwalk is only one symbol of the critical data of the work they do but, Sir, they do a lot of marine work. I congratulate and applaud the leader and his staff for having done and continuing to do such a wonderful job.

Mr. Chairman, the Botanical Gardens. I heard someone talked about that today, and I should probably seek to wind up on that. Sir, we have moved into Waterford and we have seen a transformation of a green space that I believe could become one of the marque spaces in Barbados. We have a leader of the Botanical Gardens, who is, perhaps, Barbados' only genuine tree expert, a dendrologist, by profession and he has taken on the challenge of converting that 254 acres of land that has been lying waste - we know it is a Zone 1 area, we know we cannot construct there but we could beautify it to the extent where Barbadians of all walks of life could have an opportunity to enjoy that particular space.

Mr. Chairman, I want to congratulate him and his staff for the work they are doing and I want to encourage him to press on with the responsibility.

Mr. Chairman, I wish I had time to talk about the Barbados Water Authority except to say that we have all embarked on the modernisation programme for the Authority and we intend to modernise it from the Administration and human resources all the way down to the mains replacement programme and all the other systems that are necessary to ensure that our water resources remain the best in the Region. Sir, we are a water resource country but we know we can continue to do that work.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will allow the Member to complete the point on the Barbados Water Authority issue.

Dr. the Hon D.S. LOWE: Thank you, Sir. Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Water Authority has been a source of concern in the country and no reflection who, day in and day out try to run and manage the system, a system really that is archaic. Our view is, that the way forward for the Barbados Water Authority is to first of all fix the issues dealing with human resource management.

What that means is that we are going to have to walk in there and challenge a culture; a culture that has been allowed to set in place, perhaps, aided and abetted by other persons external to the Barbados Water Authority, and get the vision in place that is forward-moving and forward-looking, and help that system to understand that when water is under threat in Barbados that the very life blood of this country is under threat.

Mr. Chairman, we have to do that and in doing that, we have to look at the issue of arrears, \$20 million plus dollars in arrears and 65 per cent of those persons in arrears are domestic users and, what can we do?

Mr. Chairman, someone raised the question of cutting off someone's water at \$30. I do not think we should either but we have to somehow let Barbadians understand that if we are going to remain a viable water resource country, that they will have to participate in allowing us to achieve that objective. Sir, what that means, Mr. Chairman, is that they will have to share the responsibility for making this system, not only modernised by a system that is able to carry its own financial weight. Sir, we will be saying much more about that as we go forward in the coming weeks and the coming months.

Mr. Chairman, educating our population is vital. I think that protecting our environment, enhancing our water supply, working with the Drainage Unit and the like will involve taking our public on board and doing what is necessary to enable the public to understand that they have a moral responsibility to share the burden with the Government to achieve the kind of national success that we are in search of.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your indulgence. I thank all Honourable Members for their participation and I now beg to move that Head 66, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 66, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 10 GOVERNOR-GENERAL (AS AMENDED) \$1 667

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 10, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 10, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 12

PARLIAMENT (AS AMENDED) \$9,000,700

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 12, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 12, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 13 THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (AS AMENDED) \$77 077 254

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 13, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 13, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 6.10 p.m.

HEAD 15 CABINET OFFICE (AS AMENDED) \$11 530 747

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 15, Cabinet Office, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 15, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 16 MINISTRY OF CIVIL SERVICE \$9 163 881

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I beg to move that Head 16 stand part.

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

The question that Head 16 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 17

OMBUDSMAN \$502 545

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I beg to move that Head 17 stand part.

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

The question that Head 17 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 18 AUDIT \$2 690 283

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I beg to move that Head 18 stand part.

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

The question that Head 18 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 19

TREASURY (AS AMENDED) \$115 616 726

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I beg to move that Head 19, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 19, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 23

MINISTRY OF HEALTH (AS AMENDED) \$300 188 188

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Sir, I beg that Head 23 as amended stand part.

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

The question that Head 23, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

. HEAD 28 MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS \$35 309 394

Hon. F.J. STUART: Sir, I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 28, as, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 29

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS \$529 397

Hon. F.J. STUART: Sir, I beg to move that Head 29 stand part.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was Head 29 stand part, put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 30

ATTORNEY GENERAL \$75 323 458

Hon. F.J. STUART: Sir, I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 30, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 32

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE (AS AMENDED) \$55 585 299

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, I beg to move that Head 32 as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 32, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 40

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS (AS AMENDED) \$96 940 101

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, I beg to move that Head 40, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 40, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 50 POST OFFICE \$14 052 422

Hon. F.J. STUART: Sir, I beg to move that Head 50 stand part.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 50, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 54

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (AS AMENDED) \$297 883 699

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, I beg to move that Head 54, as amended, stand part.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 54, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 55

MINISTRY OF TOURISM \$107 981 774

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Sir, I beg to move that Head 55 stand part.

