
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 8, 2013.

PRESENT

The full list of Members present is to be inserted from the Votes and Proceedings. Members identified from the record of this Sitting:

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON (Speaker)
His Honour K. St.C. BEST (Deputy Speaker)
Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.
Mr. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P.
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P.
Mr. H. F. LASHLEY
Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN
Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN (Minister of Environment,
Water Resource Management and Drainage)
Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P.
Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P. (Minister of Education and
Human Resource Development)
Hon. M. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Housing and
Lands, Urban and Rural Development)
Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE (Minister of Transport and
Works) (Leader of the House)
Mr. J. D. PAUL (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE (Attorney General and
Minister of Home Affairs)
Hon. S. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Youth, Culture,
Sports and Family)
Hon. C. P. SINCKLER (Minister of Finance and
Economic Affairs)
Hon. D. O'N. INNISS
Hon. P. M. T. TODD
Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON
Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning, all Honourable
Members. This House is now in session. Members, there

are no minutes from our last meeting and therefore we take the usual motion for their postponement.

MINUTES

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: The minutes referred to are deferred.

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

PAPERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, sir. Commanded to lay on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Needham's Point Holdings Limited Annual Report 2010, the Needham's Point Holdings Limited Annual Report 2011, the Needham's Point Development Incorporated Annual Report 2010 and the Needham's Point Development Incorporated Annual Report 2011.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move the first reading of the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Bill, 2012.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Leader of the House.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. CLERK: Government Business is now the order of the day. Order Number Seven, sir, in the name of the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands, to move the second reading of the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Bill, 2012.

ORDER NO. 7 – NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION (TRANSFER OF TERRACE UNITS) BILL, 2012

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Minister of Housing and Lands.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, sir, it is indeed a pleasure that I rise to move the debate on this Bill this morning. I say that because of course we are shortly in a position, and also of course we are facilitating home ownership, particularly in the low-income sector of this country. And so I want to really applaud all of those persons, particularly those in the Attorney General's Chambers, those in the Ministry of Housing's alliance and those in the National Housing Corporation for their commitment and also their input to this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the Democratic Labour Party in its manifesto of 2008, and even as far back as 2000 and 2003, we committed ourselves to a policy of the divestment of units, those in the estates. In fact, the opposition Labour Party too, in I think 2004, they embarked on a programme of the sale of terrace units. But Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between the approaches. Let me say that the Barbados Labour Party, their approach is to sell the units according to what valuation they get. Our approach, basically, I must say, was a more humane approach. That is, persons who live in units for 20 years or more, and once they pay or they are up to date in their rent, then that unit will be transferred with minimum legal fees to be paid. And so that is the divide between the two political parties.

Mr. Speaker, sir, as I said, the main objective of the programme was to create and promote home ownership. And of course, we attached conditions to those. It was not just a blanket policy of this type. And we had to place serious conditions on those who benefited and who occupied units under the 20-year programme. Of course, with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, if you may, I will move to those conditions. We said that the unit should be conveyed to the person who is the tenant living in the unit or an assigned resident in or occupying the unit to be identified with the tenant. Of course, what we are saying is that once the tenant identifies that particular person as acting on their behalf, then of course, with the requisite

documentation, the National Housing Corporation will be in a position to accommodate that unit.

They also said, Mr. Speaker, that there should be a ten-year restriction on the sale of the unit during this period. Because of course what we are looking at is that you can convey to a particular person, but we do not want to encourage profiteering, speculating or whatever. So that is when we place that ten-year restriction. In fact, similar provisions exist in some pieces of legislation.

What we also said, Mr. Speaker, is that qualifying applicants who died after the implementation date of this policy - of course the estate will benefit in accordance with the Succession Act. We also said persons living in a unit for 20 years or more, but who are not official tenants, should benefit, but will have to bring evidence to support their claim. Of course, that is affidavit evidence, bills from utility companies. And once those documents satisfy and meet a certain standard, of course the National Housing Corporation will be in a position to convey.

Of course, it was also submitted that to benefit from this initiative, all rents must be fully paid up. We said that, and I want to report to this House that after we sent out the letters to those tenants who qualified under the 20-year programme, we were able to collect some \$2.4 million in arrears, because of course there is this desire by every Barbadian man or woman to own a piece of this rock. To own a piece of this rock. So we were very pleased by the response. And of course, we said, well, let us also treat to those persons who cannot pay in a lump sum, but of course can pay by instalments to pay off their arrears.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the response was so great that Cabinet, on February 17, 2011, agreed to an adjustment to the programme and agreed that the National Housing Corporation should expand its policy on qualification for ownership for those persons who meet the 20-year qualification and to allow for a rolling date. Of course, the Member for St. James South was very vocal on this, very vocal on it. And of course, not that he persuaded the Minister of Housing, but that we took into consideration. And when we looked at it, there were a number of other persons who would have just fallen short. And we believe that we could accommodate them in this expansion programme.

And we also said that persons who are desirous of purchasing their units before the qualifying date, they will be able to buy out the remaining period up to 20 years. Because of course there is again a desire amongst persons, tenants living in the estates, that they too want to have a conveyance. They too want to benefit from this programme. And so they are not willing to wait for the 20 years. They are not willing to wait for the 20 years. And we said, well, let us consider that approach. Let us

accommodate them. And we decided to accommodate them too.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, we have those phases. I also want to report to this Honourable Chamber, Mr. Speaker, that today, under both phases of the programme, 2 497 offers have been made and 2 349 persons have accepted. Have accepted.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the Corporation to date in relation to the conveyances - we have met numerous challenges, Mr. Speaker, under this programme, just like the other side in their divestment programme, they met challenges too. And of course, the main challenge, Mr. Speaker, the main challenge that faced the National Housing Corporation, is really tenants making additions to the unit without the permission of the Chief Town Planner, in contravention, Mr. Speaker, of section 40 of the Town and Country Planning Act. And of course, this hindered and stopped the Chief Town Planner from issuing certificates of compliance. The other challenge, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the illegal extensions, or the extensions, also prevented the land surveyors from carrying out their work in terms of picking up boundaries and whatnot, and carrying out their work to facilitate the programme.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to also say to this House, and to speak, Mr. Speaker, to the nation, of the extensions. I have this information: Lammings - 4 extensions; Baby - 31 extensions; Hazel - 67 extensions; Bonnetts - 39 extensions; Deacon's Farm - 132 extensions; Ivy Lodge - 81 extensions; Furniture Factory - 49 extensions; Golden Nippers - 20 extensions; Grazettes - 113 extensions; Silver Hill - 62 extensions; Millers - 27 extensions; Pinelands - 299 extensions; [Inaudible.] - 34 extensions; [Inaudible.] - 4 extensions; Wharton - 14 extensions; Mildly - 165 extensions; Church [Inaudible.] - 2 extensions; Biblical - 7 extensions; Gold Hill - 43 extensions; Roadmap - 6 extensions; [Inaudible.] - 19 extensions; totalling 1 218 extensions. The encroachments, Mr. Speaker - we have 52 encroachments. So those are the challenges, Mr. Speaker, that we are faced with. Those are the challenges.

Further, Mr. Speaker, as I may speak to the nature of the extensions - some tenants have sent officers out in the field. And again, I want to congratulate those officers who went out in the field and did a survey and compilation of all the extensions throughout the estates in this document. I want to compliment those officers. It was not easy work because of course, you know, in some estates, when the officers go to those estates, some of them are met with resistance. And it is not that those persons living in the estate are of a particular kind. It is that they want to protect what they have done, what they have invested in.

Mr. Speaker, sir, if you look at the nature of the extensions at Hazel, we have grocery, bar, front store, room

for washing machine, kitchen and dining room, store room, patio. To the front, we have bedroom and other additions - barbershop, bar, garage. They go through all of these, Mr. Speaker. And in fact, I must say that I went to Deacon's Farm, I think, as well as Ivy Lodge. And I recognised some extensions. And in fact, some of those extensions add to and enhance the existing units. I had to go and look carefully at the work that was done, the additional work that was done to some of the units. And what is another cause of these extensions is that these units were built to accommodate - some were two bedrooms. So over time, the family has expanded and they need more room. The family needs more room and they do not have it. Some of them are unemployed. Some are working in the low-income sector, some are working in a certain income sector such that they cannot afford to go on the private market and rent a room or rent a house. And so they use their own initiative to say, look, let us prepare ourselves for the future. Let us make our family comfortable. And I have gone and I have seen extensions of rooms. In fact, all the town planners who visit the estates, they will go and at some point they will recognise that in the backyard there is an inner shed. And when you really check it, it is actually a room and somebody has a room, a DVD player - you see all of these things in there.

So, Mr. Speaker, you look at the nature and also the fact, Mr. Speaker, that some of these tenants are unemployed, some laid off, and they use their initiative to put extensions on - to start what we call a small business or what we call a speakeasy. And what happens, Mr. Speaker? What happens, Mr. Speaker, is that these small businesses end up as a common area or recreation for most of the tenants. And they recreate, they congregate there, they build community spirit. And not only that, we have recognised that a number of these tenants have joined the ranks of the self-employed, Mr. Speaker.

So what then must we do? What is the solution? I remember the Member for St. Michael North, I think when he was in opposition, suggesting - and correct me on this - suggesting that we need special legislation. That we need special legislation. Special legislation. I must say that the opposition for 14 years moved particularly slowly on introducing any type of legislation to release and to put in the hands of all tenants, or to facilitate or to place a regime that will allow those tenants to have a conveyance in their hands.

So, Mr. Speaker, this legislation, along with the Tenancies Development Act that we passed, along with other pieces of social legislation that this Democratic Labour Party passed, I must say that this piece of legislation must also be part of that group, because I say that they create the ownership of those in the working class. The working class in Ivy Lodge, Mr. Speaker, the working class in Lammings, the working class in Ivy,

Black Rock, Six Roads, Church Village - they will be favoured by this fine piece of legislation. I have been bombarded, Mr. Speaker, day in, day out, as to when are we going to receive the conveyances. I said to them, yes, I said to them, the issue is the fact that there are 299 illegal extensions in Pinelands. And what we have to do is bring special legislation to Parliament so that we can convey those units that fall under the 20-year programme. That is what we said. And we decided to do it. And we are not doing it today, this very minute - we are doing it.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I would also like to outline to you the benefits of this programme. What this programme has done, Mr. Speaker - it has brought relief for hundreds of tenants. No, let me say hundreds - I think now it is thousands of tenants who have qualified under this programme. Because what has happened, Mr. Speaker, is that once they are qualified, those tenants are not required to pay any further rent. So what it means, Mr. Speaker, is that the rent that Ms. Brown paid, or Miss Innis, or Miss Lashley, or Ms. Carrington paid, or Miss Essex paid - she can now utilise that rent money, added to the disposable income of the family, and she can utilise that extra money for the benefit of her family.

Sir, we have done well under this regime. In 2008 we have done it. Now our best is - we still have our best things to be done. It is not easy work. I remember the Member for St. George North would attest to this, that it is hard work. It is dealing with agencies. It is having the patience and meeting with those regulatory bodies so that they can come to a conclusion and come to a regime to facilitate the transfer. That is what it is. And also it calls for patience. I am not saying, Member for St. George North, I do not say that, but of course he did not make a mark on it. He did not make a mark on it. He did not make a mark on it.

But Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to say that the other benefit is that the National Housing Corporation will finally be able to give effect to Government policy. And of course, I said before, Barbadians who own these units - who qualify under the 20-year programme - will be able to own their unit. The other positive about this programme, Mr. Speaker, is that it costs the National Housing Corporation millions of dollars to maintain these units. And I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the divestment of these units will impact and reduce the maintenance bill of these units by the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, sir, it will also provide a solution for those condominium sites that were built at Kensington Lodge upon site. And, Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to give notice to the opposition that of course, in committee, we will expand the definition of terrace units, which means any residence in a multi-unit, multi-storey or detached building in an existing National Housing Corporation

estate, which may or may not be included in a declaration under the Condominium Act, because we have 300 or more units that fall under the Condominium Act. So we have, of course, to expand that definition to capture those 300 units. Because if we do not do it, it means that of course the restriction on the Conveyancing Act and the procedure under the Conveyancing Act will make it extremely costly and burdensome to the tenants who live in Kensington Lodge and those advanced areas.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to say that this is any pre-emptive strike. Of course, what they are seeking to do, Mr. Speaker - maybe I will go through the Bill clause by clause. But of course, they are also suggesting in this - they also suggested that they include a clause similar to section 38 of the Tenancies Freehold Act, section 38, which states that notwithstanding anything therein contained, the Town and Country Planning Act has application to this Act only where it is so expressly stated by this Act. And we also want to, of course, delete section 3, subsection 3(1) of the Act, because two of them cannot stand together. And so we are going to delete that section and include a provision similar to section 30 of that Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, again, I want to speak to the legislation that is before us. As I speak on this Bill - the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Bill - section 3, subsection 1 of the Act, Mr. Speaker, as I went through it before, the policy is set up basically in the sections that the person must satisfy the following conditions: is in good financial standing; has resided in the unit for 20 years; or has discharged the obligations of a tenant for that period. And it was said that we will move to delete section 3, subsection 3(1)(3) of

the appearance of legal fees and expenses that are collected and transferred. Mr. Speaker, sir, the bill is a very simple bill. Very simple bill. And again, we are very pleased by the response to this programme, because under the divestment programme of the previous government, only less than 70 conveniences were conveyed, less than 70 units were conveyed. And the challenges that they face. A lot of the units, in fact, the National Housing Corporation had no title. Had no title at that stage. In fact, they transferred bonnets, they transferred church polish. But then we came in and we vested it in the National Housing Corporation, and we did a number of other vestments. A number of other vestments. And we have gone to the Ivy and we have given up conveyances. We've gone to Lammings, given up conveyances. We've gone to Civil Hill and Ball Hill and given up conveyances. Here is where we have given up conveyances. So it is not that we weren't effective, it is not that we weren't effective, but of course the regulatory bodies replace those restrictions and we cannot have thousands of tenants out there waiting - thousands of tenants out there waiting - to get their conveyances.

And I remember a tenant saying to me, Minister, I really like my conveyance because I need the conveyance to go and get a mortgage. I need a conveyance to go and get a mortgage to either extend or to provide some money to send my son or daughter overseas to study. So this is one of the benefits, or many benefits of the programme, that it helps advance families. It helps in terms of saying, look, and it is a proud thing for Barbados - to show a signed conveyance registered and say, look, I at least have something in my hand and I am a property owner in Barbados.

But what we are also suggesting with this programme - let us form what we call tenants associations. Let the tenants form a tenants association. Let the National Housing Corporation have a representative on the body, on the association, so that those grievances, so that those problems that they face can be then fed directly from the representative or the tenant directly back to the National Housing Corporation. And you have that relationship so that we will be able to deal not only quickly but frankly with these issues.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, the other issues too that they face - and I want to implore tenants, I want to say to the tenants out there living in estates that we have to be - I have to turn this very carefully - that yes, I know that they want to expand. Yes, I know that space might be cramped. But what also has been happening, Mr. Speaker, is that some of those tenants who live in the unit now are asking: can they have a unit at Valerie so they can graduate on and give that unit to another person? Which is a policy that we are looking at. Some of those from the other units, they move forward. They either buy a house under the housing programme and then go to a rental unit at Valerie, or the other units. And then of course we have persons who are subject to welfare, who cannot afford to pay a higher rent, but they can pay these rents that are existent and they can satisfy themselves.

And Mr. Speaker, sir, you know what is interesting? I have done my research and I look at the Singapore model. I recognise that they have done what we call an upgrading programme in the units - an upgrading programme - with the cooperation of the tenants. And they have expanded the units. They have built in businesses, they have built in green spaces and they have built in places that the community can meet, the tenants can meet, and recreation. And that is why I am saying that when we visited Sargeant's Court, I believe that estate can be one area for a pilot project in terms of upgrading the existing national housing estates. And remember, for the area - because we went into that area and we have done an infill of ten or so units - it has actually created some presence in the area, actually added to the beauty of the Sargeant's Court area. So, I mean, that is something that we are looking at, and we will go towards that.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to say to those tenants out there that something good is coming for you and it is indeed coming. Yes, it has taken us some time. We had some forces to sit down and meet. Remember, St. George North is saying he is distracting me. Mr. Speaker knows pretty well that his constituents would benefit from this, and I challenge him to get up when he is speaking to say, look, I support this programme because it assists his constituents and he is supporting it and because it allows his constituents to benefit and to become part of the property-owning class of this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, under the 20-year programme, I want to give an update. We have sent out letters - one at Bankapel, we have sent out 16 letters, 15 have been returned. At Beville, 44 letters were sent to those who qualified under the 20-year programme, and 41 have accepted. Bad Plan - three of those who qualified under the 20-year programme, three have accepted. The Opponent - Mr. Speaker, 47 letters have been sent and 46 have accepted. At Ellerton Lodge, 226 tenants qualify out of 351 tenants and the letters returned and accepted - 226. At [Inaudible.], 154 units, 89 qualify under the 20-year programme, and 85 have returned the letters and accepted.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that under Phase 1, 2 212 letters were sent and the letters returned and accepted was 2 176. That is the response, Mr. Speaker, to this programme. So we are benefiting, Mr. Speaker, a number of Barbadians this morning - thousands all across the estates. We are benefiting those persons. In Phase 2, 285 letters have been sent out and the number of letters returned and accepted was 173. Mr. Speaker, so I just want to give an update and an overview of the response to this policy.

And I want to say it does not stop here, Mr. Speaker, because we have gone into other estates and we recognise that there is available space existing. And we have developed what we call an infilling programme, Mr. Speaker - an infilling programme - as what we did at Sargeant's Court. We have just received some planning permission for an infill at [Inaudible.]. We have received a town planning permission for [Inaudible.] for another infilling programme. And so what we are doing is utilising the available space. Once we have received the town planning permission and we can move those persons - our families who have expanded, whose lists have gone outside the unit - that they too can remain in the same locale and keep the families together, Mr. Speaker, by creating those infills. Not to bring others from outside, but of course to give others the opportunity - those who have gotten jobs, who have gone to universities, who have gotten jobs at a particular income - that they can also benefit from the infill programme.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I am very delighted that I was given the opportunity to introduce this bill to Parliament

because it touches and concerns the working class people. It touches and concerns ordinary Barbadians who could not afford to go on the private market but had to depend on the state for housing and lived in those units for years and paid rent for years. In some instances, when we calculate the rent, they have purchased those units two times and three times over.

The Member for Christ Church West Central can recall that pensioner - can recall the pensioner who was asked by the National Housing Corporation, at some age between 65 and 70, to purchase a unit at Bonnets for over \$50 000 or so, right, by the National Housing Corporation. And she decided to give her savings - give her savings - so that she could get the unit. The National Housing Corporation wrote there and said that she needed to go and get a mortgage to get the remainder. And we came in and we said, no, let us help this old lady in the evening of her years. Of course, the lady who would have contributed indirectly or directly to the development of this country - we believe that we must adopt a humane approach to pensioners. And the fact, Mr. Speaker, is that that pensioner was fully up to date in rent. Fully up to date in rent. And so we have assisted that person. So that was just an example.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Philip West is saying that it is urgent. Is that his urgency? But I must say he did not go against it. He did not go against it because of course he had his eyes still to rent at that thing. But I do not know what his position is now, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what his position is now. I hope to be back in here, but I do not know what is the position of the other person who is replacing him, because I know that they are not alike. They are not alike. They are not alike. Remember, someone was saying to me that one is a man and one is a woman. I know that the Member for Christ Church South is a man. I do not know about the other person. I do not know. I never met the person. Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I want again to say to the tenants - I want to make a call to the tenants. Those tenants living in the Member for St. Michael North's area - my officer is mental in Lodge - and they actually said that there is an extension every two days, that they go today and they do not see any building, but when they go the next two or three days to report back, somebody has started. Somebody has started to construct - be it a business or some additional room. And I have seen small businesses really that have contributed. I could call the names, but I do not think - I will not call any names. But I am saying that what we are also promoting is home ownership and promoting self-employment and promoting business development.

And of course, it brings us to the other point that in additional estates that we are constructing, we will have to provide - similar to London's Barbican towers - a section,

or provide, make sure that there is enough land space that we can create an area for small businesses. And we have set aside a piece of property at Country Park Towers. We have earmarked what we are going to do there. We are going to make sure that we have some shops, a supermarket - even in developments like Parishland in St. Philip, where we have 122 houses. In Lancaster too, we have commercial spots. So we believe that we are not only building houses, promoting businesses, creating communities, solidifying families. That is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker.

And again, I cannot say more things, but I am delighted to bring this piece of special legislation to this Parliament and also to bring relief - to bring relief to thousands of tenants, thousands of tenants in Silver Hills, Gaul Hill, Sargeant's Court, all over those housing estates owned by the National Housing Corporation. It has had severe challenges. It has had severe challenges. And the Member for St. Michael South East can attest to this. So I am hoping that he will speak to this because there are hard challenges in [Inaudible.] and throughout the estate.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, again, I am delighted to bring this piece of legislation. The fact that we have 1 218 extensions - and this is just a conservative figure I have gone through, sir - the nature of the extensions, 218. That is a conservative figure, 218. And I have gone through certain nature of those extensions and the challenges. And that is why we decided, Mr. Speaker, to bring this piece of special legislation to this Parliament to bring relief to those tenants. And Mr. Speaker, sir, with those few words, I move that this bill be read the second time.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we on this side have no quarrel with this bill. We support the effort of divestment and we also support the effort of giving the Corporation tenants the right to own their property. Because, Mr. Speaker, one will recall that we started the divestment programme way back in 2003. In fact, we started the divestment programme then because we believe that, as the Minister said, those persons who have paid up their rents and were in units for all those years would have made a contribution. In fact, we have found cases where persons were living in units from as far back as the 1950s - those older estates that define Golden Acres and the like.

