
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, August 10, 2010.

PRESENT

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

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

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

His Excellency D. ST. E. KELLMAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Acting
Prime

Minister, Acting Minister of Finance and
Investment, Labour, Civil Service and Energy)

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

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

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

Mr. J. D. PAUL, B.Sc.(Chairman of Committees)

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A.,

Dip. Theology (Minister of The Environment, Water
Resources and Drainage)

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.)
(Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.
(Minister of Youth, Family and Sports)

Hon. P. M. T. TODD, B.Sc. (Minister of State,
Ministry of Economic Affairs, Empowerment, Innovation,
Trade, Industry and Commerce)

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

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

*Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan
Harewood.*

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

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I
am in receipt of the Minutes of Friday, August 06, 2010
and Tuesday, August 10, 2010.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my
understanding that the Minutes were circulated and subject
to any observations or corrections, I beg to move that these
Minutes be confirmed.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

PAPERS

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member
for St. Michael South and Acting Prime Minister.

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

1. Duties, Taxes and Other Exemptions (University of the West Indies) (Order) 2010;
2. Special Development Areas, (Furniture Ltd. Notice) 2010;
3. Value-Added Tax (Order) 2010;
4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemptions) (Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Order, 2010.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move the following Private Member's Resolution:

"WHEREAS the Minister of Housing and Lands, with the

concurrence of the Cabinet of Barbados, has terminated, with effect July 31, 2010, the appointment of Mrs. Marilyn Rice-Bowen as Chairman of the Board of the National Housing Corporation, a body corporate established by the Housing Act, Cap. 226 of the Laws of Barbados, hereinafter called "the Corporation";

WHEREAS that former Chairman has issued a statement to the public of Barbados, by way of a statement to the Press on August 7, 2010, in which she indicated that there had arisen fundamental differences between the Minister of Housing and Lands and the Board of the Corporation, in terms of the interpretation and application of established rules and protocols, as well as the role and function of the Board in respect to certain projects of the Corporation;

WHEREAS the said former Chairman has stated categorically that the Minister of Housing bypassed the Board of the Corporation, such that the Board was not afforded the opportunity to give any or any due consideration to, and to make appropriate recommendations in respect of certain projects of the Corporation to the Minister;

WHEREAS such a circumvention of the Board is in direct contravention of the conventions, norms and principles of good governance and calls into question the appropriateness of the entering into contracts by the Corporation during the period, December, 2008 and July 31, 2010;

WHEREAS the former Chairman has stated that while the work at Constant, St. George, has been started on behalf of the Corporation, no contract has been put in place with the contractors CLICO Holdings Ltd;

WHEREAS the purpose of the Public Accounts Committee is to:

1. Influence the quality of administrative processes;
2. Ensure good governance and hold the Government accountable for its spending of taxpayers' money and for its stewardship over public assets;
3. Enhance accountability and improve public performance reporting;

WHEREAS it is desirable for the Public Accounts Committee of this Honourable House to inquire into the award of contracts during the said period pursuant to Section 7(e) of the Public Accounts Committee Act;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House refer to the Public Accounts Committee for inquiry, the award of contracts and projects by the Corporation during the periods December 1, 2008 and July 31, 2010, and to report to this Honourable House its findings on that question."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

10.30 a.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010 Sequence 4

MOTION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have received correspondence from the Honourable Member, Mr. Hamilton F. Lashley, which reads as follows:

"To the Honourable Speaker of the House of Assembly:

I am seeking leave from my parliamentary duties until the end of this month. This is due to an accident that I was involved in and that resulted in the loss of my friend, Mr. Sylvester Brown.

Please accept my sincere apology for any inconvenience caused to you and your staff and all my parliamentary colleagues.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding."

Signed: Hamilton F. Lashley.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move a formal motion for the acceptance of the request and that leave be granted.

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

The question that leave be granted to the Honourable Member, Mr. Hamilton F. Lashley, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 6 – TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVES ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANTS OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply.

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$3, 057 276 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2010-2011 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 1 2010-2011 WHICH FORMS THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION.

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL - \$3, 057 276.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, it gives me mixed pleasure to stand before you this morning to lead this Resolution, given the circumstances that have brought me to the office of Attorney-General, nevertheless, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Barbados and, in particular, the people of St. Philip South in this capacity.

This Resolution is a pretty simple Resolution as will be demonstrated in a couple of minutes. Let me just take this opportunity to make, as a preamble, a few comments in

terms of a couple of issues that are on my mind not only as Attorney-General but, certainly, as a citizen of Barbados.

Sir, I am a son of a police officer who is no longer with us, so the whole issue of law and order whether directly or indirectly has been with me for as long as I can remember. I daresay that with respect to the plight of police officers generally, it is something that is very dear to my heart, so that any matters relating to the police in Barbados, I am always very cognisant of the hard work and dedication of these officers and very cognisant of our responsibility as a Parliament and as a Government to ensure that they are recognised for their hard work and for their contributions.

Sir, in this regard, it is regrettable that the Police Force at this time is faced with varied challenges one of which, for example, there is a shortage of police officers, and I daresay not only in Barbados, and in the wider world it seems to be an issue in terms of the shortage of police officers.

Mr. Chairman, there was a time when Barbados produced police officers who went to Bermuda, Anguilla and diverse placed but now what we are seeing is that even Anguilla, Bermuda, et cetera, are having a shortage of police officers.

I daresay that there was a time when police officers even from the United Kingdom went across to Bermuda and other places but now, in fact, what is happening is that they are heading to Australia, so that it is not only Barbados that is faced with a challenge in terms of police officers but it is one of the things where, as a country, and as I have said, internationally, it is a bit of an issue.

Mr. Chairman, we have to look at it, as a country, in terms of what can we do to bring in more young men, in particular, because my information is that there is not a shortage of young women who are interested in joining the Police Force but there is an issue in terms of the shortage of young men who are interested. I am sure that if you did a canvass of all Members of Parliament on Both Sides of the divide, they will tell you that you have young men who would come to you, who, based on their size and based on their academic background, that you would suggest to them that there is a shortage of police officers but because of peer pressure and otherwise, they quickly decline.

Mr. Chairman, it is regrettable because there was a time when I was growing up, in particular, and I think when most of us were growing up that the police officer was seen as one of the leaders in our community and we need to look to see what has happened in our country that has caused that to decline in terms of the respect, not only for police officers but the law and order as a country. I believe that we, as a Government, are concerned about.

Mr. Chairman, I have been saying for several years that, as a country, we probably need to slowdown and go back to basics. Sir, when I say slowdown, I do not mean to stop the progress in terms of our economic progress. I mean just look within ourselves and go back to the basic things that we did when we were growing up. I believe that someone used the analogy of when was the last time a neighbour sent a plate of food across to another neighbour, so that neighbour knew there was a plate of food for him and his family.

Mr. Chairman, the norms that we had that brought us to where we are today, we seem to have gone away from these norms. We need to slowdown and accept that there is not everything in our lives that we need to change, that if some things are working, there is no need to change them.

Sir, I am saying that our old value systems when we seem more interesting in developing ourselves, our brothers and sisters and bringing everyone along with us, that we seem to have gone away from them and that we need to address them.

H/A72B/10:43 Sequence 5

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, part of this Supplementary, \$33 058, is with respect to the hiring of an investigator for the Police Complaints Authority. The Police Complaints Authority does an essential job in this community in terms of the bridge between the Police Force and the public, so that the public knows that there is an Authority if they believe that they have been aggrieved by any process of a police officer. That is not to say that we do not have the issue in terms of abuse by police officers.

As I said, we generally accept that the Police Force is staffed by outstanding individuals, outstanding men and women. The reality is, there is a role for the Police Authority, so that the public feels there is a mechanism outside of the Police Force that they can go to, if they believe that they have been aggrieved by any action and or omission by a police officer.

It is my opinion, and I have to say with some regret, that it is one area I think that Both Sides have not done a good enough job in terms of ensuring that the Police Authority is properly staffed and is functioning. Even though we recognise the importance of the Authority to give the police of Barbados confidence in our system, as I said we have not done a good enough job in terms of ensuring that the Authority is properly staffed and functioning. This position of the Investigator, for example, has been there for several years. It has not been filled. I believe they have identified an individual that they now

want to hire and thus the \$39 058 is to pay the remuneration of that individual.

Sir, I say again that I think we all recognise the importance of the Police Complaints Authority. I want to publicly thank the members of the Authority who have continued in office and who have indicated that they recognise the importance of the work they are doing and recognise there is a lot more work to be done.

Nevertheless, I want to send the message that while recognising that there is a role for the Police Complaints Authority, I want to say from This Side that we believe that in the majority, in fact, we have outstanding men and women in the Police Force and want to recognise their contribution. Sir, the \$39 058 is to ensure that an investigator is hired.

Mr. Chairman, there is an amount of just under \$1 million which is to pay our subscription for the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, commonly called IMPACS. Let me just put this in a way that we can all identify. I believe that in 2005 the Heads of Governments recognised, as early as that, within the CARICOM Region we had to take ownership of our own security requirements, and that we can no longer depend on the US and/or the UK authority to provide the level of security level of intelligence that we require. The Heads, as early as 2005, recognised this and thus the birth of IMPACS.

One of the direct benefits of IMPACS out of the 2007 World Cup, we were able to do the pre-screening of thousands of visitors to the Caribbean which, in fact, is one of the legacies of the World Cup, as much as that has continued, that is the Advance Passenger Identification system has continued to work. I believe that between 2007 and the end of 2009, by December 31, at least 44 million individuals had been screened.

Sir, in the Caribbean we depend on tourism. We are known and seen as a region of peace, but the reality is, we cannot take it for granted that terrorists or other individuals will not target us. That is the reality. A most startling reality and of more concern to me is a fact that I believe that one of the greatest threats to Barbados and/or to small States like ours, is the idea that some drug trafficker is able to come in and undermine our system. Sir, for example we can see what is happening in Mexico. We can see that in Mexico they have lost about 20 000 lives in just over a year. Such is the influence of drug trafficking.

Sir, as I said, it is our responsibility to ensure that the Caribbean is maintained as a zone of peace. My information is, we have been able through our Advance Passenger Identification system to stop certain individuals from entering into various Ports. We have been

instrumental in identifying some criminal elements and were able to have them deported back from whence they came. Sir, the cost to Barbados and the cost to the Region of ensuring that this Region is maintained as a zone of peace is a little cost in comparison with the alternatives.

Therefore, this amount of \$1 million towards our subscription - I believe the reason we are here at this time with a Supplementary is because when we were doing our Budget we were not in a position to identify what our allocation would have been for this year. Our Budget basically looked at what our allocation was the last financial year and we identified that. This difference is to ensure that we meet our budgetary requirements in terms of IMPACS. I think that one thing Barbados is known for is ensuring that we meet our regional commitments.

Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of issues with respect to IMPACS. I believe that they would like to have their own building. They have been assured that when the wherewithal presents itself, we will be happy to host them. In the meantime, given the constraints in terms of our budgetary position, not only in Barbados but in terms of CARICOM, there are, in fact, looking at how they, themselves can access external funding and how they can cut their own budget to ensure that their work can continue, because we do not want to diminish their standard of work but just recognising the budgetary constraints that as a region we are under at this point in time.

Sir, I have no problem in terms of recommending this portion of this Supplementary to ensure that our contribution towards IMPACS is noted.

Sir, the larger part of the Supplementary with respect to the Judicial Centre, I believe that some time in 2005 or 2006, the decision was made by the previous Administration that we will have a new Judicial Centre. The result of which can be seen at Whitepark today. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy normally says that one thing about the Barbados Labour Party is that if you give them the best idea in the world, they would find some way to implement it badly. I can say a lot more about the Judicial Centre but I believe that, in fact, when this discussion unfolds I will probably have a bit more to say. Nevertheless, to date we have spent about \$135 million on the Judicial Centre. As a Government the Ministry of Finance is actually re-looking at the present structure because we are not confident that the arrangement originally contemplated is the most economical arrangement for the country as a whole.

We are actually exploring whether we cannot buy the Special Purpose Vehicle and Order Centre, because when one looks at the numbers in terms of if we continue with the proposed 21 year-old lease, it may be very more

economical for us to borrow at a lower rate and purchase the asset than to continue with the lease.

HA 72 10.50 a.m. Sequences 6 & 7

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72B, Sequences 8 & 9, 10.50 a.m.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: We have been looking at it and I believe over the next couple of months the Ministry of Finance will continue to look at it and decide on a definitive position but we want to ensure that, in fact, we arrive at the most advantageous position for the taxpayers of Barbados.

Similarly, Sir, although not raised, I believe that here is a similar arrangement for the Eric Holder Complex in St. Joseph where as a Government I would recommend that we look at buying out that arrangement. Again, if it is cheaper for us to borrow money and spend it now as opposed to continuing into these lease arrangements where, at the end of the day, we are paying twice as much for building, then we should consider it. Any initiative, Sir, that enables us in the long-term to save money, then it means that money is used elsewhere in our economy, even if not in the same Attorney-General's Chambers.

Sir, I believe in 2009, we moved into the Judicial Centre and the legal arrangement in terms of whether or not we would have taken over the Centre is not agreed but what has happened since 2009 is this Supplementary, in terms of the maintenance of the building. It is agreed and we recognised, Sir, that we have been in occupation I believe for the last 10 months and, therefore, the maintenance is our responsibility. I believe about \$1.3 million of this Supplementary, Sir, is with respect to the maintenance of the Judicial Centre.

I think we should recognise from now that, in fact, in order to ensure that this building is with us for many generations to come, we should really have to spend a considerable amount of money per year, in terms of the maintenance of the building because we cannot allow it to be maintained in the normal course of things.

We have to spend money to ensure that the air-conditioned units are properly serviced. We have to spend money to ensure that the computer system is properly serviced. We recognise as a Government that, in fact, in order for the continuity of the building that we would have to spend money on its maintenance and we accept that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, BDS\$600 000 of this Supplementary is with respect to the insurance of the building. In fact, these two Heads, BDS\$600 000 goes towards the insurance and BDS\$1.3 million towards the maintenance of the

Judicial Centre. Again, Sir, there are funds that are required and I see no reason why this Resolution should not be supported.

With those few words, Sir, I beg to move that this Resolution stand part.

Thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, 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. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the Resolution was read a first and second time and passed.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move the first reading of the following:

The Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2010.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF PARCELS OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT CONSTANT IN THE PARISH OF SAINT GEORGE IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak and to introduce this matter before the House in relation to vesting of lands at Constant in St. George, in the National Housing Corporation for the purpose of housing development. The Administration on coming to office, thought it necessary to propel the housing programme, based on the demands set and the demands on record at the National Housing Corporation.

House A72B, Sequences 8 & 9, 11:00:14

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the project at Constant, St. George is a joint venture project between the National Housing Corporation and CLICO Property Development Incorporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the National Housing Corporation has thus far made no financial input into this project. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the number of houses that we are seeking to build at Constant Phase 2, St. George are 64. Some of the houses are of timber and some are of stone. There are to be 65 single storey 2-bedroom general units. These will consist of 20, 2-bedroom homes on 644 square feet of land, 22, 2-bedroom homes on 476 square feet of land and 23, 2-bedroom homes on 758 square feet of land. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are basically targeting the group that can purchase a house between \$100 000 and \$150 000 in relation to this project.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a recommendation was made that some of these houses be looked at for the rent-to-own programme so as to make it even possible for a certain group on the list at the National Housing Corporation to benefit from this programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, so far, in relation to the reports from the Technical Department, it has been stated that the level of workmanship exhibited on the site has been of an acceptable standard, that the relative building standards have been adhered to and that the construction practices utilised are of an acceptable standard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a requirement based on the layout of the development for a purpose sewerage treatment plant which is now in progress based on the Town Planning requirements. Indeed, the road works and the treatment facility are being constructed by Rayside Construction Limited.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the project commenced on October 20, 2008 with an anticipated finish date of February, 2009 but of course, there were some delays in relation to the construction of the sewerage treatment plant, the layout and in relation to discussions with the environmental agency. There is ongoing discussion with the environmental agency in order to have that sewerage treatment plant ready.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to state that in terms of the housing programme of the National Housing Corporation that this project, being a joint venture project, or what we call a joint partnership project, was fully endorsed by the Board. Indeed, there have been ongoing discussions with the National Housing Corporation

management and its legal department and personnel from CLICO.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must also state that there is a finance contract in place between the National Housing Corporation and CLICO. Indeed, that contract was signed by the ex-Chairman of the Board and was agreed to and accepted on October 9, 2009.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the matter was discussed and a letter was sent to the Managing Director of the National Housing Corporation on April 7, 2009. Indeed, it is signed, Borrower: National Housing Corporation and Lender: CLICO Development. CLICO Development is to fund the value for the housing construction programme at Constant, St. George, pursuant to a contract entered between the Corporation and itself. The contract, its construction programme and the description of the houses was signed by the ex-Chairman and was also agreed to and accepted by the General Manager on September 28, 2009.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that indeed is a commitment as indeed the attention to create legal relationships between both entities. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that in previous joint venture programmes there were...

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member just quoted from a document and it is normal...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what is the point of order?

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: The Honourable Member just quoted from a document. It is convention that when you quote from a document - in fact, it is required - that you make it a document of the House. I am, therefore, asking that the document quoted from pertaining to a contract with the National Housing Corporation and an entity of CLICO be made a document of the House so that Members of the Opposition could have a look at it, that is all I am asking.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the Opposition said that there was no contract in place in relation to the matter at Constant but there is a document signed by the ex-Chairman and agreed and accepted by the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will move further.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hate to get up on the same matter again but I am asking for the document, which the Honourable Member quoted from, to be made a document of the House.

It is a binding contract between the National Housing Corporation and an entity of CLICO. The Honourable Member quoted from the document. He stated the date of the document and he said it was a financial thing, therefore, I am asking for a ruling that it be made a document of the House.

House A72B Sequence 10 & 11 11.10 a.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I did not observe nor heard the Honourable Member making reference to the fact that he was reading from a document.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North, please continue with your speech.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I believe that the Honourable Member referred not only to, and was reading from documents in his hands, the Honourable Member took them from the file.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am making a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please be silent so that I can hear what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North-East is saying with respect to her point of order.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member took them from a file. He read the names of the parties signing what he called a "finance contract" - not a construction contract - a finance contract. He gave two separate dates from it. He also read the name of the ex-Chairman and he read the name of the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless the Honourable Member has something to hide, unless this finance contract is really not the substantive contract for the construction of the houses, then the Honourable Member must lay the contract on the table. It is not a contract between "Michael Lashley" and CLICO, unless that is really what it is.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I see no point of order. Please continue, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me make it abundantly clear, it is protocol that the Rules of this Honourable House must be observed. No Honourable Member in this House is to be referred to by name; Members must be referred to as Honourable Members, and that is the tone of what has been happening in this House today and any day I preside in this Chamber. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am of the view that this Administration has certainly not neglected St. George South, as was said by its former Representative, who said that he was treated like an outside child because of the fact that no house lots were given to him, nor no houses were built in his Constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to the issue, what has come out of this project is that small contractors have been employed on this project. Sir, four small contractors have been employed to build these houses and, as I said before, they have performed to an acceptable standard and have, of course, conformed to the building standard of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is also in consonance with the fact that this Administration, through the Ministry of Housing and Lands, in relation to a \$40 million loan, proceeded to Cabinet, which was then accepted by the Infrastructure Committee and was then approved, to negotiate a loan of \$40 million, specifically geared towards small contractors.

I will also announce to this Honourable House that in light of the fact that we are awaiting a Guarantee for that \$40 million, the Ministry of Housing and Lands went to Cabinet and got approval for the first draw down of \$10 million.

Sir, when we approached First Caribbean Bank, the first condition they asked the National Housing Corporation was, how would this Government or how would the National Housing Corporation be able to satisfy the judgment against Barrack Construction Ltd. In fact, that judgment has been the stumbling block in relation to obtaining finance.

Indeed, the Cabinet agreed to the \$10 million, which was then placed in a special account. Sir, it is on record that the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation reported to the Board, in relation to the fact that the \$40 million has been set aside for the small and medium-sized contractors, and that the projects outlined for those small contractors in Parish Land, Lancaster Phases One and Two and River Plantation...

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to announce to this Honourable House that only three weeks ago packages were prepared by the technical department for the construction of houses at Lancaster Phases One and Two and Parish Land, for the selection of 20 small contractors. These packages are now with the Technical Committee of the National Housing Corporation to be approved and those will be published in the daily papers, inviting small contractors to tender for the building of these houses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Cabinet further agreed to the starting home policy, a policy where we look at constructing houses valued between \$70 000 and \$100 000, to be built at these sites. Sir, the commitment is there, even at the handing over ceremony at Marchfield, in the presence of the Board. I mentioned that Government at the time was negotiating the \$40 million contract to utilise small contractors. This has now become a reality as we have just received the first tranche of that \$10 million. Sir, we have awarded the infrastructural contract works to Rayside and C. O. Williams Construction Companies to start the construction of the roads.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please, I want to hear the Honourable Member who is speaking. We all understand that when an Honourable Member is on his feet, that Honourable Member must be heard in silence. Let that rule prevail.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may name the contractors that were utilised at Constant, St. George. I recall Depeiza Construction, Busy-Bee Construction, Associate Design and Constructive Management and Business Inc. and Dear's Building Ltd. These were the small contractors at Constant.

11.20 a.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, at Tweedside Road, ADC Building and Maintenance Limited was the main contractor employed and small contractors were Sea Island Builders and Seale's Construction Limited. Sir, finally, at Coverley, Christ Church, the main contractor employed some 42 small subcontractors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is evidence that small contractors have been employed. Sir, C. R. S. Building and Maintenance Incorporated at Marchfield and also Caribbean Management Service Incorporated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to submit that this Government will press on with its housing programme. Indeed, Sir, this Government will not be distracted in

relation to pressing on with its housing programme. We have a mandate to fulfill and we are on our way to construct more houses throughout Barbados and to fulfill that need that is on the list at the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that these lands be vested in the National Housing Corporation.

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

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are still awaiting significant explanations from the Minister of Housing in relation to the matter of the absence of a contract at Constant. I would first like to respond by way of enquiry. The Honourable Minister has stated that a finance contract - those were his words, Sir - a finance contract was entered into with a company called, "CLICO Development". Sir, the former Chairman has complained publicly that there was no contract in place with the contractor, she did not say with the financiers. She has complained that there was no contract in place with the contractor CLICO Holding Limited. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am referring to the comments of the Chairman, who was removed from office effective July 31, this year and an individual who I believe is clearly able to make a distinction between a financier and a contractor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is important for the Honourable Minister to indicate to us whether the company CLICO Development, the financier is also the contractor but there is a clear divide, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On the one hand he speaks about a finance contract but not a construction contract and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a clear divide. Sir, on the one hand, he speaks about a finance contract but not a construction contract and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the nub.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are extremely concerned about Constant because it is our understanding that the Honourable Minister has bypassed the Board. We are concerned at the state of affairs at the National Housing Corporation when a Chairman is forced to go to the public and outline that there are a number of issues relating to the way in which the Corporation relates to the Minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have spoken on it and no doubt, will speak on it again, but we have to ask the Minister what he means when he says that the Government has got a \$40 million loan specifically geared towards small contractors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know if the Minister intends to suggest that the \$40 million that he is saying that the Corporation borrowed is to be paid by the Corporation to small contractors. Sir, so far as we have been aware, and

I speak having been a Chairman of National Housing Corporation, the so-called small contractors are, in fact, paid in joint venture projects out of the proceeds of sale.

Sir, if that is, in fact, the case, then how is it that the Government has borrowed \$40 million geared towards small contractors. It is an irony that the only contractor that he has mentioned in relation to this \$40 million happens to be Rayside, a subsidiary of the CLICO Group, so we are forced to ask exactly how it is because in joint venture programmes the National Housing Corporation does not borrow money to pay contractors, the contractors are given the lots, they do the construction and are paid as part of that process, so what exactly is this \$40 million to do?

Sir, if this \$40 million is intended to finance the development cost of putting in roads and so on, then that is not money that is earmarked for small contractors. The small contractors who are working for National Housing Corporation do not put in roads, so the Minister has to come clean and tell us exactly what this \$40 million is for.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is clearly a situation where all is not well at the National Housing Corporation. Sir, apart from the fact that staff members are, in some cases, being paid two weeks late, a first in the history of the Corporation. Sir, people are now being paid a week and two weeks late.

Sir, I am talking about employees who have to call the bank and ask the bank to hold off because their salary is going to be deposited two weeks late. Sir, it is clear that the National Housing Corporation is in a state of confusion and that confusion often comes from the top.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder what types of covenants are going to be entered into with the individuals at Constant because the National Housing Corporation has now embarked on a model where the most bizarre kinds of covenants are being employed in their developments. Sir, the National Housing Corporation is doing a development and is requiring in the covenants that the garbage must be collected by a private company. Are you aware of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Now, the individuals who will buy from National Housing Corporation are everyday people, teachers and police officers, all those people but the National Housing Corporation in one of their developments in Christ Church, I believe the Minister of Housing knows which development it is, is requiring that the refuse collection be done by private enterprise and not by the Sanitation Service Authority. Sir, what that means is that individuals, the same teachers and police officers, who buy into Coverley will...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let me caution you. We are debating the issue of Constant. Your Honourable Leader has submitted to this House a Resolution which has been approved to deal with all contracts and projects but we are debating Constant today and you will confine your remarks and your issues to Constant. Therefore, I do not want to hear nothing about any other contract, Coverley or otherwise, other than Constant in this House today.

Honourable Member, you may continue.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am, therefore, asking for the Honourable Member to let us know whether the refuse collection at Constant is going to follow the new mode that the National Housing Corporation is embarking on, Sir.

H/A72B/11:30 Sequence 15

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, I believe that is a legitimate question. You cannot on the one hand be saying that you are pursuing the catering of the housing needs of low income Barbadians and still put conveyances in place which would add significant costs to the very ownership of the property.

Sir, I also want to know whether at Constant there will be a conveyance in relation to the hanging out of laundry, because that also appears to be the new model that the National Housing Corporation is following. That model, if you are telling an individual at Constant that you cannot hang out laundry, then it means that individual must now spend money on a clothes dryer. So, again a teacher or a policeman has to now invest large sums of money in devices that they probably might not ordinarily need to have in their house, and significantly increase their costs.

Sir, I also want to know whether in Constant the National Housing Corporation will be saying to the individuals who buy up there, that they can only put out rubbish in plastic bags that are stipulated by the National Housing Corporation. Those are legitimate questions for the Minister. The people who are being offered the houses at Constant are entitled to know what are the rules that will obtain.

Sir, the new model of the National Housing Corporation, an agency that has been doing housing developments in this country for many years, who are accustomed to housing Barbadians in Husbands, Oxnards, Apes Hill, West Terrace and all over Barbados, that agency seems now to be embarking on a new model which says to individuals that they cannot change the gardens that have been planted in front of their houses by the National

Housing Corporation. I want to know if that is what is going to be inflicted on the people at Constant.

Sir, I am aware that the new model of the National Housing Corporation says that you cannot even put a footpath on your property. Is that what the people who are going to be buying these houses at Constant can expect? The Corporation seems clearly to have lost their way, but you can only lose your way if the body who is leading the way stays on a particular path.

Sir, there are substantial issues that are in the public domain in relation to the National Housing Corporation. I cannot tell the Minister, to use the proverbial term, how to suck eggs. The fact of the matter is, this occasion presented itself and the Honourable Minister has an obligation to the people of this country to explain to the people of this country what is the true state of affairs in relation to the arrangements of the National Housing Corporation.

I am delighted to hear that your good self has approved the Resolution that has been tabled by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. We hope that the opportunity will soon come to this Chamber for us to debate it. Unfortunately, the Chamber rises today on its summer recess, and it will, therefore, be some months before we have an opportunity to debate the content of that Resolution.