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

The question that Head 55, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 56

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE \$26 542 738

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: Sir, I beg to move that Head 56, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 56, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

. HEAD 62

MINISTRY OF FINANCE, INVESTMENT, TELECOMMUNICATION AND ENERGY (AS AMENDED) \$209 656 668

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I beg to move that Head 62, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 62, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 63

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION (AS AMENDED) \$28 264 046

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I beg to move that Head 63, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 63, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 64

MINISTRY OF YOUTH, FAMILY AND SPORTS (AS AMENDED) \$67 331 496

Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: Sir, I beg to move that Head 64, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 64, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

. HEAD 65

MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND EMPOWERMENT, INNOVATION, TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (AS AMENDED) \$53 231 893

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 65, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 65, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 67

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL CARE, CONSTITUENCY EMPOWERMENT, URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (AS AMENDED) \$80 597 656

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Sir, I beg to move that Head 67, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 67, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 68

MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT (AS
AMENDED) \$15 824 323

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Sir, I beg to move that Head 68, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 68, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

6.20 p.m.

HEAD 69 THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
(AS AMENDED) \$37 195 944

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 69, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 69, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, in Clause 2, the figure at the end should be amended to read, \$1, 920 772 157.

I beg to move that Clause 2, as amended, stand part.

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

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

Clauses 3 and 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule, as amended, became the Schedule to the Bill.

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

On the separate motions of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by the Hon. F. J. STUART, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2009.

ORDER NO. 15 – TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF THE SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of money for the service of this island.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of money for the service of this island, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$218 563 402 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2008-2009 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 23 2008-2009 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION. AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEADS 13 AND 52 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE 2 TO THE RESOLUTION.

HEAD 12

PARLIAMENT \$678 000

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, under this Head, this is really a housekeeping matter. The sum of \$678 000, is in respect of outstanding invoices to the end of the current financial year.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 12 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 13

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE \$4 145 067

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Head 13 relates to a minor amount to clear a sum owed to a creditor, as well as \$4.4 million. We have agreed to pay the outstanding balance due to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation in respect of pensions from the year 1999, in the sum of about \$20 million in four installments of \$4.4 million or thereabouts each.

There is also the sum of \$300 000 which is required to settle a debt between CBC and the Caribbean Media Corporation for securing the radio the television rights to broadcast the Olympic Games.

I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 19

TREASURY \$53 665

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, under this Head, \$38 000 is required to purchase archival software for the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, and the Archives Department, and \$15 000 to meet the cost of purchasing new office equipment, as well as computer equipment, to set up the office for the IADB assisted project, in relation to the strengthening and modernisation of the statistical system.

I beg to move therefore that Head 19 stand part.

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

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

6.30 p.m.

HEAD 52

MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND ENERGY \$19 316 816

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, Head 52 relates to the sum of \$130 846 for additional electricity cost, the sum of \$18 858 119 for bad debt expense in relation to the Barbados Turf Club, \$53 000 for the cost of arrears as well as the increase in overtime rates and salary for a clerical officer; \$8 000 for National Insurance contributions in

respect of overtime rates and a substitute clerical officer; \$126 000 to purchase computers to conduct the 2010 Population and Housing Census; and \$139 644 to meet the cost of travelling expense to be incurred by field investigators who are conducting the Household Budget Survey. I therefore beg to move that Head 52 stand part.

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

The question that Head 52 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 53

MINISTRY OF HEALTH, NATIONAL INSURANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY \$302 131

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: This amount represents an amount of \$227 661 to meet a negotiated settlement of an outstanding debt for maintenance services within the Ministry of Health which was provided by contract between the years 2001-2006 and a sum of \$74 470 which is required to meet the cost incurred in respect of a claim by BICO Limited for legal fees, storage, spoilage and other expenses in relation to ice cream products that were recalled and detained by the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Chairman, I therefore beg to move that Head 53 stand part.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 53 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 54

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT \$59 319 118

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, the bulk of this money is to meet the economic cost for Barbadian students pursuing studies at the University of the West Indies campuses. This is followed by some \$4 783 568 to meet tuition cost for students at the University of the West Indies campuses; \$ 800 000 to meet expenditure associated with an unforeseen increase in the prices of food stuff in Barbados and \$111 593 to meet expenditure for the payment of National Insurance contributions for the staff of the Challenor School.