But I want to remind the House, because the Democratic Labour Party will be grandstanding over the next couple of days, that they started this programme. But the truth is - and we have to remind the Democratic Labour Party - that a famous writer, George James, said that the Democratic Labour Party really does not have a philosophy. The philosophy of the Democratic Labour

Party is to take back any policy that was brought by this side. And the truth is that in 1994 - in 1994 - when the Democratic Labour Party was under IMF dictates, it was their policy, Mr. Speaker, to increase the rents.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please allow the Member to make his contribution.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We know the Member for St. James South does not have much to say. He does not have much. But Mr. Speaker, in 1994 the Democratic Labour Party wanted to increase the rents of the national housing units and it was so stated in a Cabinet paper. When we came to office, Mr. Speaker, we not only did not increase the rent but we set up a task force to look at a divestment programme. And we set up a task force - which is documented in the Ministry of Housing, which is documented in the Cabinet papers, which is on public record - and we submitted this commission to look at a divestment programme. Because the Minister, I am sure, will have knowledge that it was since the 1960s - since the 1960s - that both political parties were speaking about the divestment programme. In fact, the policy, the Cabinet decision, is based on the policy at a time where you offer housing units at concessionary rates. Yes -

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George North is misleading the House because in 1994 I was on the National Housing Board and the Board never approved anything to do with any increase in rent. Furthermore than that, what the Board did was to create an atmosphere where they turned some land into commercial land so that the proceeds from the commercial land could be used to ensure that the rents would not have to increase and things like that. Because prior to that, sir, what we found was that the Barbados Labour Party was acquiring land through land acquisitions and then turning them over to private contractors to make the profit. That is an appointment -

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want it shown because I would not want a member - the Member for St. Lucy - to interrupt me, because it seems to me it is his policy to interrupt. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, we saw the cabinet paper. We know what happened.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I have to withdraw that reminder. I do not interrupt any person, sir. I follow the rules of the House, sir. And as you were, sir, there is a rule in the House that allows you to -

Mr. SPEAKER: Collect, Members. I am well aware of the rules and the rules allow you to interrupt, Honourable Member.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Please continue, Mr. Speaker. In 1994, the then Cabinet of Barbados sought to increase the rent at the National Housing Corporation. It is a documented fact. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, when the election was called and we won the election on this side, it was agreed by the Cabinet that the rent should not be increased. And furthermore, a commission was set up - a commission was set up, headed by a former Permanent Secretary - to look into the divestment programme of the National Housing Corporation. When the Democratic Labour Party won the Government in 2008, they found a programme of divestment. They found a programme of divestment, even though we agreed that the units were being sold at concessionary rates. I want to make this point, Mr. Speaker, because the Members on that side will grandstand that they gave the units free and we were selling the units. But the truth of the matter is that we were selling the units at concessionary rates. There were some units, Mr. Speaker, that were sold for as little as \$1 000, Mr. Speaker, so the records must be clear that we agreed on this side on a divestment programme. We agreed that in order to enfranchise the large majority of Barbadians, home ownership and land ownership had to be the order. We did. It was decided - it was decided after 1937 - when Barbadians walked in their numbers, that the only thing that could enfranchise Barbadians is through land ownership. And we agreed on that. It was the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act that helped to enfranchise a large majority of people all across Barbados. So we do not stand by. I give credit because, as Sir Grantley Adams said in 1950 or thereabouts, he said that democratic policy - and the only policy - is to build on what the party has done. Party policy, because -

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member said, sir, that Sir Grantley Adams had said it - I could appreciate it, sir - because that is when the Democratic Labour Party would have needed a party. But I cannot always answer that. A party that was not in government did not even have a seat for its leader at the time. How can one be writing about that party unless the person saw the first sight of that party?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Very well. I do not remember. Please, Mr. Speaker, he cannot stop the writing because history is history and literature is literature. He said in 1950 or thereabouts that your policy - your policy - is based on building upon what this side has done. And we have seen it over the years. We have seen it over the years.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is like the court, so we can check it for ourselves.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am not quoting from a book, but I quote it from memory. From memory. From memory. I have been around for a long time. But Mr. Speaker, in 2008, the Democratic Labour Party won the Government.

And out of the doors they came and said, we want to give these units free. Okay. We said at the time. We said at the time, the National Housing units -

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. K. St.C. BEST: Sir, it was placed in the manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party that when we formed the next Government - that was in 2007-2008 - that we would do for those persons who were living in units, that all those persons would have to do is to pay the minimum legal fees to have those units transferred to them. But the Honourable Member for St. George North would be aware of that, because he believes in the Mugabe principle of taking people's land and things.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, please, I want to continue. I have seen that in 2008, when the Democratic Labour Party finally formed the Government, they said that they wanted to give the units away. I mean, you are not criticising, because with a positive government you won the election and you say you want to give away the units. In fact, we believe that you should give all the land in national policy - give them there. Every policy. The Government could give you land - give them there. Because the Government is flush. The Government does not care if they interfere with the economic affairs of the National Housing Corporation or any corporation, if it is for political purposes. We know the Democratic Labour Party will do it regardless of the economy. If the economy goes on the rocks, it is not the fault of the Democratic Labour Party - it is the fault of what is happening in the world. So the Government agrees. And we said to them in 2008 that if you ever do policy to give away units, then you have to change the law. Because the National Housing Corporation Act states - and the Attorney General should have noted, the Cabinet then advised the Cabinet - that the National Housing Corporation Act states that the Corporation can only dispose of land or units by sale or lease. We told them four years ago that they had to change the law. And they proceeded - they proceeded in giving the units - fine, but they bring the law today. And we told them that four years ago. We agree that the units have served their time, many persons have lived in them and they deserve these units, and therefore we agree to that. But when we set up our commission, it was agreed that the tenants would not pay any legal fees, that the Corporation would bear the cost of survey services and the cost of legal fees. I am not sure if the tenants today are paying legal fees, because the Minister did not clearly state if the fees will be absorbed by the Corporation or if they will be absorbed by the private sector - the lawyers. But when we met with the Bar Association way back in 2003 or 2004, it was agreed that we would bring special legislation to ensure that the fees charged by attorneys would be just the minimum fees. The Minister did not explain to us what fees will be charged and whether the fees will be based on

valuation of the property or on giving the Corporation the titles free of cost. So the Minister needs to explain who is bearing the cost of the legal work, and if the work is being done only by the National Housing Corporation and if the tenants pay nothing and if it is only the Corporation's lawyers who are involved in the transfer. But it was agreed, Mr. Speaker, that a special conveyance would be provided - a special conveyance would be arranged similar to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. We told him that, and I am glad to see the Minister has arranged to look at section 38 of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. Section 38 of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act states that the Act does not apply only in certain cases, and that is important. I am glad it is going after consultation with his team - that the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act approach is what we agreed to. So all the things that have been done, Mr. Speaker, were outlined in a cabinet paper. A special paper had to be brought here in order for the sale of the units, and I am glad to see that they have done so. So we agree with the transfer to the tenants, but there are still a number of things which we have to do.

I believe we have to strengthen the National Housing Corporation management. I have said so before. I have been there. I have seen where the National Housing Corporation needs to improve on its technical and management capacity in order to transfer these units. The problems of encroachment did not happen overnight. The problem of encroachment was around for a long time simply because the National Housing Corporation was never in a position to properly police their land. The Crown is never in a position to properly police its land. There are many persons all across Barbados on Crown land, because under the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, you cannot really squat against the Crown. But many persons are building and squatting - you cannot squat legally on Crown land. You can squat on church land because the church is not the Crown. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to be able to properly police the land, and I have called - because this is not a political issue - I have called on many occasions for the Minister and the Government to look carefully at the management of the National Housing Corporation, to strengthen its capacity to look at land, and also the Ministry of Housing and Lands. It is very important that we do so while we are here.

I have also asked that we look at the Land Registry. The Land Registry is a registry that looks at all conveyances in Barbados. It needs the capacity to do so. Even in a modern economy, the transfer of titles is still important. It takes too long. In some jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, the transfer of titles takes sometimes two or three days. In our case, Mr. Speaker, the transfer of titles simply takes too long, and the involvement of two or three lawyers who have to be paid for by those persons who want to own the land - we need to look at that. We started on it in 2002 when we looked at the computerisation of the Land

Registry. Nothing has happened since we left office in 2008. But I am calling on the Government to look at the Land Registry and see what can be done to speed up the process of conveyancing. I understand that work is ongoing, but the whole process of registration of titles needs to be looked at, because when a property is registered, the transfer of title happens to be a faster process, and we need to look at that. And of course, I would salute the late Freddy Clarke, who was given a commission in my day to look at how to transfer the registration process. But since he has gone, very little has been done. And we need to look at that process because, as I said before, Mr. Speaker, it is not a political issue and we need to get around it. This process started some thirty years ago and we need to put an end to this notion of the political thing and look at the reality - how we can move Barbados into a new economy. I believe it will be left to this side after the next election to look at this process in its entirety. We have to look at it. We have to look at it.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that Barbadians all across this country are in need of housing. A good housing policy, Mr. Speaker, must be sustainable. A good housing policy must be affordable. A good housing policy, Mr. Speaker, must enable you to transfer your land and property from one generation to another. And I understand that there is some restriction in this Bill that you will not be able to transfer these properties within ten years. I think ten years is too long. And I am not being political here. I think that under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, the restriction is five years. Five years. I have to look at that carefully. I think it is five years. And the reason for this is that because you were able to get - and I understand the restrictions here - if you were given a title for your land and you had to pay no cost, then you should not be able to benefit from it within two or three years. But under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, you can pass it on to your children. Now, I am not sure what happens here, but we need to look at the transfer of property because property is - Mr. Speaker - yes, yes, I remember.

Mr. K. St.C. BEST: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Under this programme, the transfer of property - under this programme, the original tenant has sought permission to have their children's names added to the conveyance. Under this policy, sir, you have to wait ten years, sir, because the original owner asked - listen, please - to have the conveyance made out. And I say that because some of the children were living at the house from the time they were born. So you would find - understand. So the Honourable Member for St. George North needs to stick to the area he is familiar with, like taking away land from people without compensation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: There is a sense that the units would not be able to not be transferable under ten years. What the minister said, and I'm saying it's not clearly settled in the act, but I'm referring to what the minister said and I'm saying that good housing policy dictates. Good housing policy dictates for the member for St. Michael East. I'm not a lawyer. Not a lawyer, but I understand housing policy and good housing policy dictates that policy must be sustainable and it must be transferable housing policy, that you must be able to transfer your property to your children, be a gift and must be reasonable. That's all we are saying. And I'm saying that if the government thinks ten years is enough, so be it. Is there a policy? But we are saying then that there should be some consistency and it refers to the other piece of legislation that provides, according to Barbados laws, five years.

But Mr. Speaker may believe that there are many people across Barbados who are looking at land and I know that the government policy over the past four years was to build a number of units. We have no problem with this - a bill of units, especially in the urban corridor, is desirable. It is desirable. And the act as it now stands will encourage those persons who can buy the units before five years, before 20 years to do so. We support that once you pay your rent, because it's part of our programme. It's part of our programme and we encourage that. We encourage the sale of the units for those persons who want to buy them before the 15 years. We also support the idea of selling national condominium-style units like Lammings and Valerie in a cluster. We believe in that. We believe that a way must be found to sell those condominium-style units so that tenants do not feel disadvantaged. And this is very important for us at this time.

And I also want to say that we have to not only encourage those people at the lower end because we have seen over the past four years in particular that the middle income earners in Barbados have been totally left out. We need to look at what policy we will have to bring for the middle income, because a government policy, Mr. Speaker, must help the middle income - must help those persons who are in need of housing. We have seen governments, especially on this side, use the Income Tax Act in order to provide some relief for those persons in the middle income. And I speak about policies where persons get some form of rebate on income tax if they had to repair their homes, if they had to pay mortgages. And we encourage this. We want to see the government and future governments of Barbados use the initiatives in terms of using the Income Tax Act and other acts within Barbados laws to help the middle income and help persons who want to build - and contractors who want to build a cluster of low income or middle income earner houses.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government needs to go further. The provision of land is still important. The

member for St. Michael East keeps saying that I am talking about acquiring land. I believe the government has to acquire large tracts of land and pay for them, because there are people, Mr. Speaker, who gave up their properties over the past couple of years and so far they have not been compensated. We want to see a package of compensation too. But the transfer of parcels, Mr. Speaker, must be further - must be faster. When you look at a number of housing initiatives, because the government came in with the HELP programme. The HELP programme. I want to speak about the HELP programme. The HELP programme is a Democratic Party concept. In the concept of lower income housing, it is not necessarily, Mr. Speaker, the first - and I said I referred to picking back on a programme of starter houses, Mr. Speaker. We had a self-aid programme for housing, and I'm sure the minister is aware of this. The HELP programme is an acronym for Housing Every Last Person. But what the people in Barbados are saying - not I, I am not saying so - the people in Barbados are saying that this HELP programme is really helping everyone of [Inaudible.] people.

I cannot believe that somebody was saying to me - I agree that the minister has to help his people, because I have helped, as a member and as Minister of Housing, I have helped the people of St. George, and I believe the minister must help people in St. Philip. I believe in consistency. But when a man could come and tell me that the HELP programme is only helping everyone of a certain group of people, I don't know. I ask who is really being helped. I agree that he must help his people, but there are other people that need to be helped and I don't understand what is happening.

They tell me Lancaster is still Lancaster. Phase two has not been completed. There are people that are waiting for it - people in St. James. And I want to know if you are going to put a unit in this. The people in Constant want to know if you have a unit in this scheme and where will you put it. The people in [Inaudible.] are telling me that only 30 per cent of units have been transferred and what is happening at Quarterly. So we need to look at how do we get these units transferred. I know it would be bothering the minister that only 30 houses at Quarterly have been transferred. We need to look at it. But I don't know - I'm just telling what has been reported to me. 30 per cent or 30 houses, I'm not sure, but it has been reported to me. I know that there are lots of houses being built, but in terms of the transfer process, it seems to be a bit slow and I am being told, Mr. Speaker - I have not visited Lancaster, but my research has shown that completion is less than 30 per cent. 30 per cent. I'm not sure - the minister can correct that. Lancaster phase two - houses have been built, no transfer. Constant - no transfer. Valerie high rise - no transfer. To date, UDC has not built many houses. NHC has built very little. And the problems go on and on.

And the Minister of Rural Development and Urban Development - not the Minister of Housing this time - must tell the House what help he has provided for the hundreds of poor old ladies and old gentlemen across Barbados in their plight for housing. I am saying that the government housing programme has not been as stellar as they want us to believe. Going on television night after night - that does not satisfy the answer. There are still a number of persons in your constituency, Mr. Speaker - I know your constituency, I go there quite often - the number of people in your constituency waiting for a unit. There are hundreds of people in your constituency waiting for land. The water comes to St. George. Complete the housing, complete Constant, and give Mr. Speaker some of those houses up there. Complete Lancaster and share all across Barbados. Kingsland. If you cannot sell Kingsland, Mr. Speaker, give them away.

I am saying that the government must take the houses at Kingsland and if they cannot be sold because of a policy that does not suit Barbados - because many Barbadians do not necessarily want to live at Kingsland because of the conditionality that has been attached to them. I understand that at Kingsland in terms of the conveyancing there are a lot of standards and conditions that Barbadians do not like - many Barbadians do not like. And the minister knows it - many Barbadians do not like. Even though the concept of zero-lot-line is something for urban Barbadians, the restrictions are too much. And that is one of the reasons why the transfer of title has been very slow. And it is unfair to have those houses built and left out there.

Even the government says they are in a giveaway mode. Said the government is in a giveaway mode - done before election. Giveaway, they said. The houses are probably too serious. You have the money, the government is flush. All Barbadians have to pay for them because you are going to increase taxes. The Minister of Finance already knows what he plans to do. The Minister of Finance knows how to look and amend the Income Tax Act. I am sure that it is going to give with one hand just before election and take with the next hand after election. But God is good. God is good. God is good. God is good. And the time is approaching when the public must make a decision - and if to give all these houses at Kingsland to all Barbadians and keep each other, build them and keep each other, is this what it is all about? We are saying that you have to give people the opportunity. In our time we were able to give out lots and Barbados bought over 2 000 house lots in less than five years. All across Barbados we were able, Mr. Speaker, not only to provide lots but also to provide the opportunity in terms of financing. We need to see that being done.

And I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, more has to be done in terms of providing opportunity for the middle income.

There are still a number of persons working as policemen, nurses, teachers, civil servants all across Barbados who are in need of housing as well. And we need to be able to transfer those housing units not only to a certain sector but also to all Barbadians who are in need of these houses.

In closing, finally, I believe that the vesting process must continue. We have seen an attempt to vest the properties in the National Housing Corporation. Vesting is a process in which the National Corporation receives land or property from the Crown. We need to see more of that because as I understand it, there are still a number of parcels of land, a number of units still being owned by the Crown that have not been transferred to National Housing in order for National Housing to be able to receive some form of revenue. National Housing only receives revenue, Mr. Speaker, from the sale of its units and from rents. And of course we have seen today that the rents being collected by National Housing Corporation have dwindled over the last four or five years. But we want to see a situation where they can really use the land to be self-sufficient. Right now it is a fact that the Crown has been carrying National Housing's finances. National Housing's finances have been borne almost entirely by the state. We want to see a situation where National Housing can be in a position to receive income, receive revenue through the sale of land to the middle income and to other persons across Barbados. And the government must put National Housing in that position.

There was a time when the National Housing Corporation was able to be self-sufficient. When the minister came to office, we had paid off most of the debt of National Housing. Today, National Housing is now a drain on the public purse and I do not think it is sustainable, because a housing corporation that is really asset-rich - National Housing is asset-rich but it is of course very cash poor. We need to put that corporation in a position where it can earn some form of revenue. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we believe that an entity like National Housing must be there to help the poor. We have not seen anything being done with the loan portfolio of National Housing - how it can help the poor as well. But I believe more can be done and I would like to see more being done over the next couple of years to put the corporation into a more sustainable position so they can deliver the service not only in terms of providing lots and units, but also loans to help those persons who are in need of some form of repair.

I have said so over and over again because at the end of the day we need to make sure that Barbados stands above its competitors. We must go forward as a country. We must not take everything political and I believe that the corporation must be there to help persons in need. There are still too many people who go to National Housing day after day and cannot get service, cannot get loans, cannot get housing. And we need to put this to an end. I

understand there is nothing new, but we need to go further. I'm saying that at this juncture we need to look above the politics. When a politician from St. Philip or St. Lucy travels down to National Housing every Tuesday and Thursday in need of a solution and has to walk back and go back to that home with no solution, they feel very uncomfortable. We have to put that to an end. And I have seen a situation where a person with a single lot - again, we have to address this concept of the single lot, where persons living on a single lot sometimes are thrown out because the landlord wants the land and the court says you have to find a lot and a person cannot find a lot and therefore the rental of

lots are important. And that is why I say that the National Housing Corporation was established primarily to provide solutions to the poor. I have a case in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you - a single lot person. And the person applied to that body four years ago. I sent it down. The Minister was very accommodating, I must say. But the Minister was very accommodating. And in fact the Minister said to me, allow the person to go and put the house there. He would get it solved. But the Corporation management has not got back to me. The Corporation management has not got back to the lady and the lady now found herself without a home. And these things are wrong. We cannot have a situation where people, Mr. Speaker, end up - homes end up on a dump because the court said you have to move by a particular day. And the National Housing Corporation apparently holds their hand. I don't have any solution at all. We need to provide more laws. But if a person has a house and the house is being torn down, we have to be able to help that person. It has nothing to do with politics, has nothing to do with where a person is from. So I am saying that is why I call on the strengthening of the capacity of the National Housing Corporation to deliver some service. We need more lots and I am willing, if the Minister so desires, to bring more acquisition papers here to acquire large land. And the Member for St. Michael East was saying that is unfair. He does not believe in acquiring large land, but we need to acquire more and of course compensate landowners, but we have to do so in order to provide lots for people, for a large number of persons who are in need of them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have spoken today of the sustainability of housing. I have spoken about the need to transfer title, I have spoken about the need to acquire land. I have proven the need that we support this Bill because we believe it is important, but at the same time we need to see a greater capacity in the National Housing Corporation to deliver the service. And therefore I stand on what we have said today, that we need to provide more opportunities for that section of Barbados in order to own their homes or to find accommodation. In fact, it is this side that believes that housing is a right, that the right for housing is important, the right for housing. And that was our policy - we have it

back in the social policy and we continue with that policy to provide housing for the large landmass. And we do support this, but we look forward for greater opportunity in the near future.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, sir. I wanted to enter this debate at this stage because I have to attend to some matters and I did not want to lose the opportunity as the Member of Parliament who has the privilege to represent the widest cross-section of NHC tenants to be gathered in any single geographic space, that being the constituency of St. Michael North West. Of course, we have four NHC estates there - Golden Acre, Rosemont, Ferniehurst and of course Deacons Farm. And therefore, it gives me no end of pleasure as a proud parliamentary representative of substantial numbers of Barbadians - working class Barbadians who have contributed so outstandingly to the development of this country - to be able to say on their behalf to this Democratic Labour Party Government and its Minister of Housing and Lands and the entire staff of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the National Housing Corporation, a very special thank you for bringing this matter closer to a realisation where, in fact, as you heard from the Minister, we are one step closer, very much closer to creating a new property-owning class in Barbados of these persons who have toiled in the vineyard so extensively and so wonderfully to develop Barbados.

I make this point, sir, and you must forgive me if I speak a little haltingly because I think this is perhaps, together with certain other pieces of social legislation - as we know over the years as a Parliament we have done some outstanding pieces of legislation that have touched many people in this country in a substantial way - whether it is in social areas such as women's rights, land ownership in the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act and the upgrades that have been done to that over time, the creation of the National Insurance Scheme to buttress the condition of workers in very difficult times in the 1960s. And moving forward you can point to a plethora of pieces of legislation that have been brought to this Chamber and enacted on behalf of those persons in our community whom we are drawn upon and called on through the process of elections to come into this Honourable Chamber to represent. And I think that we do not often get a lot of praise as politicians for things we do. In fact we get more criticism than praise. But I think today is a blessed and good day in the name of the Lord and his son Jesus Christ that we are alive today to see this significant piece of legislation brought to this House of Assembly.

And I am saying that, sir, and I say that in all seriousness because the frivolity and sometimes bordering

on lack of seriousness of the contribution of the last Member can be excused. Because when you are faced with substantial matters of policy intervention that transform and transmogrify lifestyles in this country it is expected that the Honourable Member for St. George South - incapable intellectually of wrapping his brain around serious matters of this nature - would try to find the easiest excuse and escape to deliver of himself some brand of comedy and jocularly in relation to his contribution. And I do not want, Mr. Speaker, sir - that is one of the reasons why I intervened - because I do not want this moment to escape.

I say this, sir, as the proud product of a working class family. A mother who had to struggle without the support of a father. My father expired when I was about five years old and my mother had to raise five children and grandchildren - added two - on her own, on a very simple job, and therefore I understand what it is to come from humble beginnings. Even though, Mr. Speaker, sir, the leader of that party believes it is some type of apparent crime to come from next to nothing, as he said it. Well, since he apparently came from next to something, I want to make the point that having grown up in a community where I saw certainly to the extent of the Ferniehurst housing unit and Rosemont, where you see these units having been constructed by the staff of the National Housing Corporation - masons and carpenters, plumbers and electricians who went to work every day to put down these units, to be able to give an opportunity to the poor working class people in this country to have an opportunity to call a place home - by acquiring a house, you can only be nothing else than elated to be part and parcel of an administration that has demonstrated throughout the course of its history a substantial degree of empathy, support, promotion and enhancement of those working class people in our country. And we continue to do this with this legislation today.

But the seriousness of it goes even further, Mr. Speaker, sir, because we would recall - and we hear it trumpeted here as we hear it outside on call-in programmes and by other media, by the acolytes of the Barbados Labour Party who speak on these matters from time to time, perhaps more than we would like to hear them - they trumpet every day how great it was under them, how much milk and honey was flowing, how much money was in the community. People had money to spend. They had \$2.7 billion in foreign reserves. They brought all this investment to Barbados. All of that, Mr. Speaker, sir, was available to them, but they could not find - not under any Minister of Housing in the last administration, including the last Member who sat, who got up in his house and admitted that he used the Ministry to fortify his own aims.

Mr. Speaker, sir, you see, you were speaking so you were watching. One Member, Mr. Speaker, sir, is watching so far away he does not remember what he said.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I remember.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I never once said that I used the Ministry of Housing to qualify anything. I never said so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I am not going to be sidetracked by any of that. I know he said it, but I am not going to be sidetracked by that. But the real point, Mr. Speaker, sir, is that in the face of all of the goodies they claim to have had, I am saying today, Mr. Speaker, saying to this House of Assembly, without fear of contradiction, that the Barbados Labour Party, in the 14 years that they were in office, created a veritable housing crisis in this country among working class people by not attending - not attending, Mr. Speaker, sir - to the basic housing needs of the average person in this country. And if I were not in this House of Assembly to hear it with my own two ears, if somebody had come to me and told me that the Honourable Member for St. George North was in here shedding crocodile tears for people who have to go around the NHC and cannot get service by way of a housing unit or a housing solution, I would say it cannot be true. But I sat here and listened to the Honourable Member. Could you imagine, Mr. Speaker, that it is that party when in government that left a list of close to 23 000 persons hunting all over Barbados - nomads, no place to lay their head that night, no house to call their own, no home to gather a family. And we are to be lectured in here today by the other side in a very jocular and comical way, Mr. Speaker, sir, about a housing inevitable crisis.