Sir, the Minister must not allow the people of Barbados to be left in limbo and come to this Chamber and circa lacuke 11 35 14 the essential issue that has been put in the public domain by the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation. It does the Minister no credit to come to this Chamber in the face of a maelstrom of criticism and inquiry, and completely ignore an issue for which Barbadians demand satisfaction. Sir, what we are treated to is where the former Chairman specifically said that there is no contract with the contractor CLICO Holdings, in relation to Constant. The Minister comes to this Chamber and attempts to say there is a contract with the financier.

I am sure the Minister does not think the people of this country to be fools. A finance contract and a construction contract are two different things. I believe that the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation - we await eagerly to see who the new one will be - the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation must have known what she meant when she said that she, as Chairman, could not ensure that a contract be put in place with the contractor, CLICO Holdings Limited. She never mentioned CLICO Development.

Sir, those are not words that emanated from the mouths of anybody on the Opposition Side. Those were not the words found in a document that fell off a truck. That is

a clear and definitive statement of an individual who was appointed to be Chairman of the Board by the Honourable Minister and approved by the Cabinet of this country.

Sir, having appointed her, in 2008, having now terminated that appointment, she has come out and said specifically what she meant. She never said “financier”. The people of this country are not fools and we want an explanation from the Minister. It is critical.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are numerous other issues in relation to the National Housing Corporation and I hope we will be given the leeway to discuss them, because the record of the Minister, which is being touted as being exemplary - I believe that when you look at the actual number of houses that have been provided, they fall far short of the Manifesto commitment of the Government. They fall far short.

I am happy that at Constant people are still able to get houses at \$100 000 and \$120 000, but we have to ask the question, has the National Housing Corporation not lost its way when on parcels of land in the region of 2 500 square feet, two-bedroom houses are being sold for \$280 000 and three-bedroom houses are being sold for \$330 000? We have to ask ourselves whether selling houses with a per square foot price of \$300 plus dollars in Barbados is really carrying out the mandate that the National Housing Corporation has been given by this particular Administration. The Minister needs to give us his answer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is that quotation from Shakespeare, I believe it is fairly well-known - it is about something rotten in the State of Denmark. It must not be said of the National Housing Corporation, an agency that was established and that has served the people of Barbados well for all of these years, that there is now something rotten in the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think such words, in my view, are unparliamentary and ask that you withdraw them, please.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have asked you to clarify. I said that it must not be said of the National Housing Corporation that there is something rotten in the Corporation. I just want to be sure what is your ruling.

Sequences 16 & 17

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72B, Sequences 18 & 19, 11.40 a.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, we must safeguard the Statutory Institutions of this country and it is important for the Minister to do so in relation to the Corporations under his charge. The issue of insurance and those kinds of things are not central. What is central, Sir, is the method in which the National Housing Corporation is doing its business. What is central, Sir, is the nature of the arrangements that the National Housing Corporation intends to put in place with the people to whom it is catering.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I close with those remarks but I look forward to the response of the Honourable Member.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this vesting and I want to make a point up front. If a contract is a problem in this, Sir, I prefer not to have a contract than to have a contract for the National Housing Corporation at Warrens, also to have a National Housing Corporation contract at Mount Poyer.

The point I am making is that if you have a contract and at the end of the day, even though you had a contract and you claim you have no breach but because you have a contract, Sir, the Government of the day has a substantial amount of money to be paid out, I prefer not to have a contract and to have the houses delivered at the right cost.

Sir, the Honourable Member was very gracious to tell us in this House that he was the Chairman at the National Housing Corporation when Warrens was being built. I am saying that if Constant does not have a contract which I will get involved in, I am dealing with the fact about a contract and the importance of a contract because what is clear, Sir, is that the Board - and not the Minister because I am told by the Barbados Labour Party that it is the Board, not the Minister, and the Honourable Member is saying that he was the Chairman of the Board. If the Honourable Member is saying that he takes full responsibility as...

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am making a comparison, Sir.

Sir, when one looks at the comparison between a contract...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, you have been in this Chamber and you are fully aware of the Standing Orders. You cannot

rise on a point of relevance. It is the duty of the Presiding Officer to determine what is relevant and what is not relevant.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, please continue.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is really misleading the House and I will explain the reason.

What the Honourable Member is trying to do, is to make a comparison between the two projects.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you must be specific in your points of order. You cannot try to put a point of order by making a statement. You must say exactly to this House how the Honourable Member in this Chamber is misleading the House and we will stick to that procedure.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Sir, the Honourable Member is trying to make a comparison between two projects when it was clearly stated by you that you would only be hearing about Constant and no other project. I am surprised now to hear about a comparison and the Honourable Member tries to put forward a comparison, clearly in contravention of your statement that it should only be about Constant in this debate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, you are misleading this Chamber by your statements. I made it abundantly clear that there is a Resolution which was approved by this House and we will debate the issue as it relates to Constant.

It might appear to Honourable Members in this House that there are side remarks but any time this Chair hears side remarks which impute improper motives in respect of this Chair, I will call.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I heard your remarks which said that all protections are on. I am the Presiding Officer when I sit in this Chair, I am mutual.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, when the Chair is speaking, please keep quite or I will ask you to leave the Chamber.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church Central, when the Chair is speaking, please keep quiet.

I want the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to understand that when I sit in this Chair, I sit mutually and will act fairly in all debates in this House.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, please continue.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear in this debate today we have heard about contracts and comparison of contracts and I am only continuing on that road. Sir, the charge against this Government is that there is no contract at Constant. I am not interested if there is one or not, even though I believe there is one and it was read in here that there is one.

The point is that the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation said that there is no contract and the point I am making, Sir, is that when one looks at the history of contracts in this Parliament and in this country, entered into by the Barbados Labour Party, you could do without contracts because in every case, Sir, even though you have a contract, the Government ends up paying out money to the contractor, ever though the Government did not breach.

Sir, for example, if we want to compare the contract at Constant, to the Hilton Hotel, tell me what was the case. The Government of Barbados ended up paying out substantial sums of money even though they had a contract. Tell me what happened at the Post Office, Sir, the same thing again. Do you know what is even worse, we had something even closer.

Sir, tell me what happened at Mount Poyer because if you were to go to Mount Poyer where contracts were issued, you would see that NHC - and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph said that NHC does not have any money to pay wages. I could understand why that is possible because even though NHC, under the Barbados Labour Party built houses, they were given to the people and in 2010 the NHC is still in Mount Poyer as if they are now building the houses because every one of the houses had to be repaired at no cost to the people living in the houses because of bad work and they had contracts.

The point I am making, Sir, that if we are going to talk about contracts, we have to talk about enforcing the contracts. It does not make sense signing contracts and then you do not enforce them, only to find out that Government ends up when it has a contract, in a worse position then if it did not have a contract.

At the same Coverley, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, when I read the Resolution, Coverley is not part and parcel of the issue so I do not want you to dare venture in respect of Coverley. When the time arises for that debate, we will hear all we want to hear.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Leader of the Opposition is taking it to the Public Accounts Committee so I agree. I accept your ruling on that one, Sir.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it means that we cannot close the House. We have to open back up the House, because if it is on all, that means we cannot debate this, Sir, so the House has been opened. The Honourable Member has opened it up.

Sir, what I am saying is that we have to be very careful where we come in here and loosely use the word “contract” because a contract in legal terms has a meaning.

House A72B, Sequences 18 & 19, 11:50:05

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, based on what I am hearing in here today from the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation who was responsible for the building at Warrens known as the Barrack Building, that that building had a contract yet the country has a big debt.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. During my Chairmanship of the National Housing Corporation the building at Warrens was not even a matter that came before the Board, it was not even contracted for, so for the Honourable Member to suggest that I in some way while I was Chairman had some connection with the building at Warrens is to grossly mislead this Chamber.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would not want to grossly mislead the Chair and I apologise for associating the Honourable Member for St. Joseph with that contract. Sir, I wonder why a man who is a member of a party would want to disassociate himself from the party on a particular contract. Is it something so bad about that contract that the Honourable Member does not want it to be attached to him?

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if we are going to be talking about contracts, then the contract must be something that is enforceable and is in the interest of the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have demonstrated, without a shadow of doubt, that if you are going to bring contracts in here like what the Barbados Labour Party brought, I do not want to hear anything about contracts because every time

they brought a contract, the contract went against them. I am saying that if we are going to talk about delivery...

Do you know what is interesting, Sir? I am not hearing about anything wrong at Constant, all I am hearing is no contract. I am not hearing that the houses are too expensive. I even heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph making the point that the houses are too cheap. The Minister of Housing and Lands said that these houses would come in between \$100 000 to \$150 000 and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is making the point that elsewhere you can get them for up to \$280 000 as to say that this contractor is delivering \$130 000 or \$180 000 cheaper yet you are asking for a contract, for what then, for building houses too cheap for poor people? If houses were coming in over that amount, I could understand why you are asking for a contract. Do you understand what I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

I am saying that you had no contract, according to them, which I do not believe, but you are getting houses between \$180 000 and \$130 000 cheaper than if you had gone outside and gotten a contract from other people. They are in here complaining about poor people getting houses cheaper all because of something called a “contract”.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want you to find out whether the Post Office had a contract like Constant and whether there were contracts up at Coverley. I am not talking about the present time.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: No, I am not struggling. I am on a good wicket and I batting.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that it cannot be about a contract, it has to be about delivery. If a contract is going to cause the National Housing Corporation to end up owing people \$70 million and \$80 million, I do not want to see a contract in here because you are having a contract and the contract is costing the poor people of Barbados but where you do not have a contract, you are getting a better delivery.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am not even going to the Memorandum of Understanding and contract. I am no lawyer but I was taught in Law that an understanding between two people is a contract too. It does not have to be on paper and that in those cases the judge is the third person and the judge would make the decision.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: You were always judging me wrong even though I was right and that is why the Barbados Labour Party would treat you that way.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am saying is that we have to be very careful because if we are going to be dealing with contracts, we have to look at the history of contracts in this country. Sir, when one looks at the history of contracts in this country, one would see that we are in trouble. We would have been better served without contracts.

Sir, do you know what is ridiculous? I was in here and I heard a former Attorney-General making the point that we had a contract with the Venezuelans and that how they would have to pay some money. Sir, six or four years after, I was in here when a supplementary came into this House to pay the Venezuelans money even though we were right and they had a contract, so do not let me hear anything about contracts in this House because the history of contracts in this House is poor.

Every time the Government got a contract it pays out money. Look at the record, Sir. I am not even talking about the SSS contract yet. I am not going there yet. I am not dealing with the contract for the Prison, whether it was stated one figure and ended up the other, neither am I dealing with the Highway because I am frightened for contracts because whenever I hear contracts I can only see trouble.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are discussing today is a project at Constant that is claimed by the Barbados Labour Party that there is no contract, but that the houses are coming in to a maximum of \$130 000 less.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am not dealing with the Chairman. The Chairman cannot speak in here.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Lucy, you have five minutes more.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: No, do not worry about it, Sir.

I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if we have no contract and the houses are coming in at \$130 000 cheaper, according to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, I want to see some more like these. I do not want to see a contract in here because every time you had a contract, you got something called overruns. Sir, if the Barbados Labour

Party goes for contracts and they bring overruns and the Democratic Labour Party goes for no contracts and brings a reduced cost, I want to side with the Democratic Labour Party.

I thank you.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to join this discussion on the Resolution before the Chamber, which seeks to vest in the National Housing Corporation parcels of land, the property of the Crown, situate at Constant in the parish of St. George, and is described in the Schedule attached.

The Honourable Member who just sat, I think, made the distinction between what is really a lot of talk in large measure by the Honourable Members on That Side and the mandate of the Government of Barbados under the Democratic Labour Party and the leadership of the Honourable Member for St. John which is to deliver housing to the people in Barbados. The step being taken in vesting the land at Constant is procedural in nature but fundamental in executing that mandate. It recognises responsibility to the order of business, something which did not characterise a lot of the activities of the last Administration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the people of Barbados heard the Members on That Side this morning trying to promote the idea of this adherence to order, they knew that they were not talking about themselves because we have examples upon examples, some referred to in the Reports of the Auditor General from time to time during the 14 years of their administration and some still being referred to on the streets and, indeed, still in the Auditor General Reports in this country...

The point must be made that the record of the Barbados Labour Party in satisfying the housing needs of Barbadians does not stand up to the boast they want to make today. The people of Barbados are aware of that.

House A72B Sequence 20 & 21 12:00 noon

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is only 2½ years, and it has been a long time since we had the responsibility. Sir, it was a responsibility taken by us as a Government to deliver this package of housing to Barbadians. It is nothing we believe that we have a right to, we are demanded by the people of Barbados to deliver on our housing programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has been doing an extremely, excellent job in delivering these housing solutions to Barbadians and this Honourable Chamber must record with gratitude the hard work of this Honourable Member, the staff of the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing and Lands. What is the record of That Side? In fact, the National Housing Corporation would have done a lot more if it were not saddled with the burden of \$68 million to a company in Barbados, which was misguidedly awarded the building of a Government building at Warrens.

It had nothing to do with the mandate of the National Housing Corporation. They distorted the mandate of the National Housing Corporation to the tune of a \$68 million debt today, which sits like an albatross around the necks of the people of Barbados. This albatross was created by the Barbados Labour Party, by those Honourable Members over there who have just spoken, and by members who do not speak nor come here. Those are the ones who created the albatross around the necks of the people of Barbados today and which led to the constraints under which the National Housing Corporation may find itself.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we speak of constraints, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has not yet spoken in this debate but I am sure when the Honourable Member speaks, he would be able to explain to the people of Barbados, because the Honourable Member for St. Joseph said he knows nothing about it, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would chronicle the events of the Warrens contract of the people of Barbados and juxtapose it with the contract at Constant. That is what the Honourable Member has to do for the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am a friend and colleague of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and I am thrilled to join with other Honourable Members on This Side and with the people of Barbados when we go to deliver housing solutions, for instance, at Marchfield, Constant, Coverley or to any area in Barbados where we have been able to deliver housing solutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member spoke about housing solutions at Constant. When we characterise these solutions with a range of prices, a range of amenities...

Sir, the Honourable Members over there have a lot to say about that but the time will come when we would be able to debate fully the attributes of all the varying arrangements that would be made in achieving the objectives of housing. Things are not as they were 20 or 30 years ago and the construction industry has not been able to avoid contact with the reality and demands of building standards and environmental standards.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North made the careful point about the cost that would have to be included in this contract at Constant, to achieve satisfactory waste disposal, through the application of expensive technology in the use of a specifically-designed sewerage treatment plant. These are realities as we seek, not in a mad rush but in measured steps, to achieve the objective of housing Barbadians and remaining safe. Barbados must remain safe for our children and our children's children, even while we create housing solutions for them.

We are touched by the kind of inheritances in housing confusion that they would have sat upon, and I speak to the question of squatting. Sir, that, again, will be dealt with and I am sure that a lot of these housing solutions at Constant will have to be awarded to persons who found themselves in that unfortunate situation, all because of a Government which was not prepared to protect this country from these kinds of things which it cannot sustain.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should not be surprised. There has been a lot of hullabaloo today about whether the Minister spoke to a contract of construction or to a contract of financing - big deal - but I am going to ask the Honourable Members on That Side what contract were they speaking to when they signed off on 3S Construction, to spend \$150 million, plus contemplating to spend another \$149 million of the people of Barbados money to build a highway. The Opposition then said that a Memorandum of Understanding was sufficient. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph is quoted as saying that a Memorandum of Understanding was sufficient to spend \$159 million on a highway, yet today is coming to confuse this Honourable Chamber. They cannot confuse me.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please get back on track.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: They cannot confuse me because once the people of Constant can go and open doors, because the important thing is to be able to go and open doors.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. George North were ordered to be expunged by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the House is fully aware of that fact. I see no point of order. Please continue, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rely on your good judgment in guiding even the Honourable

Member for St. George North from time to time, as he tries to impart some comic relief on this Chamber.

Sir, the Opposition wants to import comic relief, they have to, and they have to create as much stir on the airwaves of Barbados, but I am going to beg the people of Barbados to carefully watch the programmes and the unfolding of these programmes. I am going to beg the people of Barbados to carefully watch as we continue to create these housing solutions and as we use our small contractors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to read from some notes I made on the question of small contractors, because I knew that at some stage these issues were going to come up again. Sir, I want to juxtapose this against the arrangements for 3S Construction, because we cannot use that fully today, but let us talk about the small contractors. Let us talk about the people like small contractors at Marchfield: CRS Building and Maintenance Inc., Caribbean Management and Construction. At Constant, St. George: Busy-Bee Builders Inc., Depeiza Construction, Associated Design and Construction Management, Dave Building Ltd.

At another construction site being worked on by the National Housing Corporation, in cooperation with financing and construction arrangements, we have a myriad of small contractors: Art Incorporated, Alpha Plumbing, Creative Paving Solutions, Alston Simpson, Anthony Arendelle, Barry Marshall, David Goodridge, Elizabeth Bonnett. Sir, I can go on, and as often as they interrupt me, I will add to that list. Sir, they would have to examine their conscience and tell the people of Barbados where is the National Housing Corporation being misdirected.

12.10 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: The National Housing Corporation was misdirected, and I repeat, Sir, for emphasis, when the Barbados Labour Party changed the mandate from providing houses for poor working-class people in Barbados to one of constructing multi-storey buildings for the Government of Barbados and, Sir, we have not recovered to this day, and we will have to continue to work around these issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, when I go to these events and I watch the people of Barbados respond to owning their own properties I get confused when I read newspapers which continue featuring criticism after criticism rather than dealing with the positives and the achievements, one that prefers to feature a wide-ranging, unmeasured criticism of solutions for housing because of the prices. Sir, the reality is that the cost of building in Barbados, today, is higher than it was even five years ago,

under the Barbados Labour Party Administration and the feature of our achievement today is that, at least, we are delivering houses.

They only brought us Hardwood Housing and, Sir, the only member of this Chamber who knows what the true position of Hardwood Housing is today, is the Honourable Member for St. George North. He says he knows the warehouse, where the tarpaulin is covering the materials that the people of Barbados paid deposits for housing solutions.

The Honourable Member should be charged with the responsibility of bringing that information to this Chamber and to the people of Barbados. Sir, he said so on more than one occasion in here, that he knows where the materials are and he should be made to produce them so that those people who made deposits under the Barbados Labour Party's arrangement for housing solutions so that those Barbadians can be refunded.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I drive through Whitepark today, and again, this is showing where Constant will go because we start today with a parcel of land but six months from now, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Honourable Minister has stated, there will be houses for independent housing. There will be high-rise housing solutions and there will be houses for rent-to-own.

Sir, the people of Barbados can have reposed confidence in the Honourable Member because they can move around Barbados and see real-real solutions like multi-coloured solutions at Whitepark Road, an architectural beauty, and something to be commended. Sir, it is a transformation from rutting, rusted steel and bush which they were proud of. It was the pride and glory of the Honourable Members on the Other Side, who now seek to castigate this Administration and the Honourable Member. They should go and look through the photo files of Whitepark intersection and see what the north eastern corner used to look like under their Administration and compare it to what it looks like today, and why Barbadians, of all walks of society, are clamouring and knocking down the doors of the National Housing Corporation to occupy these homes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to be led by an "unleadable" group. I am going to achieve my satisfaction by watching the examples of success that my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North continues to place before the people of Barbados. Sir, there are some solutions that will cost more than others.

There are some solutions that carry along with them amenities, so what is wrong with that? What is wrong with a pre-prepared garage? Sir, suppose the Barbadian says that

he wants his house outfitted with STV, Multi-Choice TV? If he or she can afford it, he or she should be able to do it.

The Honourable Members on the Other Side have STV and Multi-Choice TV. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph has so much consumed the land space that he has a yacht. Sir, he owns a yacht but a Barbadian cannot own in a development that includes any kind of reasonable amenities. They must depend on walking or driving five miles to a mail box. That is how they feel about Barbadians.

Sir, they do not understand that the arrangement for central collection of garbage sorts the problem. Sir, I do not mean to pun but it sorts the problem out for the Sanitary Authority because when that kind of collection is encouraged and takes effect, it means that our dumps, where we take our final garbage, can be better managed and that we can look forward to an island solution that is much more comfortable for everyone concerned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would beg Barbadians to stay focussed, as I am, on the programme of results. Do not be misled by dissatisfaction on the Other Side and by persons who now would like to draw red herrings across the path of a successful works programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party remains committed through its Housing Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, to a programme of finding solutions for the housing needs of Barbadians, and I am not naive enough to try to present to this House that these solutions have been found yet because they are not yet all found. Sir, that is why we are still working, that is why we are still acquiring, that is why we are still vesting in the National Housing Corporation the lands that we have specified.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need not be troubled. We need not to be distracted or to be disturbed by the rumblings on That Side, of a political organisation in the Barbados Labour Party who, essentially, are marked for non-delivery of housing solutions, to come in here today and try to preach either to This Side or to the people of Barbados that they now have solutions.

Sir, now that they are in Opposition, they now know how to get Hardwood Housing to stop taking deposits and to produce houses, all that they know how to do now. They now know how to get the contract that was given to Barrack for building the Government building at Warrens diverted back to the National Housing Corporation to build houses for working-class people of Barbados but, Sir, my word to them is that it is a little late for them to present solutions.

The Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands in this country, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North will remain focussed and guarded in our resolve to find these solutions and this solution at Constant is one of many more to come.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

H/A72/12:19 Sequence 25

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say a few words in this debate. It is very important for me to say from the outset that this land in question is in the Constituency of St. George North. Therefore, any land in St. George North, square and fairly, I will have to have a say in it. It is just on the border of St. George South.

This land in question was first surveyed, based on today's plans, in July 2001. This land was surveyed by Land Surveyor Harold G. Gaskin and it was recorded in October 2001, Fact No. 1. Sir, I took a Paper to Cabinet just before this to acquire this parcel of land, which measures about 7 acres of land, or 2.76 hectares of land. The land in question was to supplement the large demand for house spots in the area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Phase 1 was bought in this constituency of Constant and we were able to accommodate a number of persons in the development. Persons found house spots to build their homes in Phase 1, as well as lots for welfare and needy cases. The area is situated just east of Constant Estate and it is also part and parcel of the Constant Tenantry. The land in question was surrounded by land that was sold at 10 cents per square

foot. We did it at the time, because we wanted to develop the tenantry, put in roads, as well as to use a ribbon development in the Phase 1 area to help the tenantry.

HA 72C13:50 p.m. Sequence 1

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72C, Sequence 2 & 3, 1:50, p.m.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I recall the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in his speech then, felt that we were interfering with the agricultural land and he objected strenuously at the time. He said that the Government was trespassing on the agricultural belt on the St. George's Valley. Little did he know, and I argued at the time that this land was marginal land and it is land that was never used really for rearing of sugar cane and so on. It was mainly grass land and we were only trying to accommodate, update and modernise the tenantry and we did that.

Sir, if you compare what happened in the first phase to what is happening now, as I said the development was bought mainly for house spots. When I came to this Chamber, the late Honourable Member for Christ Church South was the first person that told me that one acre of land can provide 10 house spots based on four-point something acreage, so that if there are seven acres of land for house spots, you should get about 70 houses. I think 64 however is quite reasonable so I have no quarrel with the 64 house spots as my colleague and I have discussed.

I am saying however that the plan for the construction of the houses was never contemplated at the time but the Government changed and I want to explain this especially to the House here and the people of St. George because we still have a large demand for house spots in St. George because a number of persons have to move their homes.

I have spoken about this at length to the Minister of Housing that the amount of people who have been given notice to quit, and therefore we need house spots. As we speak, there are numbers of persons who would have to remove their homes because of the Court Notices, and their houses would have to be put on the dump.

The Ministry of Housing has not really served the people of St. George as we had contemplated but they have built homes and the Government has built homes and I want to talk about this briefly. I want to bring this whole debate into focus. I want to say from the outset too that this land is now being vested in the National Housing Corporation and under the Laws of this country, the National Housing Corporation should never have entered into any contract with anybody because the land is not theirs.

The land is not the property of the National Housing Corporation. The land belongs to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, therefore, the Permanent Secretary, the Minister and the Cabinet of Barbados should never have agreed for the National Housing Corporation to enter into any contract with anybody because it is not theirs. There are too many problems up there and this brings me to the focus of accountability.

Who is accountable for this? I am saying that the contract to enter into lands belongs to the National Housing Corporation. It should have gone to the Cabinet of Barbados and it should not have gone to the Corporation.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: However, I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that at the National Housing Corporation you find too many people entering into contracts when it is not vested and they have a lot of problems out there.

I am asking the question about accountability at the National Housing Corporation. Who is accountable because it only dawned on me during the lunch period that this land is now being vested in the National Housing Corporation.

The truth of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not a single house should have been built at Constant. If it was built at Constant, it should have come to Parliament, or it should be directed by the Permanent Secretary, the Minister and the Cabinet of Barbados so we, therefore, Mr. Speaker, have to ask what else is happening at the National Housing Corporation without due process.

Sir, I remember saying to the Minister some time in this House that most developments take two to three years and in order to fast track it, there is a method of doing so, but you cannot just go above the Law. The Law is there. There is an Attorney-General in this Chamber. The Minister is a lawyer and the Prime Minister is a lawyer and they must direct what is happening at the National Housing Corporation and we have to ask the question: Who is really responsible for this development? So there is a mass of confusion going on at the National Housing Corporation and you know who has to pay for it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, whenever this development is completed, it will be the house owner who has to pay for this because I understand even if the cost per house is between \$100 and \$150 and you look at the sizes of the houses, one can argue that this development may very well work out to be \$300 per square foot or more.

I do not know but we have to be reasonable and if this development was started without due cost - because I am of the view because when the Minister introduced this

very well, he said that there is a Sewerage Treatment Plant and I want to know who would bear that cost. I feel that this development started without the relevant planning permission but I understand why a Minister would want to please and satisfy the need for housing.

I am of the view that this development was started before it was ready because the cost of the Sewerage Treatment Plant, the cost of all the drainage that I see going on at Constant will be exorbitant. Therefore, the Ministry and Government will have to absorb the cost of the infrastructure.

I am saying to the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation which will be responsible as of this date, the National Housing Corporation will be responsible for this land because it will be vested in the National Housing Corporation today so the new Chairman, Chairman Number 3, three Chairmen in three years, will have to now disperse of this lot.

I will want to ask the Minister to look carefully at all the relevant costs. You have to look at the cost of the infrastructure. You have to look at the cost of building the homes, the cost of cleaning the roads and putting in the various utilities, electricity, pipes and so on. You also have to ensure that adequate telephone services are provided because, as I understand it, you cannot get the telephone services in the Constant area. There is also a shortage in water so that we have to ensure because if you have a modern development there, the services must be provided.

Who will bear the cost of the various services? When you total the entire cost of this infrastructure, to pass on all of these costs to the homeowner will run into thousands of dollars. I am saying the Government and the National Housing Corporation when it is through, should get together and absorb some of these costs and should come to Parliament to say that the cost is X amount but we are taking off -X because of unforeseen circumstances and costs, which cannot be listed for the client so that this development which is in my Constituency, will be reduced.

House A72C, Sequence 2 & 3, 14:00:14

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I have to defend the people of St. George North who have sent me here and also those future homeowners whom I know will vote for me in large numbers when they come whether or not they are Dems because I am going to look after them, so I am pleading for them to ensure that the cost will be reduced to those homeowners.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want however to go a step further because even though this land is not vested as yet in

the National Housing Corporation, because we have not approved it, there are still a number of issues that must be addressed at the National Housing Corporation, which the Minister must address because the Bible speaks about good works. Regardless of whatever good work one does or is perceived to have done, one has also to dot one's i's and cross one's t's, which is important.