I therefore beg to move that Head 54 stand part.

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

The question that Head 54 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 56

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND CULTURE \$34 911

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$27 541 is required to purchase furniture and equipment, stationery and printing supplies for our new offices at Warrens. A further sum of \$7 370 is required to cover additional maintenance costs for the said offices.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 56 stand part.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 56 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 57

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS \$134
113 694

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, there is a small amount of \$25 000 to meet the payment of flexibility and meal allowance for the increase in the number of air traffic personnel at the Airport now that we have got a stronger programme going in this regard. The majority of the \$134 088 694 is required to facilitate payment to C.O. Williams Construction Limited and Rayside Construction Limited for work done on the ABC Highway to refund the Accountant-General's Office and bring the loan to account.

I beg to move that Head 57 stand part.

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

The question that Head 57 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

EXPLANATORY NOTE TO HEAD 13

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Explanatory Note to Head 13 as is set out in Schedule II to the Resolution be amended.

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

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE TO HEAD 52

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Explanatory Note to Head 52 as set out in Schedule II to the Resolution be amended.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the DEPUTY SPEAKER the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the Resolution was read a first and second time and passed.

ORDER No. 7

INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, these amendments are consequent on the Budget delivered last year and affect those matters which were announced in the Budget. Mr. Chairman, unless there is anything that any Honourable Member on the Other Side wishes to raise in addition to what was said in the Budget debate last year, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

6.30 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply. Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 15, inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, 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. F. J. STUART, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Income Tax (Amendment), Bill, 2009.

ORDER NO. 9 – SECOND READING OF THE PROPERTY
TRANSFER TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009.

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

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Honourable Members seem to be a tired after a long debate. This Amendment to the Property Transfer Tax Act relates to the fact that in 2007, Section 5 of the Property Transfer Act should have been amended to give effect to the adjusted threshold in respect of occupied land not exceeding the value of \$150 000. Therefore, this Amendment is to give effect to what should have happened in 2007, consequent on the Budgetary Proposals of that year.

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: 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. F. J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 3, inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, 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. F. J. STUART, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Property Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

ORDER NO. 10 – SECOND READING OF THE LAND TAX
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government agreed to an amnesty in respect of the payment of land tax arrears between the period March 01,

2008 to March 31, 2008. That was in respect of penalty on arrears, as well as 50 per cent of the interest. It was only a one month period. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation is being brought now to give effect to the waiver of the penalties and 50 per cent of the interest due on the arrears.

I beg to move that this Bill do now pass.

6.50 p.m.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have no objection to the amnesty and the Bill before the House. Suffice it to say that we only plea with the Minister of Finance on behalf of those who would have suffered as a result of the Land Tax bills last year, especially as he is preparing his Budgetary Proposals, I believe, in the near future, to consider that there really is a genuine case for the relief of Land Tax for those Barbadians for whom valuations would have automatically triggered increased bills.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we know, valuations are done every three years and, consequential upon those valuations, there is usually a downwards adjustment of the rate, as well as an adjustment of the bands so as to ensure that the valuations do not lead to hardship on persons. Sir, this issue has been ventilated extensively and, therefore, I will not detain the House with the details, but simply to put on the record our position that we would wish to see a level of relief to those persons because, at the end of the day, if they cannot pay, they are still not going to be able to achieve.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that all areas of taxation are likely to be under review in the lead up to the Financial Statement and no less so the question of Land Taxes. Sir, at that time I will make a fuller statement of what the Government's policy will be in relation to Land Taxes as a whole.

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

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

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

On the separate motions of Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. F.J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. S.A. LASHLEY, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. F.J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the DEPUTY SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. F.J. STUART, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Land Tax (Amendment) Act, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I rise to move the Adjournment, as customary, we would want to extend thanks to so many people. First, I think, from This Side, we would want to extend thanks to the Other Side because, without them, the quality of the debate on This Side would not be so outstanding. They have, of course, to provide fodder for us to feed on to regurgitate so that they too will get something to respond to so we want to extend to you our thanks for the contribution to the debate in this House.