I grew up in a country, Mr. Speaker, sir, where, as I said, I was raised by a very poor family, a female-headed household. And my mother felt more confident in the 1960s and 70s that she would get a house, that she could own a house in Barbados, than any other person that you could find of similar means throughout the course of the Labour Party's administration for 14 years. Have we forgotten, sir, that the advent of the rank-a-room policy in Barbados emerged under the last administration and found itself deep in the roots of the social culture of this country?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. Honourable Member, point of order.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: During the last 40 years of BLP rule, there were so many units being sold across Barbados - privately as well as government units. Solutions, housing solutions were given. There was high employment in this country so people wanted to find housing. At any point during the 40 years of BLP rule there was a lot of economic activity in the country.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right, no point of order. Please continue.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I would agree with the honourable member on one point - there were a lot of units being sold. Villas, condominiums and all different luxury units were being sold all down the west and south coast of this country, but none available to the average person which you represent in Barbados. That is the real point. Half of Barbados was being sold, sold off by the last administration when land use policy in this country was being changed. You all believe that people have forgotten your deeds. You don't want me to speak about the Malanu. Well, Duncan, St. James, and how land was changed in Barbados from zone one to zone two to accommodate certain people. The time is coming for that because I am going to have to speak on that just like I have to speak about concessions. The time is coming. This is not the debate.

The debate is really about the fact. They don't want to face it. They don't want to face it. They don't want to face the reality, Mr. Speaker, sir. They don't want to face the reality that they created a very severe housing crisis in this country in which there are people who have to rent rooms because they did not build any houses. Mr. Speaker, sir, that is the reality. Can you imagine that the honourable member is trying to convince this House, Mr. Speaker, sir, that the degrading - the creation of an underclass in relation to housing in this country by forcing people who could not get a proper unit from the Government to rent, or could not find affordable housing because of their land use policies - is acceptable? You are telling me rents went up? The average house rental in Barbados used to be three, four, \$500 - that escalated almost 100 per cent. You could hardly find a half-decent house in Barbados to rent for under eight or \$900 under the last administration.

And what happened, Mr. Speaker, sir - let us go into the record. What happened is that people who had houses in which there were tenants who were paying well decided: I am going to give the tenant notice, move them out, and cut the house up into rooms and rent the rooms. I had people sharing accommodation with 20 people in a kitchen and 14 people using a bathroom. That is what they presided over in this country. But Mr. Speaker, sir, that is what they call a housing policy. And I want you, Mr. Speaker, sir, to understand the social degradation, the undermining of the social fabric of this country, spearheaded by a non-policy of the Barbados Labour Party Government when in office on housing.

When it comes to housing, I have said in this House of Assembly before and I will say again - you should come here, come to the altar, the bar of Parliament, beg forgiveness for your sins, beg forgiveness for your sins of omission and commission, and quietly support the

Government's programme. But do you know, Mr. Speaker, sir, at every possible turn this Government has been harassed on its housing programme. I heard the honourable member say so incredulously that they supported this programme all along. When we brought this first to the House, having been announced in the Throne Speech, the honourable members from the other side said - give me the units. In fact, if you listen to our member's speech you would have heard that at the end of his speech he started going back: give me a name, give me a corporately, give me the next. They are fundamentally and philosophically opposed to people who have been living in these units for 20 years getting them, as it were, free of cost. This is the fundamental point that needs to be made in this debate.

You have never supported it. In fact, so strong and villainous is the Barbados Labour Party's policy on this matter that we had a former leader who, when he was here, promulgated that the people should get the units free. And then he became a beast of any conference. What happened was he was swayed by the Barbados Labour Party's philosophical position, changed his position, and said that they should pay for them. That is how strong your policy was. And they make it seem as though we are going to break the treasury, that we are giving people something they are not entitled to. And then I incredulously heard the honourable member stating that it is the Labour Party's policy - that they always supported it. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, sir?

And I will tell you exactly, Mr. Speaker, sir - he can shout across because he wants to stop this train from rolling. Could you imagine, Mr. Speaker, sir, I am going to show you exactly how the Labour Party functions. They knew full well. Because they parade the amount of lawyers they have - they have more lawyers than they have senior lawyers of all varieties. They have attorneys at law and attorneys at large. They have everything at their disposal. Now they must have known. They must have known, Mr. Speaker, sir, that you cannot possibly, in the state in which those housing units were sold to people - they must have known, from the distinguished QC Sir Richard Cheltenham on the file of the NHC advising them, that the laws which applied to what we are doing now had to be adjusted in order for this to be successful.

Could you imagine that the Barbados Labour Party allowed and instructed the National Housing Corporation to collect payments from people knowing full well that they could not legally transfer those units? That, Mr. Speaker, sir, can be considered nothing short of criminal. I am saying that in terms of policy, because you are taking money from people to do something that you know - through administrative practices - that you cannot deliver. It is like me going to a man and he says, I am going to sell you my car, which he knows is not his or has some other type of encumbrance. Could you imagine they took money

from people in Rosemont and Deacons Farm for units knowing full well that the land had not been vested in the NHC and the NHC could not possibly convey a unit to a person? Because the legal maxim - *nemo dat quod non habet* - a man cannot give what he does not have. But they did it nonetheless.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, sir, it could only be described as ridiculous to have done it. They knew that there were illegal extensions and that the Town Planner would not give letters of compliance, certificates of compliance, because he simply could not do it under the law. How could you take somebody's money from them? Spend it? Because by the time we came into office it was all gone. And then to have people holding on, holding on to a hope that they will get a unit. This is what we have had to face in Barbados. And I am saying that at the level of simple civics in this country, the Barbados Labour Party has failed and failed miserably on this. And knowing that they were wrong, they came to this Parliament consistently over the last five years and opposed this policy every single day because they don't want the people in Idol Lodge to get the units. They don't want the people in Deacons Farm to get them, nor Rosemont, nor Church Village, nor the Pine, because they don't see things that way. That is not their view of poor people.

They believe that poor people are the hewers of wood and drawers of water. That is what they should do, and that they should always come in subservient genuflection to the people in the Labour Party. So everybody else can get what they want - people can get this and that and the next and the third. But it is a culture. It is an attitude that you have, Mr. Speaker, sir. And the comments made recently outside of here by a member of this chamber - even though you would not believe it because that member is not here too often - clearly demonstrate the mental attitude of the Barbados Labour Party to poor people in this country. Let those who have ears listen and hear what is going on, because whenever they see an average poor person making it, it has to be some underhanded, crooked thing that they did to make it. I have not responded to any of it and I don't intend to respond to it because I don't respond to rubbish, Mr. Speaker, sir.

But I will say this. Anybody who wants to test my integrity and who wants to talk assets can do so. They are free to do it. Join me at the top of the street in Heroes Square. Bring your assets and come with two independent lawyers and two independent accountants. And while you are at it, bring the divorce settlement and bring the St. Peter Development Fund. And we will have a conversation about it. Enough time on that matter. We know who comes from that gate. And that is what I want to know. So I say it today, Mr. Speaker, sir. I say it today, Mr. Speaker, sir.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, sir, that I cannot but congratulate the Government on this outstanding piece of social legislation that I feel - that I know - will transform many lives. Do you know that in my constituency alone 377 persons have already been excused from paying an acquisition right, and because of this legislation are going to be able to say finally they own a piece of the rock and do all those wonderful things that the Minister of Housing spoke about - go and get loans and contribute to the development of their own families. Are you aware, Mr. Speaker, sir, that through this Act of Parliament, as we are doing it here, this triumph of plain reason, we are going to raise up in this country a new class of persons - over 2 000 of them - that will contribute again to the development of this society? I cannot imagine why anybody would want to oppose it.

But now, of course, as election is drawing nigh, we will hear how they always supported it. It was a Labour Party policy. We left it there for you to do. We are going to hear from them. And then they will obfuscate all of that by saying the NHC ain't got no money. And whenever we left, the NHC had money. When the Labour Party left Government, the first thing we had to do was come in here and get a loan for the National Housing Corporation to pay off debt. In fact, the National Insurance Scheme had confiscated land belonging to the NHC in lieu of payment.

And let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, sir, because he made the point about Valerie. 600-odd houses have been built at Valerie. 300-odd of those have already been sold. But do you know, one of the problems we had at Coverley and at Valerie - not us, the developers - was that there was a policy put in place under the last administration by the NIS. Because it was so heavily invested under the last Government, the NIS required that any property that they had to convey, they had to get permission from the NIS first before it could be done. They had to get a release.

And the honourable member gets up here and says that we left the thing in a mess. But I understand the problem. I understand why he cannot handle it. Valerie Phases One and Two, Hall, Marchfield, Four Hill, Country Park - colours that they left in ruins that we had to finish. And Mr. Speaker, sir, one of the most disgraceful of all - Buckley Meadows. You all remember Buckley Meadows. St. George is familiar with Buckley Meadows. The last honourable member who represented that constituency said it was treated like an outside child. But the honourable member represents St. George North. So we understand where that problem lay at Buckley Meadows.

So this is why there is this agitation, this switching around. Look at the faces of the honourable members - not the honourable member who just gave me honour. Members are not delighting in this. Look at them, Mr. Speaker, sir. All crestfallen. All crestfallen. Because once

again, Mr. Speaker, sir, the great Democratic Labour Party has delivered for the ordinary folk of this country. The Succession Act, National Insurance - you name it. Down through the years we have delivered and will continue to deliver for those folks in this country who cannot fight entirely on their own for themselves.

And that is why, Mr. Speaker, sir, we say that it is about people, not power. Those who are scrambling to get power, those who are imbued by an untying person to occupy office, who want to get there to lord off and lean off on people and order them about and abuse them on the phone, who want to take up a cudgel of destruction against ordinary people in this country - honourable member, please join it and swing it with malice. Mr. Speaker, sir, those are the ones that we have to be careful of. The Democratic Labour Party Government will stay on the side of the people. Those who are seeking power can seek it elsewhere. And I say to this country, consider these things and be wise. Proverbs, chapter six, verse six: Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise. Think about these things. Think about these things. Make the comparison. See who is on your side. And you will always come up with one answer. That is the Democratic Labour Party. I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.00 this afternoon.

The question that the House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Sitting of the House is resumed. Government notices. Yes. Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Yes, sir. Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to give notice of a resolution to grant the sum of \$15 752 814 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2012-2013 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates Number Twelve 2012-2013 which formed the schedule to the resolution.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business resumed. Yes. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin my short contribution, sir, by saying that if the Democratic Labour Party really wants to deliver itself into believing that it has seriously addressed the housing issues faced in this country then it is free to do so. And I would wish to commend them, sir, because I firmly believe that he who broke it should fix it. I really, sir, if we were to cast our minds back to the origin of the housing problems in this country we would go back to the years 1986 to 1994 when over the course of some eight and a half years the Democratic Party only found it possible to build some 53 housing units across entire Barbados. In fact, it was confined to one single area in St. Philip. So if we start to find the genesis of the problem and if we adhere, as I do, to the principal position that he who broke it should fix it, then, sir, I commend the Democratic Labour Party for believing that they are actually making inroads into the housing problems in this country.

Sir, what happened - we inherited a dire situation in 1994, sir. We embarked on a housing programme which speaks for itself. So I guess to highlight some of the things we were able to change in relation to the National Housing Corporation units. We converted the roofs - all of the asbestos roofs into galvanised roofs. We also installed firewalls, all for the purpose of transferring the units from the National Housing Corporation to the tenants. We had a housing transfer programme in place in relation to the National Housing Corporation units. So the Democratic Labour Party could have built on that. So if we hadn't done that, even what they are doing now today, sir, they could not have done those things. It had to be done. So we did those things. So they should thank us for laying the foundation.

But having had a certain role in that, sir, I have to say that addressing the issues that dealt with the welfare of tenants in the National Housing Corporation units over the last five years by this administration, sir, has been a botch job, sir. Addressing the issues dealing with the welfare of tenants in the National Housing Corporation units, sir, over the last five years has been a botch job, sir. Even this piece of legislation today is a botched job, sir. I do not know why people bring things to Parliament and do not read them. First of all, there is no natural flow to this. It is as if this were put together a couple of nights ago. Somebody picked it up, threw it down the road and said, we are in Parliament come Tuesday.

So when you have absurdities like this - section 3(1), the National Housing Corporation may, subject to subsection (5). You look there for subsection (5). There is no subsection (5). Then, sir, in subsection (3) it says

notwithstanding subsections (1) and (4), sir. You look for subsection (1) - there is a subsection (1). You look for subsection (4), sir - there is no subsection (4), sir. So again, sir, like the white paper we had before us on tourism, we have before us an incomplete document, sir, a work in progress. It is a botch job, sir.

In addition, and what tenants have to be aware of is that not all of what they are entitled to is contained in this unfinished piece of legislation. I heard the minister say today for the first time that a tenant who buys pursuant to this legislation cannot resell or sell under a period of ten years. I have never heard that said before, sir, and it is not included in the legislation. Obviously, all of the policy issues in relation to this programme are not contained in what is before us today. So we must ask the question, therefore, what else is it that the tenants will be informed of in due course by this administration? Because it is not all to be found in what is before us today, which in itself is an incomplete botch job.

In addition, to ensure that tenants understand what is going on here - let us look below the surface, because what we have here is a Government purporting to transfer or to give ownership of units to tenants, but then at the same time not allowing the tenants to exercise the rights of ownership in relation to those units, sir. This legislation today does not validate the extensions that were done to the units. All this does is permit a tenant who extended his unit to buy, including the extension. That is all it does. So if, sir, a tenant now goes to a banking institution after he is given a title deed - because it is unlikely that his lawyer will in his requisition ask for a certificate of compliance - but if not, when the tenant goes to a bank and financial institution for a mortgage, sir, there is nothing in this legislation to prevent the attorney for the tenant in his normal requisition to say, well, I want to see a certificate of compliance in relation to your unit.

Mr. K. St.C. BEST: Yes, Honourable Member. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and the whole country who is listening to him. All the requisition that relates to these units, sir - you make as part of your requisition, sir, is the certificate of compliance. And all that have done so far, sir, certificates of compliance were produced and the conveyances are in the hands of [Inaudible.]. So the Honourable Member is totally misleading the House. This legislation provides that as a result of the extension - a certificate of compliance will be granted.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: There is nothing in this legislation at all that stipulates that the town planner has to give a certificate of compliance in relation to an extension that is not in compliance with the Town and Country Planning legislation. That is simple. Simple, sir. It may be administrative or it may be discretionary, sir, but it is not in

here, sir. And anyone, sir, can find themselves, and any tenant can find themselves in the position when he goes to exercise his right to borrow money, sir, to add to the house, or, sir, to borrow money for his children to be educated, he may well find the bank saying, I wish to see a certificate of compliance. There is nothing in this legislation that says that the certificate is required - to issue a certificate of compliance. Nothing in here. Nothing in here, sir. It is as simple as that, sir.

So I want the clients to understand that while they are going to become owners of a unit, in fact they may well find themselves having great difficulty in enjoying all of the rights of ownership of that unit after they become owners on paper. So the question that has to be asked, therefore, is in fact, what could possibly have taken the Government so long to produce such a simple piece of legislation? All of the issues that were in the way of bringing this legislation were known by the Government, perhaps even before they announced the policy prior to the last general election, sir. Everybody knew that there was an issue of extensions to units in all the housing estates across five years. Everybody knew that. So therefore it was a question of getting that sorted. It cannot take five years. Five years, sir, to come up with a simple position, sir.

Everybody knew that the Housing Act had to be changed because the National Housing Corporation was not permitted to give or to transfer ownership by way of, in any way non-commercial. That is very specifically in the Housing Act. And we pointed out to the Government from within the first three or four months of their term. So they knew that had to be done either by way of an amendment to the Housing Act or by way of a piece of legislation like this. They cannot take five years to do that. Everybody knew that there were some places that perhaps needed to be vested, as we heard today. I heard it said when our members - just those who just spoke - that we were purporting to sell units that we could not sell. But I know I came across a lady only in Eden Lodge last night who bought hers, who bought hers and who applied for permission. This is under our regime and she is going along her merry way. So there was no legal obstacle to selling her the unit.

And the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West - I think, sir, he is obviously very burnt by the comments that have been made about him, sir, in recent times. And he is now obviously reaching the stage of being a bitter man. His bitterness is consuming. But he can rest assured that the statements that we made, sir, there are many still to be made, sir. So if he thinks that anything has been seriously dished out to date, he just has to wait a while to see, sir.

So the question is, sir, why is it taking so long? Why has it taken so long? The people in Eden Lodge, Grazettes,

all the housing estates across this country, sir, have been literally in a state of suspended animation for the last five years. Certainly those who are not part of the programme, not part of it and still paying rent, the other tenants, like they were before, have been for many years. They cannot get any repairs done to the units they request. Doors, windows, electrical work needs to be done, plumbing, plans that have been blown down since Hurricane Thomas. Simple things that could have been done, sir, but this Government, sir, just would not do it.

Now the Government is not providing any money sufficiently so for places like the Barbados Tourism Authority and other places because they say that would be building an economy. And this Government does not build an economy. They do not care about an economy. They focus on social issues. Well, fixing houses and giving windows and doors and dealing with electrical work and plumbing in housing area units - those are social issues. So at the very least, if the Government wants to claim it is within the society and looking after people, whether it is not looking after the economy, at the very least it can show some urgency in assisting the residents of the Lodge, Grazettes, et cetera, sir. Those who have qualified - they cannot get any papers to show that they are the owners.

Today, sir, has just been about grandstanding because an election - this may well be the last sitting in this Parliament. This has just been a grandstanding occasion for the Government, because nothing here tells me how soon these individuals are going to become the owners of their units. I too have submitted - people have submitted my name as the attorney all across Eden Lodge and Grazettes. I have not gotten a call yet from anyone, not one single person. The Minister pointed out that there were 226 people in Eden Lodge who said yes - my name is down for some of them, sir. Not one has so far gotten a single conveyance in their names. Not one, sir. And similarly, sir, in Grazettes, my name is down as the attorney for a number, sir. But after five years, gentlemen, elections are here. The Government comes to Parliament with a piece of legislation - unfinished, complicated, sir - to give the impression. To give the impression that all of a sudden, people that they could have assisted over the course of the last five years with a very, very simple programme, all of a sudden, sir, they are going to assist them, sir. So I know, sir, that the people see through all of this.

I want to say something about these extensions, because the truth is that neither the Chief Town Planner - who the Honourable Minister indicates seems to have been controlling the process - nor the National Housing Corporation should be allowed, sir, should have been allowed for so long to be resisting these transfers to the tenants. Never, sir. In the first place, Barbados is a very small place, and it is hard to think that there is much development that can take place anywhere in Barbados at

all that can go undetected for a period of four years. That is the first thing, given how small Barbados is. And you know, once a place is up for four years, then the Comptroller cannot knock it down or order and enforce any enforcement orders against it.

But apart from that, I want to zero in on the National Housing Corporation units, which is where these extensions take place. These housing estates are very heavily populated. And in addition to that, in each and every one of these housing estates, there is a National Housing Corporation depot. As soon as any tenant, if this is ready to be an issue, as soon as any tenant begins construction or extension to any unit, the National Housing Corporation has to know about it. They have to know about it. In fact, sir, I even heard that sometimes the National Housing Corporation staff members perhaps even assist in the construction of some of these extensions. So be that as it may, sir, be that as it may, you have a representative, an agency in each government of the estate. So as soon as people start these extensions, you have to know about it. If it is really an issue and you want to abide within the four corners of the law, then you should get to these people as soon as the extensions begin and tell them, very sorry, but we cannot permit you to do this because the law, et cetera. But it is inevitable, and you would even be affected by the law of estoppel, to sit back and see somebody construct an extension and then come back heartlessly to tell the people, I am very sorry, but you will have to knock it down. It is heartless, sir, and I have never supported, sir, and I do not support it now. And I believe that a Government serious about what it said it was going to do would not have allowed those agencies - who would have known about these extensions - to have obstructed such process for so long, sir.

I would also urge the Government to be very slow in enforcing the section here - section 3, subsection 1(b)(ii), sir - which talks about the unit must not restrict access to areas used legitimately in common with tenants of neighbouring units, sir. Because there are times, and I know of cases in my constituency, where areas that will be technically areas that are in common with tenants of other units are utilised by usually the occupant of the corner unit, where they have got a little outlet, be it for drinking, hanging out, a small shop or whatever, that services and serves that community. If it is a place that ends up being the focal point where the whole community comes together in fellowship, has some drinks and talks and reminisces, et cetera, plays dominoes and these sorts of things, sir - and this is again, in my view, inequitable and unfair. But as I said before, the National Housing Corporation's agency would have seen these things going up and allowed these things to be completed. And also in a case like this, to see that there are things that are servicing the community as a whole and then come back and want to take enforcement action against these people.

And I raised that point, sir, because I remember the Minister of Finance in his Budget - not the last one, sir, the one before - made a statement that all work commenced after October 1, or something like that, of 2011, commenced before October - I think it was 2011 - would have been validated. A tenant from Eden Lodge was able to bring to me a letter from the Town Planner issued the week after the Minister made that statement, in relation to one of these extensions that had been built some ten to fifteen years ago on one of these common areas that everyone from the community was using. So the Town Planner - we know the Town Planner tends to be a bloodhound when it comes to looking at every little nitty-gritty and who belongs where and all kinds of things - I want you to knock down, knock down, knock down. But I am saying, sir, that the Government has to be slow and has to get the views of the community and the village as a whole, because this is village life and community life we are talking about. And the Government has to be slow in enforcing these sorts of provisions in the legislation that will act to the detriment not only of the owner of the particular extension but also the residents of the area as a whole, sir.

Sir, I also want to say that the Government housing programme - the twenty-year programme - has been very highly discriminatory. Now I remember when the point was made sometime back that the Government was giving away the units free. Both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Housing jumped up and said, do not ever say that nobody is giving anybody anything free. They said the basis for this policy was that people who are living in units for twenty years had already paid for the unit times and times over by virtue of having lived and paid rent for twenty years. Now you see here in the legislation, they said even if you are not in the programme, you have not had a tenancy for twenty years, you can still buy. But they are going to use a formula that says the number of months required to make up the deficiency of a twenty-year tenancy, multiplied by the monthly rental applicable on the date on which the Act comes into force. If somebody was living in a unit or has been living in a unit now for eight years and they say they want to buy, you have to take twelve years' monthly rental and that is what they have to pay.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is discriminatory for the simple reason - so I took the time to check. I am going on the Government's argument that is saying that the people pay for the cost of the unit times over. Sir, if you do the arithmetic in relation to any unit in Eden Lodge - any tenant who has been in a housing unit in Eden Lodge for six and three-quarter years has paid the full cost of that unit. Six and three-quarter years. So why does that person, who qualifies after six and three-quarter years, have to pay for thirteen more years' monthly rental, sir, to become qualified to have the unit transferred into their name, sir?

That is discrimination. That is discrimination against those people, sir.

Similarly in Grazettes, sir. Anybody who has lived in a housing unit in Grazettes - St. Michael West Central, sorry - anybody who has lived in a unit in Grazettes for three and a half years, I checked, has paid the full cost of that unit they live in. So you say no, that they will have to stay sixteen and a half years more - no - for them to benefit? No. They will have to pay a monthly rental equivalent to sixteen and a half years, although the stated Government policy of the Democratic Labour Party is that after three and a half years that person has paid the full cost of the unit, sir, that they live in. These things, sir - this is a policy that was hatched quickly and long, slow to implement, sir. But it has serious, serious flaws, sir.