What is happening at the National Housing Corporation? I spoke about modernisation in a previous speech. To date, the National Housing Corporation has not modernised itself. Its legal process is still outdated and there are still a lot of problems with its financial status.

The Minister, whether or not he likes it, is accountable to the people of Barbados and to this Parliament for the National Housing Corporation and whenever something goes wrong he is accountable for it. I do not care if the Minister hires people, it is his responsibility. I do not care whether the Minister, and I spoke to him about this, appoints or disappoints.

The Minister is the Minister in charge. The Minister can appoint or disappoint his Chairman, that is the job of a Minister. However, the Minister must understand that the Chairman that he appoints is accountable to him and the Cabinet of Barbados and when there is a problem it has to be discussed properly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not fair for a Corporation to have three Chairmen in three years. When you have a Corporation and you are changing your CEO every year, you therefore have to ask the Minister if his choice of Chairman is okay. We have to watch the selection of the Minister. One has to ask oneself the question if the Minister and the Chairman were on speaking terms. If the Minister truly appoints the Chairman and if the Minister did appoint the Chairman, could he not speak to the Chairman, what was the problem? Is it true what we are hearing? We are hearing there are problems. The Chairman can do as he likes, members can do as they like and you have bare chaos and confusion. Some people say corruption, I am not going there.

I am saying that the Minister has to ask himself who is this Chairman that can give a family member a big contract. We see all of this in the public. Who is it? Is the Minister responsible? You cannot have an appointed Chairman who would do as he or she likes. I am saying that we have to watch what is happening up there. Who is in charge? Is it the Minister or the Chairman? Once that is happening you have confusion up there.

I am of the view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Minister must be accountable for what is going on at the National Housing Corporation. Too many times you cannot get a single house spot for a single person and we have

problems. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you call the Chairman, the Manager or the Deputy General Manager at the National Housing Corporation, not one of them replies to your calls. I intend, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to use this Parliament to tell people that they are accountable to Barbadians. I do not want a house spot for me, I want house spots for poor people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying to you that the National Housing Corporation continues to lose its mandate and there are problems up there that need to be addressed. The Minister is responsible to this Parliament but you cannot have a situation where the Ministry is doing one thing and the Board is doing something else. We have bare problems up there that have to be addressed and the Minister must set the tone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke to this before, that I have not seen in the last three years any real modernisation started, especially when we look at the land registration process. When we look at what is happening at the National Housing Corporation today I am not pleased because I took a paper to Cabinet before 2000 to look at the registration process and I have not seen any real progress.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hear people talking about building houses. I have made the point that house construction is not housing solution. When you look carefully at what is happening today across Barbados you have a problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad to see that through this Parliament one bank was able to reduce the interest rate to 5.7 per cent but we must call for other improvements in the Ministry of Housing and Lands if not that institution that is supposed to deliver houses will be dogged with the stigma of corruption after corruption. You should not have to pay an officer in order to get something. Gone are the days when people have to be paying people to get something done. When people in the streets wanted to get a favour, they had to go out there and do all sorts of things in order to get a house spot. People cried and bent over backwards. You have all sorts of problems up there because of what is happening. We have to stop that. One could laugh at this but it is happening. When persons go to the National Housing Corporation to get a house spot, they cannot get anything done unless they have a membership card or they do all sorts of things. It is unfair to the people of Barbados. We never had that before.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that we were able to give out loans upon loans and I did not know where they came from. I never wanted to know. We went through a General Manager who was a "D", I knew that, but he did what we had to do. We had persons up there who were "Ds" and we never fired anybody. When you go up at the National Housing Corporation, you find staff upon staff

and you are changing staff. It is unfair. It is not for Barbados. The National Housing Corporation can take on staff but you have to accommodate both "B", "D" and "Z" if not, that Corporation would lose face.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to see a situation where the Chairman who is appointed would recognise his or her role and put systems in place to ensure that the mandate of the Corporation is properly carried out. The Corporation must not be there for any "Bs" or "Ds". The Minister must set the tone. The Corporation must be there to assist persons. Those persons who are in need must get their just reward based on their needs.

A first-time homeowner, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a first-time homeowner, he or she does not have a house. A person without a house does not care about "B" or "D", they want a housing solution. I want to see a situation where the Board is in control. The Board must report to the Minister who must report to the Cabinet and the Cabinet must not ask if the person wears my colour. We have to set the tone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we did a housing development at Gall Hill, St. John and I never asked who the persons were, I was not interested. I was interested in providing solutions for Barbadians who were in need, whether they were "Bs" or "Ds" or "Zs".

House A72C Sequence 4 & 5 2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, too many times the people at the National Housing Corporation were too busy checking out people with credentials. It is nonsense and I want this to stop because we are housing Barbadians. At the end of the day, we are all interested in having a proper housing solution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to say to the Minister of Housing and Lands that we are looking forward to the appointment of a Chairman for the National Housing Corporation, one who would represent the interest of Barbadians and not the interest of the Democratic Labour Party, or the Barbados Labour Party; he or she must represent the interest of the housing sector. As far as housing persons are concerned, there is no Democratic Labour Party or Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to finish by saying that despite whatever has happened at this Corporation so far, we know that the worst has not yet come. The Government must honour its commitment to its Manifesto but, at the

same time, Government must be prepared to allow justice to prevail. Sir, a management structure needs to be put in place to replicate that Manifesto pledge.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am much obliged.

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

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly there are some problems at the National Housing Corporation. Sir, if it were not so, we would not see a former Chairman making it her business to go into the public domain questioning the difficulties and problems that exist there.

Sir, following the lead from the Honourable Member for St. George North who has just spoken, and listening to him carefully and understanding that the owner of the land is, in fact, the Crown of Barbados, then the Crown should have entered into a contract to develop that land. I have not seen the Minister produced any contractual agreement, whatsoever, and would have to come from his Ministry. It is Crown's land and the Minister is certainly responsible for his direct Ministry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only is there any contract for development in his Ministry which has the responsibility, but at no time there should have been any agreement for the National Housing Corporation to enter into a financial contract with land they do not currently own, therefore this, in itself, encapsulates the significant problems and difficulties at the National Housing Corporation.

The Honourable Member read from the matter. It was also signed off by the Chairman and General Manager entering into a finance agreement over lands that they do not currently own. How could that be? I am not a lawyer and maybe the current Attorney-General would get up and explain how, not only did the Ministry approved and allowed a contractor to start work without even an agreement, nor a Memorandum of Understanding, with the Ministry who currently owns the land.

Furthermore, a National Housing Corporation, which also has no connection to land whatsoever, except that it is part of the Government, also signs a financial agreement with another entity over the very land they do not own nor control. These are significant and fundamental problems in the chain of command in the way business is being done at the National Housing Corporation and the way business is being done at the Ministry of Housing and Lands. We are asking simple questions. We want clarity and accountability. We want to know that things are done in the correct and proper way, as we go forward.

The Government of the Democratic Labour Party asked for transparency and accountability. In fact, it was one of their pillars to be elected, but this matter is as transparent as muddy water. There is no way, or no evidence whatsoever has been brought to this Honourable House, to show there was any agreement between the contractor and the person who owns this land, the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do not get me wrong. I will always applaud and be happy when Barbadians are getting an opportunity to get houses. It is a great and fundamental right for the people of Barbados and I applaud any Barbadian who gets the chance to have a house. Sir, what I also wanted to know was for how much was that land going to be sold to those contractors?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why do I want to know that? Sir, to sell house and land for \$150 000, if I were to assume to put that house there, including the development of that land, excluding the sewerage plant, is going to be about \$5 a square foot and so that land price is going to be \$25 000 for the land and \$125 000 for a three-bedroom house. Why is it then that we can have the same National Housing Corporation produce a house for \$125 000 for the same size, 750 square feet, on one lot and then go a little bit across the road and produce the same sized house, with the same amount of bedrooms, for triple the amount of money? How could it be?

The blocks cost the same, the mortar cost the same, the painting cost the same, the cupboard cost the same? Why is it that the same National Housing Corporation could get a 758 square-foot house, of which they are going to do 20 wall houses and they are going to sell those wall houses for \$150 000. If you take out the cost of the land, it amounts to \$125 000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say this is great, this is wonderful. I say \$125 000 house is in the reach of multiple numbers of persons and we could house a lot of people who would all be able to benefit from that because it is within their grasp. Therefore, why would the National Housing Corporation not keep on that path and continue to provide houses at \$125 000 or \$150 000? Sir, instead we make a drastic shift. We decided a little way down the road that we are going to do \$300 000 houses because it is being done by a big contractor, who has to profiteer on the backs of the people.

I am saying that is wrong. The National Housing Corporation is there primarily to help people who could not get houses for themselves. Why should we as the National Housing Corporation be selling land at \$3 a square foot to big contractors, so that these contractors could build houses and sell them for \$350 000, when it is proven that the National Housing Corporation could build the same

houses, the same size, the same three-bedroom and sell it for \$125 000?

There is obviously a major problem. It is clear that the big contractor is going to be profiteering off the back of cheap land. If you are getting land at \$3 a square foot, why should you not be passing that saving on to the person who is buying the land? That is the point I want to make. What is happening is that a big contractor, who is benefiting from 10 or 11 projects across Barbados...

In addition to benefiting from these number of projects in Barbados, he turns around and gets land at \$3 a square foot, which is \$2 cheaper than what the Democratic Labour Party said they were going to sell to people. Instead the big contractor gets land at \$3 a square foot but instead of passing that saving... Mr. Deputy Speaker, land in that area would normally be between \$20 and \$25 a square foot and so they are getting a saving of between \$20 and \$22 on that land.

2.20 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: You would imagine that savings would be passed on to the people who are buying those houses but no, that is not the case here, that is not what is happening here. What is happening now, is rather than that being passed on to the people who are buying the houses who, incidentally, are, essentially, the owners of the land because it the Government of Barbados, they get a savings of \$3 but they do not pass it on. They are going to profiteer on it and sell it for \$300 000 odd which means they are benefiting significantly with the land cost and turning around and benefiting significantly by construction cost.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: We have just proven it. The Minister just said, quite clearly, that they are going to build 758 square foot houses and they are going to sell them the house part at \$125 000, so it is obvious that it is possible, not including the sewerage plant which is probably going to cost \$100 million, which means that they have to bear that cost. Why is it that down the road we have the same 700 square foot house for \$300 000? There is something wrong at the National Housing Corporation

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West, you are becoming repetitive and you are fully aware of the Rules and the Standing Orders. Let us keep it within the confines of the Standing Orders and the Rules.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will move on. The other matter to the charge from the Chairman of the Minister bypassing the Board.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West that matter is a subject of a Resolution that was approved this morning and I would caution you not to venture there. When it enters the Order Paper, it will become a separate debate, so please steer clear of that matter. It is not before the House now. A Resolution has been approved and it falls in line, according to Section 24 of the Standing Orders of this House.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am guided by your direction on that matter. I want then to come to this concept of \$10 million which the Minister spoke about. I wanted a little clarity on \$40 million of which \$10 million has been drawn down, which the Minister said in his speech. The Minister said clearly \$40 million of which

\$10 million has been drawn down for small contractors and he went through a list of small contractors, the majority of which are subcontractors.

Sir, these boys in particular are from my Constituency, and I know them quite well. They do trowel plastic work and so on. What I wanted to know from the Minister: Was he saying that \$10 million was from the same Constant development or was that a separate entity? I was not clear on what the \$10 million was for.

Sir, again, small contractors out there are having great difficulty meeting their expenses. There are many small contractors who have now reached the stage that they are having to sell their equipment. They are selling their bobcats, all their Makitas. The staff has already been laid off months ago and they are multiple numbers of small contractors.

These are small contractors who actually build the houses, not the small contractor who just comes and does the painting, or the plumbing, or whatever that the Minister spoke about because he went through a whole list of them, but they were people who do the painting and the plumbing. These are subcontractors who need to get work too but there are actual building contractors out there who are having great difficulty meeting their monthly commitments and are having now to rely on selling their assets just to meet their monthly commitments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to get some more information from the Minister on exactly how that programme is going to work.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: How are people going to become selected by the National Housing Corporation as small contractors? Sir, the reason I say that is because we heard of problems of how the National Housing Corporation makes its decisions and, on top of that, how will the National Housing Corporation be selecting its small contractors? Sir, not the subcontractors, those are small numbers but the building contractors, the people who are charged with actually putting up the blocks, putting on the roof, the driveway and so on, not the plumbing and the trowel plastic, which is the minor part but the big parts. I want to know how that \$10 million is going to be used to help the small contractors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am a little concerned about it because, as I am aware, normally the contractors build the house and then the contractors are paid or paid in stages.

I also wanted to know why is it that we have now changed it around and Government is now borrowing the money to do the building, to give the contractors and how then does the Government pay back. I was a little confused and I want the Minister to expand on that and to explain to us why it is that the Government is incurring the interest costs on building it and waiting for a seller before even actually knowing who is going to buy it, how it is going to be done or when it is going to be completed.

Sir, as far as I am aware, that is not how it is normally done. Sir, how it was done before is that the house was built and then the contractor was paid from the proceeds of the sale. This seems to have changed and I am asking the Minister to expand on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few words, I am obliged.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. The debate before this Honourable House centres around a Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, Cap. 225, vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of lands the property of the Crown situate at Constant in the parish of St. George in this island for the purpose of housing development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not believe That Side has sought to suggest that these things are, in fact, in this Bill. I think it has been established by our mere presence dealing with this Resolution that the land has not just been vested in the National Housing Corporation. I have stood in this House now for seven years or thereabouts and there has been an extremely long history of lands being used by the

National Housing Corporation, the property of the Crown, not vested in the National Housing Corporation.

Sir, the vesting comes some time down the road. There are lands developed at Deacons, London Bourne Towers, and I have visited one or two of those when I used to be engaged in another activity, where the land has not been vested but there seems to have been an acceptance of this process, where the National Housing Corporation, in order to meet ever-demanding needs to house people moves ahead knowing really that you are rubbing the same hands. Sir, you are rubbing the hand of yourself.

Sir, I am not saying that this is tidy. This is a bit untidy but it has been a process over eons and those on the Other Side who now can stand up and claim as though this has never been a process over time should reflect and, Sir, reflection is good for both the mind and the soul, particularly the souls of many of those who are on the Other Side.

H/A72C/14:30 Sequence 9 Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. R. D. JONES: At Constant, St. George - I have been, not on the site because it is still a site under construction, but I have passed by St. George Secondary School and I stopped because I received several requests from my constituents as well as other persons across Barbados, who are in search of a comfortable home that they would like to be relocated at Constant in the parish of St. George, and not necessarily to vote for the current Representative either, regardless of what that Representative is saying.

I am looking forward to the day when the Honourable Minister, the National Housing Corporation and the leadership and staff of that Corporation, along with the developers who are working in partnership with the National Housing Corporation, will be able to pass 63 or 64 keys to all of those who qualify. You still have to qualify because you have various financial commitments to meet.

It is, therefore, extremely unfortunate that today and over the last few weeks that we have had speculation as to what took place, or is taking place at Constant. I have not detected in any of the arguments thus advanced - I want to repeat that. I have not detected in any of the arguments thus advanced, that there is a desire on the part of the developers or on the part of the National Housing Corporation to rip off those persons who will eventually own the homes at Constant, St. George.

I am hearing that the Minister bypassed the Board, in some instances. I am not saying in this instance because I do not know any of the evidence that has come forward, thus far, suggests that this is the case. Sir, we are going on the words of one individual, words that are contested, so

there is a contestation by the Minister that this is not the case.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have not heard any of the other Members of the Board, thus far, coming out and saying the Minister was wrong, or the Minister is right, or that former Chairman is either right or wrong. Maybe that is in the future. It might be the proverbial story we hear in Barbados which says, let the fish gather. It might be that. I do not know. The point is, it is extremely unfortunate where all the avenues of communication were opened. Sir, you have a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Lands and a Deputy Permanent Secretary. There must be a SAO somewhere.

Sir, you have an individual whom you called your friend - these are things I am speaking about - who would have been responsible for bringing your name forward to your colleagues and saying to your colleagues, accept this person that I bring to the Board. Where there is a breakdown, and in the human life there is sometimes a breakdown. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you are friends at a distance you agree best. Sometimes when you come close together you have friction. You have friction even among persons who walk up and down the aisle, who maybe should never have been on the aisle anyhow, but who walk up and down the aisles...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I will deal with you outside, not in the confines of these Chambers.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: You will run like you ran a few months ago, and not for a seat where you ran away. I am not distracted, you frightened fellow.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, where is obviously a parting of the ways of two individuals, who I firmly believe were committed to the development of housing every last person in Barbados, and the normal and natural process would be for the person who is appointed, to move on it and found they could not have avenues to deal with what they consider to be their distress. That is the normal decent and natural thing, not to go and heap up piles of cane trash, get gasoline and light a match and say let it burn down wherever. That is a style of the Barbados Labour Party.

Aside

Hon. R. D. JONES: I am sorry if that is the case. It might be "cow dung" because it burns long.

Sir, the point is, there is a need for careful guided or managed leadership of the National Housing Corporation. I think that is in place. From my knowledge, I believe that is in place. We know that the National Housing Corporation has come through a very narrow dark channel, previously, with all kinds of difficulties.

In this Honourable House when I was on That Side, I used some very strong words with a former General Manager of the National Housing Corporation who eventually was given a lollipop by the Barbados Labour Party to go somewhere else. That was done eventually. He was given a lollipop. They gave him a large lollipop, not the small ones, the ones that are so big that they cannot fit into your mouth.

I had to speak harshly, because I thought at that time that Deputy General Manager did not like poor people based on the complaints that I was receiving as a representative of the people of Barbados, and I spoke to it.

I believe that the National Housing Corporation now is forging ahead in a path where there is some emergence of coherence. They are focussing on their mandates. I have not seen the Honourable Minister coming to the Cabinet of Barbados with any desire for the National Housing Corporation to construct any large office buildings. I am seeing the Minister bringing to the Infrastructural Committee and to the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet for land, 500 lots at \$5 per square foot.

Sir, I am seeing the Minister bringing partnership agreements for places such as Coverley No.2, Constant and other areas which would most likely eventually be brought. That particularly is a very good and important strategy because it is known, unless we are pretending, that the National Housing Corporation has had an outstanding amount of debt over time. It has had to go to the money market in Barbados to get money to shore it up over time. Maybe the formula used might be wrong but these are debatable questions. We can debate them and settle them.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West speaking about the model which was used. The Honourable Minister would tell you that I have spoken to him about that model, where those who would eventually be beneficiaries of the lots or the houses are the ones who come forward with the 10 per cent or whatever and work through the process, so that cashflow difficulties would not be as prolonged as it appeared to be in the past, or will be in the future, or you have to keep going to the money market of Barbados. There are formulas which can be utilised.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I very well remember - as a youngster growing up in that part of Barbados, running through the fields of Coverley, either Stage 1, particularly

Coverley Stage 1, what you call at the back of the 'Flash N', in those days using the Barbadian vernacular, and reaping some juicy canes from in that field.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We were owners of the plantation.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We always sought the permission of the Manager. We would never take which is not ours, so I have never seen a police at my door, or never had to pay a lawyer. There are three above there. Maybe I would have only used one of the three above there. The other two I would scoff at. I will not go to the lawyer from St. Andrew or St. Joseph. I would not do it. They would not take me on anyhow. I do not have the money.

14.40 p.m.

Sequence 10 & 11

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72C, Sequences 12 & 13, 2.40 p.m.

Hon. R. D. JONES: The point is that at Phase I Coverley, there is a mess...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Coverley, yes.

No, we are not talking about Coverley, I am talking about the mess and juxtaposition, relative to Constant where the only difficulty may be the rapidity of roll out and there will be no mess. The Minister has already stated about the quality of workmanship. We are talking about putting in place the sewerage system. That is an additional cost of development that was not in place before. That would have an impact on the total development cost and obviously, the cost of what you call construction, or the cost of the houses.

It was not in there. I do not see a sewerage plant at Coverley, Phase I. I have never heard about it. I have heard about the mess at one of the developments where persons have bought up every single housing solution already. There are houses that can cost \$300 000 to \$400 000, inclusive of land, 800 to 900 square feet of house, plus the land, because you have to look at what you are getting. Many of the houses built by the developers, sometimes they give you a bare skeleton. You have to put in the cupboards yourself. You have to tile the floors yourself. You have to put in all of the various amenities and at this

development, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you do not have that. This is what you have. Granite counter tops.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: What are we talking about? I am talking about a development. I am generic. You like you know something that I do not know. You need to be in Alaska where you live. Movable bedroom wardrobes, ceiling fans, wooden kitchen cupboards, chrome kitchen faucets. Every single thing that you can think about is being placed in those homes and there is a cost. The washing machines...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Listen, each man buys what he wants and each man buys what satisfies his own particular pocket. You are not shutting out anybody. You are not developing any prejudice.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: There must be housing solutions across the board and if at some time there is a segment of the population that wants houses in the \$500 000 or \$600 000 range and they so want to have a partnership with a private developer, so be it because that group must not be shut out as well. I do not accept this discrimination. Just like the group that needs a house for \$100 000 inclusive of the land should not be shut out either. There must be a variety across the board.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: You have granite in Haggatt Hall so why they cannot have granite somewhere else?

Is it Haggatt Hall when you branch around the corner at the three storey mansion there? That is what it is called?

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Lower Burney. There you have granite so why the ordinary citizen cannot get granite too?

This powder puff face behaviour I cannot accept, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is an extremely unfortunate situation when the Minister at the National Housing Corporation is being derailed in his pursuit in getting housing for the people of Barbados by a lot of flimsy patched-up behaviour - that is what it is - and putting the lives of decent men and women to be challenged by persons who really do not care about the working people of Barbados. These things must be said and I am angry.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, I have made it abundantly clear that when an Honourable Member is on his feet, he must be heard in silence. I have not heard the Honourable Member who is on his feet made reference or called any person's name in here.

This Chair has heard you repeatedly called the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation's name. Please desist from doing so. Thank you.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I will not call the names of anybody. It is not important. It is not about ad hominem attacks on anybody. It is about a process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know what is the problem? The problem has to do when you juxtapose on the right-hand success and on the left hand the lack of success and at least I am going to be a bit kind to the Honourable Member for St. George North because I thought he gave a reasonable speech. He was challenged to stick to the core but he gave a reasonable speech.

There are two other Honourable Members on the Other Side, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who was a Chairman of the National Housing Corporation and the only thing you can see from him is an erection at Warrens. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew what you see on the Other Side is the lack thereof, because there was no performance at all, none whatsoever. Those Honourable Members were responsible for the decimation of the National Housing Corporation (NHC).

We have now seen the light lit by decent men and women at the NHC and the Honourable Minister. My advice is to plough ahead. Do not stop. The people of Barbados will judge you, not on the trumped up words, or the words placed in the mouths of others to circumscribe your action of behaviour, but by your inability to give them housing solutions, including the land lots, houses, terrace units, including the variety of housing solutions that we must have in Barbados to satisfy the mirage of people who come to the fore.

It is unfortunate. Again, I keep repeating what has happened. One unusually looks that if one wants to plan on the pulpit of decency, accountability, transparency and all of that, that somehow, the Prime Minister would have had to be saying to the Minister, please put your documents at our disposal, or I will take them because you were involved in corruption but that is not the case.

Therefore, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, being brought to the throne of public disgrace is extremely uncalled for and unfortunate, as the individual

sets about to house every last person. It is not fair. Then for an Opposition, hungry to satisfy themselves, to look for scraps to scrape together to try to decimate the hard, creative work of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and by extension, the hard work of those in the National Housing Corporation who, for the first time in a long time, see a clear path and purpose to which they can relate. They saw a little glimmer of that under the Minister from St. George North but when they started to do a little something, they moved it.

I do not know what the problems were between him and the previous Prime Minister. There are a lot of foolish rumours and I reject them because he was a former colleague in Education, so I reject those kinds of scurrilous attacks on any Honourable Member, but they emanated from your people.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: The kinds of rumours you hear on the ground came from your own people but I reject them. I do not listen to your people. You are a former colleague in Education and there are many young people of Barbados who speak highly of you, particularly in your area of business that taught them at Grantley Adams School, so I am not going to listen to them, not against you, a former colleague.

If this Honourable Member for St. Philip North had opened large hands and said to any of the developers and said, put something in there or you do not get this, or look to take something from somebody or call them and say, come and fix my house, or call them and say, I need paving stones, or call them and say, all matter of things, then I will never stand by his side. I will be the first like the lion in his throat because we do not stand for that.

House A72C, Sequence 12 & 13, 14:50:17

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. R. D. JONES: I will support the Honourable Member because the Honourable Member is doing what we have asked him to do, get houses for the people of Barbados. At the end of the day, no member of any Board... There are some out there who might feel that they are the Minister, that is part of the problem. I speak candidly on these matters because I beg no favours and I fear no hate. I kneel before my maker every day so I do not have to worry. I bow down to the Lord not to man.

There are some people who believe that they are the Minister and when the Minister says look, this is the path as designed by Cabinet or one of its Committee and this is what we want. They want to tell you "no" that you cannot have it and then they walk about the country and call their

friends and tell their friends, "I tell the Minister no." How dare you? You should have handed in your resignation from the time that emanated from your mouth. I am not as decent as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, you know. I am extremely decent but I will not stand for foolishness.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not stand for that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I want to caution you that a matter in respect of the former Chairman would be the subject of a separate debate by way of a Resolution and I want you to steer clear of that.

The Honourable Member has two minutes in which to wind up.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Sir, I respect your ruling to steer clear of the matter which is by Resolution to be debated some time hence, maybe after 2012. I have no problem with that.

I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think it is only fair that I can inform you and everybody else, that as a citizen of Barbados in a democracy, the House is not the only place that we speak. Once we are buttressed by the truth it must be told wherever it is.

This Resolution is fully supported by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. Get ahead, Mr. Minister, Honourable Member for St. Philip North, with the construction of houses, but forget not Christ Church East Central. I know we are challenged for space in that particular Constituency. I know that we cannot any longer keep expanding outward, but we could go up. What I see at Country Park Towers says to me that we have persons, including the staff of the National Housing Corporation, who constructed two of those beautiful structures at Country Park Towers, who can construct houses well. The company that built the other two also did a good job.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is this talk about small contractors and we are now dividing small contractors into building contractors, plumbing contractors and landscaping contractors. The point is that they are all contractors, sub or main. We know in this country that persons we designate as small contractors are sometimes challenged by cash flow problems. We know that Government relies on you to output first and then for you to be covered when draw-downs are received on any Government project. Part of the \$10 million - and this is what I think the Honourable Minister has been saying - was a bit of front loading to help those struggling small contractors so that they too could get a piece of the pie or piece of the cake. There are some who

do not come to the table with any resources but they must not be shut out.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Joes River bridge has been fixed and people can move through, thanks to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I am not going to be distracted. The point is that these things must be told. These are the truths. Bring the truths and let the people see the truth. They are feeling the truth as the Minister speaks more and more to these issues. It is not as you spread this dark blanket deliberately across the space in order to obfuscate the work of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands. It is not like that. It is unfair. It should not have been done and there is a need for repentance one day coming soon.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I intend to be fairly brief for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, but when a former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation could indicate that despite her best efforts a contract for Constant...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member...

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: This is not about the debate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member in his presentation made the point about CLICO and about a financing contract. I am just saying that when a Chairman of a statutory body could indicate that despite her best efforts she could not impress on the Minister to give her details of an important contract with CLICO Holdings, like the one we are dealing with for Constant, and the Minister could come before this House and indicate that the Chairman did sign a contract on September 28, 2009, is a matter of grave concern.