I also want to extend thanks to the Clerk of Parliament, his Deputies and all those persons associated with Parliament in one way or another as workers and labourers in the vineyard, to ensure that our task here becomes relatively easy. Mr. Speaker, we want to extend that thanks, through you, to all of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the workers of the Royal Barbados Police Force they are always here guiding, directing and keeping all of us secure in these hallowed Chambers and we would want to extend our thanks to them. Sir, to members of the media, who come every time this House meets, and if they are not present physically in the Chamber, at least they listen to the broadcast and are able to report with some accuracy as to the various contributions of the various Members here in the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to all the other persons who have assisted in some way, it is not our intention to leave anyone out, we want to extend the same wishes to all of you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we journey into Easter time, I would like to extend the best to all as they celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ. May they too be moved by what Christ did while he was here on earth, in order to save us all, knowing that all of us were, in fact, sinners. Sir, since we are going to be out for a few weeks, National Heroes Day and May Day would also fall during this period and to all, we want you to enjoy yourselves and prepare to return on May 5, 2009, at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we too would want to associate ourselves with the remarks of the Leader of Government Business and to thank all who have worked hard over the course of the last week to ensure that our work could proceed apace. This morning, I would have already reflected on the unfortunate incident of yesterday evening and to thank those who would have allowed us to continue today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the Easter recess is well-deserved for the workers of Parliament, for the police, for the caterers and for all who have put in time beyond the call of duty in this very difficult week that we experience every year during March.

Sir, with those words, I would like to wish all persons in here, Members of Parliament and, indeed, workers, a very blessed and peaceful Easter and to look forward to resuming our work in May when, hopefully, we will be re-energised and our batteries will be recharged to take on whatever befalls us in these difficult years.

7.00 p.m.

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, I want to express my sincere sentiments to the staff who have helped us during this long period. I join to wish the entire staff of Parliament a very Happy Easter and God's richest blessing. The Government and the Opposition spoke, so I have to speak as an Independent Member, lest they may think that I am ungrateful and unappreciative of the services that are provided by the staff of Parliament. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to thank all Honourable Members for their cooperation during this debate. I want to wish everyone the best during the Easter holidays and to ensure that when we all leave here, we get to our respective homes safely.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I have some quiet please?

On our resumption we return to do the work of the people of Barbados and when we go to our respective constituencies we will continue to do the work that is needed of us.

The question that the House be adjourned until May 5, 2009, at 10.00 a.m was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

7.02 p.m.

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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. Opening. The source opens with ‘RESUMPTION’ and ‘This Sitting is resumed’, with no PRESENT list and no prayers. The Leader of the Opposition begins ‘when I was speaking yesterday’, and at the adjournment refers to ‘the unfortunate incident of yesterday evening’, so this appears to be the resumed day of a Sitting begun on an earlier day. Please confirm the date and whether an earlier part of the record exists.

Q2. Resumption after 1.40 p.m.. Hon. R. D. Jones moves ‘that Item 11 be postponed for further consideration’ and the question is agreed to, but after Orders Nos. 13 and 14 the source reads ‘ORDER NO.11 (resumed)’ and the Committee of Supply on the Estimates resumes. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Committee of Supply, Head 10. The heading reads ‘HEAD 10 GOVERNOR-GENERAL (AS AMENDED) \$1 667’, which appears to be an incomplete figure. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Chair and speech labels. After the 1.40 p.m. suspension the source has ‘Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed’, though Mr. Deputy Speaker presides immediately before and after. On Head 66 one label reads ‘Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up.Hon. P.M.T. TODD: I look forward to such modern amenities ...’, so Hon. P. M. T. Todd’s closing sentence runs on under the Chairman’s label. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 7, Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009. The procedural note says the House ‘resolved itself into Committee of Supply’ on this Bill, while the other Bills that evening go into Committee; the third-reading note cites it as ‘the Income Tax (Amendment), Bill, 2009’. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Tuesday, 24th March, 2009, about 9.30 a.m., Mr. Speaker opening the Sitting and Mr. Deputy Speaker presiding for most of the day. Hon. R. D. Jones gave notice of three Resolutions on allocations under Head 57, Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport, and on substituting Head 54,

Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, for Head 43 in respect of a grant of \$126 000. The House then went back into Committee of Supply on the Estimates, Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair, on Head 38, Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, the Leader of the Opposition, said the Government’s programme did not reach the poor and urged reverse mortgages for pensioners, noting inflation of 8 per cent and food price rises of 16 per cent and that pensions drawn in sterling had fallen from nearly BDS\$4 to \$2.80 or \$2.90 to the pound. Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick contrasted allocations to the National Housing Corporation of \$3 585 000 in 2002/2003 with \$19 million in 2008-2009, and said 77 houses had been built in eight months with 247 under construction, against 102 homes and 814 lots in the former Government’s 916 ‘housing solutions’; Mr. G. A. Clarke rose on a point of order over the \$50 million Settlement 2000 bond. Hon. F. J. Stuart, citing section 45 of the Interpretation Act, defended the free transfer of units in Government estates, while Mr. G. W. Payne asked that deposits be refunded and raised the Deane Town project of about 1 500 houses; Mr. Stuart rose on points of order. Hon. R. L. Sealy spoke on in-filling and density, Mr. H. F. Lashley on landlords charging \$800 to \$1 000 for a one-bedroom unit, and Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe on housing as social investment.

Miss Mottley returned to argue that ‘or otherwise disposed of’ in the National Housing Corporation’s legislation did not cover a gift and that tenants needed a guarantee of title, and that hundreds who had paid deposits of \$2 000 to \$9 000 should be repaid; Mr. Stuart rose on a point of order. Mr. D. St.E. Kellman suggested charging \$1 for a unit, as free school meals had once cost 10 cents. The Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, said it had never been Barbados Labour Party policy to give the units free; his speech drew repeated points of order from Miss Mottley, both Members withdrew remarks at the Chairman’s request, and the Chairman ruled that calling a leadership ‘opportunistic’ did not impute improper motives. Hon. C. P. Sinckler said a tenant who had paid a \$6 000 deposit on a \$30 000 unit would save \$24 000. Progress was reported and the House was suspended until 1.40 p.m.

On resumption, Item 11 was postponed and Orders Nos. 13(A), 13(B), 14(A) and 14(B), the Resolutions of which notice had been given, were passed without debate. In Committee, Hon. R. D. Jones spoke on housing for the middle class, Mr. G. A. Clarke said the former Government had acquired almost 1 000 acres for housing, and Mr. R. C. Eastmond spoke. Hon. M. A. Lashley, replying, raised loans made by the housing fund in 1998-1999 and the

contract for the Warrens building, and said lots were being prepared for a \$5 lots programme; Head 38, as amended, was agreed to. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe then opened Head 66, Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage (\$131 825 505), with a plan to make Barbados the leading green economy in the region and to introduce emission testing. Mr. Eastmond, Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Mr. Clarke, who objected to water being cut off for arrears of \$30, Mr. Sealy and Miss Mottley followed; Miss Mottley said drainage spending of \$1.92 million the year before had been cut to \$863 000 and asked about the \$9 million voted for leachate treatment.

After a suspension until 5.30 p.m., Hon. F. J. Stuart laid eleven papers, among them audit reports on the Catastrophe Fund, the Severance Fund and the Unemployment Fund and the 2007 Annual Reports of Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. and Invest Barbados; Hon. E. G. Hutson laid the Annual Report of Barbados Port Inc. for 2007; and Mr. Jones gave notice of a Resolution for \$218 563 402. Mr. J. D. Paul, Hon. M. A. Lashley and Miss C. Y. Forde spoke on Head 66, and Dr. Lowe, replying, said the Barbados Water Authority was owed over \$20 million, 65 per cent of those in arrears being domestic users. Head 66 and the remaining Heads were agreed to, clause 2 was amended to read \$1 920 772 157, and the Bill passed as the Appropriation Act, 2009.

Under Order No. 15 the Committee of Supply passed the Resolution for \$218 563 402 under Supplementary Estimates No. 23, 2008-2009, which included payments towards about \$20 million owed to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation pension scheme, \$18 858 119 in bad debt relating to the Barbados Turf Club, \$4 783 568 for University of the West Indies tuition and most of \$134 088 694 for work on the ABC Highway. The Prime Minister then took the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009, the Property Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009, which gives effect to the 2007 threshold of \$150 000, and the Land Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009, which waives penalties and 50 per cent of interest under the amnesty of March, 2008. Miss Mottley supported the last but asked for relief from higher land tax bills, and the Prime Minister said all taxes would be reviewed before the Financial Statement. All three Bills passed.

On the adjournment, Mr. Jones, Miss Mottley and Mr. H. F. Lashley, speaking as an Independent Member, thanked the staff of Parliament, the police and the media and wished all a happy Easter. After 7.00 p.m. the House was adjourned until 5th May, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.