Also, sir, the issue of deposits has to be looked at. There was a programme in existence before this Government changed. A significant number of people had opted to purchase the units that they were living in and they paid down, in some cases, a fairly significant amount of money. Some paid \$5 000, some paid \$10 000, some paid even more towards that unit. The Democratic Labour Party comes into Government and says, you do not have to pay for the unit anymore, but refused callously to give the people back the deposit that they had paid down. They refused to give the people the money back that they had paid down. Now, sir, if somebody does not know by some mistake that they owe you money, you can say that it is still wrong. When somebody is aware of the fact that they are not giving you back your money that they owe you - it is criminal. It is criminal to hold on to the people's money who paid it in on the understanding that they were going to pay for housing units. Then the Government came - another Government came - and changed the policy and refused to give back the people their own money. It is stealing their money.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Yes, it is a gross misrepresentation on the part of the Member, because to say this is criminal certainly misrepresents what happened, and certainly the undertaking was given by a previous government in that matter. But what has happened certainly since then is that the situation has changed. And certainly you cannot put the responsibility on the Barbados Labour Party Government for something which in a sense the Barbados Labour Party in itself created. What he should do, on the other hand, is give praise to the Government for the fact that it has covered for a new initiative which really in itself will benefit those persons. Generally, he has to admit that what we have tried to do is to make a more generous arrangement for the purchase of a unit that he borrows.

Mr. SPEAKER: In your part, Honourable Member, you have five minutes.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: You know what they said? They said it was for legal fees. They were calling about for legal fees. So now there are no legal fees. I am aware of none. Where are the purchase - the sale and purchase of a National Housing Corporation unit that cost ten or \$15 000 - that cannot happen. Cannot happen, sir. And I also want, on that point, sir - note that you mentioned it - I see here at section three, subsection one A four, the tenant must satisfy some conditions, including agreeing that they will pay such legal fees and expenses that are connected to the transfer. Now, Mr. Speaker, you do not have to legislate that. Somebody has to pay their own lawyer. You do not have to legislate that. So you want the Government to make it explicit in here today. And if they want - I am not doing it - that what the Government is saying to these tenants is that if they want to become the owners of these units, they have to pay their own lawyers and the lawyers for the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. K. St.C. BEST: That is what they have to do. Mr. Chairman, the only Member is misleading the House, sir. The only legal cost in relation to these matters, sir, is the legal cost for the attorney who

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: pay their own - like this. Because I do not know why on earth you will put in legislation that a tenant has to pay legal fees and expenses connected to the transfer, if you are referring to his own legal fees, because he knows you have to do that. That is normal. You have to pay your own electric bills, water bills and everything. So I guess the Government will soon make it explicit that tenants will have to pay their own electricity bills and water bills, et cetera, sir. But, sir, I also note a requirement that the unit extensions must be certified as structurally sound by an engineer registered in accordance with the Engineering Registration Act, sir. Again, sir, I want to ask the question: who is the bearer of that expense? Is it the tenant who has to bear that expense or is it the Government, sir? The Government, sir - who is going to pay the expense, sir? So, Mr. Speaker, I believe I should have made those points. The Government's housing policy, contrary to what they are launching people to believe, sir, is far, far from satisfactory. And that is why they continue to build. They continue to build houses that cannot be sold because they are building houses that people who they think will want them do not

want, sir. And quite frankly, sir, I am not sure what the Government is patting itself on the back for when it comes to the area of housing. And I just want to repeat, sir, and caution the tenants of the units that remarks

Mr. SPEAKER: and, sir, I commend to you the Honourable Member for St. John.

Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to add my voice to this debate as I feel that the Government

does have much to pat itself on the back about, and I am profoundly proud of the accomplishments of this Government and more precisely, this Minister and the Ministry of Housing. The Democratic Labour Party has a housing record since 2008 that has been exemplary. We promised and we are delivering housing solutions and different types of housing solutions according to the needs of Barbadians, so that we have the rent-to-own, the HELP programme, the land-only programme, and with the land-only programme, this means that people can build at their own pace according to what suits their situation.

Just looking at the Democratic Labour Party's record today - true, the Minister called all the names, but I shall just name a few because I just feel so good about it. There is Country Park Towers, Coverley, Lancaster Greens, Stuart Lodge, Woke Hall, Marchfield, Four Hill Parish Land. And the Member representing St. George North says that HELP stands for something to do with Lashley's people. Well, then Lashley has people all over Barbados. I do not know what he could be complaining about.

But the actual Bill, sir - what is this Bill that I am supporting today? This is a Bill that would provide for the transfer by the National Housing Corporation to its tenants of ownership of certain terrace units that satisfy the legal requirements prescribed in this Act for the transfer. And what are these requirements? That the tenant is in good standing with the Corporation in respect of the unit. That the tenant has resided in the unit for 20 years or has discharged the obligations of a tenant for that period. That the tenant does not use the unit for any activity in contravention of the Town and Country Planning Act. And that the tenant will pay such legal fees and expenses that are connected to the transfer. It is clear to me that some Members on the other side had not read this at all. So I thought it necessary to ensure that everybody understands what the requirements are.

Ordinary Barbadians are occupying these units and have been occupying them for 20 years and over, and they have endorsed these programmes and are eager to be part of this process of owning their piece of the rock. These tenants have waited patiently for this Bill. The former administration did next to nothing. Very little was done for the ordinary Barbadian while the west coast was being sold off to the highest bidder. What is the Barbados Labour Party's housing record after 14 years in Government? A housing legacy of a long list of over 17 000 people seeking housing solutions to no avail. What did they do? Mr. Speaker, I vaguely recall some models that never got off the ground. Something called Bumblebee. Oh, sorry, Butterfly.

This transfer of ownership is long overdue. This is not an entirely new idea, but the difference is that we have executed. Government is about managing the people's

resources. The management skills of the Democratic Labour Party administration are quite evident in the Ministry of Housing. We go from idea to action without the dreaded overruns of the previous administration. We have done so many projects, so many are in train, so many are on the drawing board, and we have managed to maintain our budgets. A lot of people do not recognise this aspect of our performance to date in these difficult economic times. This is what we are accomplishing. If we can accomplish these things in these tough times, one can only imagine what could have been if we had the benefit of the resources of plenty which the last administration enjoyed.

The National Housing Corporation is, in my view, accomplishing what it says is its mission - to be the leading provider of affordable housing solutions through highly skilled, competent and focused employees. Note, I said provider of affordable housing solutions, and that is what the National Housing Corporation is doing, and there is more to come. Government is awaiting approval so as to build at Exmouth, White Park and at [Inaudible.] Scenesville.

Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat, I also want to inform the people of St. John that the Democratic Labour Party is not leaving them out at all. We have lots coming in St. John where people will be able to build according to what suits them. And in closing, sir, I wish to applaud the Minister of Housing and congratulate the Ministry of Housing on their accomplishments.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I rise to give full support to this bill before us today. As the parliamentary representative for St. James South, which currently at Hayesville provides some 323 national housing units that form the homes of residents, I am very much in support of this bill before us today. This is indeed a continuation of this Democratic Labour Party government's commitment to helping every last person with a housing solution. When we came into office in 2008, we came promising Barbadians that there will be great assistance and guidance and leadership in terms of affordable housing solutions for this country. I believe that despite the economic challenges that confronted this small society and economy over the last four and a half years, we have delivered and delivered well in respect of housing in Barbados.

There is no doubt that there is a marked divide and a great difference between the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party over housing matters in this country. One will not believe, as you listen to the Honourable Members for St. George North and St. Michael North, that they sat in a cabinet - well, at least until the one

for St. Michael North was unceremoniously removed. But they sat in a cabinet throughout a 14-year regime where this economy, according to them, was blessed with an unprecedented high level of financial resources, and yet still could not come anywhere close to the housing that this Democratic Labour Party has provided in four years in office. There is no doubt as to our commitment to helping those who are less fortunate in society. I know only too well from my constituents who reside in the Hazel community that this legislation before us today will cement in their minds this government's commitment to providing them with affordable housing.

The former government took a position that individuals who resided in these units, I believe for 20 years or more, should have to purchase them. The same Honourable Member for St. Michael North just stood up here and did a calculation which I cannot consider to be new mathematics - it has to be mass. That is real visionary, because I don't know if you are right. By his calculations, he probably learned mathematics at law school. But the army officer here calculated that in three and a half years, someone paying the rent charged by the National Housing Corporation could have paid for the unit. And yet he was part of an administration that said the same individuals, after 20 years, would have to buy the same unit for \$75 000. That can only be mathematics according to the Barbados Labour Party. So clearly, these things really don't make sense when you listen to the opposition benches.

Mr. Speaker, you will not believe that there are constituencies currently represented by the Barbados Labour Party - which shall come to naught shortly - that actually contain national housing units. And it is really and truly reprehensible that you could have members on the opposition benches coming here today and seeking to speak against an opportunity for their constituents to get the chance to own a piece of this rock. There are 444 national housing units located in constituencies represented by the Barbados Labour Party. There are apparently currently 444 units, I believe, including in Lamin, St. Joseph. I was up there on Saturday where the Tom is. I don't recognise a warm Mr. Marshall. But in Lamin in St. Joseph, Maynards - I believe that is in St. Peter - Belplain, St. Andrew. Of course, the members for the Belplain and Maynards areas are, as usual, absent. And of course, Eden Lodge. 351 national units in Eden Lodge, and their parliamentary representative in Parliament today has spoken strongly against a piece of legislation that would allow said occupants of those units to own them, and will want to go in a few weeks and ask the same tenants in Eden Lodge to vote for him. What will they be voting for? An opportunity not to own a piece of the rock. That is why I say that the Member for St. Michael North has ceased to make any meaningful contribution to parliamentary life and debate since 1999, and I only hope that this is the last time that we see him in Parliament except in the public gallery.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at what this means to many individuals. I am told there are some 3 885 national housing units, of which 2 495 to date have qualified to own the units on the pioneer programme, and some 60 per cent in total - or 2 349 - have actually accepted to take ownership of the unit, providing their rents have been paid up. And certainly in Anvil, 65 per cent of the NHC tenants there have accepted the government's offer and shortly, on completion of this legislation and all the necessary paperwork by the lawyers, will become proud owners of a piece of the rock. This is testimony of this Democratic Labour Party administration's commitment to assist the forward home ownership, especially among the low-income group in this society.

Another interesting scenario that will emerge from this, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the National Housing Corporation will shortly be relieved of the burden - the financial burden - of maintaining these units. I heard the Barbados Labour Party speak about and against this initiative, the same Barbados Labour Party that almost bankrupted the National Housing Corporation, certainly did not provide adequate funding to the National Housing Corporation to maintain these units in a manner in which they should be maintained. We recognise we have a situation where the rental income from these same units was exceeded by what it was costing the National Housing Corporation to maintain them in terms of buying supplies as well as to pay wages and salaries. So it really made no sense for government to hold on to them as well.

The other fact, Mr. Speaker, is that this action on our part helps to improve the financial situation of families. And for those in the lower socioeconomic bracket of our society, this makes a profound difference to their lives. These individuals no longer have to pay that \$400 per month in rental income, which means that for many of them, that is additional money that they now have in disposable income to spend in another area of investment in their own sphere. This means, for those who may have argued whether they get a salary increase, the truth of the matter is that when you extrapolate it, they really have received something. We are speaking of a good 20 to 25 per cent increase in their disposable income on a monthly basis. And when you add to that the fact that many of them have children of school age who, under the Democratic Labour Party, can now get to school without having to struggle for bus fare, you recognise that you have a quiet social revolution taking place in this country under the Democratic Labour Party. So we have nothing to be ashamed of.

It also means, Mr. Speaker, that there is a level of intergenerational economic empowerment taking place as well. I have individuals in my constituency who are now in a position to go to a commercial bank and offer their residences as security to help their sons and daughters

acquire another family property that they can move on to. That is how you build wealth in this country. We have been known in this society to use real estate to help build wealth. And certainly we are grateful as a government to be able to help some of those in the lower socioeconomic bracket to truly become owners of some wealth and assets in this country. So this is certainly part of the government's Barbados initiative - very innovative, visionary. It is a housing programme that is designed to correct many of the failings of the Barbados Labour Party.

I don't need to rehash much about the Barbados Labour Party. I believe they went through about six or seven housing ministers, including the parliamentary representative from St. Andrew, who is well known as a successful failure when it comes to ministerial responsibility and as a minister of housing and lands in this country. We know very well that under the Barbados Labour Party, housing was taken somewhat for a joke. We will certainly expect that as safety improves in this country you will get all sorts of accusations being levelled at the Minister of Housing and his management and staff. As a matter of fact, it started today. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North get up here, Mr. Speaker, and say that National Housing Corporation officers helped to construct illegal structures in NHC housing areas. That is a very unfortunate statement when a parliamentarian benefiting from the privileges of Parliament could come and make such accusations against public officers who cannot defend themselves. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North stated in Parliament today that NHC officers have been involved in the construction of illegal structures in NHC housing estates. That is a very unfortunate statement. Just as unfortunate as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North referred to the Chief Town Planner as a blowhound. I only hope that the public out there is listening and very much in tune with the attitude of the Barbados Labour Party towards public officers in this country. They have not come anywhere close to winning an election, nor will they. But it gives a classic example of what Barbadians will have to go through if ever we made a mistake and had the Barbados Labour Party holding the reins of government again - public officers will be hunted. He said: a blowhound. Yes, you have a dormant pincher who made these comments. Public officers will be victimised left, right and centre in this country. That is what the Member for St. Andrew and those like him like to propagate in this country. Totally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

But it is not only those of the low socioeconomic bracket that have been benefiting. And I always remind my colleagues that I represent a constituency that is predominantly middle income as well. I am not going to give great support to programmes that benefit any one class and ignore the middle income in this society, who in many respects are the ones that have been shouldering the burden

of development in Barbados and moving things forward. And that is why I commend the National Housing Corporation and the Minister of Housing and the entire government for middle-income housing developments that have been taking place. Corvali continues to attract the attention of the Barbados Labour Party and I can only conclude it is because it is a new housing initiative that is providing affordable housing solutions to middle-income Barbadians. So anything that is good for ordinary black Barbadians cannot find favour with the Barbados Labour Party. But there are those who can afford to build their mansions elsewhere in this country - inflated land prices, which then has a ripple effect of pushing up land prices throughout the country. And that is the group that the Honourable Members for St. Andrew, St. Joseph and St. Peter in particular find great comfort in, including homes where they host their \$500-a-head fêtes. I am not ignorant of these things. \$500 per head - salmon and cheap cigars and wine. The aspiring date soon come. But you know, some people like to feed. They can hop up and pay \$500 and get. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the better days and packing biscuits - some like to hobnob. I have people who are constantly drinking white rum. All of a sudden they want Chardonnay. I don't even know what it means. Yes, the wine is just like the St. Peter - celebrated, rather aspiring and not good for all souls. Mr. Speaker, that is what the Barbados Labour Party really wants to have going on in this country.

We have to recognise that there are other developments that have been taking place through the initiatives of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the National Housing Corporation - Corbin, I mentioned Constant, Forhill, Lancaster, many of them - and I have asked the Minister of Housing to ensure that my constituents are not left behind when the allocations are done, because there are those second-generation middle-income Barbadians who would not qualify under normal circumstances for assistance from the National Housing Corporation, but whose income levels are not at the point where they can benefit tremendously from what is being offered on the open market. And therefore the National Housing Corporation, as a state agency responsible for assisting Barbadians in home ownership, has a duty to assist middle-income Barbadians as well. And I am satisfied that we are on the right trajectory.

In my constituency, the National Housing Corporation, along with a private developer, have embarked upon the construction and provision of 72 middle-income houses, as well as there are plans afoot - I believe it has been approved in principle - for the provision of affordable housing in the Oxnards Crescent, Oxnards, Haynesburg area as well. So the National Housing Corporation, certainly under this Democratic Labour Party administration, has not been busy building any land bank. We have been busy providing ordinary Barbadians with

houses on which they can create their own homes. And that is exactly what this society has been called upon to provide for the citizens of Barbados.

Deputy Speaker, I wish to just touch on a few other issues related to this bill before us, somewhat perhaps indirectly. It is the desire of every Barbadian to own a piece of the rock and it is the duty of the government to create an enabling environment to make that happen. So it is not just what we have been doing directly in terms of the National Housing Corporation; it is also what we have been doing under trying circumstances to ensure that every Barbadian gets the opportunity to get a sound education at a price that is not a burden to their parents. It is also what we have been doing to ensure that the average Barbadian can have access to good health care without going broke. These other activities and roles and responsibilities of the state do actually help and do actually assist Barbadians in owning a piece of the rock, because otherwise these are areas in which we have to spend sizable amounts of money.

But there are some issues upon our physical land space that do bother me immensely as a Barbadian, as a parliamentary representative and as Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, I am advised that there are probably about 12 000 to 14 000 vacant lots in Barbados - lands that have been subdivided and have been approved in principle by the Chief Town Planner's office for the provision of houses. These lots, invariably, I am told - at least half of them, let us say 7 000 lots - are often kept in a state that is a risk to the health of the public, not just neighbours, but generally speaking to the public. In other words, they are unkempt lots. And I may sound like a broken record speaking on these matters over and over again, just as the Honourable Minister of Environment and all parliamentarians on both sides have been speaking about from time to time. My ministry has been tasked with the annual vegetation programme and we do make an effort to clean the lots. So of the 7 000 lots we estimate that need to be cleaned on an annual basis, through letters - the pressure, I should say, applied by the Ministry of Health, where environmental health officers will write to the landowners and request that they clean the lots within a certain time. If not, we shall clean and we reserve the right to dispose of the land if the bills are not settled. You find that approximately 2 000 private landowners would clean their lots, respond to clean their lots, on an annual basis. Through the Ministry of Health we are able to clean about 400 lots on an annual basis but we only collect about 45 per cent of what we invoice.

I would like, Deputy Speaker, to make a plea here today again for Barbadians who own vacant lots - whether you reside in Barbados or reside abroad - to please clean the lots. We have opted not to use the heavy hand thus far in this matter. But I really would encourage Barbadians. There may be reasons why individuals cannot build at a

particular point in time. But because you may not live in the area, it does not mean that you must be so irresponsible and uncaring as to not even visit your land occasionally and ensure it is kept in a manner that does not pose a threat to neighbours and to the wider public. My ministry, as I keep saying all the time, is not sitting idly by. We shall soon publish in the public domain the list of those whose land we have cleaned and for whom they have refused to pay the bills, as a quiet and diplomatic reminder of your indebtedness to the state and as the last resort before for-sale signs go on them.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, related to the physical environment and housing and lives, et cetera, is the level of illegal dumping that takes place in Barbados in the 21st century. One would think that given the Sanitation Service Authority refuse collection service that works, Barbadians would not be dumping anywhere. And yet too often my ministry is bombarded with complaints about individuals dumping illegally. This, Deputy Speaker, also has to come to an end. And if it means that we have to drag a few before the courts and use them as an example, then that will have to be done. But I firmly believe that we are intelligent enough as a people to know better. We really must do better in this society.

The other issue, quite frankly, Deputy Speaker, quickly before I wrap up, relates to this issue of indiscriminate burning. Because you have around housing estates and private homes, et cetera, individuals who take it upon themselves to rake up their leaves, their debris, their garbage, put it in a heap, throw a little kerosene on it and flip a match. This is totally reprehensible. To tell the truth, Mr. Speaker, I have been speaking about it time and time again. Now, the Ministry of Health officials cannot police every village 24/7. We are constantly seeking to remind Barbadians as to the harmful effect of indiscriminate burning, the amount of monies we are spending treating individuals who have asthma, who get ill. I must say, I suspect

some may even have died as a result of this reckless and irresponsible behaviour, or those who have allergies or whatever. The fact remains, it is a public health nuisance. It is a risk to the health of Barbadians, and it is a matter that must come to an end. I know there have been calls by several parties for the creation of legislation. Let me say that the Health Services Act, as far as I am concerned, particularly the nuisances regulations, does give us enough authority to deal with the matter. We have spoken with the relevant attorneys involved and that has been their opinion as well. Yes, perhaps we can codify in one piece of legislation, or we also need to bring clarity as to cases where there may be exemption or licensing for such matters. But the bottom line about it, as Minister, is that we are not waiting on the creation of any legislation. The environmental health officers and the Barbados Police

Force have been advised that they have to step up to the plate and file the necessary actions and take all necessary actions against those who seek to burn indiscriminately in this society. It is zero tolerance of such going forward, and that applies as well to any state-owned property where this may occur.

So, Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, as I close, let me reiterate what great importance this Bill is for the lives of thousands of Barbadians who perhaps for decades sat paying rent, feeling that they never got the chance to own a piece of the rock. This quiet revolution, as we have been speaking of, is now going to be able to uplift many Barbadians from a lower level to a point where they can really stand on their own. This is how we build strong societies and strong families in Barbados. This is what being Barbadian is all about - helping those who are less fortunate in our society, while not ignoring the middle income and the upper income as well, who continue to make an invaluable contribution to this society.

It is certainly with a deep sense of regret and annoyance that I have again to reflect on the strong opposition to this Bill that is coming from the Barbados Labour Party. I cannot believe that an opportunity presents itself to help thousands of Barbadians own a piece of the rock, and you can get such a volume of objection and opposition from a desperate political party in this country. Clearly, one will very well know what to do in the fullness of time with the Barbados Labour Party. May they reign in opposition. Deputy Speaker, these two words I am obliged to.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Deputy Speaker, you are a member -

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Deputy Speaker, I have sat in this Honourable Chamber, sir, and I have heard many debates relating to housing. But perhaps in my mind this is the most important debate on housing that I have listened to and been part of, sir, for the last 19 years that I have been in this Honourable Chamber, sir. Mr. Speaker, sir, permit me, sir, to use the limited time that I have on such a very important debate on the empowerment of poor people in the communities across Barbados, sir, to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Housing, sir, who, sir, over his tenure over the last four and a half years has done a magnificent job, sir, as Minister of Housing, sir, in relation, sir, to providing affordable housing for the poor people, sir, across this country, sir.

Mr. Speaker, sir, first, before I get to that, sir, let me say that I could speak seriously about that, sir, because I have spent as a young man coming up in Barbados, sir, 35

years of my life living in the government housing estates - from the Pine in St. Michael and Wildey and Parkinson to Cornell in Christ Church, sir. So I am a product of the housing area culture in Barbados, sir. But I am taking a perspective in this debate this afternoon, sir, from that of a community practitioner, sir, a social practitioner, sir, and I must say, having spent this long period of time, sir, I have been associated with the problems, sir, that are in the housing areas in Barbados.

And if I recall my own personal experiences of my family over a period of time, sir, living in the housing estate - I remember the time, sir, when my mother and ourselves could not afford to pay the rent to the National Housing Corporation. I know in those days in the 70s, sir, you had to face the embarrassment of an officer from the National Housing Corporation, sir, placing a notice on your house in the full view of the neighbours, sir, giving you a notice of eviction, and I know having to move out of the housing and having to move back in because we were living in an abject state of poverty at the time. I have those experiences. My experiences, sir, are personal and are also those of a person who has lived in these housing areas for quite a long time, sir.

When I sat as an independent member of this Honourable Chamber, sir, I always say that I was obviously very impressed with the Government's social programming, sir, not realising that one day - that came very, very soon, in the short term, sir - Government would have brought a piece of revolutionary social legislation, sir, that will see poor people owning their own properties in the housing districts across Barbados.