This is a matter for the Attorney-General because this is a case where the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, with respect to Constant, has made her position very clear. It is a little unfair to that Chairman for the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to come to these Chambers to make her look like a liar when that

Chairman cannot defend herself. That is a shame. It is a very serious matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that you might be saying that I am looking at a document here. It is the statement of the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, which is relevant to this debate. The Honourable Member got up and raised a document which he never made a document of the House, but I would like to make this document a document of the House.

The document is a statement under the hands of the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, Marilyn Rice-Bowen, relating to Constant, relating to contracts, relating to contractors, relating to CLICO Holdings and ongoing works at Constant, which the Honourable Member this morning when he spoke said...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, you are quite aware with respect to that document you want to refer to and make a document of the House, that it forms part and parcel of a newspaper clipping.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: No, no, it is not a newspaper clipping. You could examine this document for yourself. It is a public document, a statement which was made available to the public by the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation. We are debating...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, hold on a minute, please.

House A72C Sequence 14 & 15 3.00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what I wanted to draw to your attention was that you made reference to the Minister reading from a document this morning. Nowhere in the records of this Honourable House this morning is it recorded that the Minister was reading from a document. I ruled on that issue when the Honourable Member for Christ Church West rose to his feet on a point of order. The Honourable Member then rose on a point of relevance and I dealt with that matter also.

Honourable Member, you are free to make the document to which you are referring a document of this Honourable House. You must clearly state the date, the author and everything else, so that the Honourable House can have a proper record from which you are reading.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Do you want me to read the entire document, Sir? I will read the entire document.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is fairly obvious that Honourable Members on That Side do not want to debate the Resolution. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East had the gall in his presentation...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that language...

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I withdraw the statement. Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East-Central indicated that Resolution would be debated in 2012. He insinuated that. He insinuated that it would be debated in 2012, therefore, if it would be debated in 2012, at least give me the opportunity to read from it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is not the Leader of Government Business. Honourable Member, you are fully aware of Section 20 (4) of the Standing Orders which indicates that:

“Private Members’ Business shall be set down on the Order Paper for a particular day in the order in which it was entered in the Order Book for that day.”

Honourable Member, my record indicates that we have approximately seven businesses prior to that and it is the Leader of Government Business who will determine the order of business. Therefore, to try to indicate that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central indicated when this matter would be dealt with, the Honourable Member does not have the authority to determine when that matter comes to be debated in this Honourable House. Please continue.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not too sure whether or not you were listening to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. I am not saying that the Honourable Member is indicating, as a matter of fact, that the Resolution would be debated in 2012. The Honourable Member said in his loud voice - I do not think that he could have heard himself - that maybe this Resolution, which is an insinuation, would be debated maybe in 2012. Therefore, I think it is only fair to the public that statement, which is not a statement to the Press, it is a statement to the public - it says:

“This statement is designed to set the records straight. As regard to my termination as Chairman of the Board of the National Housing Corporation, when I willingly accepted the role of Chairman of the National Housing Corporation in December 2008, I viewed that position as an excellent opportunity to broaden my service within the community, through alleviating many of our society’s ills that are rooted in the twin issues of inadequate housing and overcrowding.

Despite my social intent, unfortunately, there were fundamental differences...”

Sir, the emphasis is on “fundamental differences”

“between the Minister of Housing and Lands and the Board, in terms of our interpretation of established rules and protocols, as well as the role and function of the Board in respect of certain National Housing Corporation projects.

The fully established rule is that in respect of all National Housing Corporation funded projects, the Board recommends, and the Minister...”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not the Ministry, as reported in “The Advocate”.

“is free to accept or reject any such recommendation.”

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, if you are going to read from a document, please read exactly what the document says and make no reference to anything else. If you are making that a document of this Honourable House, please read exactly what the document says.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the document almost by heart and sometimes I may call a word incorrect. I may say “Minister” instead of “Ministry” but it is not deliberate.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, whether you know this document by heart...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I have made it abundantly clear. When Mr. Deputy Speaker is speaking, no one else should speak. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: “Regrettably, in some instances, the

Board was never afforded the opportunity to give due or any consideration to and/or make an appropriate recommendation in respect of some National Housing Corporation projects. Simply put, the Board was bypassed by the Minister. This attitude and disposition on the part of the Minister ultimately led to an impasse between the Minister and me, and ultimately my termination as Chairman of the Board -

case in point, work at Fordes Road, Clapham, St. Michael.

Prior to my termination, and as a result of the said impasse already referred to, I considered resigning on several occasions but felt that I owed it to the Prime Minister, who was instrumental in my appointment, as well as my commitment to the cause of social justice.”

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: The man that you killed in St. Peter.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, you cannot cast aspersions or make such disparaging remarks about any Honourable Member in this House. I already spoke to you with respect to reading from the script.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you did not hear the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, according to you, cast aspersions on this Honourable Member. Sir, you better speak to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I have good ears and maybe the sound gets to me before it gets to you. I can understand that.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I continue:

“to persevere in what was fast becoming an impossible situation, in the hope and expectation that the matter would be resolved amicably. Sadly, this was not to be and I exited the Board on July 31, 2010.

Whereas some strides were made under my stewardship at the National Housing Corporation, I leave somewhat disappointed that certain issues were not adequately addressed, for example, the awarding of contracts to small contractors. I feel passionately about this issue, given my direct dialogue with many small contractors, many of whom are on the brink of failure.

I have repeatedly sought, without success, to persuade the Minister to buy-into the concept outlined in the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto of 2008, of awarding a far greater portion of National Housing Corporation contracts to small contractors.

Accordingly, I leave with the knowledge that despite my best efforts and alerts, I could not ensure that a contract

be put in place with the contractors, CLICO Holdings Ltd., re: the ongoing work at Constant, St. George.

3.10 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. G. A. PAYNE: “The experience gained as Chairman of the National Housing Corporation will be forever etched in my mind. Hence, I wish to extend sincere gratitude to the Board as well as the management and staff for your cooperation.

I also wish to take this opportunity to publicly thank all my well wishers for their notes and calls of encouragement, to my clients and policyholders, my YWCA sisters and our many sponsors. Rest assured of my adherence to my highest standards of professional responsibility.

To date, I have not received any direct or indirect explanation as to the root cause of my termination as Chairman, nor have I received any prior warning. In the absence, therefore, I can only conclude that my termination was due to my interpretation of and strict adherence to established rules and protocols. If so, then I leave with my head high as a proud and disciplined former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation.”

It is signed on August 7, by Marilyn Rice-Bowen, Chairman of the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Minister made reference to a financing contract signed by the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation. It is interesting that in his presentation he made a lot of reference to having a lot of discussion with the management at the National Housing Corporation but there are a number of members of the Board, not just the Chairman, who were at odds with this Minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was a former Minister of Housing myself. I built more houses in that short period of time than the Democratic Labour Party built in 15 years, but speaking specifically to the National Housing Corporation, I find it difficult to understand how a Minister could find the time to spend so much time with the workings of the National Housing Corporation on the premises of the National Housing Corporation and yet there has been very little consultation, as evidenced by the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, with the Board in relation to contracts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would have thought that the Honourable Member, when he came in here this morning to introduce this Resolution, would have introduced the Resolution and forgotten to mention anything at all about

CLICO, about small contractors, or about any contracts in place because the Honourable Member ought to know that the process is such that there is consultation between the Chairman and the various contractors. Sir, the Minister comes in at the last minute, but it is fairly obvious that these contracts...

Asides.

Mr. G. A. PAYNE: Sir, I have heard Honourable Members on the Other Side speak about backing the Minister 100 per cent in what he has done, but I want them to understand that as members of Cabinet if there are any deals which are not the subject of any proper contract that they themselves, as members of Cabinet, are responsible.

We have a new Attorney-General and I would hope that he does not ignore the “mouthings” of some Chairmen of the Boards, of some of the goings-on at some of these various institutions because, ultimately, it is going to reflect very badly on the Cabinet.

Sir, when you are dealing with deals, any time a Government places its emphasis on deals and you have a Minister walking about arranging contracts with individuals and not bringing them to the Board, well then, you are sowing seeds for corruption. There is no way that a Minister should be dealing with contracts and contracts and the Boards know absolutely nothing about them.

Sir, they may laugh at this but each member of the Cabinet of Barbados will be under scrutiny. Sir, it is worth repeating as Minister. I have never had any meetings, any dealings, no sit-downs with any contractor. I have never had a meeting with a contractor. I have never had any dealings with a contractor and for a Minister to be painted in this way, for a Chairman to come out and make a statement to that effect, in terms of what we have heard, it is really a very serious indictment.

I have heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central mentioned that he is going to tell me something when I get outside. I have to be very careful when people make those comments because the Honourable Member for St. Philip West indicated to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph that he was going to see him outside, and you know the history of that. Sir, I hope that they are taking these accusations very seriously.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to Constant, I would hope that all the contracts are in place whether or not he chooses to do the right thing in view of the publicity surrounding Constant, whether he decides to do the right thing by bringing those contracts.

I think that this subject with this whole issue of Constant, the contracts, CLICO and everything have been

bandied about so much in the Press and elsewhere that every single contract entered into in relation to Constant...

Asides.

Mr. G. A. PAYNE: When we get to Coverley and the others, we will deal with those, but the same would apply to all of those. The contract between CLICO and the National Housing Corporation, the directives from the Minister, the contracts between CLICO and all the subcontractors, because of the likely scandal that this whole impasse might create at some later stage and which it could impact on a future Minister of Housing whether or not the Minister of Housing comes from This Side or the Other Side, this issue is not about the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, or the Honourable Member for St. George North.

This is not about anybody from the Other Side. This has a lot to do with good governance and it has a lot to do with how people see how. It is very well known that there are a number of persons out there who are of the opinion that politicians enter into politics for one thing. We have to dispel what people think of us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not about defending the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, it is not about that. I would hope that Honourable Members carefully scrutinize what has happened and have a sit-down with the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to ensure that they will not be tainted at some time in the future because that is an important matter, it affects them, it affects us and it affects this Parliament.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also like the Honourable Member to tell us how much of those houses at Constant will go to persons outside of the relevant Constituency in St. George and outside of his own Constituency because I have a number of people in St. Andrew who are being told that there are no houses available for them in St. Andrew. I want to know after I see those contracts laid because I assume that the Minister will do the right thing. How many of those houses will be available for the people of St. Andrew?

H/A72C/15:20 Sequence 19

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I would like the Honourable Minister to give us the assurance that when those houses are completed, the people for whom they are built would be able to afford them. This is a Government, who in their Manifesto spoke of providing 500 lots of land in five months at \$5 a square foot for first time homeowners. I want to know from him how many of these lots at Constant are part of this programme, because it does not seem that

the Government can get their housing programme off the ground. All we are hearing every ...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I am living in Barbados. If you tell me that you are going to have 500 housing solutions in five months and we are into the latter part of your third year, and only last month you gave an address where you indicated that you built 263 houses and you are about to launch the \$5 a square foot houses; even in these 263 houses - the Country Park Towers, of which you boast a lot, is a clear example of the housing solutions that have already been taken care of.

Sir, I would like the Minister to tell us what he means by housing solutions, because if he is talking about housing solutions and he is saying that they already have 263 housing solutions since they came to Government, and they have included the housing solutions like the Country Park Towers that were already there when we left office, that was part of the 4 000 housing solutions we left when they came to Government. I would also like the Minister to tell us - He should be able to tell us...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: You cannot distract me. He should be able to tell us how many of those houses have been built by the National Housing Corporation since the Democratic Labour Party came to Government, how many of those houses are occupied.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a shame that you have a number of houses, I do not have all on the list here, Greens, Work Hall ... a number of houses that have been built in this 263 houses that they claimed to have built so far, and these houses are not occupied. Sir, the reason being, the same people that they have built those houses for cannot satisfy the requirements. They are building low income houses for people who are working, and with the qualification you have to be working for \$4 000, low income housing.

Sir, we built low income housing, and whenever I speak about housing, I always like the example of a lady who worked as a maid at the National Housing Corporation. A lady by the name of Daphne, who was working as a maid and we built houses. We did not build the houses and then work backwards and decided that you have to pay \$3 000 a month. We looked at the salaries of those low income earners. That is what we did. Then we looked at their salary and then we planned the houses around the maids.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, you have two minutes.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Sir, you have not included the period that I was ...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew you have two minutes more.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: You have to work around the salaries of those poor people. You cannot build houses and then tell people they have to pay \$4 000 a month. That is the reason why, despite all of the television publicity they are getting, they are not coming back and letting us know that the houses are unoccupied. This is where I think The Nation, the Advocate and the Press, the same way they can televise the Minister when he is giving all of these - somebody called them the excellent speeches about work he is doing in housing - easily he is the worst Minister of Housing that we have ever had in such a short space of time in Barbados, easily.

Sir, the television cameras should be able to go and show you those houses that are unoccupied. A number of houses that have been built for poor people and the qualification period is way out of sync with the same maids, labourers and general workers cannot access them, and they come in here every week talking about they building houses. Every time they have to give somebody a house, you have to have it on television, television hungry. Sir, this is degrading to poor people.

Sir, quite recently someone came to me, they got the keys at one of these televised functions and they were televised receiving a house, then the next day, the person said, "Mr. Payne, National Housing Corporation wrote me and told me that they want back the keys because I do not qualify."

Aside

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: If you want it, I can give you the name. That is what you all are doing.

Sir, I want the Minister to deny to a number of those houses, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people in your Constituency. I am speaking for you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, people in your Constituency, I am speaking for you because you cannot speak in this debate, a number of people are not accessing these houses. I want the poor people in your Constituency, because you represent some of the poorest people in Barbados, St. Michael East. Sir, you know the people in St. Michael East well.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is uncharitable, to say the least, for the Honourable Member to suggest that the management and staff of the National Housing Corporation, the Minister and Members of this Government have been inviting persons,

giving them keys, showing them off as house owners knowing that they did not qualify. That is totally untrue.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: There are a number of persons who have been allocated houses by the National Housing Corporation, by this Government, they have been given keys and then they have been told subsequently that they have not qualified. Check the facts. I can bring the names to you.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: It is true. I deal with poor people every day in my law practice. You would not be aware of what I am speaking about. Could you protect me from those Honourable Members, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member your time has expired.

Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I entered this debate knowing full well that the last speaker does not in anyway believe anything that he said, and his sole purpose for entering this debate was to create more confusion in the minds of the Members of the Opposition. It often reminds me each time I hear him speak, which is not very often, because he hardly comes into this House to represent the constituents of St. Andrew, each time that he speaks he reminds me, and he has been in here for nearly twenty something years, of the kind of Member of Parliament that I would not suggest to any young person in Barbados to become. The example that is set does not in anyway give the kind of justice to what should happen in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I knew before this debate started that the Opposition Members were very angry with the progress of this Government in housing. I knew that the first opportunity they got they would try to spur any and as many untruths, inaccuracies, as possible in a move to dethrone or to seek to dampen the acceleration and the pace of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, knowing full well that once the facts are laid bare that they would fail miserably.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to refer to a few things which we heard from the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. He said this debate has to go with good governance. I made very careful note of that.

HA71 15.30 p.m. Sequence 20 & 21

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72C, Sequence 22 & 23, 16.20 p.m.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: He seems to be saying that something strange or improper has happened in relation to the subject matter of this Resolution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear that he premised most of his contribution on the basis of some lack of good governance. I just wish to remind the House of a number of things, because I believe that when the Opposition speaks - and I think that if there were other persons other than the current Members speaking and attacking the Government in the way that I have heard, if there were new people then, not the current people that I am seeing - then I would perhaps listen to them.

When I look across the Opposition Benches at the persons who are speaking about housing, irrespective of the fact that over the past 14 years, because of a lack of any kind of management approach to providing housing solutions to Barbadians, we were caught upon assuming office with thousands of Barbadians without housing solutions.

When we speak of good governance, we have to look at the examples set by the persons who are speaking. We heard also of corruption and these kinds of things, which is language that we often hear from the Opposition Members.

We had, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew who just sat down, who presided under the indictment Labour Party Government as a Minister of Housing and who, along with the current Member of Parliament for St. Joseph presided over what I believe is the worst act in which a Government became saddled with a debt in excess of \$60 million, in relation to the Barrack construction in Warrens, the worst indictment of ineptitude and bad management, almost everything that you could think of where you have two Attorneys at Law, Mr. Deputy Speaker, presiding over contractual arrangements in relation to Warrens, which has incurred a significant debt, in excess of \$60 million for this Government to bear. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you are talking about corruption and lack of good governance, in circumstances where the same pair of individuals who are Principals in the law firm of George Walton Payne, ended up being the same persons who defended Mr. Al Barrack in court in relation to the same contract.

Asides.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Tell me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we speak of allegations of corruption and lack of good governance what we are talking about? That is why when I speak in here on these matters, I can stand up and look at them straight in the eyes because they really do

not present a good example to follow. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why I knew that this debate would have come to this, and that is why the debate must go beyond what they are talking about. We have allegations that no contract was entered into, in relation to the subject matter of this Resolution and I look back.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had in this House this morning a Resolution, and I am not going to talk about the Resolution, but it was a fallacy, in my view, to bring a Resolution, where the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee knows full well that she does not need a Resolution to investigate anything in relation to the Government. It is one of these things to capture the attention of the media. Sir, under the Rules of the House and under the Act that governs the Public Accounts Committee, the Leader of the Opposition, without more, can summon a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee convening any time, day, night, morning, noon or whatever, and investigate any matter in relation to the Government so they need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to do their work and stop sidetracking the business of this House, a Resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I assure you if you look at it, is really out of place.

I want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to refer to something here because I carefully read the Reports of the Auditor General and I believe that if the Opposition were to do one thing in relation to the Public Accounts Committee, it would be to ensure that they do not only investigate the period of the National Housing Corporation between the narrow period of 2008 to now, but take it back a bit further, investigate from the time they were in office. I think we were a bit tender and gingerly with them but in the Reports of the Auditor General, are replete with the works that were done under the last Administration, not only without any contract, but without adhering to any tendering process.

I want to come closer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the subject matter of housing because we have had committed on the backs of Barbadians, the gross act of the hilt of illegality and breach of the rules of, not only this House, but a breach of the rules governing the whole question of the use to which lands allocated for housing were ultimately put. Yet still they come into this House to make us believe that somehow they are the hallmarks of virtue.

I speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the lands earmarked for the Kent Development. I want to address it because this is an example where the Barbados Labour Party Government utilised the lands of Kent on the evening of an election, actually siphoned them off to private owners, in breach of the purpose for which those lands were put, disenfranchising hundreds of Barbadians who would ordinarily be entitled to own a piece of the rock.

I want to refer to it and if I appear to be a bit rattled in this debate, it is because the public needs to know the truth in relation to the persons who were speaking in this debate. They need to know the truth whom they were talking about and often we have to remind them, but none of the Honourable Members on That Side can stand up and look at the Honourable Member for St. Philip North in the eye and talk anything about housing at all. They really have no moral authority to do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I refer to the Special Audit of the National Housing Corporation by the Auditor General, and this is dated 2009-10 of 2013 and I am going to read the entire thing, because I heard the Honourable Member for St. Andrew read some correspondence from the outgoing Chairman of the National Housing Corporation in relation to her departure from the National Housing Corporation.

It was ironic because when the Honourable Member was unceremoniously dismissed from the Cabinet of Barbados, this House did not have the delight of hearing any explanation from it. He did not say why he was fired, but at least, he could read from some correspondence from the outgoing Chairman of the National Housing Corporation why she felt matters led to her departure.

I want to refer to this matter of Kent because it is important. It is a good example of what has happened to bring us to this stage of rushing ahead, trying to make sure that we can find housing solutions for Barbadians because they were left abandoned by the Barbados Labour Party Government.

It had to be that. Perhaps this is one matter that I believe the Leader of the Opposition, in her capacity as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, should investigate. Page 29 of that Report, "Land sold at Kent, Christ Church" and I read from that Report.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in November 2007, 28 acres of land at Kent, Christ Church were vested in the Corporation for housing purposes. By letter dated January 10, 2008, the Sales and Marketing section of the National Housing Corporation offered two parcels of land for sale at Kent, totalling 28 acres, to two companies. Sir, 15.1 acres to one company, and 13 acres to another.

House A72C, Sequence 22 & 23, 15:40:14

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: "Both entities responded the same day - January 10, 2008 - accepting the offer."

Of course, we had Elections on January 15, 2008. It just goes to show what the former Government was about.

It continues:

"4.14 Sales instructions were then issued to the two firms, which paid deposits to the Corporation on the 14th and 18th of January 2008. The Audit found no correspondence on file indicating that these entities had expressed any interest in purchasing land from the Corporation or were selected through any competitive process."

"4.15 According to the Minutes of the Board, an emergency meeting of the Board was held on 9th January 2008, and the Board was told by the management of the Corporation that the Ministry of Housing had recommended that the lands be sold to the two companies."

This is talking about a Minister who is telling the Board what to do, strange enough, but this is an independent Report by the Auditor General.

I will continue, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

"It was indicated that the sale of the land was to provide capital to execute the Corporation's projects."

"4:16 It was also reported that one parcel contained 15.1 acres, and the Town and Country Planning Department had already given permission to subdivide it into 73 lots for residential purposes - in accordance with the Resolution of this Parliament. This permission will expire on the 17th August 2009."

The Report continues:

"4:17 After these lands were vested in the Corporation in November 2007 for housing purposes, they were not placed on lists to be made available to the wider public."

"4:18 The information trail did not provide sufficient information to determine how the decision-making process was arrived at."

"4:19 The Board made the decision to sell the land to the two entities based on the reported recommendation of the Ministry. However, there was no evidence of an application from either entity for land at Kent ever being made to the Corporation or the Ministry."

"4:20 Over a five-year period to March 2008 approximately 85 acres of land at Kent has been sold in large tracts to three (3) private developers."

What has happened here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that this was an example not only of the then Minister of Housing acting through the Ministry of Housing giving instructions to the National Housing Corporation to act in

breach of a Resolution of this House, but also on the eve of an election on January 10, 2008 to offer for sale to two private developers land for which they had expressed no interest in acquiring. We can ask a number of questions about this development but I would like to table that section of the Report.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, given that the Opposition is in the vein of investigation, I would like to make a call in the interest of true transparency that this particular matter be at the top of the list for investigation by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. If we are in the mode of investigating, let us investigate and in investigating do not just cut off a little piece and say that you are only dealing with this part, let us deal with it fully if we are interested in transparency and, as the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said, in good governance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this issue of housing is extremely charged as we know but it is only charged because the Opposition has seen that in short time this Government has signalled that in view of its mandate given to it by Barbadians to wrestle this problem of housing to the ground that we have deemed it fit to commence a very aggressive housing programme, which has already, in my estimation, begun to bear fruit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is worrying the Opposition members to the point where an act of a Minister to remove a Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, which the Minister by the way is entitled to do, has now created a new schematic by the Opposition to rush in and to somehow create furore and anxiety in the minds of Barbadians.

In my submission, the matter of changing a Chairman of a statutory corporation is not an issue that should conjure up the kind of emotive and pejorative language coming from Members of Parliament like I am hearing, it is really not, especially where those Members do not stand on a good record. The record is extremely poor.

Sir, that is what irks me because in this debate all I have heard is that all of a sudden a former Chairman of a statutory corporation is now loved immensely by those who would have crucified her only a couple days ago. In my mind, that smacks of the usual Barbados Labour Party politics but it does not smacks of a party that has the interest of the housing needs of Barbadians at heart. Controversy and seeking to derail a housing programme that persons who are beneficiaries of that programme are fully aware that they are benefitting from is not in the best interest of Barbados.

What I do know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there are a number of examples where lands, which were earmarked for housing purposes, were unceremoniously

taken out of housing use, very much in breach of the resolution of this House and placed this Government in a very precarious situation as it relates to providing for the housing needs of Barbadians.

Sir, when we talk of the various housing developments that have been going up and you had to judge the performance of this Government over the past two and a half years compare to inheriting a situation over 14 years of ineptitude by the last Administration, I would say that we have done exceedingly well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want for the record to publicly congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Philip North because of all of the housing Ministers, some who are still present in this Chamber and who have spoken... I have been present during debates in this House and each time this Government acquires property for housing purposes, the only statement in rebuttal from the Opposition was that we had intended to do that too, oh, we had that on the desk, we had plans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have taken this particular public challenge of housing and we have not been talking about it. Through the leadership of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North we have been acting. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are worried about persons being seen on television getting a key to a house but they should not be worried. What those persons are signalling is that they are elated at achieving a goal that has been so elusive over the past 14 or so years of Barbados Labour Party rule. They are overjoyed and you cannot take that from them.

The reality, if we are honest and truthful as we should be in this House, is that on a weekly basis in all of our constituency offices the sole burning issue of concern for Barbadians remains housing. When we are in this Chamber talking about housing. It resonates in the minds and hearts of Barbadians listening. They are the ones who understand and they are the ones who are hurting.

House A72C Sequence 24 & 25 3.50 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: When I have to sit and listen to my constituents relaying how long they had to line up waiting for housing, with no responses and with all kinds of gerrymandering occurring at the National Housing Corporation, where persons who were on a list remained on that list and the relevant Minister, whoever he was on That Side, brought in his chosen few, there was no equity in that, none whatsoever. There was no best practice, there was nothing. Barbadians were deprived of housing, based on their political affiliation. It was strictly politics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Opposition must not come here and pretend that somehow, as the Honourable Member for St. George North said, when he approved housing development, he did not see BLP or DLP, because that does not accord with what people are saying to us. I hope that when the Honourable Member faces his constituents, both B's and D's, that he is able to give credence to that claim. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are clear about and what is beyond any contradiction is that we have remained faithful and true to our Manifesto promises and pledges in relation to housing. Sir, this scapegoat debate, this deflection that we are having, Barbadians are not going to be fooled about that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this captivation by the Opposition of every once in a while when something becomes the flavour of the month they jump on it. Sir, you can see this. You do not have to be a fool. Sir, the minute we had the announcement of the revocation of the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, you saw that all of the public relation strategies and strategists of the Barbados Labour Party went to work, every one of them. You could see it before your eyes. You had all the letter writers in the Nation Newspaper, you had the columnists in the Sunday Sun.

Sir, it starts like that each time. It is almost like a *deja vu*. The main columnist starts his work and he goes and sets out everything that he has been instructed to say, followed by the legal luminaries, who then start to look at the legislation - all very concocted and nicely put together. Of course, not to mention the Leader of the Opposition. The Honourable Member starts her charade as well, very well put together in terms of public relations but has nothing to do with the reality of the lives of Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there is an indictment to be laid in this entire debate, and if it were a regret in terms of where we are going as a country in relation to important issues of housing, is that we have had an effort in this debate - though failed, by the way - and even before, an effort by the Barbados Labour Party to 'mammagise' Barbadians and to fool them literally into believing that somehow they had a housing policy that we have derailed. That is what this is about but we know they did not have a housing policy. If they had a housing policy, the Reports of the Auditor General, which speak to all of the improper systems, the breaches, lack of contracts, et cetera, would not have been detailed in the Reports of the Auditor General.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issue of private sector partnerships is something with which they had to deal with as well. It is not something that this Government has somehow decided to dream up. The reality is that in the last 10 years of the Barbados Labour Party Administration. We have had efforts and the spending of money by the

Barbados Labour Party that have rendered available finances in relation to housing extremely limited. Therefore, they recognised too that in order to provide meaningful solutions to the housing needs of Barbadians, you had to find finances from somewhere.

Sir, I know Barbadians need to know this because in the same Reports by the Auditor General, the Special Audit, he dealt with the issue of private partnerships and from where it came. Sir, I want to refer to it to make sure that it is read into the record of this Honourable House.