Sir, when the Minister defined his social agenda as it relates to housing, he came up with the acronym HELP. Some thought this was an impossible task. The Government was criticised - that you thought you would help every last person and that it did not materialise. Let us really examine the HELP programme, sir. No government, sir, when it comes to policy, ideologically, sir, sets an agenda that they know, sir, would benefit the populace of Barbados. Sir, this is not just an acronym. It is a social acronym because it is designed to benefit the poor people in the housing schemes across Barbados. And I am saying that, sir, because if you look at the design of the social agenda within the National Housing Corporation, sir, as orchestrated and designed by the Minister, sir, you would see it is a multifaceted and a multi-dimensional approach to bring housing solutions to the poor people of Barbados.

The Honourable Member from St. George North referred to the HELP programme. And I want to thank the Honourable Minister, sir, for helping my constituents along the way, sir, with affordable housing. I do not understand why it is that every time this Government designs a programme for the poor, Barbados gets harshly criticised,

sir, by the Opposition. I do not understand it, sir. This Minister, sir, has settled a 20-year programme which allows persons who are living in NHC units, sir, to own them - all the titles transferred to them, sir. That has never been done before, sir. He also brought to his programme, sir, a 500-lot programme, sir, where persons earning approximately \$1 240 monthly or lesser can obtain, sir, a spot of land at about \$5 per square foot, sir. All of this is done by this Minister as part of the HELP programme. So when we hear the HELP programme, it is not an illusion, sir, or a fleeting illusion that we cannot pursue. It is a reality. It is a social programme, sir.

Also, the Rent-to-Own programme. And I really want to congratulate the staff at the Ministry, sir, who work with this programme. The Rent-to-Own programme, sir, has virtually given tenants a rate, sir - those who qualify, who can qualify for a mortgage of up to \$120 000, sir - they would be renting for seven years, then 70 per cent of that goes towards the ownership of their own house, sir. We are talking about a revolutionary social development housing programme, sir. This is a series of programmes. The IDP programme, sir, is a grant. You do not have to repay. It is a grant that is given to poor people across Barbados, sir, to repair their houses, sir. And this has been a tremendous benefit to the poor people across this country, sir. The General Workers Loan Scheme. But all of this at the National Housing Corporation, all of this is part of the HELP programme. So he is not talking in isolation; he is not talking about a project that may happen - these are programmes that are already in place at the National Housing Corporation, sir.

He has had four and a half years of his tenure as Minister. So on a night when people are partying, this Minister is isolated, planning to help poor people across Barbados. That is the reality. That is the reality. Because leadership - if you are going to make serious decisions for the poor and the vulnerable and the marginalised across Barbados - then sacrifices, personal sacrifices, have to be made.

The General Workers Loan Scheme. I want to thank him also because as I depart into the sunset, I am happy to know that what I am leaving behind is that the Minister has made a commitment to the people of St. Michael South East, and we have a continued process of programming that the persons in Wildey and in the Metro area will also be recipients of the HELP programme, sir. And I am very happy for that, sir.

Now, sir, I really do not believe that Government should take the full responsibility of housing every last person across Barbados. I believe that there should be a shared responsibility - that we should share and we should partner, sir, with other entities. I also believe, sir, that one of those entities, sir, that I feel we should engage the

attention of, sir, is Habitat for Humanity, which is an international programme where they make resources available to persons living below what they call the poverty line or just above the poverty line, sir, and provide those necessary housing solutions. It is done across the Caribbean, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago, sir. But what it does, sir - it is not a new concept because our parents, our grandparents were having similar types of community-based programmes where on Sundays when they were building their houses, they borrowed what I call equity from within the communities where people came together and provided the necessary assistance. And I believe, sir, in communal assistance. And I really believe that Habitat for Humanity is a programme that we can adopt to Barbados, of course fashioning it based on our own culture, our own resources within the communities across Barbados, sir.

Housing and agriculturalists believe that the land should not be taken up to build houses, sir, while we know that housing is a priority in Barbados. But at the same time, sir, I believe that both of them must be given the priority that is necessary, sir. And it is at this point in time, sir, that I would want to - in terms of the fusing of the two, sir - look across the housing development estates, sir, and encourage our residents, our tenants to get involved in what I would call backyard farming that could contribute to the economy substantially, sir.

Also, sir, I believe at this point in time the communities at the housing areas, the housing districts, are the best place for the establishment of community cooperatives, sir - buying clubs to solve some of the problems, sir, in terms of food items and so on, sir. Buying clubs within the community, sir. I also, sir - and I heard the Minister speak about it and he was making an exceptionally great point, sir - when he talked about the creation of commercial spaces for business activity within the housing areas across Barbados. That is critical because if we examine the history of the Pine housing area when it was first started, there was no availability of these spaces to the residents, and the results of that are well known, sir. But I am happy to say, sir, that we have established a business centre in the Parkinson Field district. What I would like the Minister and his staff to examine very seriously is the establishment of open spaces in the housing districts across Barbados so that the young people could ply their trades in terms of barbershops, small cooperative supermarkets, and other such activities. Because the social landscape of Barbados has deteriorated to such a level now, sir, that it demands these kinds of social intervention programmes within the communities to bring that level of stability within the communities, sir.

When I look at my constituency - the Pine and Wildey - I have always been branded as a type of representative who allows my people, God's people, to do

anything and contravene the law in the community. Let me look at the profile, the demographic profile of the Pine. I realise that I have more, Mr. Attorney General, more than 1 300 persons that are eligible, sir, for this magnificent programme and this transfer of titles the Minister of Housing brought to this Honourable Chamber, sir. Demographically, I have the largest housing area in Barbados, sir. The largest. There are more than 18 000 people living in the Pine alone. I am not talking about building 18 000 people on 18 and a half acres of land - that is the density. So you are talking about nearly 1 000 people, sir, per acre of land. The density and the profile that I give you, sir, speaks of a very overcrowded community, sir.

So let us see - we always look at the effects without examining the causes. We have to also look at the social profile and we also have to look at what created overcrowding, sir. We have a problem of overcrowding in every single housing area across Barbados. And because of the discomfort, some residents have to sleep on staircases, some of them have to sleep in the kitchen, some have to sleep on cushions on the floor in the house, sir. It became necessary - very necessary - to extend the housing, sir, so that the overcrowded units of 16 or 20 people in a two-bedroom unit with one toilet, sir, it was critically necessary to extend them so that there would be a level of comfort, sir, within the housing areas across Barbados.

What this Minister has done is accepted - as Honourable Chairman - rather than make it an illegal venture and have people prosecuted and face the wrath of the Town and Country Planning Department, that poor people now have the right, sir, to own the spaces through the validation of this Act in this Honourable Chamber. And I really want to congratulate the Honourable Minister. What he has done, however, is take a precaution against the eventuality that might occur again. So at the time, what was seen as a transgression - he was called a criminal, he was criticised, he encouraged people to do this - and he defended it in this Honourable Chamber today. Deputy Speaker, those actions have been exonerated by an Act of Parliament because what was instituted was a level of advanced social policy. They might not agree. You might not agree, Mr. Speaker, sir.

Sir, I also believe - I heard the Honourable Minister come here today not just to talk about the validation and all of that. He brought a comprehensive housing programme to this Honourable Chamber, sir. That is what he did. I hope everybody was listening carefully because he thought of establishing a direct link between the tenants and the National Housing Corporation through the formation of a tenants association. Just imagine - across Barbados, every housing area having a tenants association established. And now you have a situation where you have this great interaction between the elements of the housing area and

the National Housing Corporation, sir. What you will find, because of this synergised interrelationship, sir, is that you will get more productivity, you will create more harmony - the harmonisation of the housing areas across Barbados, sir.

And I am saying that we could develop massive beautification programmes, sir. I have this extreme vision - I suppose that at this time it is one that should be executed - whereas all of the Government housing units, all of them, Deputy Speaker, at this point in time should be painted and beautified so that when you are flying over Barbados, particularly at night, you have a kind of transformational, physical, picturesque view. And looking down at the wonderfully fluorescent painted houses in the housing areas across Barbados - you know what that will do? That will also lift the self-esteem of the young men and the girls on the blocks and the residents. A beautified community will really lift the self-esteem, sir, of the residents. Some of the housing areas like the Pine - one of the oldest in Barbados - are certainly in need of this type of beautification. And I am saying, sir, I am not only talking about painting units; I am talking about the NHC and all of the other agencies coming together, sir, for a massive beautification programme of the housing areas across Barbados. It is so critical at this time, sir, because we need now to lift the self-esteem of the residents, sir. And I am speaking with this, sir, with a passion because that is the kind of environment that I enjoyed for 35 years of my life, sir.

I came in - some people talk about going to school at the University of the West Indies or to Combermere or to Lodge - but I got my education in the University of the Pine. I learned life from persons who were more experienced - from doctors, lawyers, all different spheres of life, sir. But I am saying, sir, that the tenants association will now enhance all of the work that the Minister has done and put into the development of housing, sir.

Also, we have to transform the housing areas in Barbados. That beautification programme that I am speaking about should also include a white wall programme. That white wall programme, sir, is where you paint all the open walls in the housing areas across Barbados, sir. What you would do is not just paint them white - what you would do is debate murals depicting community practitioners, people who have made a contribution to that community. Every wall, every available space. You know what will happen - imagine the Minister of Transport driving down the Pine East-West Boulevard and all the houses from Martin's Road midway right down to his office have murals on them. And at night when they are lit, they become a natural tourist attraction. It also enhances the Minister of Tourism's community tourism product, because now the tourists want to see this wonderful depiction of the history of the community of

Barbados on walls going down the Pine East-West Boulevard. That could happen in all the communities across Barbados, sir.

Even more so, Deputy Speaker, sir, when we observe the stabilisation and harmonisation of the communities across Barbados, sir, one of the areas that I would like to enhance is that of inter-sporting housing area development, where as part of the tenants programme, communities could travel to each other on weekends and have natural interaction in all kinds of sports and culture. Therefore, we start changing the social internal networking of the community, sir, and bring a level of activity that has never existed in Barbados before, sir. The reason, sir, we have this kind of instability in some communities across Barbados is because there is a lack of clear, definite, defined social, sporting, and cultural programmes within these communities. The tenants association, sir, could certainly create that necessary linkage that is critical at this point in time. And then we keep out the men in blue too - if we keep out the police, because now you establish a community, a clearly defined programme in association with the Barbados Police Force.

I refuse to acknowledge that in the year 2013, sir, we are still naming our police force the Royal Barbados Police Force. I refuse that. I will continue to call it the Barbados Police Force because that is what it is. I want our young people, when they come in, to have a clear understanding of who they are. There must be a kind of consciousness that connects them to every sector of this society, sir.

And as I finally conclude - for you told me I only had five minutes, I believe, sir, that has just passed - I want to call on the Honourable Minister, sir, because there are a lot of pirates, I want to put it that way, in Barbados who charge exorbitant rents for derelict structures, and because housing is in great demand, sir, many poor people, sir, suffer as a consequence, sir. It is not only domestic housing but also commercial housing, and I believe the time has come to establish a rent control board in this country, sir, to control these pirates who charge exorbitant prices and prey, sir, on poor people because they are desperately in need of a house. That is why I say that housing development in Barbados and housing redevelopment in Barbados cannot be left solely to Government.

This Minister, as I come closer again - I have to congratulate him because he has done more than all the Ministers of Housing I know of since I was in here for the development of housing, and I have been here for 19 years, and I can speak without any fear of contradiction, sir. This might be one of three more speeches that I would have in this Honourable Chamber, sir. This might be my last housing debate in this Honourable Chamber. But I will leave with the clear knowledge that we have a visionary who will be returned to this Honourable Chamber to

continue the work of this Government, sir, for the poor people across Barbados, sir. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank you very much for allowing me this time, sir, to complete what I have to say. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. He is obviously somewhat intoxicated by his own treatise on social engineering and community empowerment. And I would like to caution the Minister of Housing - I would like to caution the Minister of Housing - into not patting himself on the back with respect to that.

Because I have been in this House since 1991 and those same praises have been heaped on every single Minister of Housing by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you know, I have no way of ruling on this particular point of order because I really do not know if you are objecting to the truth of that. I cannot possibly rule on it. So he can only be objecting that he is misleading the House. I cannot possibly rule on that. Let me hear your objection.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: If the Honourable Member is making that allusion, sir - illusory comments - therefore the records of Parliament must have it recorded. Everything that I would export and accomplish, make it every Minister of the day. Is that not so, sir? Yes. I would ask, sir, if the Honourable Member for St. Andrew cannot prove it, to take it back, because it is not true. And you know it is not true.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: - I would say to any person in this House, and I have certainly heard you commending - one thing about you, about the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East: he is always commending persons in this House, unlike other Honourable Members and in particular Ministers of Housing. I certainly was on the receiving end of a lot of those commendations and for that I am very thankful to him. But I must also further caution him to the extent that the Honourable Member, even though he has said that this might be his last speech on housing, that he will continue to commend whoever is the Minister of Housing when he leaves these chambers, because he is a Minister's man, he is a government man and he has always been on the side of whichever government is in power. So I have no doubt that from the calling programmes he will be administering his social engineering in the same way that he has done today.

Mr. Speaker, I am a little disappointed at this legislation before this House. Suffice it to say that we have a number of persons on that side who have spoken in this debate who are not familiar with the regulations with respect to the transfer of ownership. And in a sense, had I been in their position, I probably would have said the same things that they have said with respect to the support of this legislation. I mean, it is somewhat scary when I hear the last speaker who spoke stating that this is an important piece of legislation - perhaps the most important piece of social engineering that has been brought to this House since he was a Member of Parliament. And yet this House has been cavalierly treated, Mr. Speaker, by the Government with respect to this legislation. I do not necessarily agree with him because I do not see anything in this legislation to suggest that. And I will come to that a little later. But if this legislation is that important, well, then it should have been treated in that way.

Now, I received a copy of this Bill for the first time last night when I returned home. When I came home, it was late, and it was debated today. Now, if, in keeping with important pieces of legislation as the Honourable Member alluded to, this is legislation that should have been readily circulated. And this is the type of legislation, certainly, that the members of the Bar Association should have had the opportunity to comment on and to have been able to make their input. I am a little amazed that we have an Attorney General who, no fault of his, may not be familiar with the normal practice in certain areas, but at the same time I think it is time - he has been in his position long enough - to have taken the necessary consultation in all areas to ensure that legislation of this nature, when it is brought to Parliament, not only reflects the thinking of the practitioners at the Bar, but certainly that it is the type of legislation that would stand the test of time.

Now, this legislation - three pages. An important piece of legislation. Three pages. Three pages of legislation that says nothing. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North has been ridiculed by members on that side because he said he does not support the legislation. Do we appreciate that there is a problem with respect to the transfer of ownership of tenants in the housing areas? We all agree on that. We all agree that something must be done, but it does not necessarily mean that you could come to Parliament with a piece of paper - three pages - that makes no sense. There is nothing in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, which speaks to or addresses the problems that are being faced by the tenants in the National Housing Corporation units. So I could agree, I could empathise with the Member for St. John, the Member for St. Michael South East, with members on that side who are not familiar with the law and with the practice. But I think it is an insult to this House that legislation - important legislation like this - should be brought in this manner, at this late hour, without consultation, and members parading - it is obvious

what has happened with the Democratic Labour Party. They came to government unexpectedly in 2008, all of the promises, and they have been parading up and down this country criticising the policies and the programmes of the Barbados Labour Party, and all of a sudden they have remembered that they have to put their programme in place and this is part of their hurried agenda. Yes, the transfer of ownership in the terrace units in the housing areas. There has been a problem, but this is not the way to solve it.

All this piece of paper is is a statutory lease with an option to purchase. That is all this legislation is. I doubt very much that the persons responsible - and I say this with respect - for drafting legislation, if the Attorney General's department had anything to do with this. And it is very important, Mr. Speaker, that every time you have important legislation coming to this House, the draftsmen from the Attorney General's office would be here to make any necessary amendments to the legislation. I do not see any of them here. I do not see any of them here. It means that they do not agree with this legislation and they do not want to be part of it, because there is nothing here to amend. This legislation is an insult. It is an insult to Parliament. If all of the attorneys on that side were laymen, not attorneys at law, I could understand the situation. It is true that when I look across I do not see any of them having any experience in conveyancing. I do not see any of them having any experience in property law. But that is not a criticism. There are some of us over here that are short in some areas, but we are in a position where the necessary consultation should have taken place, and there is no way that this piece of foolishness should be brought to this House. This is an insult. What I am reading is an insult. I mean, there is no attorney at law in Barbados who would - and you would ask any attorney at law in Barbados who deals with conveyancing - who will accept a conveyance based on this piece of legislation.

I mean, this was an excellent opportunity, Mr. Speaker - five years, every good policy of the Barbados Labour Party. This was a good opportunity for them to have come here with the type of legislation that would have dealt with the problems that we know have plagued the practitioners with respect to the transfer of ownership in the terrace units, but also an important opportunity to circumvent the provisions of the Condominium Act, Mr. Speaker, because when the terrace units were built, they were not built with the Condominium Act in place. They were not built in contemplation of what went into the Condominium Act, Mr. Speaker, so that however difficult it might be, however cumbersome it might be for the practitioners or the legislators to deal with this problem, the important thing is it is a problem that must be addressed, and it was an excellent opportunity, and it could not have been done in three pages.

The question of a condominium declaration - however, I can understand the enthusiasm, the excitement of the Minister of Housing in having his agenda in place. But it is consistent with the Minister of Housing building a number of houses without setting them at prices that his constituents can afford - people now cannot even afford to live in these houses. So we have a situation where there will be a lot of houses unoccupied, well short of the amount that the Government said they would have built. But this was an excellent opportunity for the Minister to have dealt with this, and this has not dealt with the position before us. And all he needed - he would not have needed to get over the problems with respect to the Condominium Act - but all you would have needed is one single paragraph: an amendment to the Housing Act which would have allowed the transfer of ownership of property in situations where there is no consideration. A simple amendment, and that would have taken care of it. That would have done more than this has done. It would have given you a good title, because the Housing Act is very specific with respect to the transfer of ownership - notwithstanding the fact that the title must be 20 years, it is very specific, and it states in the actual conveyance that notwithstanding the fact that the 20-year period has not been reached, that title has been transferred. This document here before me - pure foolishness - does not address the question of title. Does not.

We were dealing with the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. The problems relating to town planning, Mr. Speaker - it does not refer to the Housing Act. It does not refer to the Town Planning Act. It does not refer to anything. It does not refer to anything. All it says is one simple paragraph: if you are a tenant of a unit in the National Housing Corporation, you have a right to buy that unit for the equivalent of 20 years' rent. That is all this Act is. And you can include the Act, you can include the schedule, you can include the regulations - that is all this is. But Mr. Speaker, you yourself are a practitioner. I know for a fact, because I have seen requisitions that you have made, and I know for a fact, Mr. Speaker, that you will not accept a conveyance because there is no form. The drafters should have known better. You had, as I said, under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, the process of the legislation was very specific and it took over a year for this legislation to come to fruition - in terms of going back and forward with the drafters of the legislation - and they were very specific with respect to the planning provisions. And the planning laws cannot be invoked in that legislation because that is made specific. The only provision with respect to town planning which is included in the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act is a provision where if the landlord raises a question with the Town Planning Department with respect to a unit not complying with the planning regulations and the Chief Town Planner, on review, agrees with the landlord, then the landlord will then have to find an alternative lot for that particular tenant, so that if you have

five or more lots, you do not have to go through the rigmarole of making the application to town planning and things like that. And that is specifically mentioned in the legislation, whereas this says nothing with respect to that.

And it also sets out - just like the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, just like the Agricultural Holdings Act, the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and the Housing Act - they all set out the form of conveyance. The form of the conveyance in the case of the Tenancies specifically states in the schedule in the conveyance: the vendor as beneficial owner hereby conveys the said parcel of land together with all the rights pertaining or annexed to the property hereby conveyed as provided for by section 66 of the Property Act, so that no person can come and say that there is no good title. Mr. Speaker, the Housing Act - the Housing Act with the Ministry of Housing - you cannot just decide on a National Housing Corporation conveyance. You can do a conveyance from the National Housing Corporation to a tenant. Under this legislation, the conveyance will be no good. The only person that will not be able to dispute that conveyance is the National Housing Corporation. The National Housing Corporation could not come back and say that they did not convey the land. Yes, they could convey - the Housing Act is very, very clear. The Housing Act specifically mentions that the land is being conveyed together with the rights and benefits pertaining or annexed to the land hereby conveyed as provided for by section 6 of the Property Act. Similarly, the Agricultural Holdings Act has a similar provision. And how the Minister could bring legislation of this nature - as they call it, such important legislation - it is obvious that if it is that important, they have not done what they were supposed to do, Mr. Speaker. They have not done what they were supposed to do.

I do not know those people who are in housing units. I can understand the right Honourable Member - he speaks with a passion, a passion that he can identify with. I can understand him. I can understand those persons who represent constituencies with a lot of terrace units. But they are being misled into believing that this legislation gives them something that they did not have before, Mr. Speaker.

And in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I will have to go back to the provisions of the Condominium Act. There is no provision for an engineer - I do not see it anywhere. The unit in question - you do not know what I am talking about. I do not think you are a Member, Mr. Speaker. If I understand it correctly that you are taking a side - you are listening to a side - but you are a Member for St. Michael. You interrupted what I am talking about. You are on your feet and you said you do not know what I am talking about to the Chair. The Chair speaks.

This legislation is so loosely drafted. I do not want to say that I believe the Minister himself has drafted this

legislation because he is not a reckless man. I have never known him to be a reckless man. But some reckless person must have been advising him, because I think that because of the hour of the day, the fact that the Democratic Labour Party suddenly realised that they are on their way out anyway - because the people of Barbados are not going to vote for this - for the comments that he made, the comments that he made with respect to the need for the legislation, the type of legislation. But not in this form. Not in this form.

But then you cannot come and have an engineer certify that a building is structurally sound in accordance with the Engineers Registration Act, Chapter 368B. I do not see that anywhere. Nothing about the Engineers Registration Act. Nowhere. In the Property Act there is a requirement - and if you want to do a conveyance and you want to transfer a unit, you still have to do it in the form required by the Property Act. Or if they want to use the form of the Housing Act, they use the Housing Act. They still have to bypass this - the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Act. I mean, this is nonsense. A lot of nonsense. Mr. Speaker, I would call it something else if I was not in these chambers.

You still have to comply. I would like to caution those Members of Parliament who are not familiar with the requirements of conveyancing and the type of requisitions that you get. You get some requisitions - some lawyers are even put out of place by this particular case - and you are a Member for a constituency with terrace units and talking about - sometimes you are on good ground and you get requisitions and you have to answer them. These are requisitions. If you get requisitions on this particular legislation, you cannot even answer them, because this Act - and I heard the Member for St. John and she is obviously of the view that you do not need any town planning. You know, some people are of that view based on what they have heard the members on that side speak. They are of the view that you do not need any planning permission. The only saving grace with respect to the town planning legislation is that if the development has taken place for more than four years, the Chief Town Planner will not be able to intervene. None of that is so for mortgage or otherwise. But that will happen whether or not the lot is transferred. So you are in a position whereby you transfer a lot and there have been changes - and remember, if the Town Planning Department has been complaining of those changes for a long time, from the time the changes started, you cannot rely on the four years. So if there have been changes, extensions to the units, the Ministry of Housing cannot go and transfer the units. They can transfer them, but the poor fellow who buys these units will just have a piece of paper and he will not be able to do anything. He will not be able to do anything. And those transfers, Mr. Speaker, they have to be done under the Housing Act. They cannot be done under what we call the National Housing

Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Act. No conveyance of any unit can be done under this legislation. This, as I said, is all this legislation is - a statutory lease. Clearly you are wasting time at this eleventh hour, this twelfth hour in your administration, to bring a statutory lease with an option to purchase for 20 years before Parliament. Are you talking about it being the most important piece of legislation? You are misleading your own members. You are misleading your own members. You are misleading your own members. Coming to Parliament with a statutory lease and making people believe that this is some revolutionary legislation. And when we speak of revolutionary legislation, we speak of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act as such legislation. This does not even contain a single paragraph of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. This cannot command. So I am saying that it is misleading, and members on that side have been misled because they have not realised the real import of what has been included in these provisions and the Condominium Act.

I find it extremely difficult sometimes dealing with provisions in the Condominium Act and the type of requirements. But I mean, they have put us in - good thing they have stopped persons from putting up a structure of orange box and then trying to sell them off in units. And I would caution the National Housing Corporation: whatever it takes to comply with the Condominium Act, comply with the Condominium Act. Make sure you get the condominium declaration with all the provisions. And then do the transfer under the Housing Act. This piece of legislation - this is, in the words of a lady from my constituency whom we used to call Ms. Malaprop - this is political geometry. And no more, Mr. Speaker.

And one more thing, Mr. Speaker, one more thing. You are now telling the people in the units you are giving them a statutory lease with an option to renew at a specific price - 20 years. Right. An interesting point with respect to those persons who have paid. There are persons who have paid. They have been up to date. Now, while we commend any government for wanting to ensure that the poor people in the terrace units own their own home, we have to make sure that we are not rewarding persons who have flouted the laws of the National Housing Corporation. There are persons who have paid in full for their units - in full, calculated at 20 years' rent. They are owed money. I would like the Government to address those persons. Those law-abiding human beings. They do not want 30 years. The units will be sold - they have paid their money in full. Now, you should not only pay that back - pay back the money. I appreciate the fact that I referred to him in this particular presentation, but I have to. But I think that I am imagining him when there is a change of the next Minister of Housing, applauding that Minister of Housing - as is his wont - for introducing a policy whereby those persons will be refunded. And I was personally hoping to see if he

would have called on his own Government - but he is a government man - his own Government to repair and refund those persons who have paid over and above. As the social scientist that he says he is - because I have not heard anybody else on that side refer to him as any social scientist or any community practitioner; he himself is a self-appointed person in that particular area - and those members who have spoken on this side, why? Because we appreciate the problems that Government faces with respect to the transfer of units, transfer of units in Government housing areas. And we do support the fact that those persons who have paid rent for lengthy periods are entitled to have the lots transferred to them. We believe that it should be done in the right manner and we believe that they should be given a document that they can take to the bank, Mr. Speaker, and if they want to borrow money to make any repairs to that particular unit, that they would be able to do so.

I am not really concerned as to who paid the legal expenses. That is beside the point, because in terms of legal expenses, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Parliament with terrace units - not as many as some of my other colleagues - I have already offered to do them free, of course, free of course. And I believe that some of the members on that side have done a similar thing with respect to the transfer of ownership of terrace units of constituents in terrace units. And I must say that even as I speak, I have had applications from over 100 persons in other areas, including the constituencies of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. And I will just let them know - not being the social scientist that the Member for St. Michael -

Southeast states he is, that certainly on this side will be willing. I don't speak for myself. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Honourable Member for St. James North - we are all willing, free of course, to facilitate in this transfer of ownership. So that shows that we have the interest of our constituents at heart. But we do not want a situation whereby they get a piece of paper and then when they go to the bank, they realise that it is worthless. Mr. Speaker, I bless you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I entered this debate on two points. One, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said that the sale of the units are illegal and that any rents collected over 20 years, that those rents are illegal. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that prior to this amendment the sales took place under the Barbados Labour Party and the rents over 20 years would have been taken by the Barbados Labour Party. So the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is telling this House that they have committed

two crimes. One, that they sold the units to the people they should not have sold them to, because they remember -

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: No, there are terrace units and there are terrace units. There are certain terrace units that are not affected by what we are speaking about. There are scandal terrace units and those terrace units are the ones that have been transferred. The terrace units, Mr. Speaker, that are part of blocks - those are the ones that are creating the problems and those are the ones that have not been dealt with. And these are the ones that come within the condominium legislation and those are the ones to be addressed. When you say that we did conveyances - thanks for the clarification.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, that is a non-point because what this is dealing with are those persons who also had additions and we are now justifying those additions. But what the main point is the sale of the property, and the Member said that there are persons who paid rent for over 20 years and that they should be refunded. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that there are persons who would have paid hard cash to the Barbados Labour Party when they were in government for over 30 years in rent. But not only did they pay 30 years in rent, but they also took the cost of the property from them, Mr. Speaker. They charged them for 30 years rent and then charged them for the building too. So what the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is saying is that they charged them for the property twice and over twice. That is what the Member for St. Andrew is saying, Mr. Speaker.

But Mr. Speaker, that is not what is wrong. It has nothing to do with the transfer of title. You know what - they went all over my brothers and they told the people about cost of living and how this Government is not caring and how we have not lowered the cost of living and we have not done anything about the cost of living. Mr. Speaker, this is what is worrying them, sir. We introduced free bus fares - \$2 at least a day, that is \$4, and that is what a school child pays, and they have five days in a week, sir. So that is \$20 and they go to school for 38 weeks. So that is \$760. The average family has about five children, sir, and we have been able as a Government to put back into the disposable income of the people by giving free bus fares. But that is not all that is really happening - we did that alone. But now we are adding the rates that we used to pay. So what we are doing, sir, is that if you live in Lodge Road, depending on the tax, you would have been paying \$40 per week and you would have paid for 52 weeks, sir. You know what we are now doing, sir - we are now increasing the disposable income of our people, sir, by \$2 080 per year, sir. When you add that, sir, to the \$3 800 - and that is where, sir, they do not know how to respond, sir. What we will see, sir, is that we have been able, sir, on a place where Lodge Road residents would be dependent, to put \$5 880 in disposable income back in the hands of our people. And

that is what is worrying them, sir. That is what is worrying them, sir.

But Mr. Speaker, it gets even better. If you live in Dingleton Terrace, Flat Rock, or similar areas, you would have been paying \$80 per week multiplied by 52 weeks - \$4 160. And when you add the bus fares with the franchise, you get \$7 860 in disposable income back into people's pockets. And that is what is worrying them, because they talk about all these things, but what they do not understand, sir, is that this party is so caring about poor people that even though there is a world crisis, we have found creative ways of increasing the disposable income for the masses of people in this country. And that is what is worrying, sir.

But Mr. Speaker, bring the people of Country Road and Three Sides Meet - all of their parents are there. Because these people also pay \$150 a week. Give them \$6 000, \$6 300 in disposable income back in their pockets. When you add the \$3 800 they no longer have to pay, sir, they will get, sir, \$10 100 in additional disposable income. Nobody has to pay this expenditure, sir. No, they do not have to do it, sir. And that is what we are talking about, because what they are saying, sir, to people - when you analyse the facts and you do this properly, you realise how much money, as a price of tenantry, we have been able to free for the masses of people in this country and put that in their pockets. And we are not talking about the caps. So when they go along saying that we have not done anything for poor people, sir, just the past years and the removal of the rent alone, sir, has been able to put between \$5 880 a year back in poor people's pockets or \$10 100 - and that is what is worrying them.

We should get the golden opportunity and push on the conveyances so that people can receive these things, bring their conveyance when they said so, so that they amended the law to accommodate people in tenancies so that they could get their lots - they can do it. But now we are doing it to get people a piece of land and a building. The same thing if there is a friend. In other words, if they can do no wrong, everything they do is correct. But when we seek to empower people and make it better than them in a different way, they complain. Mr. Speaker, we know how to do social engineering policy - the Democratic Labour Party knows how to do social engineering. We drove as far back as free secondary education, not to mention school buses and free buses. This is just a continuation, sir, of social engineering by the Democratic Labour Party, sir. So this is nothing to surprise.

Mr. Speaker, whenever we come to Parliament to empower people in this country, we get the same people saying we do not care, when they are prepared to get the car and know that we are giving them an asset to improve their asset, because everybody knows that when you get people owning their property, we are empowering people.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are about empowering people, and that is why I stand for that, and when I asked the man that is bigger in one section than in the other - so Mr. Speaker, I am not worried about these things, because one day I am confident, sir, that when we do things we do it right, sir. And that is why, sir, we will ensure that we continue with these policies to make sure that the people in the Americas are empowered. You know, Mr. Speaker, about thousands of people having a right to get a conveyance and go to the bank and borrow money to send their children to school. This is what they are arguing about, sir. They do not feel, sir, that poor people should have the same right - they are entitled to a conveyance - but yet they were coming here and how many conveyances have they for themselves, and now we are seeking to get poor people one conveyance and they seek to frustrate the effort.

Mr. Speaker, we understand the social engineering. We understand how it will empower our people and that is why we are supporting it, sir, because we are not selfish people. We are here to ensure that we protect the interest and continue to look after the interests of the people above us. And that is why, sir, we have no choice but to support this. We took between 2008 and 2012 to do this. For the time they came to power in 1994, they were thinking about doing this for 15 years. They could not do it but we did it in four. And they are complaining. Every time we perfect something they can find an argument. There is no foundation for them. But you know something, sir? Every hot servant - they claim everything you do behind your back, because they were in favour of conveyances in here. But when they get to the people, you know, they give you the units we passed in the House, but in here they will put it down to make you believe you are doing the worst thing in the world, and behind your back and off your spoke they claim everything you do.

But Mr. Speaker, I want to say this. This will go down as one of the greatest pieces of social engineering that has occurred in this Parliament after free secondary education. Because I can tell the people who have been speaking to me that once they get the conveyance, they can now take it to the bank and they have a piece of collateral, that the man on the west coast has the same entitlement as them and that they have the same entitlement as the man on the west coast. They now own a piece of the rock. And you know, sir, they cannot talk about land ownership because that Government, sir, they had large sums, a large number of pieces of land. But what did they do with the land? They took the land and put it in the land bank for white people because of creative scarcity. At the same time, to ensure that poor people did not get land. What they did while they were offering their friends land - they were born with condition cards and large numbers to get poor people, because they knew, yes, they knew that once you bought a car, you would not have any money remaining to buy a

piece of land. And they started reporting disposable income to buy land. We are not doing that.

What we are doing today, sir, is continuing by transferring these units to the people. And at the same time we are also telling them that if they cannot get a unit, we will sell you a piece of land at \$5 a square foot. And that is what we are doing. We are empowering people. There has always been no philosophy and no policy to bring the poor people close to us. Why the Barbados Labour Party believes they should push them away and make them dependent on them - and this is why they cannot associate with this, because they believe that the more independent people they get in Barbados, the less votes they get. They see everything as votes and they cannot handle independent people. And the more that we empower people in Barbados, they will be lacking for support coming along. And that is why they are fighting against this. But if they were smart, every man or woman would have gone up and associated themselves with this far-reaching piece of legislation. But as the Republicans in America have done, they believe they are going to block everything, not recognising that Obama is on his way and that it is better for them to associate. But you see what they are fighting for - they know that we are not on our way out, that we are on our way up. And that is what is frightening them, because they will have to face us and we will implement this and we will watch it grow. And what we will do, we will even look forward, sir, because we have always said, sir, that we are going to find a housing policy and a land policy to empower the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, sir, as we end in housing, sir, as it relates to housing, sir, we are now doing it in a big way as it relates to land. As we ended in education, sir, we are now doing it in land and housing, sir. Mr. Speaker, after free secondary education, sir, the next greatest social thing that can occur - and I said this, sir, in the early 2000s, sir, across roads - that after we have delivered free secondary education, the next thing we have to deliver on is land in Barbados. And today, sir, I am here to watch it being played out, sir, and to watch it being implemented. Because what we have been able to do after delivering free secondary education, sir, we have now been able to deliver on house lots and land.

And do not disrupt the spirit, sir, because if you want to stay working, sir, come to Montpelier in St. Lucy and see what poor people will do when you give them the land. For example, sir, to understand how people operate, sir, in Montpelier, sir, I was able to allocate lots to National Housing, sir. The people see the houses that were built by the Barbados Labour Party, sir - you have to ask yourself, sir, how can a political party come into power in Barbados and build houses like those, when the people, when empowered to allow themselves to build their own house, they build mansions, because they know how to do it on

weekends, they know how to use their funds. But they are not about friends, they are about contractors. They are people, sir, who will extract, sir. But what we are about, sir, we are about empowering people, sir.

And I am saying, sir, I was happy to hear the Honourable Member for St. John speaking to the issue of house lots because that is something, sir, I have a passion for, because I believe that we should not as a people saddle people with large mortgages, but we should empower people by giving them some house lots and allow them to build at their own pace. Remember, the Honourable Member for St. James North knows of what I speak, because he is from that background and he is from that understanding of how to empower poor people, sir. They know how to build from the back and come forward. They know, sir, to turn concrete on Saturdays with their friends. And there is nothing strange to me, sir - I must be interested in this, sir - that is how my house is built. We know how to use the combies and biscuits, and nobody only uses combies and biscuits for election time. Combies and biscuits - they are used for a story being told, and others being told, that when women decide to renovate my house, when they go to the first pillar of the house, all they can find is corned beef sauce and biscuit boxes. But you know what, sir? Because of that, they were able to construct the property that I call my own. And you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? We were not selfish. We turned around and did the same thing for the workman. And that is what we have to encourage - people to help each other. And that is why I have a passion about housing, because I believe that we must continue to build the communities and allow the people to build the communities.

All of us are in here with pastoral constituencies and see people turning concrete. And I have always said to the Minister of Housing that a very good example of his housing policy is Montpelier. On the right-hand side going in you have the Barbados Labour Party. On the left-hand side you have the Democratic Labour Party. That is a comparison between the two political parties.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support this amendment because it is about empowerment. And not only that, sir, if the Member for St. Andrew was in his seat when I myself was speaking, he would have heard me say that there are some amendments to make. But because he was elsewhere, he could not. And he spoke as if this Bill is final. It is not. There are amendments that are coming in the Senate. So I do not know what is the big argument - how you could come at the last minute and want to claim credit for the whole day. So, Mr. Speaker, what I am saying, sir, is that there are amendments that will be made. The Minister said he will make them, and I have the full confidence that the Minister will make these amendments in committee. This is a normal practice, Mr. Speaker - you cannot make

amendments now. Mr. Speaker, as you would know, the amendments will be made in committee. So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I am proud to be associated with a political body that believes in empowering people and making them independent.

and not dependent.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish, sir, to add my comments to this debate and to indicate at the outset I have got no housing units. However, I have very humble, hardworking Barbadians whom I believe deserve to get some benefits, too. I want to reinforce some of the points that were raised by this side of this Honourable Chamber and to reinforce or to reiterate that the process with the housing units and the sale, starting with the Barbados Labour Party since 2004, 2005. And I am happy that a Democratic Labour Party has continued to pursue that effort to be able to continue to empower Barbadians. It is a pity that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, who is the Minister of Rural, did not follow suit in that respect with Rockhampton Road and Cane Wood Road. That only needed bituminising over the last five years. So the continuity by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is respected highly by me. All Barbadians deserve to be empowered and any effort, and I will keep saying it over and over again, sir, until you tell me that I am regurgitating the same point. I believe that when people are empowered, it builds a better society. People feel worthy to be a part of this society. I believe it makes them more productive and more respectful of whatever they receive. So the social legislation, though, when it comes to housing and other aspects of our living, has been going on for numerous decades in Barbados. And I want to highly commend all governments, and I hope that any future government will continue along this vein of seeking out to draft and implement social legislation that will empower Barbadians in a better way.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is misleading the House because the Honourable Member knows that the roads that the Honourable Member is speaking about were not budgeted by Rural. But it so happened that I had to find the money to pay the contractors - over \$1.2 million - to pay the contractors for roads that were not budgeted for, and -

Miss C. Y. FORDE: – not completed. I know. We know, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member might be a millionaire, and therefore, if that is the case, then I feel good about it. But I still leave my point there because I want to get to the housing component. But those people who live in Rockhampton Road, Jackson, St. Michael, are proud Barbadians who do not have housing units, who get

nothing free. But they contribute to the National Consolidated Fund because they are working people, most of them, and they are proud, honest Barbadians contributing through their income tax, through that and all the other aspects of costs that they are expected to pay and are willing to pay. But the social legislation to which I was referring, which for many decades has been offered and introduced - let me say it that way - by the various governments, is associated with the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. And I challenge any Honourable Member on either side of this Chamber or any individual in the rest of the society to state that the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act of the very early 1990s, in another administration with the Labour Party, did not bring about a measure of transformation that is phenomenal, that it is the envy of other communities in our region and indeed the rest of the world, the way that it was done. And I am very proud when I move through various communities in this country to see how those plantation tenancies have been transformed.

And then at a later date, another Labour Party administration looked towards the urban tenancies where people in urban Barbados who are living under tenancies and qualified can pay \$2.50 per square foot while Government will subsidise the rest of it. And it means that both rural and urban people are getting help. The permanent employment of Barbadians, sir, who were first formally deemed as casual workers is another important component of empowering people so that they get security of tenure and they can still pay for the housing units, they can maintain themselves, they can buy the car, they can help to educate their children, they can help with community projects, with the churches, with other family members who are less fortunate and so on. That for me is another aspect of the social legislation that we are talking about. The 100 per cent mortgages to be able to be offered to persons who would have been willing to buy spots and build houses or to just acquire the stock alone and do other things on their own. And how the Member for St. Lucy will talk about the community efforts - that too must be lauded in respect of what we are talking about, sir.

And then the General Workers Fund that for me seems to be very dormant now under this Government. And there are thousands of people who would love to access the General Workers Fund to be able to upgrade their homes, to be able to extend them, to be able to do a number of things with their households where they live, sir. Another aspect of social legislation that helped to empower Barbadians came through the Rural and the Urban Development Commission where people's houses were transformed, roads were transformed, persons were given grants to help them to set up their own little businesses or to become entrepreneurs, or there was mass training that helped them to be able to better produce a product that Barbadians want to buy into. These for me are extremely important and I am not going to be dwelling on the housing

programme that the Labour Party had where persons were able to buy the lots and do the construction, or houses and land that they would be able to get somewhere for them to live. The Honourable Members, sir, on the other side are talking a lot about a number of aspects in relation to what we are discussing today to do with the housing units.

And I believe that effort in 2004 by the Barbados Labour Party as a Government spoke volumes for me. Now that we have gone the extra step and the people are given their houses for free - those who qualify - I am not complaining, because times are so hard now that for persons to have to come out now to pay for them, it will really cause both them to go the route of the cemetery. Every day somebody drops dead, sir. Every day somebody gets a stroke in this country because of the hardship that the Democratic Labour Party has forced on them throughout the lucky manifesto and the lack of implementation of policies to save those people. And -

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Point of order, sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the public the impression that the only time that people ever get strokes or anything like that is under the Democratic Labour Party. By the time I was a child, people were getting strokes.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, hardship is hitting every household in the face, whether it be the working class, the middle class, the upper middle class and the unemployed. The unemployed, sir, are the ones who have me extremely concerned because we have thousands of young people out there who need hope, who need the handholding to be able to be productive citizens. That, sir, is another aspect of discussion, but I am not going to go there. I will just pass over the interjection that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy made, but the point that I want to make to reinforce what we are discussing here - and I am not bringing any new documents, sir - I am referring to a document of the past where in 2005 the 33rd Annual Report of the National Housing Corporation speaks to the efforts that the Ministry of Housing, under the leadership of the then Member for St. James South, would have been instituting to assist individuals in having their houses in readiness when they had made the deposits.

Some people - I believe there must have been about almost 200 persons - who had been paying small amounts, because there also was a concessionary rate where some individuals only had to pay \$750 to get their unit, depending on the age of the unit. Others were in newer units and were expected to pay \$15 000 or \$50 000, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North had said earlier. But when I see the breakdown, sir, at page 32, where the efforts were being made by the Honourable Minister then and the staff of National Housing, they had to do house-to-

house visits or visits to the various communities to be able to get this kind of information for compilation.

And we see, sir, that the asbestos roofs were one of the major challenges. How do you sell then the housing unit with asbestos roofs when we know of the impact that asbestos roofs can have on the health of individuals? And in 2005–2006 the asbestos roofs and the firewalls - the roofs were removed and the firewalls were installed - because we would appreciate that if the structures were built in a way where, if there were a fire, a whole block could go, then the firewall was very important, and therefore the transferring of any title, any information, anything for these persons could not happen. It would be unreasonable for anyone to do it. And there are almost 1 300 asbestos roofs that were completed in 2005–2006. In relation to the firewalls, there were just over 1 600 firewalls - in Farm Garden, Welton, Hazel, Eden Lodge, Rosemont, Bell Plain, Paul Hill, Bunnies, Collaton, Ivy, Pleasant Hall, Deacons Farm, Ferniehurst, Silver Hill and Kensington Lodge.

The other issues that I want to highlight also have to do with those persons in the old estates who had paid in money - the almost 200 they spoke about. And my question to the Honourable Minister is: will these people get back their money? Because I know this interest - and I am not complaining about it, I am just saying - I know this interest, that there would have been quite some tenants during the period that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East would have been the Minister of Social Transformation. When across Barbados in these housing units there were persons who could not make ends meet, or some who did not choose to make ends meet, because sometimes the mentality among some of our citizens is whether the Government will also pay - what kind of attitude. And therefore, through the Poverty Alleviation Bureau at that time, there were scores of individuals who had debt relief.

And I felt that it was humane on the Labour Party as a government at that time, having implemented strategies to assist those persons, to handhold them and give them another opportunity to remain with a shelter over their heads. I thought it was extremely important for the debt relief to come about. But when we said debt relief, you are talking some people \$7 500 in debt, \$10 000 in debt, \$300 in debt, and that kind of assistance was granted because they do not support lots being taken off people's houses, putting them next to the road, especially houses with families, small children or senior citizens in particular. But nobody should be reduced to that status in any society at all.

So I was very supportive. The younger member will support me on this. When I learned of what the Poverty Alleviation Bureau was doing to help those mothers with

children who were unemployed or whose salaries or wages were so small that they could not always meet that debt, I thought that too was honourable. The Labour Party did that when it was in office.

So those are the two areas that I wish to touch on now, Mr. Speaker. The other aspects of the upgrades for the housing units at that time that impacted on what we needed to do as a government under the Labour Party was associated with the individual wells. There were no individual wells - the wells were communal, let me say it that way. And in order for persons to be able to do their purchase or to receive it as a gift, then those wells had to be examined. New wells, I believe, had to be dug. And so I would like to know if the Honourable Member would have been successful in doing it, because if it were not done, then it caused, at this time, for those residents who are living in the units to be able to have some kind of arrangement made that they will all pay the costs when the sewage has to be cleared and other things to be done in association with the encroachment or the expansion of some of the units. That too was a cause for concern under us, and that is what helped to push back the effort for the sale to be expedited.

And of course the aspects of the legislation. When we talk about persons being able to have their payment, to have their papers in their hand, the last two were to do with the land vesting that was being pursued, and of course the general maintenance of the units. Workers cannot give people the units when they are in a position that they need proper maintenance - windows falling out, toilets not flushing properly, pipes leaking, and so on. And the maintenance at that time, and subsequent to that when we exited office in January 2008, the maintenance was ongoing, ensuring that the quality of life of individuals would have been protected.