Sir, you have a database within the National Housing Corporation at March 31, 2008, of more than 29 000 applicants for land and housing solutions. Sir, this database has grown at a rate of 2 400 applicants a year, over the 10 year period to March, 2008. Sir, these are not things that I have concocted, the Auditor General is saying that in the 10 years, prior to March, 2008, you had a database of 29 000 persons and that each year - in my estimation - without proper housing solutions, that was rising by 2 400 persons. That is what we had to deal with.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to allude to the need for private-sector partnership because it is as a result of that the last Government identified the need to have joint private-sector partnerships, to deal with the housing situation. Therefore, the move by this Government to have arrangements in place, to have Joint Venture Programmes, is not something that they could come and criticise. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to read from page 9 of that Report:

"The Joint Venture Arrangements were to facilitate and promote Private-Public Partnerships, with the view of satisfying an increase in demand for housing. In March, 2002, the Cabinet agreed that the National Housing Corporation should invite proposals from developers to enter Joint Venture Arrangements to develop land owned by the Corporation. Specific areas to be developed for middle and low income housing were assigned to developers/contractors with a number of lots assigned to each developer/contractor.

The programme for each income category was to be carried out in two phases, starting in the latter half of 2002."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from 2002, the Cabinet of Barbados had made a decision that in order to alleviate the financial burden, given the high demand for housing, we had to resort to a Joint Venture Programme. Sir, what I would say is that under this Government, given what I call crisis state of housing in Barbados, we had to accelerate the whole movement in terms of Joint Venture arrangements, without any apology whatsoever, to deliver to Barbadians housing solutions that were reasonable, in an environment where the number of Barbadians coming on to the database

of the National Housing Corporation was rapidly increasing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my submission, if we are going to have a debate on housing, albeit in relation to this particular Resolution, we have to lay the facts bare for Barbadians to understand and there can be no ‘mammogising’ of persons listening to this debate, in relation to a development that has occurred, which is totally within the domain of any Minister.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes more in which to wind up.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, any Minister is free, either to select or deselect a chairman of a statutory corporation. What has happened in this case, is that we have seen a clear orchestrated attempt to take an issue and fly it as a flag of ultimate proposed destruction, aimed at targeting a Minister of Housing and Lands, who they, themselves, admitted in this Honourable House was doing a good job.

4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, they admitted it, in prior debates but, all of a sudden, in their own inimitable fashion, they have seen a window of opportunity and they have jumped in where angels fear to tread.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my position is that we will remain focussed on the mission of delivering housing solutions to Barbadians. We have no choice because we have inherited a situation where, because of the kind of neglect from the Barbados Labour Party, we have had to now deal with accelerated housing provisioning and, Sir, even in my Constituency, where we are looking at housing tracks and so on for development, it is clear that all work has only just began.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would end by saying that I totally support this Resolution. This Government has nothing at all to be ashamed of and even if there were allegations to be hurled, let those allegations be hurled by people who can stand on some moral ground, some moral basis and hurl those allegations. I, therefore, say that those persons are not to be found on the Benches of the Opposition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this debate is no longer about the vesting of property at the National Housing Corporation at Constant alone. This debate, over the course of the last few hours, has also come to be characterised by statements made by the Minister in his opening. The Minister was very clear when he spoke about the Budget his morning to say that on September 28, 2009, to be precise, that as he held a document in his hand, he delivered himself of these words, that there was in place a finance contract and that the finance contract was signed by the former Chairman who went to the public of Barbados and indicated that there was no contract in place with the contractors at Constant, namely, CLICO Holdings Limited.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may start first by citing and quoting from her, which has already been made a document of the House, we may come to understand why this debate has now assumed greater proportions than that which it had when it started this morning before lunch.

Mrs. Rice-Bowen on August 7, 2010, in a statement to the Press re the National Housing Corporation signed by her, made a document of this Honourable Chamber by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said these words:

“Additionally, I leave with the knowledge that despite my best efforts and alerts, I could not ensure that a contract be put in place with the contractor, CLICO Holdings re the ongoing work at Constant, St. George.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this debate started with that public statement which has been in the public domain for more than one week.

The normally talkative Minister has not uttered a word up until today in respect of Constant, St. George or, indeed, any other aspect of this statement. Sir, somehow or the other, he went mum and silent until today. I would not be like those who are uncharitable and say that he was suffering from “Marilynitis”. I would not do that but what I will say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this, he chose to engage on one point today in relation to the former Chairman’s comments and that was on the issue, is there or is there not a contract in place at Constant, St. George. I would limit my speech to that point because he has made it an issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, rose on his feet and the Chair made a ruling that the document he referred to which we believe he was reading from, he would not make a document of this Honourable Chamber. We have abided by Your Honour’s ruling, but without prejudice to that ruling, I challenge the Honourable Minister of Housing to make it a document and to release to the public of Barbados the finance contract that he referred to this morning, which he says that the former Chairman signed and the Acting General Manager

of the National Housing Corporation signed and which, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my opinion was asserted by him, in order to give the impression that the former Chairman, Mrs. Rice-Bowen was not speaking the truth when she said that she could not ensure that a contract be put in place with the contractor, CLICO Holdings Limited, in spite of her best efforts and her alerts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to you, this is the Parliament of Barbados, and this, as we have come to call it, is our highest court. This is a Chamber, whose conventions and principles require not simply that we come here to alert persons on those things that we would wish to pass into law but also on all of the public affairs of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the land at Constant is being pursued by the National Housing Corporation, which is a statutory corporation in this country, established by Cap. 226 of the Laws of Barbados. The officers at the National Housing Corporation have a duty to carry out work at the National Housing Corporation, not on their personal behalf, but on behalf of the public of Barbados and hence the fiduciary duties that are imposed on them by the legislation, Cap. 226.

Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a previous Barbados Labour Party Government in 1980, passed a new Section 5A in that legislation, imposing a duty on members and officers of the Corporation not to participate in any conflict of interest. Sir, this was in addition to Section 6, which imposed on them a requirement to enclose members interest at the National Housing Corporation.

It is of note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these obligations do not extend to the Minister because it was never contemplated in this legislation establishing a statutory board or any other, for that matter, that a Minister would have a direct role in the issuing of contracts, or the awarding and conclusion of projects.

Mrs. Rice-Bowen, the former Chairman, has put an issue in this particular debate because she has put many other things that we will speak about in other debates. Your Honour has said that this is not appropriate for full debate in here.

H/A72C/16:10 Sequence 29

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: This issue pertaining to Constant, she said that there is no contract. The Minister said there is a - well he used the word "contract" about eight times but he qualified it once, and only once did he qualify it to say "finance contract". In my view, in the hope that the public would come to the conclusion that the

former Chairman was not reflecting the truth when she made these comments to the public.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why is a contract important? In July, 2008, the Minister of Finance brought a Budget to this country, and in his Budget within minutes of starting, dismissed a Corporation on the Floor of this Chamber. He said then that he was doing it because there was no contract in place with the entity. So serious did the Minister of Finance view the absence of the contract that he brought to an end in full public glare a contract with a company called 3S that has now ended up in Court suing the Government of Barbados for tens of millions of dollars.

The Democratic Labour Party paraded during the course of the last Election about the absence of a contract. Even though there was a Memorandum of Understanding, which is justiciable, can be interpreted by the courts, they ignored that and proceeded to dismiss the company that they say did not sign a contract with the Government of Barbados.

Now I have no doubt that the Honourable Minister understands these matters, because he is a man who has acted as the Attorney-General of this country, so when he comes to this Honourable Chamber and seeks to put forward that there is a finance contract in place, he knows what he is saying and he knows what he is telling the country. He knows that if he had a full construction contract, he would have made it a document of the House without batting an eyelid, but his behaviour reminds me of a man in the dock who wants to hide behind the veil of an unsworn statement, rather than seeking to produce the evidence that can exculpate him, that could acquit him.

Sir, I say, as you all very well know, there is no charge which is levelled that if you have evidence to counter it that you do not bring and give it to the court. If you have a contract, put it before the public court of Barbados and let the people of Barbados judge for themselves where the truth lies in this matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to you that this is a serious matter, because Members of Parliament and in particular Ministers of the Government, have a duty to be full and frank in their disclosure in this Honourable Chamber. It is given wide privileges in debate. It is why Ministers in England and Ministers of the Commonwealth have had to resign when they have failed to be full and frank in their disclosure to the Parliament of a country.

Sir, therefore, I say to you that this Minister's future performance rests on his credibility on this issue, because you cannot play with the Parliament of the country and seek to give the impression to Barbadians that a Chairman who was appointed by the Honourable Minister, who appointed his second Chairman, the first one was

dismissed, gotten rid of, asked to leave, I do not know, but is no longer there after less than a year. A Chairman appointed by an instrument, Gazetted in the Official Gazette of this country - this is not John Doe. This is not an ordinary person walking down Broad Street. This is a person who was invested with the authority of the Law under Chapter 226 of the Laws of Barbados as a result of that instrument of appointment. That is who has made the allegations. For you now to say in this Honourable Chamber that a contract was signed by her on September 28 without producing that contract, knowing full well that she does not have a right of a reply in this Chamber, knowing full well that she does not have a right to respond to what the Minister has said is unfortunate, is unfair and is wrong. I say that the Honourable Minister must be held to a higher standard than that in this particular matter in this Chamber.

Let me go further. This project at Constant is delayed. The Minister acknowledged but he did not tell us by how many months, but it is delayed. When you have delays in projects, you also have cost overruns. Therefore the issue of why there should be a contract in place is absolutely important, because we need to know under the contract who is responsible for the delays, who is responsible for the cost overruns, who is responsible for the infrastructure work going from \$900 000 to just about \$2.7 million, an increase of over 200 per cent in the cost of the infrastructure.

Sir, now he has said that is part of a result of a sewerage plant, but a sewerage plant is only \$600 000, so what is responsible for the other \$1.2 million increase on this particular project at Constant that may now have to be paid for by the taxpayers of Barbados? I wish I could defend the Minister but I cannot, because there is no contract before this Honourable Chamber. We do not know who has responsibility for the overruns. We do not know who has responsibility for the delays, but it gets better.

Sir, do you know that this project was announced two days before the news on CLICO broke on January 31, 2009, and the Chairman of CLICO Holdings Barbados announced a \$60 million housing project at Clermont, a low income venture at Todds and a \$12 million package in the Housing Every Last Person Initiative at Constant, St. George, and of course, the \$140 million redevelopment at Sam Lord's, so the public of Barbados learnt about this in the last week of January 2009, from the Chairman of CLICO Holdings Barbados.

Now I have to ask, where has the money come from to finance this project, and has this money come from the people's deposits for the Executive Flexible Premium Annuities? Has it come from the life insurance policies? Has it been raised from someone else? Where has the money come from?

Sir, I ask that consciously that the Government of Barbados not only does it not have a contract in place with Constant and the NHC, but there is now no Oversight Committee supervising the affairs of CLICO since June 12, 2010. When the Honourable Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance was asked about it, he indicated that, in his view, there was no need for it because there was a Supervisor of Insurance.

HA71 16.20 p.m. Sequence 30 & 31

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72C, Sequence 32 & 33, 4.20 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, you are fully aware of the relevance and you must stay within the confines of this debate.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph, I am speaking to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. You are fully aware that when the Chair is speaking that no one else speaks, thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was seeking only to treat to the financial stability of the joint venture partner of the National Housing Corporation in this project on this land before this very Honourable Chamber and since the Honourable Minister spoke to a financing contract, I have a duty on behalf of the taxpayers of Barbados to address the issue of the financial viability of the joint venture partner at Constant.

The Honourable Minister who spoke made the issue and I say that it is important for us to see the contract because it is bad enough that we may be exposed to the contingent liability for \$300 million, and now to add \$12 to \$15 million more on Constant. These are issues that are troubling to us and the Minister has a duty to tell us what are the contractual arrangements that have been reduced to writing that will address the issue of where the risk falls, who is responsible for overruns, who is responsible for delays, who is responsible for defective houses after a period of time when the houses are handed over to the people. These are all relevant issues, but I go further.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister has a duty too, to tell this Honourable Chamber what is the price at which the land is being sold at Constant for those 64 units. Is it \$5 per square foot, is it \$10 per square foot, is it \$15 per square foot? What is the price that persons are paying for that land at Constant, particularly since the overall package of the house and land he indicated is in the vicinity of \$100 000 to \$150 000. Sir, these houses are all less than 758 square feet so you can work out the construction cost and that is why the price of the land is important.

I also want to know how much the Government is paying to acquire this land at Constant from the landowners. How much are you paying to buy the land and how much are you selling it for, to the people buying the houses at Constant? When you come to this House to ask us to agree to a vesting, these are basic details that we would expect to hear, but the Minister was so busy padding up this morning that he forgot his duties in relation to basic information that is normally given by a Minister of Housing when you come to this House to vest land.

I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we would be happy for houses to be built. We are told that there are to be 64, but the Minister is not telling us that there are only 30 or 35 under construction now. The Minister is not telling us either, as he told the public of Barbados when he addressed them at Coverley that there have only been 235 houses and in that 235 would you believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that he included the 64 houses at Constant that are yet to be completed?

Would you believe that of those 235 houses that he said they have completed that 64 at Constant were included? He did not tell us what really has been completed. You have Work Hall built by JADA, not by the small contractors listed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South and the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. You have Greens built by JADA, not built by the small contractors listed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South or the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. You had Four Hill not built by small contractors listed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South or the Honourable Member for St. Philip North but also built by JADA.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you add up the three that JADA built, that 135 units there already, nothing to do with the 1026 at Coverley, nothing to do with the 26 at Country Park Towers, nothing to do with the more than 1 000 at Bushy Park, nothing to do with Valerie, and we are looking to hear what will happen there. I say this to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if we want to speak, let us give the facts because the numbers of small contractors who got work at Marchfield, pale in comparison to the fact that almost 200 units plus 1 026 and those are 1 226 units to one single contractor in this country. No wonder small and medium-sized contractors are sucking salt in Barbados.

Sir, to say that you are getting the financing from CLICO is no excuse, to say that you have now gone to procure a loan to give small contractors work is to remember half way through your term that there is a class of people called small contractors in this country. This shows where the priorities of this Government lies. Sir, with that I cannot help but recall the words of Mrs. Rice-Bowen. Hear what she said.

She said that I have repeatedly sought, not once, not twice, repeatedly sought, without success, to persuade the Minister to buy into the concept outlined in the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto of 2008 of awarding a far greater portion of MHC contracts to small contractors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is their people saying that, but yet the Minister would want the public to believe that he is the defender of small contractors. If I did not know better, I would have thought he was re-Christened JADA. He wanted a shorter name, JADA.

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

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Minister must be measured against the promises in the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto. This Minister was under a duty to deliver 2 000 houses a year. By all reckoning that would be 4 700 houses now, given the time that elapsed since this Government was elected. In fact, the last Honourable Member who spoke, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, said he was doing everything that they promised in the Manifesto. Sir, 4 700 houses promised and we cannot even get to 400, not even 10 per cent, not even 8 per cent, not even 7 per cent of what was promised.

I, perhaps, better understand now why the contractors referred to this Honourable Minister from St. Philip North as the 5 and 10 man. I really do because if he can only deliver 7 per cent of what was promised he has to fall somewhere between 5 and 10.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition, he promised that he would deliver 500 lots within 5 months. Would you believe that in August 8, this year, my memory recalls that a special article was carried in the Advocate Newspaper, the same day that they carried Mrs. Rice Bowen's statement and censored and edited it, so that everywhere where she said the Minister in this statement, the Advocate carried 'Ministry' and not 'Minister'.

On that same date, my memory tells me that on page 17 there was a full page article and the Minister in that article was quoted as having said that they had delivered, 182 families have been successfully housed but 235 have been built. The figures are getting confusing.

House A72C, Sequence 32 & 33, 16:30:12

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: What I do know is that in last year's Budget the Minister of Finance indicated to this Honourable Chamber that at May 2009 - we do not

know when one is coming for this year so we have to go back to last year's - the National Housing Corporation had commenced construction in six developments to produce 247 houses; not 4 700, not 2 000. To this date, 91 houses have been completed while 156 are at various stages of completion; not 2 000, not 4 000. He then went on and said, in addition, during the 2009-2010 financial year, which finished four months ago, the National Housing Corporation is projecting to complete 572 houses and 426 lots.

By the standard set, not only by the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto, but by the standard set by the substantive Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of this country, this Minister has failed abysmally if for no other reason that he has not come close to 572 houses. He announced in that same article that they were now getting ready to launch the \$5 a square foot lots with the help of the surveyors. Two years have gone since the deadline. I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I will let him slide on that. I will let him slide for only getting 7 per cent of what he promised but what I will not let him slide on is failing to be full and frank in this Honourable Chamber and seeking to give the impression that there is a finance contract in place with CLICO and refusing to produce it to the public of Barbados.

This is not the Honourable Minister's house, this is the House of Assembly of Barbados. The Honourable Member has a duty as a Minister of the Crown to provide the information to this Honourable Chamber in a manner that is consistent with the conventions and norms and the truth in this Honourable Chamber.

I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I wind up...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am finishing the sentence, Sir.

...let the Minister produce the construction contract between the National Housing Corporation and CLICO at Constant in St. George.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, your time has expired.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Let him produce it.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must make a confession, small as it is, that I came to this House today perhaps misguidedly so with a little bit of trepidation because I believe that this is perhaps my first dispensation as Leader of the House that I was pre-exposed to the fury, or the intended fury of the Opposition, only to come to the House to realise that the fury was nothing more than fluff properly wrapped up in a red outfit, broach and all, and so impotently delivered by Members of the Opposition in relation to a condemnation of the Minister or a persecution of the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands, and a condemnation of the Government's housing programme.

Sir, we have heard for the past two weeks, press release after press release, issues pertaining to what has transpired with the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation and about how the Government's housing programme was in...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Look, do not let them distract you, that is entirely what they want to do. Do not fall into that trap. They came into this House of Assembly after two weeks of winding up like the energizer bunny intending to throw body blows in the Government's housing programme and it has fallen entirely flat, but we knew that it would be based on our record and based on their lack of record.

What was even more surprising was the otherwise brilliant speech of the Honourable Member for St. George North who entirely condemned, with some slight degree of eloquence, any prosecution, which the Barbados Labour Party Opposition would have had of the housing programme. Imagine it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition just sat. The Leader of the Opposition made the point that the National Housing Corporation entered into contracts with some company called JADA. The Honourable Member said that JADA built this and JADA built that, while failing to tell this Honourable House that under the same Leader of the Opposition when she was Attorney-General of Barbados that JADA was selected to build the Judicial Centre.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: How much was it, \$125 million? Sir, we now have something against the same JADA we are talking about who built the Coast Guard station. When the Honourable Member was a Minister of the Crown and JADA was working... I did not see any small contractors out in Whitepark Road but all of a sudden there are these crocodile tears for small contractors. When the Honourable Member was Minister responsible for the Urban Development Corporation a company called José Y

Jóse did up to 50 per cent of all of the work under the Honourable Member and I did not hear any crocodile tears for any small contractors.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: When the Honourable Member - we are talking about building contracts - was Attorney-General, she presided over the award of a contract to the same Jóse Y Jóse, whom I am told the Honourable Member knows very well, to build the police station at Crab Hill in St. Lucy as we are told by the Auditor General's Report. If you read the Auditor General's report...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: He won it but he could not complete it. Oh, yes, we know who the small contractor was. We are well aware of that.

These crocodile tears that are being shed on the part of the Democratic Labour Party's housing programme is just a red herring across the trail designed to upset this Minister whom they say is the hardest working Minister in the Government and the one who is producing. That is what you all have said.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: They want to attack the Minister's housing programme because they could not get their housing programme off the ground. If it is the only thing that they claim the Democratic Labour Party is doing is its housing programme - they are opposing this housing programme. They opposed the handing over of units to people. You cannot give them units. They should not get them for free.

House A72C Sequence 34 & 35 4.40 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are opposing the Joint Venture Programme. Sir, I heard an Honourable Member of this House speaking elsewhere about covenants and trying to pooh-pooh every single thing that is done by the Democratic Labour Party. They tried to pooh-pooh the project at Pickerings, St. Lucy. They said the developers did not have any money. They are now trying to pooh-pooh the development at Coverley; you cannot hang out clothes.

Sir, they did a covenant under the Barbados Labour Party at Lammings Housing area. Under the covenant at Lammings, you could not play music nor sing; you could not even sing a lullaby, you could not even sing "Baa baa

black sheep, have you any wool?" In London Bourne Towers, you could not have a "wireless" television.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, imagine it that the Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, who tried to be magnanimous in this commentary but could not sustain it, said that we built houses that are out of the reach of the working-class.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me read:

"Made on 27th day of March, 2006, between the National Housing Corporation Incorporated... and I will not read the name of the person there.

"Lammings, St. Joseph, in the parish of St. Joseph."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it says here at page 14(f):

"Shall not cause or permit..."

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, if you are going to read from a document, please make it a document of this Honourable House.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will make it a document of this Honourable House. It says here at 14(g):

"Shall not permit any singing or playing of any musical instrument or use of hi-fi wireless television..."

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: That was withdrawn? I am going to read it again because they want to make people think that I am foolish.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I continue:

"Shall not permit any singing..." Sir, not even "Baa baa black sheep".

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to make light of this matter. I will make it a document of this Honourable House. You read it and see.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the issue of low-income housing, they did a project at Westwood Development,

Husbands, St. James, with the Barbados National Bank. Sir, I will make this a document of the Honourable House too. I want to read parts of what was done in the review.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: What contract? There was no contract. What contract are you talking about? There was no contract. I am dealing with low-income housing. Sir, one Honourable Member in this House made the remarks that we were ripping-off people at Coverley.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, at Westwood Development, houses that were supposed to cost \$200 000, ended up costing between \$397 000 and \$415 000, in 2004, for poor people. Sir, it was concluded by the National Housing Corporation. Sir, I will continue to read:

“Notwithstanding the anticipated profit, there was a lost. The National Housing Corporation and the Barbados National Bank agreed that the National Housing Corporation’s share would be cancelled, if it was agreed to a zero input cost for the land.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they did not even get paid for the land.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: It went to the Board? It went to the Minister too. I will continue reading:

“The National Housing Corporation further agreed to set off outstanding monies, approximately \$2.9 million due to the Bank from the sale of its commercial property at Lot 2, Warrens. The net result from the project is that the National Housing Corporation has not benefited financially.”

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a disaster, if ever there was one, and this was supposed to be for low and middle-income persons. Sir, if you were to see some of the names here. I would not read the names, because that is not my place but if you were to see some of the names here - the Leader of the Opposition is well-aware of several of the names on that list.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the document. The document is there.

Asides.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The document was made a document of this Honourable House and then I saw the Minister of Housing and Lands indicate to the Minister of Education that he should take off something. You cannot tamper with a document that has been made a document of the House. We already have instances today where the Minister refused to produce this alleged finance contract. You cannot do that.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was an A4 page protruding beyond the other page. There was a page that was folded back. All of us saw it. You cannot now treat to this Honourable Chamber in this way. You cannot do it.

Asides.

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

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. There were about five cross pages to the back of that document, which were torn off. I saw when they were torn off. Is that the example all of you are setting, and you are always talking about Head Teachers and Principals? You should be ashamed of yourself.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, these are the documents that were handed to me, which become documents of this Honourable House. Please continue, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Asides.

4.50 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I have listened to Your Honour’s ruling in relation to what was handed to you. The gravamen of my objection is not what was handed to you. It was what was laid. It was laid by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North told him, do not hand up all of those and to take off the piece at the back. At that point, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central

removed a document. What they have now passed to the Clerk stapled is a single piece of note paper that neither has a staple nor is it folded.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am on a point of order. It neither has a staple nor is it folded. I appreciate that what is handed to Your Honour is not what left the hand of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. There are at least four Members on This Side who saw the part of the document removed. You cannot come into this Honourable Chamber and deceive or seek to do... It is a serious allegation...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, you know full well that you cannot use such language to impute improper motive on Honourable Members of this Chamber.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not use that language.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have ruled in respect of the documents that were handed to me and that were made documents of the House and I am calling on you to take your seat and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West will continue.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am rising on a different point of order. I have not asked you about what was handed to you. I am rising about what was handed to the Clerk's Table from the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. It was not what was handed to him from the person making it a document, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. I am asking you to rule on that point. Your Honour is free to rule any way which you want, Sir, with respect, but I am asking you to rule on that, not on something that I did not submit to this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have ruled in respect to the document that the Clerk handed to me that is a document of this House. Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, please continue your speech.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on their behalf I apologise because I know when you are under pressure, you try to find the easiest way to get out by causing disruption. Sir, I quoted from a document and I make the document available. You cannot determine which document it is I made available. I made the document I quoted from and that is the one that is the record of the House. Sir, I will move on from there.

Therefore, you are talking about the Government's housing programme that was delivered when you had none.

You had a situation of Barrack Construction and the National Housing Corporation, Buckeley Meadows and the National Housing Corporation...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have constantly said throughout the day that when an Honourable Member is speaking, I must be able to hear him and he must be the only person who shall be speaking when he is on his feet. Please let me have some order, please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. Sir, all of the housing projects which the Government of the last Administration did, especially on joint venture, ended up in misery for homeowners. Sir, we had to come in and sort out Buckeley Meadows. It was a disaster and we are still trying to sort it out. Thank God for the Honourable Minister and the National Housing Corporation under new leadership. They have been able to put it together to get those people out of their misery.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to touch Hardwood Housing because that is not relevant here. Sir, Coverley, Stage 1, is another disaster which had to be rescued and still has to be cleaned up.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Every single housing project that they put their hands on they fumbled, bumbled, mumbled, did everything and produced absolutely nothing for it and the colonel...

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The Deputy Speaker has indicated to me that we should take a break for five minutes.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Honourable House be suspended until 5.05 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 5.05 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

H/A72C/16:56 Sequence 39

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Honourable House is resumed.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we suspended I was trying to create a contrast between what would have taken place under the last Government and what would have taken place under this Government. The most glaring contrast is the production of housing. Other Honourable Members on This Side have spoken eloquently to that point. Therefore I do not need to repeat it.

Sir, what has also happened under this Government that did not happen under the last Government is, we have shown that we can conceptualise, design and execute housing projects with a degree of alacrity and without sacrificing efficiency, proper governance and good standards. That is one of the most critical contrasts, apart from the fact that we have delivered, that people have actually got houses. As the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would say, you can hear toilet flush, not like under the last Government when they built a house for a lady through the Urban Development Commission, and when you turned on the face basin the toilet used to flush.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: This is a fact. I had to see it for myself. I did not believe it. You turned on the tap in the face basin and the water done down the toilet - not that kind of standard of work, proper quality work. Sir, when you think about what happened in a place like Buckeley Meadows where people, ordinary Barbadians like you and me, not rich people, people who are generally called working-class people in Barbados who had for more than a year to be paying mortgages to banks and other financial institutions, one having to live out of containers in this country.

Sir, where was the Leader of the Opposition when all of that was going on, beside presiding over a prison that burnt down? Where was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when people were paying mortgages for houses that they could not live in? Whereas the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has been at the doorstep constructing and reconstructing that project so that those ordinary Barbadians could have their houses. Today we are to be lectured from some moral high ground about a contract for CLICO. That is the big thing that the Leader of the Opposition walked up and down here for the whole day in and out of the House just to come to deliver, where is the contract for CLICO.

Sir, they started this debate by saying that the Honourable Member bypassed the Board, did not include the Board, on the project at Constant and on other projects,

which is not true. Sir, the Minister will speak to that as he has spoken before.

HA72C 17.10 p.m. Sequence 41

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72C, Sequence 42 & 43, 5.10 p.m.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Then comes the Honourable Member for St. George North, in one of his more magnanimous and outstanding moments to blow the fish out of the water by saying that in matters pertaining to Crown lands, which are in the possession of the Ministry of Housing and Lands...there is no NHC Board. There is no NHC when in a joint venture. It is the Minister and the Cabinet.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: That is what he said and he is absolutely correct.

This Minister did two things. He not only brought the matter to the Committee in Social Policy, Infrastructure and the full Cabinet, which approved the project, he took it back to the Board. He did not have to do it but he did it. This is governance and transparency.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The ex-Chairman signed off on the contract. Unless the Honourable Lady, Sir, signs things that she is not either in agreement with or did not read, it befalls being a state of complete incomprehension to understand how she could say, ex post facto, that she knew nothing about the thing and that you bypassed the Board. It is ridiculous.

Could you understand, Sir, that in a housing programme that is in full flight, that some conspiracy could be cooked up by the Opposition to come in here and outside of here to derail this Housing Minister from delivering houses to poor ordinary Barbadians? When you think about Country Park Towers that were left in a mess, mangled steel rushing to the core, bush growing all over the place, rats and vermin going in people's houses. While the Leader of the Opposition was in Sandy Lane lying down comfortable, the people out there had to contend with rats running in their place.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I am talking about rats like the Honourable Member for the City, rodents and the Democratic Labour Party had to come and take up that project and build it and they are vexed because we gave

three of the towers to Jada or Preconcor. Two were done by NHC and two done by an outside company and the Honourable Minister is to be crucified in Barbados, like somebody who committed a crime, when you had under the last Government, the Leader of the Opposition as then Leader of the House tried to stall a no confidence motion debate in this House brought by the Honourable Member for St. John then as Leader of the Opposition on Hardwood Housing Factory, where people paid deposits and up to now have not gotten back their deposits or the houses.

Again, the Honourable Member for St. George North in an outstanding moment of clarity and frankness said in this Honourable House that he was aware the Hardwood houses were under a canvas, a tarpaulin, in a warehouse and we have asked him to share that information with the police. He has not yet done so but we have asked him to share that information with the Police of Barbados.

We made the point up to Election day.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You do not know what happened after then, that is why the auditors cannot find them and that is why the forensic auditors cannot find them, but that is not the point. The point is this, Sir, we took over a National Housing Corporation that was in serious debt, was not delivering houses and therefore had no credibility in the housing market. It was an agency without credibility in relation to building housing and providing housing solutions.

We had to come to this Parliament as one of our first actions and get a Supplementary to retire about \$34 million in debt for the NHC. This was one of the first acts of this Government. Having cleared that and with no money, this Government had no other choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but to invite or to entertain proposals from private developers to help us get the housing project off the ground. The reason we wanted to do that was not only to deliver houses to people but to restore the credibility of this damaged agency both in the eyes of the public and in the eyes of potential partners and financiers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had to do that but you cannot invite a small contractor to put up \$30 million or \$40 million to do a housing project. It is not possible. It is not feasible so obviously by logic and by nature, you have to find partners who can put up that kind of resource. We identified some and we have gone in, executed the projects on time and within budget, but still were able to give more than 55 small contractors work within that process, indeed as the Minister said, in relation to some of the projects. The larger contractors by instruction of the Cabinet, the Minister indicated to NHC who indicated by letter in

writing that they should include small contractors in the project.

What else is this Government to do? I am beginning to wonder if the Barbados Labour Party Opposition really wants Barbadians to get houses. When they were in office, they were not producing any. Now they are not in office and houses are being produced, they are finding every reason to pick at it, Sir. I really wonder about their seriousness, in relation to this matter, and so I said that we restored the credibility of the NHC. Having now done that, Sir, there are financial institutions that are approaching the NHC for ventures with them, making available resources to be borrowed by the NHC because they feel now they have a sense that some level of seriousness has returned to the administration of the Ministry of Housing and Lands in this country.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, having felt the heat, they said that this looks like it is going somewhere. People like winners. People like to be associated with success, so now we have a \$40 million loan from First Caribbean International Bank. You could not get that under any Minister of Housing in the Barbados Labour Party particularly in its dying days.

The one time when you had it from BNB (Barbados National Bank), it ended up being a complete loss. Then, we are going now to the Caribbean Development Bank to look to negotiate upwards to \$70 million in which now we have been given instruction from the Cabinet that small contractors should be the principal actors.

Sir, do you know why we can do that. It is because this money is being borrowed by a State agency. It, therefore, becomes the money of the taxpayers of Barbados and we have a say in how it is spent. You could not do that with private capital because it is the people's money, but we still try to insist with them and they acted to their credit in good faith. Sir, the housing programme has not gone on a trajectory up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we call on the Members of the Opposition - I know you want to score political points, you want to do your stuff. When the Leader of the Opposition cannot get her own way, she and the Deputy Leader march out of here, they run out, they do not want to debate, so they create a false argument when they are defeated in debate over a piece of paper.

House A72C, Sequence 42 & 43, 17:20:10

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you imagine that in this Honourable House a former Member called a member of the media profession a half-literate indentured servant and came back the next week and had it expunged from the record and nobody in the Barbados Labour Party Government walked out, but suddenly, a piece of paper that has nothing on it but a few notes that I had written becomes now a matter of big dispute for people to march out of the House. It is ridiculous. This is childishness. We have to put that childishness behind us. It is like when you are pitching marbles and you cannot win in “Killa” and you take up your marbles and go home.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Or when you are playing bat and ball and you get out, you take up the bat and go home, or you take up the ball and hide it in the bush. It is ridiculous. This is a serious House and it has to be treated seriously.

We have to understand, and I am saying this in all seriousness, that until the people of Barbados speak again, and I think I have a fair sense of what they would say when they speak, this Democratic Labour Party is the Government and we will act and behave responsibly as a Government. The administration of this country is not run from Roebuck Street. People have to understand that. If they want to behave like children, I have no problem of going over at Cherish and buying some diapers. I will buy them, good quality ones too, like Huggies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this will not stop this Government from being focussed on producing housing solutions for the people of Barbados, whether at Constant, Marchfield, French Village, Workhall, et cetera. It will take me all evening to read them out. Sir, we are going to Bushy Park too and if the Leader of the Opposition wants to sit when the contract is being written, the Leader of the Opposition could come and sit because, at the end of the day, that is what matters. At the end of the day you do what you have to do with transparency as this Minister has done even though he was not required to do it, but you do it with the seriousness of an agent of the Crown so appointed by Her Majesty's through her agent the Governor-General of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have known this Minister for practically all my life. He is a school mate of mine and nobody is going to come into this House, or outside of this House, and believe that they could rabble-rouse this Minister, not when I am in here. They would do it when I am not in politics but it is not going to happen because there is no other that I could think of, besides myself of course, that holds a higher standard than this Honourable Member. He has a good heart and a trained mind. He is

acting responsibly and he will continue to deliver for the Democratic Labour Party and the people of this country.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, within the Constitution of Barbados there is provision for the doctrine of collective responsibility of Cabinet. The Constitution itself says there shall be a Cabinet that should be collectively responsible, meaning therefore that on matters of policy no Minister can publicly criticise or condemn a fellow Minister, and if a Minister condemns a bedfellow then that Minister who is a critic would have to resign.

There has also existed in this country the doctrine of individual responsibility of Ministers, meaning, as P. J. Patterson would no doubt tell you because he himself had a particular experience with it, that where a Minister is responsible for a department and agencies under his portfolio, that Minister is answerable. In the context, therefore, Sir, of what we are looking at this afternoon, the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands is answerable to us all and to the country for events and occurrences, decisions and activities under his portfolio.

Sir, it is well-known that prior to this particular day the public relations machinery of the Democratic Labour Party was so oiled and thrust upon Barbados that the Minister of Housing and Lands was very much the principal spokesperson for the Government.

In this regard, Sir, I must make a comment on something said by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central. In this business of politics charges are made and counter charges are made. One side says something that sounds reasonable and the other side says something that is opposite and equally sounds reasonable.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central made bold to say that on the matters of recent occurrences at the National Housing Corporation that we on This Side produced a heightened intense public relations campaign on an issue affecting the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. Sir, the truth is, that if we review the public relations of this current Government there can be no question that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North was identified as the star boy for the Government.

It all started way back when he was seen physically delivering things to personnel in the National Housing Corporation housing units. I suspect that some of these things were promissory notes to be followed by actual legal documentation but let that slide, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Sir, whenever a housing project or indeed any project is contemplated, certain pre-activity decisions have to be taken. In the context of housing, where there is a housing project that is floated, certain systems have to be put in place at many levels, involving many persons, with the Minister ultimately having a supervisory role over what is transpiring.

In this regard, one of the critical components of the project at Constant has to be the question of finance. What we on This Side are insisting on is that the finance package referred to be particularised to such a degree that nobody can leave this Parliament this evening in doubt about the final details of the financing of the project in question.

I am, therefore, inviting the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to give us further and better particulars in respect of this particular finance package because it has been customary in this Parliament, certainly during my experience, that on matters affecting the National Housing Corporation, various Ministers have even brought surveyor plans before Parliament for Parliament's consideration, so we would want some detailed information on the question of financing. In that respect, we would have to agree with the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and other Honourable Members on This Side who have spoken.

Sir, now to Constant. We can have Constant as a place and we have "constant" the word. We are having this word "constant" arise in a situation where there is turbulence at the National Housing Corporation. Things are not constant there at all. There is turbulence, there are storm clouds and there are predicted weather forecasts affecting the National Housing Corporation, which we on This Side hope would not materialised. We would hope that a side wind can emerge to throw off the scent which we suspect could very well happen if things go further awry. By the end of December 2010, three Chairpersons would have headed the National Housing Corporation as the decision-makers answerable to the Minister, that is a sign of turbulence. There is also further turbulence where there are serious rumblings among the staff at the National Housing Corporation. The morale is not great at the National Housing Corporation. I am not speaking in any role as a propagandist, or as a person offering misinformation. The longstanding workers at the National Housing Corporation are saying openly that the place has become the bedrock for family and friends and it is affecting staff morale.

House A72C Sequence 44 & 45 5.30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, with regards to other things in relation to the National Housing

Corporation, we have heard time and time again during this debate that the youthful Honourable Member for St. Philip North is hardworking. He has to work even harder because there are matters affecting the small man that have to be resolved, some of which are sufficiently serious to require immediate action.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister has to insist that the staff at every level at the National Housing Corporation should be aware of the Vision and Mission Statement of the Corporation, if it has one, its goals and objectives and should advise the Minister. If the Minister is not getting advice, the Minister should demand it. He should also go all-out to find out the extent to which some poor people are disadvantaged.

Sir, for example, there are people in Barbados who have paid the full purchase price for lands owned by the National Housing Corporation and they have not gotten their conveyances. I could call names, but in a situation where I would not use this Parliament or the national airwaves to breach the privacy of particular individuals, I can hold it back and offer the Minister written supported evidence that there are too many persons who have paid for lands coming directly under the National Housing Corporation, who are yet to receive their conveyances. Sir, there are endemic problems there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are times when people go to the National Housing Corporation with their receipts, which is proof that they have paid for their land, sometimes in circumstances where the National Housing Corporation does not reply to these persons. They then get their Members of Parliament to write the National Housing Corporation, to which there is also no response. The Minister, himself, is not approached directly, but as Minister with responsibility for the National Housing Corporation - I am not going to involve the line Ministry in this argument - but the Minister has to be in a position to know what is happening.

In addition, the Minister would have been sworn in as Minister in charge of this portfolio, in a situation where there has been a National Housing Corporation and before it, a Housing Authority. Sir, why do I mention this? I mention this because for a long time, there have been different housing estates throughout Barbados and ordinary folks are complaining that as residents and occupants of units in these housing estates, simple administrative matters such as application for repairs are not heeded.

Sir, in the Pine, Deacons, Thorpes and many other places, where there used to be a system of Estate Wardens - I do not know what is now the status - individual renters would have had a problem with a door, the roof or a possible complaint against a foreign substance like asbestos

and they would have approached the National Housing Corporation and got no response.

Another bad thing that has been happening recently in that Corporation is that a number of full-time employees - non-political or allegedly non-political - often tell the public when they go for help: "Man, go to your politician and the politician would activate things and things would happen and you would get what you want." That has made many a Barbadian very, very frustrated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, consistent with what the Honourable Member for St. George North has urged with regard to the development at Constant, apart from the fact that we want further and better particulars on the financing package, we also have to encourage Government to go back and look at the central area of Constant.

Long ago, there was the Constant Agricultural Plantation and with it a tenantry, referred to by the Honourable Member for St. George North. In the olden days, there was a demand for sites and services in the olden tenantry. That demand is still there because the sites and services that should have been installed before have not been installed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to raise this further. The policy of the Barbados Labour Party is that where you are bringing new housing into an existing community, you should aim for integration of the new buildings with the pre-existing community and have certain structures and institutions so integrated to strengthen the community. Sir, I would want that by the time Constant is reassessed and looked at, that a lovely, wonderful community would be built with the appropriate facilities that would make all Barbadians proud.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, having mentioned the frustration that particular individuals in Barbados have expressed in their dealings with the National Housing Corporation, Barbadians are also questioning this business of the degree to which a chairperson, as Head of a Board, should be persuasive enough to be able to enlighten a minister on policy, or on the contrary, the extent to which the Minister should transcend normal general directives of a general nature and be the day to day micro manager. The balance of appearance in Barbados is that the Minister ought not to micro manage and even the chairperson ought not to micro manage, but their role is to put systems in place to encourage the line staff to carry out their functions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said earlier, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has benefited from a high political profile, through an excellent orchestration of public relations by one of their public relations personnel. While the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is saying that our system of public

relation is far more proactive and far more effective than that of the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, if that is to be so, come this weekend, our public relations will be intensified on this matter because this is a matter that is not going to go away at all.

Sir, why am I saying this matter will not go away? One reason I say that is that in an era where we have certain aspects of administrative justice, public functionaries - and I am not necessarily referring to politicians - owe it to the public often to give reasons. What were the reasons for which, by which or which suggested why the last Chairperson had to demit office? We have not been told. I have not heard any allegations of public misconduct. I have not heard any allegation of malfeasance or misfeasance. I have not heard any allegation of incompetence. I have not heard any allegation of inability to conduct the business of Government. What I have heard is that outgoing Chairperson said that the way she conceptualised her role was consistent with the promises of the Democratic Labour Party and that every promise and precept was breached by her Party, the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have heard in this country that as far as the Democratic Labour Party is concerned, a Manifesto is never a social contract. We have heard that time and time again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we hear Honourable Members on the Front Bench, in particular, trumpet the achievements in housing and congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, we on This Side have to be blunt and frank with the public. Sir, if one were to put \$70 to \$75 worth of gasoline in a fuel efficient car and drive around Barbados, where people have heard that new houses have been built, you are bound to come across a situation where many houses built by the National Housing Corporation, whether they were conceived before 2008 or built after 2008, are entirely unoccupied. There are too many houses, since January 2008, that are entirely unoccupied. Sir, in a normal business scenario, in evaluating the assets and stock, an accountant would call that wasted inventory. Sir, in circumstances where the National Housing Corporation is promising to discharge its functions so judiciously to increase the housing stock, then we cannot have seven or eight houses in your Constituency remaining unoccupied for any length of time, in a situation where the public demand for housing is never-ending.

5.40 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: I am challenging the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to go back through the whole of this country and count the houses that have been built, which remain without owners. It is a waste of stock, especially when you consider that a financially cash-strapped agency built those houses, so a public sacrifice would have been made. Sir, the problem with St. James North is that three-quarters of St. James North is a water zone and then the rest is water-prone but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you are well aware, outside of the fact that a lot of St. James North is water zone and a lot is water-prone, I do not think that St. James North's personnel has any quarrel with the person who is speaking now, or would have any quarrel this evening later, or would have any quarrel for some time to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we ask why it is that the chairperson had to demit office, as we ask whether there were other members of the Board who proved awkward in relation to the interpretation of Government policy, we also want to say that in this matter, if the entity still has a heart, a brain and a hand, and if the entity is morally-bound, the hand and the shadow of CLICO are all over this. The hand and the shadow of CLICO are all over this, in circumstances where we have had no satisfactory explanation and certainly no satisfactory action by the Democratic Labour Party on the whole CLICO fiasco, in a situation where CLICO has many tentacles and one of those tentacles could have descended on this project in this way that could give us a wake-up call months ahead down the line.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I close by making these observations. Sir, there can be no question that every Member of Parliament and every acting politician is aware of the fact that in keeping constituency clinics and in interacting with their constituents, that housing is one of the most popular issues raised, and sometimes it is the most painful issue to be raised. Sir, there are people who can produce evidence of having made application to the National Housing Corporation going way back when and, Sir, action now has to be taken to satisfy to this demand and, at the same time, in this modern era where Crown lands can safely be in the hands of the Crown for years and where the Government, whether "B" or "D" has housing plans, in particular, for that land.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this process of how the Government gets the land and then eventually, how the functionary, the National Housing Corporation, gets permission to proceed becomes highly relevant. The Honourable Member for St. George North said that in a situation where the vesting has not yet been approved by this Honourable House or the Senate that he wondered whether to permit a project to occur in the name of the National Housing Corporation for two years could have been good.

You cannot fault the reason there of the Honourable Member for St. George North himself a former Minister of Housing. If he says how come National Housing Corporation can be committed to a contract, whether a finance contract or another contract in a situation where the National Housing Corporation does not yet have the title.

Sir, somebody in Barbados once said that silver and gold has nothing in it but what I have to give you and then arising out of that the maxim came "Nobody can give or confer what he or she does not own", and all these anomalies and irregularities have to be straightened.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me, as I close, start at the very start. Sir, first of all, with a compulsory acquisition, there must be speed. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew is known to be a Minister to move speedily on a number of matters.

Sir, I need to call his assistance but I would not bother because the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, in his humility, would not want me to blow his trumpet for him in a situation where he is resting temporarily for the rest of this evening, and it is expected that answers that we are seeking would come from the Other Side. Sir, you have the acquisition that takes long and then the property is vested in the Crown. It might remain in the hands of the Crown for years, then it has to be vested then in the National Housing Corporation, and let us say that process takes two or three years. Are we not at a stage yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where that can be fast-tracked and where the functional arm of Government's housing policy can be empowered to be able to move more expeditiously rather than 10 years delays, five years delays and such like?

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want all Honourable Members to sensitise themselves to the goings-ons at the National Housing Corporation as far as the attitude of the staff is concerned. Sir, a particular ethic, a particular ethos seems to have descended on that institutions where some of the workers are marking time until retirement, some of the workers are timid, some of the workers fear political victimisation, some of the workers see blatant patronage, some of the workers do not feel like producing because the last Democratic Labour Party Administration has been so full of inertia that even the public relations of this new Democratic Labour Party are suggesting that they do have the energy, yet the workers there do not seem motivated to be able to produce to the satisfaction of all.

Sir, in other words, I am suggesting that the National Housing Corporation at a certain level is suffering from a problem of insufficient productivity along with the morale and, Sir, in a place like the National Housing Corporation, where it can be used as a political football, you are bound to have the average yard-fowl around there whose role is

not to do any work, but to carry people's name to a politician to earn some salary and, if possible, to get involved in any little deal that would enhance the status of the yard-fowl among his political comrades.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few remarks, I am deeply grateful to you. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate where the Government is seeking to vest just under three hectares of land into the National Housing Corporation. Sir, this is land at Constant in St. George, land that we can, again, provide houses for the people of Barbados and continue the work that we have been doing in this regard.

I know the Honourable Member who just took his seat was expunging when he spoke of the political yard-fowls and of the environment that consumed the National Housing Corporation towards the end of the last Administration and maybe that was why they could not get any houses done. Now that we have purged ourselves of that kind of behaviour under the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, it is a difficult kettle of fish. The reality is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, houses are going up, people are getting keys, things are happening, there is a buzz and an excitement about housing in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just say that the Honourable Member for St. James North is at that stage of his political life where he can give some statesman-like addresses and you can see that he breaks for himself. I notice he did not get involved in that political hankering, but he touched on some very significant notes.

He spoke about the fact that we, as Members of Parliament, at the front line of feeling the pain of Barbadians who are inadequately sheltered, or do not have any shelter at all. We have to understand that there are 20 000 people or more on the waiting list at the National Housing Corporation. The population of Barbados is probably close to 280 000. We are in the process of doing a census and we will see where it is.

H/A72C/17:50 Sequence 49

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I want you to realise percentage-wise, we are talking about a huge number of people in the context of a small nation, as I say, certainly less than 300 000 inhabitants. We are talking about a very serious issue here. Mr. Deputy Speaker, forgive me if we have to look at the backdrop against which we are operating.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North and myself entered this Chamber the very same time, 2003. We well recall, the last term of that Administration had record levels of revenue, VAT receipts, the world economy was expanding and all sorts of resources were at their disposal, and yet they simply could not get the housing programme into second gear, they could not.

I think the real hurtful part is, we have come to office in the middle of a global crisis with all of the challenges. We did not only get the programme into second gear, but we have driven it into, third, fourth and in overdrive, and that has them upset.

Sir, I think the overall performance is what really bothers the Honourable Members on the Other Side. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to allow me for illustrative purposes to use a very personal example. I know Members will say that they heard it, before, but I can repeat it in this debate because it is relevant.

Sir, I spoke about the times of plenty that existed in this country. When we came into this House there was a billboard in Tweedside Road saying, "Houses Coming". Sir, 2003, 2004 and 2005 also went. At every Estimates debate I used to get up and remind the then Government about not what I as a Member of Parliament had asked. They put up the billboard and said that houses were coming.

Sir, do you know that the wood ants ate down the billboard and not a bit of concrete, not a load of marl, not a sheet of plywood, nothing? Do you know that since we came to office the Honourable Member for St. Philip North said to me, "Richard, I was there with you shoulder to shoulder, I know what you are going through. We will find the resources and we will get that project at Stuarts Lodge started". Do you know it has been started and is virtually complete within a ten-month period?

The last Government could not find the few little coppers in time of plenty to put those 20 housing solutions at Tweedside Road, but this Government, under the inspired leadership of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North was able to execute. I might add, it was done by a small contractor, a Barbadian, and he did an excellent job, Mr. Christie of ACP Building Work, who is one of many small contractors who has been doing work for the National Housing Corporation. Sir, I would say that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North needs to tell that story.

Obviously if you are doing large joint venture projects, you have to go to large contractors. There have been modest projects by small and medium-sized contractors. That story needs to be told.

Sir, when you are dealing with a problem on that scale of which I spoke about, think of those 20 000 souls and all they have is an acknowledgment receipt for submitting an application at the National Housing Corporation. What about them? The only way we are really going to break the back of this problem is to have a few large projects and to work with the private sector.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is a part-time contractor. He would know that a tower crane costs \$250 000 just to acquire it, far less to erect it and then to maintain it. There is no small contractor that can take on a project, where you are going to be involving that kind of indirect cost just to get the plant going in order to erect what is necessary, so we are going to have large contractors involved in the housing programme in Barbados when we talk about greater levels of urbanisation, the Valley Project, and I think there is one in Bridgetown as well, the Mason Hall Street area, high rise.

These projects, of necessity, we are going to have to use contractors who have the capacity for that sort of work. I do not think we need to apologise for employing all of the contractors, all of the private sector interests, big, small and those in-between, in dealing with this housing crisis that we have inherited.

I want to say that the performance of the Minister is exemplary, and far as I am concerned, he should continue doing the excellent work he is doing because of the buzz that has been created, and the excitement that people feel because they are actually seeing houses taking place.

I remember Members of the then Government, before the Election, were very frustrated at those efforts. We all remember the public relations nightmare of the "Bumble Bee", the "Cockroach", the "Red Ant" and "Black Ant" houses and that kind of thing. People were lining up in the sun. All of that disgusting behaviour and nothing to show for it.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North actually has houses to show. Keys have been given out. What is wrong with celebrating home ownership? Many people who have been on a list for 10 and 15 years, and you say to them, let us acknowledge the fact that they have been able to achieve their dream. They have been able to own a piece of the rock. There is nothing wrong in celebrating that fact considering the long, hard slog in getting to this point.

Sir, let us not fool ourselves - one of the main reasons that the Government is in office today is because of housing. One of the areas that most people were most disappointed with the performance of the last Government was in this area of housing, among other things. Sir, we have a responsibility to make sure that we can house all

Barbadians. We have a responsibility, particularly to those who can least afford it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we will not be sidetracked by a group who do not really have any authority to speak on these issues.

I had to go to the funeral of a constituent, but I was able to tune in. I did hear of activities that are planned, a Private Member Resolution. I am not anticipating the House, but I will say this much. If you want to talk about an inquiry, let us talk about the asbestos roof sheets at Kensington Lodge. That needs to be inquired into, and the circumstances involving the award of it, and the performance of the said contractor.

I heard of a conflict of interest. All of a sudden the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, in his speech, conflict of interest. Did he not whisper anything in the ears of then Honourable Member for St. James South when dealing with that issue? That is blatant conflict of interest, as in a contractor from in the same household as the Minister and did not even do the job properly.

Sir, what about the Barrack situation? Well that is an unfortunate one, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central spoke to some of those issues. How can we seriously take on board advice from a group, that when they formed the Government, did basically all kinds of things that are also worthy of an inquiry. Sir, this issue of a contract is now a problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is well-known that many Government projects started and many of them are concluded without a contract being in place. Do not make it sound as though it is something new, that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is bringing something new, that he is executing work without a contract.

Many Government projects, and I know of what I speak, having done work not only for this Government but other Governments in the Region, you start work, you exchange letters and sometimes because of the backlog involved in the Solicitor General's Office, you even complete work...

HA72C 18.00 p.m. Sequence 50 & 51

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72C, Sequence 52 & 53, 6:00 P.m.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: You would get a phone call many months later, indicating that the contract is ready and you say, contract for what? The work that you had done, concluded and you had been paid already so that is really basically a non issue, this question of a contract being in placed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you want to suggest, given the gravity or the sale of the project that a contract should be put in place, which, admittedly, is the proper thing to do, let us talk about 3S, the other BOLT arrangements and so on. I mean you cannot approbate and reprobate at the same time. I am hearing a feeble defence for what was taking place before 2008 and, at the same time, you are trying to attack the Honourable Member for St. Philip North for having committed some heinous crime. It is not going to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make it very clear that through it all I think we need to understand what this debate is all about. It is about a Government that has an aggressive programme to house this country because it is a serious national issue, a serious problem that we have inherited.

The Honourable Member for St. James North, as I said, in a moment of intellectual honesty, realised that we, as Members of Parliament, face it every day on the front line, and to the extent that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is probably the best Minister of Housing this country has had since Sir Mencea Cox, and even before that, we need to be thankful that we are seeing things happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was a Member of Parliament for five years and was unable to point a single constituent in the direction of a housing solution, and that was not for a lack of effort, writing the letters and meeting with people, even going down to the NHC holding people's hands and that type of thing, but there were two things. We would not talk about political victimisation and being the only urban Member of Parliament, at the time that could not come to the meetings the UDC was having with St. Michael Members of Parliament. We would not get into that, but what I would say is that there were also no solutions for anyone. No houses were being built. You cannot give people houses that did not exist and that was the problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we actually have houses now, houses exist to be allocated, houses have been allocated and houses continued to be allocated, so at least, the Honourable Member for St. James North, yourself, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and in St. Michael South Central, we can at least bring some relief to a few of the 20 000 people, those 20 000 souls that are totally frustrated over the last of any opportunity to provide shelter for their loved ones. We can finally do something about that and so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to just say to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to continue his excellent work.