Now, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South earlier spoke of an old lady who was expected to pay a \$50 000 amount and she was told to go for a mortgage. The old lady would never have been able to get the mortgage. So to my mind, that is folly - because no senior citizen will get a mortgage. But I believe this is another opportunity for families to come together, to lend support. When we started to work, each of us in our large family did something to improve the quality of the house where we live. And I believe that if younger people were living in the house with that old lady, or with any other senior citizen in any other of the units, those young people needed to come on board and offer the assistance as they do when it comes to a private house - sometimes you get two sisters going forward for a mortgage, you get a partner and another and a spouse going forward for a mortgage, you get a brother and a sister and so on. And I believe that if that kind of exercise were instituted, that old lady would not have been brought

to that level. And I am happy to know that the Minister said she was able to get her unit for free.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I support the sale to families. I just said that because they are the ones who will be beneficiaries at the end of the day. But as I come closer to the close I would wish, sir, to indicate that my old people in St. Thomas, my single mothers, my persons living with HIV and others who are in the marginalised - let me say it that way - they do need a measure of assistance, and despite what the other members on the other side will say, I do not want to see two Barbadoses developed in this country. I do not want to see it. And therefore the fact that the old lady got her house, I am happy for her.

I would wish to call on this Government, before it exits office, to offer some assistance to the people of St. Thomas - meaning the constituency of St. Thomas. I am not speaking of St. James Central because that is where the Boarded Hall housing area is and I expect them to get the benefits for the free units as is the case across the island once they meet the qualification bar. But my seniors, my single mothers, my little ones there, those persons I said living with HIV and so on - they too need to be cushioned by this Government as many thousands others were by the Barbados Labour Party as a government for housing repairs and upgrades.

There are still many houses in the constituency of St. Thomas where - let me say the correct expression - Tropical Storm Tomas devastated the households and blew off roofs and so on that are still not touched. I am asking the Honourable Minister to please give me word as to whether the catastrophe funds are all gone or if these individuals can get some measure of help in this bright new year of 2014. We have been waiting very long and we expect to be able to get some answers, and therefore I am making that request for my seniors in the twilight of their years - they too must have a quality life.

I am asking the National Housing Corporation again: what is the status of the General Workers Fund where people can access it? My people have not been successful in any numbers when it comes to the Housing Neighbourhood Upgrade Programme. For the \$10 000 that has been offered, not one of those in the Allenvue area has received anything. We are still waiting and relying on this Government that speaks about equity, that speaks about transparency, that speaks about quality service and good governance. We are waiting patiently for the Government in the next few weeks - if that is the case, that they will not call a general election - to give us some measure of assurance. Show us that you care for all Barbadians by helping those people in the constituency of St. Thomas who are needy.

And my final comment, sir - I want to find out from the Honourable Minister, if you will so allow me a response, to find out how many persons will now own their units. How many persons who meet the qualification bar have not been included? Will the funds paid in by those persons - whether it will be the full amount or instalments - when they learned in 2004–2005 that they would have been able to purchase their properties, will those persons, sir, be reimbursed the funds? They need it now more than ever because of this high cost of living and the utility bills and the food costs and the petrol and the energy costs and so on. They really do need whatever help they can get in the form of funds.

What plans are there from the Honourable Minister in relation to green spaces near those housing units? Because you will appreciate - and the Honourable Members said it this morning - there are families that are large and that is the reason why they are doing the expansion. If there is any space left I would wish to see not only the zero-lot business happening, I would like to see some green spaces there to help those individuals to find somewhere for recreation, especially for the younger children who are living in those densely populated areas.

We must not forget, still under this Labour Party and the effort that was made to be able to offer people another opportunity to move from the rundown areas where they were living and to be able to receive a better quality of life. And of course I made the query and I want to reinforce it - the General Workers Fund, where people in these harsh economic times do need a little extra something to be able to defray certain costs if they can borrow the money from the General Workers Fund and repay it in the way that they do. Because everybody cannot be a member of the credit union - it is not always possible. I would like to know if the Honourable Minister will be able to indicate, so that my people will hear not from me now but through him, what plans this Government has to be able to ease the squeeze among ordinary people in particular.

And I am sure that once that is done my people as well as the rest of Barbados will get another lease on life for better quality, which is all I feel should be the mantra of any government that is worth its salt. And therefore it is with those few comments, Mr. Speaker, sir, that I have made my contribution, and I would wish to congratulate those persons who should be the beneficiaries of these housing units that started under us but have been brought to completion by the Honourable Member within the Democratic Labour Party as a government to make a difference in the lives of Barbadians.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this resolution which is the National Housing Corporation transfer of terrace units built. And to say that I am very proud of this Democratic

Labour Party administration for bringing this revolutionary piece of legislation which will empower the masses of our country who live in the NHC apartment units across the island to be able to own a piece of this little island paradise - Rock, Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I have the distinct honour of representing the good people of the City of Bridgetown. And among these constituents, we do have a few hundred that actually [Inaudible.]

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this sitting continues from where the suspension was taken, on Order No. 7. Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to lend my voice to this debate in support of this legislation, this bill. Mr. Speaker, periphery seeks to facilitate the transfer by the National Housing Corporation to the tenants of ownership of the terrace units in many parts of Barbados. And I would like to say at the onset that of course, as the Member of Parliament for Christ Church West Central, I have indeed a major vested interest in ensuring that this bill becomes a reality in this House because both within the housing areas of Silver Hill and Gaul Hill, a significant number of units in that development, and of course, many of the residents of Silver Hill and Gaul Hill would want me to express their appreciation, certainly to the Minister of Housing and Lands and indeed the ministry and the office of the Attorney General for moving rather quickly to ensure that we could have before this House a bit of legislation essentially designed, Mr. Speaker, to regularize a situation that, of course, none of us in this House would have caused to happen.

And indeed, many of the residents who would have made adjustments and enlargements, improvements to their units would have done so with the sole purpose of improving the livelihood and arrangements for their families. And this government would have considered it its duty to come up with a solution not to deprive the owners, the occupants of these units, of the opportunity of having title vested in them. But as is customary practice of the Democratic Labour Party government, we believe in doing things according to the law and therefore, unlike the practices that we were seen on the Barbados Labour Party, where they would have done and certainly proceeded to operate in a particular way, the tenants of good governance would have determined and dictated that we come to this House with the appropriate measure to ensure that the Parliament can consider and approve legislation to make good the title of many occupants of housing units under the 20-year transfer programme and indeed by means of this

bill, create the environment and pave the way for the conveyances to be issued to affected persons.

I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I have listened very carefully to members on the other side, particularly the lawyers on the other side, casting significant doubt and certainly taking aim at this bill which is before the House. Many of the assaults, verbal assaults, were related in some measure to the practice of conveyance and the system of requisition in title which, of course, all these arrangements are known to us attorneys who were involved or were involved in the business of conveyancing. But I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that what is happening and what we are doing in this House is not a difficult matter for consideration. My understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that this bill will, in effect, create a regime to allow for the transfer of these units without legal impediment. And when you look at the contents of the bill, it is extremely clear that a new regime is being created which sets the preconditions under which the National Housing Corporation can transfer its current ownership in these units where the occupant, where the tenant has resided for 20 years or more. And that notwithstanding existing issues pertaining to either encumbrances or what would be classified as illegal extensions, that notwithstanding these issues, which have proven to be problematic in solving the issue, that this bill now clears the path and clears the way by which these units can be conveyed. And I don't believe that particular explanation is difficult for anybody to comprehend.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not by surprise. It should take none of us by surprise because I believe all of the measures that we would have brought to this House, we would have brought legislation to deal with the vexing issue of adverse possession and title and so on, and we would have heard similar attacks being made by the Member for St. Andrew where he derided that bit of legislation - it was impossible to implement, it would do nothing new. And that title which was being applied for by adverse possession, the famous title suit, the arguments put in this House was that legislation would have done nothing, absolutely nothing, to cure the particular mischief which it was designed to do. So it does not surprise me that again, of course, that measure was passed by this House and I have not heard of a single complaint being made by legal practitioners, by the Registrar of Titles or any particular client who seeks to have their title perfected in relation to adverse possession. I have not heard any complaints. And equally, and similarly, and as predicted, by the way, we have had a dissertation and an attempt at a lecture in the business and the process of conveyancing and the need to convey by means of the Condominium Act and all kind of stuff, notwithstanding the fact that I heard the Minister saying that he proposes in committee to move an amendment in relation to ensuring that the condominium issue is addressed within the context of this bill. So I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I remain unconvinced, as I usually am, in relation to the arguments

being brought to this House by the members of the Barbados Labour Party opposition.

What offends me - as a matter of fact, perhaps I think the most reasonable contribution I heard in relation to this particular measure coming from the opposition, came from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, where she basically avoided consideration of the bill and spoke to other issues and concerns that she has in relation to housing. Of course, all of the issues she mentioned, Mr. Speaker, were totally avoided by her while she was sitting in the Barbados Labour Party government. All of the issues pertaining to housing difficulties which impinge and impact on the constituents of St. Thomas somehow have been resurrected as being huge and large in the year 2013.

And the Honourable Member for St. Thomas continues to accept zero responsibility for championing any of these issues -

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading this chamber. The Honourable Member is contradicting himself and he says, I did not speak to them but yet I resurrected them. The Honourable Member is misleading the chamber.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: He absolutely is far out to sea at this point in time and I want to continue with the Speaker, but we will have ample opportunity when we go to St. Thomas to deal with the issues pertaining to the Member for St. Thomas consistently coming in this House - rather than representing the constituents on the ground on matters of housing after 14 years in government - coming to this House to somehow lay blame on her inaction at the feet of this government. I take exception to that, Mr. Speaker. And I take exception not only in relation to what is happening in this House, I take exception to it on behalf of the hundreds of constituents of St. Thomas with whom I interact on a regular basis.

Because this measure, rather than being derided, rather than being attacked, Mr. Speaker, this particular bill ought to be held high as being a serious initiative being brought in this House to empower hundreds of Barbadians in Barbados, who for years, Mr. Speaker, would have been deprived of the opportunity of owning their units by the Barbados Labour Party government at the time. In fact, all that they did in relation to their transfer of title programme was to charge people who were in occupation of those housing units exorbitant purchase prices. That is what they did. The difference between, Mr. Speaker, the two parties is simple. We saw that injustice in 2008 and we made a solemn promise to the people of Barbados that upon assuming office we will ensure that those units, once persons were tenants for 20 years or more, that we would ensure that they could own those units without having to pay a single cent for them. We said that and we said it not

out of the blue. We said it within the context of what we saw was significant injustice by the Barbados Labour Party administration at the time for persons who would have lived in the unit, who would have paid their rent for 20 years or more. We felt that they would have paid for the unit many times over and as a consistent and precise social engineering measure, we determined, Mr. Speaker, that they will not be charged any purchase price for having to have title transfer to them.

And I want to place this particular measure, Mr. Speaker, within the context because we often hear the Barbados Labour Party trying to fool Barbadians that nothing is being done by this government on their behalf. And that seems hard. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas saying that she wants to hear what plans the government has to ease the squeeze. That is what she said. She wants to know what plans this government has to ease the squeeze. I listened very carefully and attentively to her in particular, Mr. Speaker. Now you have a measure before this House, a significant piece of social legislation designed to ensure that those Barbadians, hundreds of them, who live in housing developments across Barbados - not only in relation to Silver Hill and Gaul Hill, across this country. As a matter of fact, some of the beneficiaries of this bill reside within constituencies currently held by some members for the time being of the Barbados Labour Party. And you can tell me that they have the audacity to come in here and not support it and not support a measure that is designed to empower their own constituents. I find it distasteful. I find it, Mr. Speaker, totally unacceptable. And therefore, that is why I have to speak in this way, because this measure is one of the measures designed to ease the squeeze.

When you could have - Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point. I want to make the point that from the time that we came into office and we declared that this particular policy would take effect, it meant that those beneficiaries stopped paying rent. Rent was no longer a cost for them to budget within their weekly or monthly salaries. We took away the rent immediately. Once they signed that offer letter in anticipation of their conveyance and the legal work to be done, they paid no rent whatsoever. That, to my mind, Mr. Speaker, is easing the squeeze.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that I heard from the Member for St. George North, I heard from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, lamenting the housing issues and so on and all the things that ought to be done within the housing units. I heard of the need for green spaces. I heard of all of the things that I thought ought to have been factored into the development of these housing units when the Barbados Labour Party was in office. I heard of them in this House today. And, you know, as usual, Mr. Speaker, I picked up the last issue of the Barbados Labour Party manifesto. In other words, should they have formed the government in 2008? Their manifesto

would have spoken to their plans for housing in Barbados, and given that we are talking about this particular issue of creating a legislative solution for ensuring that title can pass in the affected housing areas because of the very long-standing issue of encumbrances and extensions that were not in accordance with the law, I would have thought, Mr. Speaker, that in their manifesto on pages 54 and 55, that etched in bold would have been an innovative policy designed to ensure that these units could be transferred to tenants without these problems. You know, in this document, there is not a single mention of it. There is not a single mention in their manifesto of this particular problem. But now that we have designed a solution to deal with it, we are hearing that they have issues.

Mind you, I did not hear the Member for St. Thomas saying she has an issue with it. The Member for St. Thomas, in my view, supports this legislation, this bill, and I must compliment her for that. She supports this bill. And the Honourable Member for St. George North himself, based on what I hear from him, supports this particular measure. What I heard from the Honourable Member is diametrically opposed to what I am hearing from the other members on that side. So there is a divide, as usual, on the benches of the opposition as to whether or not they support this particular measure. And it is a normal thing. We find solutions to the problems and we come in here, and one would expect that if we are debating a solution to such a vexing problem, that if the opposition had issues, that we would hear alternative suggestions. I have heard none, Mr. Speaker, and I remain quite satisfied that this particular bill offers us the solution. It creates a legislative framework. We are not talking about anything else other than this particular bill before the House, which is, in fact, special. You call it special legislation for a reason, Mr. Speaker, because it is special. It is special legislation designed to deal with a special problem, and therefore, within the context of conveyancing. If you are an attorney at law and you are seeking to requisition in relation to a housing unit, once this bill is passed, I will consider that you will be acting other than in accordance with what is conveyancing practice, not to requisition in accordance with this bill, because this bill, once made law, has to be the centrepiece of requisitions made by any attorney who is doing conveyancing and doing legal work for a client in relation to the conveyance of the unit. My view remains, Mr. Speaker, that this particular measure - we are on the right course, and therefore, it is clearly intended to address a problem which has been around for many years. And I am satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that we are in the right direction.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to spend a lot of time on this because I believe that the legislation is quite - the bill before the House is quite clear. And as I said, on behalf of the persons who will benefit in Silver Hill, I believe in Silver Hill we have about 62 extensions, about 42 extensions, and across the housing areas, there are

about 52 encroachments, as the Minister of Housing would have said. But I want to also signal my support for the intention to form residents associations across the housing areas in Barbados, because I believe that from the onset I have been a strong supporter of the formation of residents associations, because I believe that within the context of housing development, that a further move to empower the occupants of these units will be to ensure that there is a systematic way of not only gaining feedback from residents, but ensuring that they together can have a direct say in relation to the development of the housing areas, the entire district.

I agree that within the context of what has happened in the past, that many of our housing units, housing developments would have been developed in a manner that did not address issues such as green spaces, did not address issues such as the need to have commercial operations, meaning making provision for vendors and other operations. I believe that going forward, Mr. Speaker, that we will have to make provision for this, because within the context of these areas where people are living, are playing, are recreating, we have to come to the understanding that they will also need to engage in certain areas of commerce. And I think the Honourable Minister is on board with this. And I think it is a great opportunity in forming the residents associations to ensure that they can be involved in this development focus and that their views can be periodically heard. I would like to encourage, certainly the National Housing Corporation to use the residents associations within the housing developments for regular and consistent consultation and to ensure that the areas of concerns - and not only concerns, but that the input from residents are taken on board. I believe that the development of our housing areas, those that are coming on stream and the existing ones, can benefit from that consistent interaction with the residents.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would have heard the Honourable Member for St. George North making a number of statements seeking to represent one of our distinguished scholars and writers, C. L. R. James. In fact, he did make the statement that C. L. R. James made some kind of a declaration. Well, he has not brought in the House anything to convince us that he was reading from any primary source. And that primary source could either be one of the books written by C. L. R. James - he would have written a number of books on a number of issues of serious import. Of course, there is no record, and I would challenge the Honourable Member for St. George North to produce any record of C. L. R. James making any such statement in relation to the Democratic Labour Party following the Barbados Labour Party in anything. As a matter of fact, I would even dare to say that no writer of the stature of C. L. R. James would even want to mention the word Barbados Labour Party in any of his writings. And therefore I stand

to challenge the Honourable Member for St. George North on that.

In fact, I would recommend as required reading - because C. L. R. James, for example, we know that he was a Trinidadian, was born in Trinidad, he lived in the United States for many years. And of course we know that, unfortunately, in the 1950s, he was deported from the United States and only got the right to return to the United States in the 1960s. Now, the Honourable Member for St. George North claimed that C. L. R. James made these statements or wrote these things in 1960. He was on his way back to the United States, and I doubt that he was writing anything at that time. Now, my recollection, Mr. Speaker, is that C. L. R. James wrote a number of key pieces, and I want to - because it was raised - I want to tell the Honourable Member for St. George North, he wrote a book called *Every Cook Can Govern*. *Every Cook Can Govern*, and that was published in 1962. I don't know if that book was referring to what is happening now within the Barbados Labour Party, because every cook in there now feels as though they can lead the Barbados Labour Party or can govern it. He also wrote a book called *Beyond the Boundary*. And he wrote that book, published in 1962. I believe what was done to the former Opposition Leader in removing her from office unceremoniously was beyond the boundary. So maybe C. L. R. James was speaking then to what was going to happen within the Barbados Labour Party in relation to that. He also wrote about modern politics and his *Modern Politics*, Mr. Speaker, was a compilation of a number of his lectures. And as we know, C. L. R. James was very supportive of Marxism and those lectures dealt with Marxism. And in fact, he felt that Marxism ought to have been studied closer within the Caribbean experience and therefore he wrote about it and so on.

But there is one book that I want to recommend to the Honourable Member for St. George North and the Barbados Labour Party. And the book is entitled *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*. *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways*. And that was written in 1953. But the title of that book, which speaks to renegades and castaways, is probably something that I believe that the Honourable Members on the other side can relate to and speak to. But I felt it was a bit disingenuous to bring C. L. R. James' name in this debate and to ascribe to him something that he did not say. I thought he wrote some very good pieces in terms of what was happening during his time, but certainly not in relation to this debate.

But I want to end, Mr. Speaker, by saying that the record of the Democratic Labour Party in relation to housing development in Barbados, when compared to that of the Barbados Labour Party, stands heads and shoulders above what we have seen by the Barbados Labour Party in their 14 years of government. And I want to echo - because

I am not saying it because I can say - I want to echo because right across my constituency, Mr. Speaker, I have men and women who come to me at my constituency office and they say to me, I have been waiting for a unit or a piece of land for 20 years and so on. These people were waiting for housing solutions under the Barbados Labour Party for many, many years. And while we have been able to help some of them, while we have been able to help some of those persons who have been waiting for housing solutions for so many years under the Labour Party administration, they recognise. They recognise, Mr. Speaker, that having been in office for a mere coming up to five years, that we have only just scratched the top of the iceberg and that more solutions for housing are yet to come.

In my constituency in particular, we would have started an acquisition for land in Boxall, but unfortunately we actually did not pursue that acquisition because a family would have been affected. There was a particular gentleman who voiced concerns and pleaded with us because he wanted to hold that land for his family members. And we acceded to that as a conscientious government. But we are looking now, Mr. Speaker - I have asked the Minister of Housing and he has indicated positively that we will be looking at some land in Boxall for a housing development. And also there is also some land in Silver Hill that will be looked at in relation to housing development for persons who would rather stay within the constituency. We recognise that many of the persons who need housing would rather stay within their constituency. And that is something we support. But we recognise that providing housing is not a short-term matter. And although we have accelerated the provision of housing, we cannot obviously do all of the requirements within a short five-year term.

And that is precisely why today, given the acceleration of housing solutions in Barbados, that is why many persons that I meet are positively optimistic about the future in relation to housing development in Barbados, because they are very ready and anxious to see the Democratic Party moving forward with additional housing solutions and doing it within the next five years, because we have done well in the five years that we have been in office, and therefore we have been given the relevant, excellent passing grade to take our housing programme further. So, Mr. Speaker, I again would like to voice my support for this measure. And I take note of the minister's introduction that there will be a few amendments in committee to deal with a few of the issues. But this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, represents a solution to a problem. We have studied the problem and we have brought a solution to this House and we have done it in record time. Mr. Speaker.

So, on behalf of those residents in Silver Hill and Gaull who stand to benefit from this measure, I would like

to offer certainly my appreciation and congratulations to the minister and his staff and also to the officers in the Attorney General's office who would have drafted and assisted us in this process. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to contribute to the debate. But I believe that when we look at the particular piece of legislation that we are debating, I know that the members on the other side said that it was not at all earth-shattering, that it had very little significance. But, you know, Sir, I was elected by the members of the community of St. Michael West Central to represent them in Parliament. And a representative, Sir, must know his constituency in terms of what the needs are and what will be most impactful on the people.

And, Sir, the residents of Grazettes housing area can justly, Sir, be proud of the fact that the Democratic Labour Party, Sir, has brought this particular piece of legislation to be considered at this time, after the previous Government had the opportunity for some time, Sir, to bring it - Sir, it was never brought. Not only that, to be fair, the thing is really that it did bring some legislation, but it did not speak to the fact that really what was happening, Sir, within the estate, the housing estate, Sir, was that they were operating in a way which did not actually serve the residents of those estates.

And I believe that instead of criticising the Government at this time for accurately recognising where we are in terms of our country's development and where, in terms of responsibilities of Government, to provide Barbadians with suitable housing accommodation, what the responsibilities are - that at least the Democratic Party was innovative in bringing this legislation that met the needs of people. I want to emphasise there that we sometimes in this country do not want to admit that there are people in this country who sometimes do not have the resources, Sir, to achieve the most basic aspiration. And I believe, Sir, that we have to recognise that one of the most basic things that most Barbadians want to aspire to, Sir, is to own a home. That is one of the most basic things.

And I think therefore, that to say that this particular piece of legislation, Sir, really has no significance in the context of a modern Barbadian society, Sir - I think, Sir, it is not true to say that. It does have great significance. And let me just say this, Sir, in Grazettes, for instance, in that area, we have 234 units, Sir, inside it - 234 units, Sir. Among them, 131 letters, Sir, were sent out to residents of those units. The number of letters returned and accepted, Sir, was 129, Sir. We really nearly got 100 per cent of the letters. And I am sure that by the end of the process, Sir, all 131, Sir, will have accepted. And, Sir, it demonstrates that

there was a genuine keenness on the part of the residents of those units, Sir, that they wanted to own their own unit. And that, Sir, is what is important.

And I really think, Sir, that we have to commend the Minister of Housing, Sir, in moving forward in this manner. We have to commend him because what he was able to do was to carry forward a piece of legislation which the other side failed to do. And the other point too I wish to make is that we have a habit - and today it seems as if the only way we can think of making a point is to create a crisis in our society. We are saying that the Democratic Party is not addressing the other issues that they should be addressing. But, Sir, in truth and in fact, we sometimes do not appreciate the impact of making Barbadians the owners of property.

Sir, a lot of persons who live in these units - I can tell you, Sir, a lot of them, a lot of the residents of St. Michael - are operators, Sir, who have to go to the bank from time to time, Sir, for loans to help them finance their businesses, some of them in these units. Not only that, Sir, the Democratic Party is aware that in these economic times, yes, it is tight. But what we are trying to do is to use every opportunity to help people, to create resources, to use the ingenuity in order to create advantages for themselves. When we permit residents of these estates to be able to own their units, this at least, Sir, forms one other piece of collateral that they can actually use to help them go to a financial institution to seek some form of assistance for the businesses that they operate. There is a certain awareness of empowering individuals, Sir, to take at least control of their own destiny. That is what we are doing.