I am going to take my seat shortly but I have to say this much before I do that. Sir, I am particularly impressed by not just the energy and determination of the Honourable

Member for St. Philip North, but the fact that he is prepared to, as the old people would say, "use his kidneys". He is thinking, he is trying to be innovative and creative, he is looking at high-rise and those opportunities to increase density so that more relief can go to more people. He is also looking at the zero lot line concept, so that we can have greater densities, again more relief to more people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Housing is looking at creative ways of involving the private sector, something that has this Opposition very upset because we all know the disaster of their Joint Venture programme, again, bringing more relief to more people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to encourage my friend and my colleague to continue doing the excellent work. He has the support of the Government of Barbados and, more importantly, he has the support of all the people of Barbados. Continue to ride on my friend and keep doing the excellent work. We are backing you. Do not worry about what you may be hearing. There is good work going on by this Government and relief is coming to the people of Barbados. We may not meet every target that we have set but, at least, we can see houses going up in Barbados and relief being brought to those frustrated individuals who have been looking so long for a housing solution.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Asides.

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

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate. Sir, we are reminded that to whom much is given, much is expected. I want to say, Sir, that one of the things that clearly the people of Barbados expect the Democratic Labour Party to do is to fulfill its promises, in terms of trying to fulfill the mandate that it gave to them in terms of housing in this country.

Sir, it is only one who either has not been living in Barbados since January 2008 or one, who is prepared to ignore the facts before them that would say this Minister of Housing has failed and has not made a concerted attempt to deal with the intricate problem of housing in this country.

As a result, Sir, I want to say that I have no hesitation in supporting the measure but I also want to say that it is a fact we understand as politicians - which is a peculiar occupation - that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh. Sir, even when you act on a Statutory Board, it is the understanding of those of us who love our country and who want to make a contribution to our country that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh and we understand, Sir,

that I am not comparing the Minister with that status but certainly, Sir, there is something comparable.

Sir, I want to say that as mature individuals, being part of a political process, we serve, knowing the risk that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh and we understand when we serve that the Opposition can attempt to make what I would call an unseemly noise that puts forward to Barbadians, the kind of behaviour that we would not want to see operate in politics in this country because they know too, Sir, and they have done the same thing.

There have been instances when they were in Government, Chairmen have been removed in some cases, Sir, unceremoniously and, Sir, we have not had the situation where Members of the Opposition have actually sought to derail a Government based on the fact that you want to engage in crass political opportunism and that is what it is, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want Barbadians to look at the fact that we, for the first time in many years, have been able to see a Minister who is prepared to examine every single opportunity to try to provide the kind of housing that will meet the needs of Barbadians.

House A72C, Sequence 52 & 53, 18:10:19

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Sir, I want Barbadians to look at the fact that for the first time in many years we have been able to see a Minister who is prepared to examine every single opportunity to try to provide the kind of housing that would meet the needs of Barbadians. Sir, this is what the debate is about. Sir, do not be sidetracked. I would also want Barbadians not to be sidetracked by some of the mouthings. One of the mouthings that most concerns me is the attempt to imply subterfuge where there is none.

Sir, we have a situation where there is transparency, where the Minister acted within his rights. Sir, how is it that we have a situation where we give the power to someone to do a job and when they attempt to do it in good faith and to exercise and to use the very tools available to them, we turn around and criticise them for using those very tools? Sir, this Minister has nothing to be ashamed of.

Sir, I want to say to the residents of St. Michael West Central that there is evidence that this Minister has nothing to be ashamed of. Sir, the Minister did not recall, but there is a housing project not too far up St. Stephen's Hill in an area called Airy Hill that we visited last year in which some keys were handed over to the residents. Sir, if they want to talk about going and seeing empty houses, let them go and see those houses, every one of them has been filled. They have not been filled by the rich and the famous

but by ordinary civil servants, like policemen. Sir, this is tangible proof that this Administration and its housing policy is going places under the leadership of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Sir, we know that the life of a Back Bencher in Government is not easy. Sir, I do not want to give names here because I am in the same position as some of the Members of the Other Side who said they do not want to give names. I do not want to give names for legitimate reasons but I could point to actual cases of persons in St. Michael West Central who have been able to benefit as a result of the efforts of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. Sir, we cannot dismiss these things and take them lightly.

Sir, one of the other points I wish to make is that we hear talk about low motivation and low morale within the National Housing Corporation, give me a break. It is that Administration that established Public Sector Reform. Low motivation and low morale did not come about with the Democratic Labour Party. If they are honest enough, they will admit that they were not able to do anything about it during their tenure. Sir, now that we have a relatively new Administration that is facing the same problems and is making the effort to deal with it, we are hearing talk about low motivation and low morale as if it began with the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, I believe that civil servants in this country generally want to do a good job. They might be placed in uncomfortable situations. Sir, many of us have watched the film "Waiting to Exhale" but I feel that the song the Opposition is singing is waiting for the Democratic Labour Party to fail. Sir, you can see it in the behaviour of the Opposition. It is as if they are trying to seize on every opportunity that they perceive there is a failure in order to prove to the citizens of Barbados that we are failing but, Sir, we are not failing.

Sir, I want to plea to Barbadians not to give in to this kind of behaviour that seeks to take advantage of the propensity of persons to believe sometimes in the worst when there is evidence that something better is actually happening. Sir, I want to use the song of "Red Plastic Bag" that something is happening. Sir, I want us to just look around and see some of the things that are happening.

Sir, we have a Minister of Housing and Lands who, in recognising the fact that things in the economy are not that good, that there is not the kind of money to engage in housing projects...

When there were times of plenty, when the Opposition was the Government, instead of using the resources available at that point in time to address the housing issues in a meaningful way that would impact on

ordinary Barbadians, they addressed the needs of the rich and the famous.

Sir, what you can clearly see is that in the face of limited resources we are using the resources that are available to us and innovative means to try to address those housing problems. Sir, the fact that the Minister is reaching out to private sector partners, even at this time, to try to resolve some of those difficult housing issues is something that he should be given credit for.

Sir, under the last Administration, we had a situation where we were not sure, in terms of the future of other sectors, the extent to which they were actually compromising the ability of other sectors to survive, but we can see that under this Administration, every effort is being made to ensure that we maximise the land that is available to us even in terms of the zero-lot housing concept and the fact that we are looking at going into high-rise building.

Sir, when you look at the kinds of initiatives that this Minister of Housing and Lands is pursuing... The fact that he was not prepared to sit down even within the first two and a half years of this Administration and not come up with solutions and try things, I think that we need to give this Minister of Housing and Lands credit for what has been happening over that period.

Sir, I just want to finish off at the point where I started, that is, that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh. Sir, all of us want to serve our country in whatever capacity but I do believe that we have no choice but to give support to the Minister of Housing and Lands who has done so much, and who I think reserves the right at times to put our resource personnel in the manner that he thinks fit, in order to ensure that he could continue to do the work he has been doing. Sir, I want to say to him that he needs not fear and to continue.

There are some issues that we have to look at. I think the Minister has clearly stated that he recognises that the small contractors have to play a role in terms of the provision of housing in this country. Sir, when you look at it, the Minister has shown clearly that he intends to deal with that particular aspect.

House A72C Sequence 54 & 55 6.20 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can now recognise that he has made contribution in trying to resolve some of the difficult issues in housing which face Barbadians. Sir, again, I want to give him my support on this particular matter. I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution before this Honourable House, to approve the vesting of Crown land in the area of Constant, St. George, in the name of the Minister of Housing and Lands, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, to the National Housing Corporation.

Sir, I wish to say that this is consistent with the professional and serious approach of this Administration, in terms of expediting the work of the Housing Ministry, the National Housing Corporation and the Government of Barbados in providing tangible housing solutions in a timely manner, to the masses of our country.

Sir, it is of note that the Barbados Labour Party was tardy in vesting a number of these parcels of land in the National Housing Corporation, for example, Deacons Housing Area which was part of the Jenkins Plantation and London Bourne Towers. Sir, these areas needed to be tidied up by this Administration, so that, for example, we could transfer housing units to those persons who occupy these units for 20 years or more.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very confident and appreciative of the work of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North as Minister of Housing and Lands. Sir, all of the red herrings that you are seeing being thrown across the trail by the Opposition Members are demonstrations of the fact that they are jealous of the outstanding track record of this Minister of Housing and Lands, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. This is a man with a mission. It is not just talk, it is action.

Sir, I can speak from experience because the Minister of Housing and Lands, in the 2½ short years that he has been Minister of Housing and Lands, has responded within a moment's notice, whether it be a house fire like what we had one Saturday morning at Spruce Street, near Nelson Street. I was able to call the Minister of Housing and Lands, who dropped what he was doing and with great speed rushed down to Bridgetown and was able to provide that displaced family with a housing unit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I go further when we had another house fire in 8th Avenue, New Orleans, one "Foreday" morning which, unfortunately, resulted in the loss of a young lad, again, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North rushed to the scene and within less than one week, we were able to go to Arlie Tenantry and provide those displaced families with housing solutions, in accordance with this very far-reaching rent-to-own concept, which allows working-class Barbadians to be able effectively to pay for their apartments/units over a period of time.

These are persons who would normally not qualify because their income level would be below the necessary threshold. This is very exciting and the members of the public have embraced this concept because Barbadians look forward to owning a piece of the rock. This provides an opportunity to encompass the masses, who otherwise would not have been able to qualify to pay for a mortgage through a normal lending agency, including commercial banks and credit unions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my brief intervention, I salute the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. Just a few weeks ago, after a whole day of meetings, I invited the Honourable Member to journey with me to the heart of Nelson Street, to the Pondsides/London Bourne area, where we spent the whole evening, until after dark, meeting with people to address their concerns. The Minister is always available.

The Minister was able to journey again to New Orleans, at the corner of 10th Avenue and Wharton's Gap, to see an area of land which is earmarked for housing solutions. As I said before, there are not many open parcels of land left in the Constituency, and so I am urging the Government to acquire these lands, so that I will be able to build high-rise condominium solutions.

As the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central mentioned, we can build these high-rise condominiums to maximise the use of the limited land space, to provide the highest possible number of housing solutions to the hundreds of thousands of people of Barbados who urgently need housing solutions. Sir, this includes the people at Murphy's Pasture, who for years have been threatened by being in a low-lying area, which is flood-prone, to the extent that persons have had to be rescued by boats. These persons had been promised by the Barbados Labour Party for more than 14 years that they would have been resited. These people had given up hope, until Elections were won by the Democratic Labour Party.

We have heard publicly enunciated by Minister of Housing and Lands, the commitment of this Government to provide high-rise housing solutions at places next door, such as at Mason Hall Street. Again, I have taken the Minister of Housing and Lands to another area of land with good foundation, with the coral stone rock protruding at the surface, at the corner of White Park Road and King's Village. Again, I look forward to the Government acquiring this land before it goes into commercial development, so that we can provide housing solutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also see the wonderful accommodation in terms of the Country Park Towers. I wonder where was the Honourable Member for St. Andrew because in his presentation one would have gotten the impression that the Barbados Labour Party was responsible

for that development, when, in fact, we know that prior to the 2008 General Election, that site was left with the steel rusting and bush all over the place. That site was literally abandoned by the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

This Minister of Housing and Lands, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North representing this Administration, was able to move with great alacrity to transform that area to the almost complete multi-storied apartment complex which has been the pride and joy of this Administration.

The Honourable Member has now demonstrated that this Government is serious about providing housing solutions to the masses in a timely manner. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a great enthusiasm as we meet constituents in our clinics, when they realise that this is for real, that this Administration is delivering. These people are anxious to be provided with these housing solutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, as a teacher, I would wish to give an A+ to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, for his very fast-paced approach to the provision of housing solutions to the people of the City and to the people of Barbados, and to advise him to go full steam ahead and not to be distracted nor deterred in any way by the irrelevant mouthings of persons of the detractors from the Other Side.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I crave your indulgence to make an intervention in this debate. I would have considered it an act amounting to almost a betrayal if I did not intervene in this debate, to throw my full weight behind the Minister of Housing and Lands, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I noted with interest the virulence with which the Opposition Members came after him today.

6.30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. F. J. STUART: The Members of the Opposition came after him today, and he will bear witness that I warned him some time ago that he should not be beguiled or misled by the smiles and by the hallow exhibitions of friendship to him coming from the Other Side, that he had to realise that he had shot to ministerial stardom within a very short time of being appointed Minister of Housing and Lands and having shot to ministerial stardom, he was a source of continuing embarrassment to the Barbados Labour Party.

Therefore, since he had a beauty in his performance that made them feel ugly, he could be sure that they would come after him and would leave no stone unturned until they had succeeded in besmirching his character and trying to undermine his reputation. Well, I think he understands now and I do not think that the scales would be any longer on his eyes in relation to what he is up against when dealing with Members on the Other Side.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to confess that when the Barbados Labour Party lost office on January 15, 2008, I thought that was all they had lost, but the passage of time has taught me that not only did they lose office, but they also lost their sense of shame.

I cannot imagine that a party in Government for three consecutive terms with three two-thirds majorities and the largest revenue intake at its disposal for any Government of Barbados since 1627, when this country was settled, could leave office with the low-income housing problem in Barbados basically untouched and could still come in here today, and on previous occasions and try to berate a Minister who is performing for building houses, which every Minister of Housing and Lands is supposed to do.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North has created history in Barbados in this sense. He is the first Minister of Housing and Lands to be attacked for building houses. The only thing more absurd than that would be to attack a Minister of Agriculture for producing food.

Sir, a Minister of Housing and Lands is supposed to get houses built and the Minister of Housing and Lands is getting that done and he is under attack from the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, trust the Barbados Labour Party when all else fails, Honourable Members on the Other Side, and this is a historical trait of the Barbados Labour Party that goes back to the founder of that Party, the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams, when all else fails, you look for some other little legal technicality, some little legal issue and try to inflate it as much as possible so that the substance is removed and some quasi-legal issue, or some pseudo-legal issue begins to loom large and, so it is with this case.

The issue is not over whether houses are being built at Constant, this is what the voters of Barbados and the consuming public of Barbados are interested in. The issue is over whether there has been a signed contract with CLICO or not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from 1994 continuously, until the present, CLICO has been treated as a political football in Barbados.

...Sir, you only have to look at the people, for example, at Rock Hall in St. Philip and at the Belle Gully

in St. Michael where people are what we call "squatting", a legal misnomer because, to be quite frank, the truth is that a lot of those people have acquired rights under the Limitation and Prescription Act and they are not squatters anymore. Those people build for themselves timber houses and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has always made the point in this House that if you were to just make land available to people in Barbados, to those who are desperately in need of what I heard being called nowadays, housing solutions, that they will find the housing solutions themselves.

I get evidence of that practically every week from the Constituency of St. Michael South where constituents say to me, "Just find me a house spot and I will look after getting the house myself." Sir, usually the house they are talking about, they go on to say that they know where they can get some lumber and get people to help them build it, and so on.

They are thinking timber houses because the paramount consideration, as far as they are concerned, is to get shelter over their heads. Therefore, I see nothing wrong with some timber houses being built at Constant in St. George.

I am glad to hear from the Minister that some of these houses will be made part of the Rent-To-Own Programme and I am also glad to hear that so far the level of workmanship has been sufficiently high to be described by him as acceptable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of this is placed during the worst financial and economic crisis the world has known in nearly 100 years. It is known that the National Housing Corporation is not awash with liquidity and, therefore, the joint venture programme, upon which the Corporation has embarked, is a necessity.

What is important is that we do not allow these joint venture exercises to degenerate to the same stage of disgrace known under the Barbados Labour Party at places like Buckeley Meadows, Coverley Phase 1 and elsewhere. I am pleased that the Minister is managing this situation very well. This is not the last occasion on which he is going to be attacked because he is doing something right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, out there on the ground in Barbados people describe him as the Minister who produces because they see houses going up all around them. When I was at Coverley for the handover of houses, I saw real keys handed to real people at a real location to facilitate their occupation of real habitation. There is nothing fictional or imaginary about all of this.

The Minister is producing but he has to make peace with the fact that the quality of his performance makes his

critics look ugly and feel ugly and, therefore, as a way of assuaging their own discomfort and sense of embarrassment, they must continue to attack him.

H/A72C/18:40 Sequence 59

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. F. J. STUART: He must keep the faith and rest assured that his colleagues are with him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Resolution has my unqualified support.

I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to make a short contribution in this debate. I will begin by saying that I really wish the Government well in the area of satisfying the housing needs of Barbadians. Sir, I say that because I believe he who broke it should fix it. I heard Honourable Members on That Side who spoke today about there being a 20 000 number waiting list. That did not drop out of the sky today. That has its genesis in the last term of Government of the Democratic Labour Party Administration, when in the course of 8 years, between 1986 and 1994, the Democratic Labour Party could build only 53 houses and provide no enabling environment whatsoever for people privately to acquire their houses.

Sir, for eight years houses were abandoned like a lost child, and that is the origin in the issues we have today in relation to housing. Sir, that is when the waiting list that we heard of today escalated suddenly and exponentially, under the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, under the entire term, 14 years that we have, that disgraceful state of affairs is what haunted us, and that disgraceful state of affairs is what was the albatross around the necks of the Barbados Labour Party, 14 years we have struggled against. A waiting list that went to the tens of thousands, perhaps, under the Democratic Labour Party for having built 53 houses and provided no enabling environment for the development of the housing sector in this country.

Sir, every week in our constituency offices people come to us about problems in relation to housing. Sir, unemployment, we practically cured that defect. We brought it down to practically nothing, but housing was the real issue. Everyone came to us on a weekly basis. Sir, we tried our best and we made a significant dent in the housing problem in this country, a significant dent.

We provided a number of houses, and provided the environment under which people could acquire houses and left a number of projects in place ready to the point of takeoff in addition to our performance and actual delivery, a number of projects were left on a platter for the Democratic Labour Party to just walk with, so they should be thanking us for what we left for them.

Sir, rather than thank us, the Government decided that we were not doing enough. They not only said that they were going to do more, they made bold commitment that every last person was to be housed, every last person, 2 000 would be provided every year in this sacrosanct document, the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto, Sir, 500 house lots in five months at \$5 per square foot. Public servants are still waiting for this Home Ownership Revolving Fund to provide them with interest-free loans to acquire houses. These were the promises that the Democratic Labour Party made.

Sir, what is the sad reality today? I appreciate the doctrine and the concept of collective responsibility. Therefore, Honourable Members on That Side, Ministers especially, had to do what they did. They had to get up in here today and defend the indefensible, and I understand that. The Honourable Acting Prime Minister, who just spoke, had to get up and give of his best trying to find a way for a Minister who to date, to this day, has been an abysmal failure in relation to housing in this country.

Sir, I am the first to concede that the Minister is number 1, the star boy in terms of photo opportunities and public relations, and perhaps I should say, looking busy. That is a fact.

HA72C 18.50 p.m. Sequence 60 & 61

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72C, Sequence 62 & 63, 6.50 p.m.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, if you drive the road any Friday evening, the Honourable Member can tell you that in Wilkey, I saw him with two other Ministers hustling at three o'clock, saying that they now came from looking at some piece of land somewhere that will be acquired at some time in the future. Sir, that is how busy the Minister is. He drives around and in the same way that any tourist can identify a lot of land in Barbados that is unidentified and scenic and so on, so can the Minister. He can tell you how many lots he has seen all across Barbados and how many housing solutions will be provided.

Sir, but really I want to know from the Honourable Minister, the Acting Honourable Prime Minister, just said that he was at a location, I think it was Coverley, and he saw real people being given real keys in a real location for

a real house, but did not say how many people. Sir, if you can go back through the speeches of the Minister of Housing, you would realise that on almost every occasion that the Minister speaks, he is delivering 23 houses, 11, 9 or 18, but 2 000 will come at Bushy Park and 1 000 will come at Coverley.

Sir, it is always, will come, will come, will come so that whenever the day comes, Christ is coming again too, but when? Sir, that is the question that we would like to have answered. When are Barbadians going to see the houses in the numbers that will make Barbadians feel that this Government is really on top of the housing problem in this country, and it will go anywhere near at all to fulfilling the promises contained in this Manifesto, Sir, which caused people to go out in their numbers in the last Election and vote for the Democratic Labour Party. When, Sir, are they going to satisfy these needs?

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I will quote some but I want to get to another point first because a Minister can sit back and the other Honourable Members on That Side can engage in overly congratulating the Minister. The Minister can pat himself on the back for a performance, Sir, that no one besides himself and them can see with the naked eye. They can continue to do that.

I have to raise some hard facts because one section of this community that is being seriously left behind as a Minister gloats in his performance are those persons, Sir, who inhabit the National Housing Corporation housing estates across this country. I have to make a plea for them because, unfortunately, I was not here on the last occasion when an issue came up in relation to that, but I thought that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would have been speaking strongly on behalf of his constituents because I believe, Sir, he would have a majority of constituents who live in Government estates, Sir, and I was listening to hear him give some staunch defence of them and argue their interests.

Sir, instead I heard him jumping over here then jumping over there, jumping back here, Sir, doing the "whammy". Sir, I have to speak in defence of them because this is a sector that was led down the garden path before the last Election on the assurance that they would have been in quick time, become homeowners in this country. Sir, people were told if you live in a Government unit for 20 years, they were going to be given their units, some say free, some say without any further cost. Sir, that is almost three years ago.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I have two housing estates, Eden Lodge and Grazettes. I was told that the people in Eden Lodge and Grazettes are not going to get their units, certainly, not in any hurry. When I asked why, I was told because they had put extensions on to the houses.

Sir, before the last Election, the Democratic Labour Party did not go to these people and say that if you live in a unit for 20 years, and have not put on any extensions, you are going to get your unit conveyed to you free of cost. They never had any rider, such as, not if you had put on any extensions. It was a carte blanche assurance that if you live in a unit for 20 years, you are going to get it free of cost if you elected the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, they have been elected and now they are saying that those people who have built on extensions are causing the problem and that is why they would not get to own the house. I want to let the Honourable Minister of Housing and the Government as a whole knows that the people in Eden Lodge and Grazettes who put on extensions did not hide and put on these extensions. Sir, every single housing estate across this country, as far as I am aware, has an NHC depot in it, correct me if I am wrong.

Sir, certainly Eden Lodge and Grazettes have housing depots, which have employees of the NHC in them. People in these units did not hide and put on any extensions. They were done in plain view of the National Housing Corporation, Sir, and on top of that in some cases I am told it was staff of the National Housing Corporation who went and helped the people put on the extensions anyhow.

In addition to that, Sir, these housing estates have estate wardens who are busy bodies in these housing estates. They would have seen these extensions going up and if it really was going to be a major problem, from the time these extensions began, they should have been stopped. People should have been told that if it was ever going to be an issue now, stop. Do not continue with them.

Sir, but to go and promise people before the Elections that if you vote for me in quick time you are going to have your unit conveyed to you, if you have lived in them for 20 years, and now to use an excuse about extensions, Sir, is unconscionable. I am surprised and disappointed with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West who got in this Parliament and failed to defend his own people on this matter.

Sir, I am not afraid to do it and I am calling on the Government now to bring legislation to this Parliament to validate these extensions. Sir, only except in cases where there is a physical encroachment by one person onto another person's property, perhaps in some others, except in some other exceptional circumstance that I cannot even

think of, I want them not to say they are going to do it, Sir, because they have been saying that for a while.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: You never said it.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order the Honourable Member is really misleading the House. I explained that in a previous debate in this House and I said that we would examine it and bring legislation because the Town Planner made the point and it was reported in the Press, that we had to go to each of the houses, examine the extension, determine their suitability and where they can be upgraded, ask them to be upgraded, where they could be passed, pass them, and that we will bring an omnibus Legislation in here to deal with all of the issues pertaining to that so that the houses could be transferred, but you are never in the House, you do not come here, that is your problem.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is that in almost three years, that is more than enough time for any examination that had to be carried out to be carried out, Sir, but the Honourable Member said that they are going to be looking at it, but I am saying, do not just look at it, bring the legislation because the fact is that Parliament can do anything at all on earth, except make a man a woman. There is no excuse now. The Honourable Member wants to have it all of the ways, so he wants to jump over here and jump back there and that is what he did in the debate when he spoke. He did not address the issue. He did not argue on behalf of his own people. Sir, I am not afraid to do it and I am again repeating, I am asking the Government to bring the legislation.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is really misleading the House. I not only argued on behalf of my constituents, I argued on behalf of his, but he was not here and I put the point repeatedly and I will continue to make it. I spoke about the frustrations of my constituents and his because he was not here so I spoke for him, so do not mislead the House and say that I did not argue for my constituents.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the record is there. The Honourable Member did not argue and stand on that point.

Sir, I want to go further having said again and I have said this all over the years that the Government needs to bring legislation to validate these extensions.

Sir, what is even worse with this Government, they have already declared the policy and are executing it, that they are not giving back anybody any money at all, who paid previously.

House A72C, Sequence 62 & 63, 19:00:13

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Having said that they are not giving them back any money. They are also saying that they are not the owners.

Do you know, Sir, that even those people who were living in the houses for 20 years, who got letters from the National Housing Corporation saying, in effect, that they would be owners, cannot now even do any extension to the houses? These people are in a state of total confusion and limbo because the Government will not act decisively in letting these people know what their rights are.

Sir, you have now a letter from the National Housing Corporation telling you that you are the owner of the house, that you do not have to pay any more rent but you are not getting any more repairs done to your house, you cannot carry the letter to...

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: On a point of order. Again, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Honourable Member has said that this Government, through the National Housing Corporation, delivered letters to people telling them that they own the house, and that could not be done. The letters, which were given to the people, indicated to them that they were qualified and eligible for the transfer programme and that they should procure legal services to enter into the necessary processes and engagement to get the houses transferred to them. What he has said is not true so he is misleading the House.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to ask the Government to clarify exactly what is the status of these tenants.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: What is the status of somebody who has received a letter telling them that they are qualified tenants yet they cannot carry the letter to the bank to get any loan on it, they cannot do anything at all. They stopped paying rents, they want to do some

extensions to the houses and are being told; sorry, the National Housing Corporation is not facilitating you to make any extensions at all to the house.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: This would have been regularised ever since under us.

Sir, I want the Government to stand up and not only assure these people but do something to take them from the twilight zone, which is what they are in now, and put their feet on the ground so that they know what their rights are. Sir, every single time now people are showing me these letters that they have received from the National Housing Corporation, and every time they attempt to do anything at all with the house, the same National Housing Corporation is intervening and saying, "No you cannot do it." They are not being granted permission.

Sir, if they do go ahead and try to build anything... One lady told me that a Town and Country Planning Department officer visited her and told her that she is going to have to knock it down. Sir, these people now are truly disadvantaged. It is too long now for the representative for St. Michael North West to come in here and say that the Town Planner has to visit each house. This is almost three years. That should have been done ever since.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: That is no excuse but I know how glib the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member on the radio the other day saying that the National Housing Corporation could not have awarded any contracts to people other than small contractors or something like that, that certainly contracts would have to be involved because it was a directive to them that they had to do it. That is the way the Honourable Member argues. The fact that he gives a directive means that it has to be done. I know how glib he is and it sounded as though he was actually addressing the point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say that the performance of the Government in the area of housing, contrary to all of the self-congratulatory tones that underline and underlie every single opportunity we have to discuss housing, is devoid of any reality. The fact is that out there in our constituencies, the number one issue still is the need for a house and the Government buries its head in the sand as if it does not see that. The waiting list is still, I have to say 20 000. What dent could have been made in the waiting list when you currently have, according to the Members on That Side, a waiting list of over 20 000 persons? This means that the Government needs to stop the talking and get down to some serious work.

I would certainly like the Minister to understand that a number of very serious issues have been raised in recent times. I rather believe that his stardom is nearing an end. I would want to hear the Minister respond today in respect to a number of questions already asked by Members on This Side.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

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

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is ten minutes after seven o'clock and I know that we do not want to be delayed here for the rest of the night. Indeed, up until the last speaker I believe that all that was needed to be said, was said. Albeit, the last speaker decided that he had to contribute and I daresay did not add anything to what was said previously.

Sir, there are a couple things that were said today that I have taken to heart and felt that I needed to make a contribution on, especially the one which was led by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was agreeing with him up until when I realised that he was not serious. Sir, I believe that Members of Parliament have a responsibility to be serious and to have a serious conduct of their affairs and that we are in fact, partly our worst enemies by, for example, suggesting that X politician is dishonest, et cetera.

Sir, I agree with him that we actually need to have a code of conduct that allows Parliament and politicians to be seen in the serious light that they should be seen in but then he went on to accuse the Honourable Member for St. Philip North of doing deals, which meant that he was not serious about his comments. I want to say though that I have taken it to heart and I do believe that we owe it to ourselves, and to this Parliament, to be serious in our presentations, and to lift not only the level of debate, but the level of our presentations and try not to mislead either deliberately or by accident.

In some cases, like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, I do not believe that he meant to mislead us. I just believe that he was generally confused. He did not understand the difference between what we are trying to do now in terms of acquiring \$40 million to be used for small contractors and the fact that what we did initially is to ask the large contractors on the projects to ensure that they utilise as many small contractors as possible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I daresay that the agreements that I have seen have, in fact, specifically said that they understand the mandate given by the National Housing Corporation, that is, to incorporate as many small

contractors as possible, so these are two different issues. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand his confusion but partly I would assume that it was jet lag so I would want to forgive him.

Sir, the one really serious point that I want to make - I believe that Both Sides obviously are at fault in this regard over the years - is that we need to ensure that before we proceed on any large projects that the correct contractual arrangements are in place. There is no doubt about that, so I find it very hypocritical for the Other Side to come in here today and spend 12 hours on a contract for \$10 million when, in fact, the Leader of the Opposition and her sidekick, like Batman and Robin, presided over a contract worth \$125 million for the Judicial Centre, which was not signed until 2009 and work went on from 2005 and 2006. That was \$125 million worth of work and we are spending the whole day on a contract worth \$10 million. I would elaborate on that.

House A72C Sequence 64 & 65 7.10 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I want to make and the issue we need to address is the fact that we need to agree that when it comes to public works, that we try to ensure that we have the correct contractual arrangements in place. There is no doubt, let us accept that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to the particular issue with which we are faced, there are, indeed, as the Minister was saying, two contracts. As the Minister said, there was one contract with respect to housing and one contract with respect to the infrastructure. Sir, if the author of this document did not understand what was signed by her, it is too bad and no wonder the decision was made to remove the author of this document from the position she held.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to encourage the Minister and my colleagues, let us not spend any time with respect to the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation. She has served as Chairman and nothing is to be gained by bringing her name into the mud. That is not how I operate, that is not how I expect us to operate. We decided that we were going to terminate her appointment on July 31, that is enough. There is no need for us to fall into the trap into which the Barbados Labour Party wants us to fall and spend time discrediting her name in public. We will not do that. We are past that. We have done what we had to and we have moved past that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in reality, what is this debate about? We are spending 12 hours on 63 low-income houses. We are criticising the Minister for wanting to bring

63 low-income houses: 20 2-bedroom houses at 644 square feet; 22 2-bedroom houses at 476 square feet; 23 2-bedroom houses at 758 square feet. Sir, that is what this debate is about. They are criticising the Minister for wanting to bring these houses to the poor people of Barbados. Sir, what we are trying to do is not only to bring housing solutions to the people of Barbados, but a large proportion of these houses will be rent-to-own, so that poor people can own these houses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me say from the day anyone signs a contract to acquire any of these houses at Constant, the value is going to appreciate because of the fact that it is a lovely area. I am sure the Honourable Member for St. George North would agree that if the cost of a house is \$150 000, by the time the contract is executed, it would be worth \$175 000. This is a lovely area and we are happy to bring them to the poor people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, like other Honourable colleagues, I want the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to know that he has and will continue to have our support. The Honourable Member is a good, able-bodied colleague. He is also a hard worker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, today has been a good day for the Honourable Member. What he has now realised, which the Honourable Acting Prime Minister has been saying to him, is that "every skin teeth ain't no laugh". Sir, certain individuals who would call him, speak to him and smile with him, he has now realised that they mean him no good, they mean him injury, they want to see the back of him. Sir, the best way for him to ensure that this continues is for him to continue to perform.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to encourage the Minister to continue on the road on which he is going. I want him to work harder and to reach higher heights because we want to ensure that when they speak about you, even if they say publicly that you are no good as a Minister, when we go behind closed doors, they would want to say, "Can you imagine how much work he has done?"

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the Honourable Member for St. George North said today, the project at Constant is not a new one. In 2001, the land was acquired by the Barbados Labour Party. In 2004, the National Housing Corporation applied for permission to divide the land into lots. Between 2004 and 2008, nothing was done. Sir, they should be ashamed. What they do every time we have a housing debate is to say they had that in the plan.

Sir, therefore for four years nothing was done. What the Minister now comes and does is to go to the Town Planning Department and say, "We want to proceed with haste". Sir, what is the problem? The problem is that we

have spent a whole day discussing whether or not a contract was in place, as opposed to acknowledging that we are going to provide 63 houses for poor, ordinary Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say to the Minister of Housing and Lands, if that is what he is being accused of, I say to you, continue your job, let them curse you for providing housing for ordinary Barbadians because that is your mandate, that is why you were given the Ministry of Housing and Lands. Let them continue to curse you. We will continue to support you because we know you are doing an admirable job.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank all Honourable Members on This Side for joining in this debate and for their support. I also want to say that speaker after speaker from the Other Side raised a number of matters. Sir, as the Honourable Acting Prime Minister said, after today I will know that, "every skin teeth ain't no laugh".

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to start basically from the point where the last speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West ended. The Honourable Member spoke to the issue of the units. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had a number of discussions at Cabinet Committee level and also at the Social Policy Committee level. We recognised that the National Housing Corporation has documented what has taken place throughout all the housing estates in relation to those extensions and we have met with the Town Planning Department. We are looking at a way, because of course there are some of those units that can be acceptable and others, since they have encroached on the common area, we cannot accept.

I believe that we have to initiate a programme where we have wardens going out and policing these areas. It also involves the Member of Parliament to these areas to speak to the constituents. I believe if the Honourable Member for St. Michael North-West speaks to his constituents in Eden Lodge, I believe he would be able to persuade them to be cooperative with both the National Housing Corporation and the Town Planning Department.

We are also looking at the pros and cons of that special piece of legislation, so that we can put those units into the hands of the ordinary Barbadians, so that they can become part of the property owning group of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other issue was the problem of vesting of these units. I had to come to Parliament and vest the Ivy Housing Area into the National Housing Corporation. Of course, persons in the Ivy and other estates, where the units are not vested, they have already paid deposits into the National Housing Corporation. The question, therefore, is that during the former Administration, these persons paid down deposits but they do not have legal title and so the conveyances cannot be passed over.

7.20 p.m.

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: We are now working on those vestings. We have met with the land surveyors over time and we are getting somewhere with the land surveyors in terms of the providing and fast-tracking the work so that we can get the boundary plans in and get those units transferred.

I want to assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael North that, basically, we are on top of the matter and we are hoping soon to have this matter rectified by way of cooperation between the tenants, the Town Planner and National Housing Corporation if we have to enact special legislation, and that is documented in the Cabinet Paper.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North, the former Minister of Housing spoke and, Sir, I would also state that at this very moment London Bourne Towers is not vested in the National Housing Corporation and, of course, we have to vest London Bourne Towers into the National Housing Corporation. Sir, also, we have to vest Deacons in the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North was critical of the area at Constant. He supported the Resolution but history would show as speaker after speaker from This Side indicated and it is documented in the Auditor General's Report in the Special Audit of the National Housing Corporation that even in relation to the development at Lower Burney that the developer built the houses and no formal contract was in place. In fact, there is no evidence that the entity was invited by the National Housing Corporation and, Sir, that is documented in the Special Audit for the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. George North should have looked at the Auditor General's Report and recognised that the Auditor General has said that the Barbados Labour Party entered into a relationship with a developer, without a contract at

Lower Burney and it goes throughout the Report of the Auditor General.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, further, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West questioned the \$10 million that we have in a special deposit to assist small contractors. I am saying to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West that, indeed, we have made a move and there is some progress. Indeed, the fact that we have mentioned it time and time again that we are negotiating this \$40 million loan.

We are waiting on the guarantee by Parliament to satisfy this loan, but we are able to draw-down \$10 million as interim to work at Lancaster 1, Lancaster 2 and Parish Land, and the packages will be going out this week for small contractors and medium-sized contractors to construct houses at Parish Land, Lancaster 1 and Lancaster 2.

Further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew raised an issue about the ex-Chairman. Indeed, I want to state to this House, Sir, that from my recollection in Christ Church, the 407th meeting of the National Housing Corporation, August 27, 2008, meeting was informed that the projects earmarked for Tweedside Road, St. Michael, Four Roads, St. Michael and Haggatts Hall, St. Michael could commence, so the Board was notified that Four Roads could commence. In fact, the Board queried the length of time it would take to construct these units and the Acting General Manager, at the time, reminded the Board that there was only one quality surveyor on staff and that it would be necessary to find out if there were any priority cases being worked on.

The Board advised that the houses and road works should be completed simultaneously, so the Board was not bypassed, respectfully, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to the Four Roads Project. Further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must also state to this Honourable House that the ex-Chairman signed the contract, that is the ex-Chairman, whom the Honourable Member for St. Andrew referred to in his speech, that the ex-Chairman signed the agreement at Coverley on March 31, 2010. I want to say that the ex-Chairman signed the contract at Coverley on March 31, 2010.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, further, and I want to say that on June 30, 2010, I think it was about 3.52 p.m., the Acting General Manager reported to the Board that the first tranche of the \$40 million was available for draw-down. She then indicated that all sites, house construction would start as soon as the carriage way was completed and that multiple small and medium-sized contractors would be used on all sites. She noted the packages to the Board and the members of the Board directed management to ensure that all preparations were in place before drawing any

monies and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ex-Chairman was present at that meeting.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am respectfully submitting that at a meeting of the Board on June 30, 2010, the Acting General Manager reported, after the infrastructure Committee agreed and Cabinet agreed, that the National Housing Corporation should go ahead and negotiate the \$40 million. Then the Ministry of Housing and Lands went back again to Cabinet and got the approval for a draw-down of \$10 million to utilise on these projects.

The General Manager reported to the Board that the \$10 million was accepted as a draw-down and that multiple small contractors were utilised at these projects in Parish Land, Lancaster 1 and Lancaster 2 in the presence of the Chairman.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am respectfully submitting that in agreement with all Members on This Side, we are on course in providing low-income housing. We have stipulated and we have actually conceptualised a starter home policy that went to the Social Policy Committee and we have agreed that we would build starter homes in these areas, Lancaster 1, Lancaster 2 and Parish Land so that persons in a particular income group can benefit from the National Housing Corporation programmes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, further, all of the houses have been allocated in Four Hill...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, especially the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, I have spoken to you on several occasions about shouting across these Chambers and that when an Honourable Member is speaking, he must be heard in silence.

H/A72C/19:30 Sequence 69

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am cautioning you for the last time to desist from your unruly behaviour. Honourable Member for St. Philip North, please continue.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say to the Honourable Members on the Other Side that the Board has allocated the houses at Greens, Four Hill and French Village. Persons who have been allocated are in the process of dealing with their lawyers and the National Housing Corporation's lawyers to make sure that the conveyances are passed and persons get their keys as soon as possible.

Sir, indeed, I want to say in terms of the units we have looked at in Tweedside Road... In fact, the yard is being paved. That is the final thing to be done. All the

interior and exterior work will be done as soon as possible, and hopefully, by the end of September we will be able to hand over the keys to those persons who knock on the doors of Honourable Members of the Other Side. Also at the Country Park Towers we will be handing over keys shortly.

Sir, further, we are also looking at an area in relation to Vauxhall, Christ Church. In fact, we have acquired land at Vauxhall and Exmouth, St. Michael, and we are looking to construct units in those areas for persons within the urban corridor. I know the Honourable Member for the City has already a number of requests for his constituents, along with other Honourable Members of this House. We hope to deal with those matters soon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that Honourable Members on This Side have already put the case for This Side. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke to the issue of the houses that were built in 2004 in relation to a joint venture between the National Housing Corporation and the Barbados National Bank.

Sir, one reason in relation to the failure at Westwood Development, Husbands, St. James, to build 26 houses, was the price ranged from \$397 000 to \$415 000. Of course, the National Housing Corporation did not benefit financially from that arrangement. In fact, it was a loss for the National Housing Corporation. Sir, at no time did the National Housing Corporation supervise the work because the contract did not provide for such supervision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at these issues, I recognise a statement was made about the cost of the houses at Coverley, but at Westwood Gardens there is no provision for furniture packages. In 2004, the National Housing Corporation was providing houses at a price of \$397 000 and \$415 000. In fact, the problem was, persons who were supposed to qualify from the National Housing Corporation list did not qualify.

It was stated in the Auditor General's Report and it was also stated - Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may refer to Pages 14 and 45 of the Barbados Audit Office of the National Housing Corporation, the bank financed the entire project for both the infrastructural development and construction.

When the houses were completed the bank and the Corporation found difficulty finding purchasers for the properties. Of the 24 applicants, which the Corporation submitted, only two qualified to purchase properties which were supposed to be offered for sale at \$250 000, but were being sold at an average of \$415 000 by the bank. The Auditor General said this prevented the majority of applicants from having any chance of qualifying. The bank reported that it suffered a loss on the project, and as a result

the Corporation did not receive any monies from the sale of the properties.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It was never a low income project. It was supposed to be a joint venture project between the Barbados National Bank and the National Housing Corporation. It was supposed to be supervised directly by the bank. The bank funded the project for middle and upper-income projects.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I see no point of order. The Honourable Member is reading from the Auditor General's Report which is already laid in the House.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North is confused and indeed I can pass the Auditor General's Report to him.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, I am saying that the houses were supposed to be at a price of \$250 000. Indeed the price went to some \$400 000. Certainly, thereby excluding a large impact. The Auditor General is saying indirectly that the National Housing Corporation was basically removed from its mandate. By this admission it is basically saying that the National Housing Corporation removed itself from its mandate and we are being criticised about incompetence and houses are being built for under \$400 000 in 2010, and you were building houses in 2004 for \$400 000.

Sir, regardless to whether it was a joint venture or not, the fact is, in this document the Auditor General is saying that the houses went for \$400 000. Indeed the National Housing Corporation suffered a loss on the project.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have outlined the fact that the Ex-Chairman has signed all of the contracts. The Board was constantly kept informed in relation to Four Roads and I am saying, respectfully, that we have put our case and will press on with our housing programme, despite what the Opposition says.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member has misled this Chamber by indicating that Constant is a low income project. He has

failed to tell this Chamber what the land is being sold to the people at Constant for. He has failed to tell them.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I got up before he sat down.

HA 72C 19.40 p.m. Sequence 70 & 71

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

House A72C, Sequence 72 & 73, 7.00 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, you know full well that you could not rise on any point of order because the mover of the Resolution has wound up the debate so that is an issue you have been asking. The Honourable Member has a right to answer or not answer.

The position is that when a mover of a Resolution sits, no other person should stand up to say anything on a point of order. You have been in this House of Assembly for a long while and you should be aware of the rules of debates so you should know better.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

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

ORDER NO. 5 – THE CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2010

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a pre-functionary matter really. In 2009, Parliament issued an order to accompany the Customs (Amendment) Act of 2010 for the list of prohibited and restricted imports and exports. It was subsequently discovered that, in fact, the restricted imports and prohibited exports were actually one and the same list. It was, therefore, advanced that this had to be corrected in terms of the Schedule because the error in that particular matter led to no coverage being provided for the importation of chlorofluorocarbons and hydrocarbon imports. Of course, the trade of CFCs substances was allowed in 2009 but, in fact, should be prohibited from January 1, 2010. These substances are what we call “ozone depleting substances”.

Sir, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel’s (CPC) office was asked to address the matter, and advised that in addition to making the correction, that the list of the substances, prohibited and restricted, should be replaced in the current citation of the Customs List and Prohibited Imports and Exports Order, 2009.

In addition that a new section, Section 3, should be added to Section 89 to make the process of obtaining a licence more explicit in relation to these restricted goods. Sir, we are asking now that such amendment be made to the Act and to the Order from 2009 to bring them closer together and to reflect what is, in fact, the true state of affairs.

With those few words, Sir, I therefore ask that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. C.P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. R.D. JONES, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. J. D. PAUL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee

Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. C.P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, 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. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Customs (Amendment) Act, 2010.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that brings us to the end of Government business for today and indeed for this Session of the House before we take our summer recess.

House A72C, Sequence 72 & 73, 19:50:10

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Speaking on the adjournment, allow me to take the opportunity to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions to the matters that have been brought before the House and to invite Honourable Members to get some rest over the period but, of course, to use the opportunity to go to their Constituencies and do that work which we are required as elected Members of the House to do in the service of the

persons who elected us and even those who did not elect us.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the Clerk and his staff for the contribution they have given so selflessly over the past few months. Of course, we are going on recess a little later than we normally do, but that is because we had some issues that we had to deal with and now that we have gotten those down to the House we can proceed on our recess.

I have been reminded as well that we should thank members of the security forces particularly the police and also the Government's security guards who kept us in safe quarters here in the Parliament and all those members who would have contributed to the smooth and effective running of this House of Assembly.

I therefore take this opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to move that this Honourable House be adjourned until October 19, 2010 at 10 o'clock in the morning.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, speaking on the Adjournment, I must confess that I am equally obliged to thank all of the persons who have serviced the Honourable Chamber, be it the Clerks at the Table, be it those responsible for meals, be it those responsible for our security and be it those responsible for the reporting of matters in this Honourable Chamber.

May I also say that we very often forget those who are responsible for the recording of what we say, particularly the Hansard Editors and Writers and those responsible for the amplification and recording.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am a little surprised that the House is not coming back until October 19, having broken for almost four weeks already. We really thought that was the summer recess, but be that as it may, in all seriousness on the Adjournment, I say this that this Honourable Chamber, in my view, may well have to prepare itself because the truth is that I do not know that the Barbados economy can wait another two months for an intervention to support the productive sectors of this country. The truth is that it seems...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Yes, you can. That is the one time that I can do a speech on the Adjournment.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems to me that to take a two-month recess at this stage

is to be insensitive to the state of the productive sectors, the state of households and the state of the economy or it is to admit that this Government finds itself incapable of any solution or any action to change their condition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will tell my members to be prepared because it is my judgment that we may well have to come back before then. If the Government feels that they are incapable of providing solutions at this stage, so be it to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish you all the best during the recess. I say to you that we are cognisant of the length of the Adjournment, but we are equally cognisant of the need for urgent intervention on the part of the Government and we will stand ready to participate whenever we are required.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me align myself to the comments made by the Honourable Leader of the House, the Representative for St. Michael North West. It is not usual that we on This Side would speak after the Leader of the House would have thanked all those who have been involved in the mission of this House, but suffice to say that there were comments made on this motion for Adjournment which really should not go untested.

The reality is that it has been a long journey over the period and we do not function really in truncated points of time. As Members of the Government, we continually work throughout the period and the reality is that there is no vacation for any one of us. This short break, albeit just about eight weeks, would allow us to plan the business of this country more effectively as we prepare to return to the House to bring more legislation to guide the affairs of the State and the citizens of Barbados.

This is surely not a retreat from the numerous tasks, which we would be doing as Honourable Members of the various Ministries and Members of the Government and therefore that intervention by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was really uncalled for. We will continue as a Government to do what is necessary to support all businesses in Barbados and all citizens of Barbados in our quest to ensure that this country continues to survive the most difficult economic recessionary challenges that the world has known.

We would encourage all Members, including the Minister of Tourism, to continue to work hard and zealously to maintain the upward trajectory in tourism that we have been noticing and all Honourable Members who are in the productive and money earning sectors to continue to do the same.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would hope that the Honourable Members of this House would rest assured that we would continue to ensure that Barbados survives and that the citizens of Barbados survive well.

I thank you, Sir.

The question that the House do now adjourn until October 19, 2010 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

House A72C Sequence 74 & 75 8.00 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. R. D. JONES.....	1
Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, 1.	

PAPERS

Hon. F. J. STUART.....	1
1. Duties, Taxes and Other Exemptions (University of the West Indies) (Order) 2010;	
2. Special Development Areas, (Furniture Ltd. Notice) 2010;	
3. Value-Added Tax (Order) 2010;	
4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemptions) (Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Order, 2010.	

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY.....	2
------------------------------	---

MOTION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER.....	2
Hon. R. D. Jones, 2.	

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER.....	3
Hon. R. D. Jones, 3.	

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVES ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANTS OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.....	3
Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, 3, 4, 5; Hon. C. P. Sinckler, 6.	

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. F. J. STUART.....	6
Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, 6.	

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF PARCELS OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT CONSTANT IN THE PARISH OF SAINT GEORGE IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.....	6
---	---

Hon. M. A. Lashley, 6, 7, 8; Dr. W. F. Duguid, 7, 12; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 7; Mr. D. D. Marshall, 9, 10, 11, 13; His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman, 11, 12, 13, 14; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 14, 15, 16.

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 4 (resumed)

Mr. G. A. Clarke, 17, 18, 19, 20; Dr. W. F. Duguid, 21, 22, 23; Hon. R. D. Jones, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27; Mr. G. W. Payne, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 43; Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, 32; Hon. S. A. Lashley, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44; Hon. C. P. Sinckler, 41, 42, 43, 44.

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 4 (resumed)

Hon. C. P. Sinckler, 45, 46, 47, 60; Mr. R. C. Eastmond, 47, 48, 49, 50; Hon. R. L. Sealy, 51, 52; Mr. J. D. Paul, 53, 54, 55; Hon. P. M. T. Todd, 55; Hon. F. J. Stuart, 56, 58; Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, 58, 59, 60, 61; Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, 61, 62; Hon. M. A. Lashley, 63, 64, 65, 66; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 65; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 65, 66.

ORDER NO. 5 – THE CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2010.....	66
---	----

Hon. C. P. Sinckler, 66; Hon. R. D. Jones, 66.

SUSPENSIONS.....	17, 44.
------------------	---------

ADJOURNMENT.....	66
------------------	----

Hon. C. P. Sinckler, 66; Hon. R. D. Jones, 67; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 67.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
DUGUID, Dr. W. F. (Christ Church West)
EASTMOND, Mr. R. C. (St. James North)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LASHLEY, Hon. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)

MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
PAYNE, Mr. G. W. (St. Andrew)
SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
TODD, Hon. P. M. T. (City of Bridgetown)
TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C. (St. Michael North)

DISCLAIMER. *This transcript was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools and is provided for reference only. It has not been reviewed, verified or approved by the Hansard Department of the Parliament of Barbados and does not constitute an official parliamentary record. It may contain errors or omissions, including inaccuracies in wording or speaker identification. For authoritative quotations or confirmation of proceedings, consult the official Hansard record when available.*

EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Masthead and date. The source heading reads ‘Tuesday, August 17, 2010’ but the convening sentence reads ‘Tuesday, August 10, 2010’. The heading date is used, as in the file name. Please confirm.

Q2. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q3. Opening. The convening sentence in the source begins mid-sentence: ‘met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, August 10, 2010.’ Printed as in the source (see also the date query above).

Q4. Order No. 4, the mover’s opening. Hon. M. A. Lashley says ‘the number of houses that we are seeking to build at Constant Phase 2 ... are 64’, and then ‘There are to be 65 single storey 2-bedroom general units’ (20 + 22 + 23). The sizes are given as square feet ‘of land’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Suspension of Sitting, about 1.00 p.m.. The motion is to suspend ‘until 1.30 p.m.’ but the procedural line records the suspension ‘until 1.45 p.m.’. At the later suspension the procedural line says ‘Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting’, although the Deputy Speaker was presiding. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 6, Committee of Supply. The procedural report of the Money Resolution (‘On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN, reported ...’) is set in the source as a speech by Hon. C. P. Sinckler, and the next line reads ‘seconded by seconded by’. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 4, Mr. D. D. Marshall, about 11.35 a.m.. One sentence reads ‘come to this Chamber and circa lacuke 11 35 14 the essential issue’, where a time reference appears to have been run into garbled text. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Order No. 4, speaker labels. Three speeches by the Member for St. Andrew are headed ‘Mr. G. A. PAYNE’ instead of ‘Mr. G. W. PAYNE’. Printed as in the source.

Q9. Order No. 4, Hon. S. A. Lashley. The Special Audit of the National Housing Corporation by the Auditor

General is described as ‘dated 2009-10 of 2013’. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 17th August, 2010 at 10.15 a.m., with the Deputy Speaker presiding; prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood. The Minutes of Friday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 10, 2010 were confirmed. The Acting Prime Minister, Hon. F. J. Stuart, laid four papers. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley gave notice of a Private Member’s Resolution to refer to the Public Accounts Committee the award of contracts and projects by the National Housing Corporation between December 1, 2008 and July 31, 2010, after the termination of Mrs. Marilyn Rice-Bowen as Chairman and her statement that the Minister had bypassed the Board and that no contract was in place for Constant. Leave of absence was granted to Mr. Hamilton F. Lashley following an accident in which his friend Mr. Sylvester Brown died.

In Committee of Supply, with Mr. J. D. Paul in the Chair, the new Attorney-General, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, moved \$3 057 276 under Head 30, including \$33 058 for an investigator for the Police Complaints Authority, just under \$1 million for the subscription to the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security and the insurance and maintenance of the Judicial Centre. The Resolution passed, and the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2010 was read a first time.

Order No. 4, the Resolution under the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 to vest in the National Housing Corporation parcels of Crown land at Constant, St. George for housing, was moved by the Minister of Housing and Lands, Hon. M. A. Lashley. He described a joint venture with CLICO in which the Corporation had made no financial input, houses aimed at buyers between \$100 000 and \$150 000, delays caused by the sewerage treatment plant, and a finance contract signed by the former Chairman; he also announced a first draw-down of \$10 million of a \$40 million loan for small contractors. Dr. W. F. Duguid and Miss Mottley raised points of order asking that the documents he quoted be laid, which the Deputy Speaker did not uphold.

Mr. D. D. Marshall pressed for an explanation of the absence of a contract and questioned the \$40 million loan; he was asked to withdraw words the Deputy Speaker found unparliamentary. His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman argued that delivery mattered more than a contract, and Hon. J. D. E. Boyce said the former Administration had left the

Corporation with a \$68 million debt. Mr. G. A. Clarke and Dr. Duguid questioned the sale of land to the developer at \$3 a square foot. Hon. R. D. Jones defended the Minister, and Mr. G. W. Payne read the former Chairman's press statement into the record. Hon. S. A. Lashley read from the Auditor General's special audit on the sale of land at Kent, Christ Church in January 2008.

Miss Mottley argued that the Minister's credibility rested on producing the contract, pointed to CLICO's financial position and to the project's delays and cost increases, and said he had delivered about 7 per cent of the Manifesto's 2 000 houses a year. Hon. C. P. Sinckler said houses at Westwood meant to cost \$200 000 had cost between \$397 000 and \$415 000, and laid a document

whose pages Miss Mottley and Mr. Payne said were incomplete; the Deputy Speaker ruled on the documents handed to him. Mr. R. C. Eastmond, Hon. R. L. Sealy, Mr. Paul, Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Mr. Stuart, Mr. R. St.C. Toppin and Mr. Brathwaite also spoke, and after Mr. Lashley's reply the Resolution was passed without division.

The Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2010, moved by Mr. Sinckler to correct the Schedule of restricted imports so as to cover ozone-depleting substances, passed all stages. On the adjournment Mr. Sinckler and Miss Mottley thanked the staff, Miss Mottley objecting to a two-month recess, and Mr. Jones replied. The House was adjourned until October 19, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.