And I really think, Sir, that in this age where, in a sense, because of the fact that the world has changed, a lot of people are saying to governments today, Sir, that you cannot expect to operate in the same way as you did in the past. Certainly, a lot of these housing estates were built in days when you had other countries in the world who were prepared to be very generous - in other words, when these housing estates were financed, a lot of them were done off grants in many cases. But people in developed countries were able to say, let us give them the grants. That is not happening today. And I really think that what we have to get accustomed to is the fact that we have to start to look to finance our own development. But in the same way, Sir, we need to start to involve people in the process of financing that development.

And that is why I believe when you look at this particular piece of legislation, Sir, it at least helps people to recognise: one, I can own property - and that is one of the basic things. What we have now to teach them to do, Sir, is that on owning that property, what are the things that you can do in order to develop the properties that you own? What we need to do is to develop a sense of community

responsibility. I have noticed that in many of the housing estates what we have seen is a genuine attempt on the part of people, Sir, to improve their surroundings. And one of the things that we should even do within the Grazettes community that we have within West Central is that now we are going to see an effort on the part of those residents to start to improve their communities, make it better. We have to understand that when you create that psyche in the individual that this is something that belongs to me, they invest more into it. And that is a way, Sir, of helping to solve many of the social problems that you find existing within communities by helping them to own that piece of property.

So we must not, Sir, in any way diminish this particular piece of legislation, diminish the fact that it can also cause a different type of mindset in the individuals who are resident, Sir, in those housing estates. And it is sometimes very disappointing, Sir, in terms of debating this. I would want the opposition to come and at least embrace that kind of approach. Because what we are doing - and they know it - is that in this period where a lot of governments are challenged in terms of delivery of services, delivering the necessary financial results to finance development, here it is that we are bringing, Sir, a piece of legislation, Sir, that will change the psyche, the thinking of Barbadians, Sir, as to how we can do things and how we can move to work together with Government.

It does something else, Sir, that we need to recognise. What this actually does, Sir, it frees up the resources of Government to move and deal, Sir, with other issues as it pertains to housing in our society. One of the issues, Sir, certainly that we have within St. Michael West Central - and that is one of the things I think we need to move quickly on - is the issue of the facilities, the general facilities and upkeep of those facilities in the area. If we can encourage residents, Sir, to upkeep these properties, Sir, in the appropriate way, what we are actually doing now is that the scarce resources that Government has, we can actually improve the physical landscape and the surroundings of where people live, and you free up resources that would otherwise be spent on the units themselves. That is something else that we can do.

And sometimes we have to be careful, Sir, that when we look at these communities, all we see sometimes, or we believe that we see, are people who are not concerned about their own development. And one of the things I find that we have as a tendency to do is - even today - to continue to put what I will call unreasonable responsibilities on Government that you know are unreasonable. Usually, even if they were the Government, they could not do it anyhow. But I know the intention is really that they would like, yes, to win a vote - but they would not win a vote that way. That is why, of course, the Democratic Party will be returned, Sir, whenever the

election is called. That is why. Because in a sense the arguments that they are bringing forward are not relevant to the needs of the people today, because the Democratic Party has recognised these are the ways in which as a nation we have got to move forward.

We have got to start to think differently to how we thought in the past. We have got to start to look not only to impact on a particular group of people and make a particular group of people mendicant. What we have got to try to do is to find ways to empower people and reduce their dependency on the state for certain services. And if it is one thing that this bill carefully tackles, it is that of housing. And the point about this bill is that it does it in a humane way. Because, for instance, when you look at the section of the bill that speaks to the fact that those tenants who have been tenants of the NHC for 20 years will be able to become homeowners - but it does not stop there. And I think that when you look at the whole event being crafted, it shows the whole humanity in the approach that has hitherto been conducted by the Democratic Party. And they recognise that there may be situations where individuals might be in these units for less than 20 years, but they also offer a way in which those individuals can be able, Sir, to own those units.

I think also, too, it was a bit of a stretch to try to treat those tenants who might be in the units for a shorter period of time the same way as those tenants who were in it for 20 years. I think that we have to be fair when we are looking at issues here. I think that we have to look at it in a very pragmatic manner, because what we do when we do things like this and confuse people about it, we stretch the argument. And then, of course, that determines the expectations of people. And those are the things that we have to be careful of as leaders of communities, as representatives of people. Because in a sense, what we are doing, we are actually trying to structure the approaches that we are going to take in terms of the development of people.

And again, when we look at the bill, what we see is an attempt to be balanced, but it is also an attempt not to shut out persons that do not need to be shut out. And I think that the Democratic Party, but more especially the Minister of Housing, I think he has to be commended for the approach that he has taken here. And, Sir, when we therefore look at the fact that you will see those kind of approaches being taken - now, one of the other things, let me talk about the social dimension, Sir.

A lot of these communities - I know it was described by the previous administration as a basic urban community - one of the things that we have to be careful of is that we ensure that we provide a certain level of services to support that community, because in St. Michael, Sir, we have a huge, large group of young people who have energy. And

we would want to see the basic support of facilities and environments that not only young people can benefit from, but the older people can benefit from. And again, I would want to say to the minister that in his second term we look at the issue of ensuring that we develop adequate sporting facilities, especially within Grazettes. Because I know the Minister of Sport - I spoke to him about this already. The Grazettes playing field actually, Sir, needs some work being done on it. The drain is there when the rain falls, servicing the Grazettes playing field area. That area, Sir, is extremely draining - the water does not go off adequately.

And even one of the things I have seen in other areas - where we have invested heavily in facilities up at the University of the West Indies - because one of the things that we do not seem to recognise is that a lot of the money that is used to invest in facilities at UWI and at Kensington is taxpayers' money which can also be invested in certain communities. One of the things I have a concern about is the extent to which, in developing these ultra-modern facilities, we are also impacting negatively on sporting facilities in communities like Grazettes housing area in itself. We have also the Belfield facilities down there, which of course is not a housing area, but certainly is an area which I think needs attention. And we also have some other fields which youngsters use within the community of St. Michael West Central, for instance in the area in Roger Quarry Road and the same Marshall Parkinson Road.

I am saying that what we need to recognise is that we need to ensure that we develop facilities that are more environmentally pleasing. That is one of the things that we need to do. We have spoken to the fact of the preservation of green areas - but not only preservation, but the issue of maintenance of green areas, especially, Sir, within these housing areas. Because when you have a large number of people concentrated in one area, sometimes you have passions building up. Not only that, you have people - the older people need exercise too. And one of the things that we have not paid a lot of attention to, especially in relation to these housing areas, is the fact that we need to have areas in which people can recreate. So what we need to understand is that even with this development in terms of this bill, what we will see is resources being freed up to allow for the development of recreation facilities in these areas.

But what also - I come back to the point about the question of sporting areas, especially within St. Michael West Central. There is a large amount of talent among our young people. One of the things I am going to feel strongly about, Sir, especially in terms of sport for those areas, is that we build up the sporting facilities in those housing areas in a way that - the same way the school up at [Inaudible.], Sir, can produce good sportsmen - that we have adequate sporting facilities of a certain standard that will allow young people to be able to practise their craft

when it comes to sports and produce better sportsmen. Because one of the things that happened under the last administration was that we seemed to lose the focus of sporting development within communities in itself.

There was a time when Grazettes had one of the best bodybuilding teams around Barbados - excellent bodybuilding. We have to ask ourselves, what happened to destroy those kind of initiatives that we have within these housing areas? You have to ask yourself, what happened? And maybe what are the things that we did - maybe sometimes with good intentions, mistakenly - what did we do to undermine those who were responsible for the successes of the teams at that time, that gave those communities within the Grazettes area a certain sense of pride in terms of the achievements? Those are some things that we need to address.

And again, I want to emphasise that this bill that we are bringing is more than that. It is not just giving people houses. It is returning the pride to the communities, recognising that we are living there in a different time. And I think the opposition needs, when they look at the argument as to why we are doing this and why it is so revolutionary, to recognise that it is more than that. And that is why, even more so, because of their lack of understanding of the new part of it at this point, it also emphasises the reason why this Democratic Party administration has to continue the work that it has started. It emphasises that. So we have to appreciate, Sir, that it is a lot more than it seems. I think that we have to understand that the whole thing about the transfer of ownership - that the ownership carries certain responsibilities - is in a very revolutionary way. And I think we have to recognise that.

The other point too, Sir, I wish to make: what we have seen in many cases, too, in these housing estates is that as residents take more responsibility for these units - and this is going to happen because I think that as more and more people, given the fact that we have, again in terms of the test, 129 of the 131 that have been accepted - what we will see as a result of that too, Sir, is that in terms of the physical landscape, because I talked about the fact that Government needs, yes, to develop the physical landscape of the community, but what also I think we need to recognise is: how do we involve the people in that effort? Because one of the things that are happening there, especially at the Grazettes community centre, I know that very often it is hyperactive, but one of the things that we do not get a lot of is the residents themselves actually getting involved in terms of making sure that when we improve the facilities, they themselves are part of it and make sure that it continues to be maintained. And that is one of the areas in terms of self-help within communities that we need to build, Sir, again.

In terms of the special legislation that we are bringing, which I think is very important, that we need to deal with for areas like Grazettes - I think it is going to mean something. But as we also look to other communities, which is, for instance, the area in Marshall Parkinson Road, when we attempt to do certain things, I think that we have now to start to look at the building of residential units in those areas in a different way. We have to do it in a manner, Sir, that when we build these areas, they actually fit into the communities.

One of the points I want to make too, Sir, in terms of the question of the Marshall Parkinson Road facilities that are going to be done, is that I hope the relevant authority recognises that in terms of the housing solutions, we have situations in which there are persons in St. Michael West Central who are looking for accommodations, but a lot of them do not want to move out of the area in which they live. And I would hope that we do not do what in some cases was done by the previous administration, where when we were able to identify land, what happened is that a lot of persons who did not live in the area at the time seemed to be - at least in the opinion of those residents of St. Michael West Central - given preference. I think that is something that we have to be very careful of. But of course, we have to recognise that at the same time it depends on a person's ability to finance or own the property, or in some cases rent the property.

But the thing is, really, Sir, I think that we need to ensure that those persons who are within St. Michael West Central and who can actually pay for those properties, that they should also be given first preference, especially when it relates to the areas in Marshall Parkinson Road. And with that, I want to say that I fully support the programme. I believe, Sir, that it is something that generally the residents of St. Michael West Central will be generally in support of. And not only that too, the residents within the Grazettes housing area - they generally, Sir, will be in support of the initiative that is being undertaken on the part of the Minister of Housing. I think that we need to give them our fullest cooperation and generally indicate that.

I want to say again, Sir, in relation to Marshall Parkinson Road, I look forward to the time, very soon, Sir, when we will be able to start construction of units in that area to serve the needs of residents of St. Michael West Central and of course wider Barbados. And with that, Sir, I thank you very much. I support the bill wholeheartedly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the honourable member for St. James North.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. George Lamming, sometime between 1951 and 1953, sensitive, aware of the circumstances in which the poor had been abiding, launched out an attack on the forces that kept

back poor people, launched out an attack not only on the poor infrastructure like roads, also launched an attack on the very poor quality housing which was located in Barbados and in particular St. Michael. Honourable members are free - you don't have to read the whole book. Right on. In the first few pages he mentioned that when the rain fell, everybody in that area - Zeroed and surrounding areas - would be in trouble. The reason I mentioned that, sir, is that prior to the establishment of the Housing Authority, as it was then called, there was no real public housing, and the result was that a lot of persons who deserved better never accessed housing solutions. In so far as Grantley Adams and the Barbados Labour Party are concerned, they did three things among others, whichever way you look at it: the National Housing Authority, or the Housing Authority as people call it, was set up with the view to providing the poor with adequate housing and proper facilities. Aware, sir, that in the days of Massa and those who succeeded Massa, particular persons had no security of tenure. In Chapter 2, 3, 7 of the Laws of Barbados there are set up provisions in respect of providing security of tenure for particular persons who rent their house and small agricultural pieces of land. Grantley Adams' Barbados Labour Party, Mr. Speaker, also passed legislation to deal with chattel mortgages. The reality being in those days that a typical poor person had to find funding by means of legislation where systems and policies had effectively prevented particular persons from being able to access funds for housing. The chattel mortgage was under not only the severe scrutiny of the commercial banking sector, but the provision for chattel mortgages had not been followed. Many financial institutions said that if you put a chattel house to secure any amount of money borrowed, you had no control - as borrower, the funds are not owner of the land - you had no control over having that chattel house moved away from the land, or complications arising in relation to how the banks perceived possible risk in that particular area. Today, sir, after about 15 years where only one commercial bank had been offering chattel mortgages, three commercial banks are offering chattel mortgages. Once again, the probability is that a lot of people are being enticed to take chattel mortgages because the banks have so much money and such liquidity that they want to lend to make some profit. But the traditional intent was for poor people to be able to access housing.

I may be able, sir, to talk about a programme under the Barbados Labour Party government that was reactivated by the honourable member for St. Andrew and the honourable member for St. George North. A young writer in the 1980s once said that the average Barbadian would go for a separate house and land rather than terrace units, and that the album of St. Lucy would tell you the tradition among rural people is to get up a small land and put up a house. But because of a number of constraints and problems, persons have had to rely on public sector housing even when some of them did qualify by having

income so high that they could absorb their needs elsewhere. It would not be true to say that the Barbados Labour Party has done nothing for housing. If you check the record, Mr. Speaker, you may encounter a situation where between 1989 and 1994 the government of that day hardly got past Church Village and St. Peter as far as housing is concerned. But to the Barbados Labour Party's credit, under Lionel Seymour Craig, the charismatic Rosemont was set up, Ferniehurst was set up, Haynesville was expanded, Redmond Village. And if you doubt me, you could ask the honourable member, former honourable member for St. James, Mr. Craig, or a person who worked closely with him, a former honourable member for St. Thomas who helped to guide policy.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for St. George North mentioned that we are into an era where people are taking chances and squatting on other people's land. This thing about squatting is not entrenched within the culture of Barbados and should be dealt with speedily right away. At the same time, when government, through the National Housing Corporation and particularly the Ministry of Housing, has to face the reality of the stocks of available land in Barbados, then every encouragement must be given to the government - whichever government - to do their best to facilitate housing and to make it accessible to poor people. Sir, I mentioned already this question of chattel mortgages where a chattel house can be used as security collateral for a loan. And I also mentioned the Adams era of the 1950s, which actually attracted the attention of C. L. R. James. C. L. R. James was not really known to be the purest of democrats and the greatest champion of freedom. I think he was seen to be a left-leaning character who in some countries would be called undesirable or even a communist. But C. L. R. James was of the view that the social policy of the Barbados Labour Party was very much pointing in the direction of Barbados and was not afraid to say that the BLP rather impressed him more than any other party or political organisation.

On the question of squatting, I would, as a Barbadian, encourage those people who are going to risk squatting not to do it. And one reason why I am saying it: first of all, it is illegal. But secondly, sir, when a small man picks up \$35 000 to put on a piece of land in Zone 1 to face the risk of having it demolished, that poor man really has come to grief. I am serious. Where a poor person desperate for a spot is more or less under duress - duress caused by the responsibility to his wife and his children to facilitate accommodation for them - and if John, a small man, finds \$40 000 to do a chattel or start with wall, hoping to be able to develop further, when such a person has to knock down their house which they worked so hard for, that is so vicious as to border on being criminal. And so we have some functionaries on the opposition bench who need to be understood in the context of the fact that tonight we are not opposing this. In fact, it was in all thinking that the

question of complete transfer to simple ownership out of a tentative thing - we are committed. It is just that the honourable member for St. Michael North and the honourable member for St. Andrew looked at certain legal implications which could confuse matters, such that at least one honourable member over there said that amendments will come with a good committee tonight. Yes, I am sure that my ears have not been betraying me. I am sure that at least one honourable member in this debate, in his serious anxiety to ensure that this message is in the Jews, has said that we should purely find the bill in the - where there is no doubt whatever. And you really have to pay attention to the submission of the honourable member for St. Andrew, an outstanding lawyer, an outstanding and senior member, when he said that it is not within the thinking of the Barbados Labour Party to have a loophole when you really ought to go for freehold and what we call simple absolute in possession.

Sir, thank you very much. The honourable member is very supportive, both for what he has brought here today and supportive of myself. And he can judge me because he has known me since Martin Luther King had a dream. He knows me well. We have heard contributions from the honourable member for St. Lucy. The honourable member for St. Lucy has always talked about the small man without any real self-interest. He qualifies as a small man if you look at him carefully from head to toe, and he has always been for the poor. This lady here to my left - always for the poor and the deprived. And she knows who she is and what is her background. She is an adorable daughter of a crafter. As for myself, I narrate escaping being born in circumstances of horrendous poverty. Mr. Speaker, our thrust towards housing for all - she doesn't mind. She is going to someday be crowned under the influence of God's righteousness. All she has to do is call upon the Lord and she will renew her strength.

At this point, in the context of the activities of the Ministry of Housing, I think we have come to the day where we not only look at measures like these, but look carefully, very carefully at two things. Basically, the amount of land available to government, and the possibility of finding a large plantation that is marginal for agriculture, and let the action continue. But we actually lost momentum in housing policy between 1989 and 1994. As a fact, we lost momentum and the government of the day would not have been able to show precious more than Church Village. Mr. Speaker, all we do - there are constraints. What constraints, sir? In the presence of Zone 1, much as they have been thinking about looking at the Zone 1 scenario, we can seriously, as a Parliament, get somebody who comes from Barbados or from the Caribbean to advise. I have spoken to the honourable member for St. Andrew to advise on whether Zone 1 land is excellent land in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Michael North East, going up a place called Exchange - Exchange

under Apple Ridge. A large part of that is Zone 1. But I think Barbadians worry a lot about Zone 1 and the capacity not to deal with it. The reason why Barbadians have misgivings about the Zone 1 scenario is that you can have land here by this honourable member that is not Zone 1 - Zone 3 - and you can have two or three feet away a Zone 1. And that troubles Barbadians. Yes. At the same time, we have in the Zone 1 scenario to be sure what we are doing. We do not want to contaminate the water supply. At the same time, if you go to agriculture, we do not want to provide agricultural chemicals that would compromise business. But the time has come when we should seriously look at Zone 1.

Mr. Speaker, in the same way, there are tiny amounts - very tiny amounts - of government-owned land, especially in the area of St. James North, which is half Zone 1. But there are some little parcels of land in St. James North and I will assist the honourable member for St. Philip North if he needs it. I will talk to him. You do have opportunities with the lands in St. James North which are not needed and which are not only marginal but small. It grieves me to report that a supporter of the Democratic Labour Party called Ms. Jordan was evicted from her little fursale shop. Unknown to the honourable member for St. Philip North, Marcel Jordan lost a little stall because some bureaucrats in the ministries with no political agenda got her off in record time. There is a threat to a gentleman of long standing - a fisherman - called Master Jordan. There is a gentleman called Mr. Ralph Maskell. Ralph Maskell is close to 80 and has been occupying an area in western chattel. He is 80, he goes down there, he feeds his sheep, he goes fishing when he likes. He is an ancient shipbuilder and he is very much traumatised tonight that a note written by a civil servant to him told him to get off - if it is movable and chattel, some fishing boats and things like that. No truly caring government would bring a strong case against a person in Master Maskell's position. Picture this man - 80 years old - he has made a contribution to fishing, he occupies with the boats, he has a couple of sheep there, what he occupies is not contaminated, it is not a risk, and it is a very tiny area. Yet some civil servant can try to evict a senior citizen who has made a wonderful contribution to shipbuilding and to joinery and who is still strong enough to teach youngsters joinery and shipbuilding if they are so inclined.

By way of a normal parliamentary concern, I am a little worried that the resources in urban areas that would normally be reserved for matters like these have gone thin, and that there may not be resources in rural areas at this stage to facilitate persons seeking help. We have to look at the financing of housing, not only at the level of the individual. Housing as we know it now is exceptionally expensive to manage, and it is a good thing though that in recent years we have shifted away to stronger structures

even before a strong building code has been developed for us.

Mr. Speaker, sir, as I close, I will wish to mention that there is some anxiety among persons whose first application to the National Housing Corporation would have been 25 years ago. There are people who actually are still waiting after 25 years. I mean, I am not going to get political and do a dog dance or any dance over this, but I would want the assurance that the Ministry of Housing, headed by an energetic minister, and the National Housing Corporation, should be made to move expeditiously on clearing down backlogs and see the new energy that Barbadians as a whole have in respect of being empowered - see that as a concern or interest of a typical poor person.

Mr. Speaker, having looked at the problem with Zone 1, having looked at the problem of small amounts of marginal land, there still are lots and lots of houses - wooden houses and wall houses - which appear to be only less. There are government properties that have been left, have been taken over by people whom the Jamaicans call roving schizophrenics, whom the Trinidadians have another name for, and who, in all parlance, we call - it is a derivative of paranoid. Pardon me, Mrs. Weaver, this gets controversial after being heckled in low tones from another member over there. Let me thank you, sir, for the intervention you permitted. Let me wish you and yours well and let me say that once again I want to wish honourable members all success in the year 2013, especially as regards health and wealth. We can say wealth because we have been talking about empowering people and things like that. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with a member of parliament accumulating wealth in the right manner. The typical member of parliament will survive 18 months at parliament - they deserve something, honestly, because it is no easy thing to represent people in Barbados. You are a cabinet minister and you have a constituency. How do you sleep? Some members take the chance of sleeping here, but I do not look at that as anything laughable. Some of us are tired - not fed up necessarily, but physically tired. At the age that some of us are at, we cannot risk these ultramodern tablets and medicines and herbs. We cannot take that risk. So I am calling on society to be lenient on the political class, to encourage us to do our work and to work with us towards building a better Barbados.

SUSPENSION

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes. Honourable member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House be suspended until quarter to eight, Members.

The question that the House be suspended until 7.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

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

Mr. K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the National Housing Corporation Tenants Ownership Certificate legislation, sir. This piece of legislation is of great benefit to the average working class Barbadian, sir. And if I can go right back, sir, to the Democratic Labour Party manifesto of 1991, when it speaks, sir, of the whole question, sir, of allocating more national housing resources to provide serviced lots for sale and rental units, and an introduction of a lease purchase arrangement, sir. And, sir, if I go, sir, to the manifesto of 2003, page 30, it says that a Democratic Labour Party government will allow all persons living in a national housing unit and in payment for a period of 20 years or more to own these units - a housing unit - for payment of a small fee for his or her title.

Persons would want you, sir, to believe that things written in manifestos have no value. They say that things are manifesto promises, sir. This, sir, what has occurred here and occurred prior, sir, is to indicate that the Democratic Labour Party government has come through on their manifesto pledge. One recognises that when we came through on that manifesto pledge, sir, that persons in their eagerness to better themselves and to make room available for expanding families, sir, would have joined that process, did remedial work and some extensions and some lovely work, sir, to their unit, sir, for the betterment of their family. So when the time came, sir, for the conveyance or the transfer to be made, there were a couple of problems, sir, in relation to being unable to get the significant compliance from the Town and Country Planning Department, because it was seen then that those alterations to those units were illegal, sir.

When we looked at the whole situation, sir, we said it would be unconscionable to ask those persons to destroy those structures. But what we will do, sir, on humanitarian grounds and as a caring government, is look at the ways where legislation can be put in place for those persons who made those extensions and alterations to their property, to be able to have their title vested. And that is the reason that this piece of legislation is before this House.

We heard all sorts of thoughts today on the other side, but the principal spokesperson, sir, for the Barbados Labour Party agreed that this piece of legislation was needed and that they had started, sir, the process of giving persons a unit, sir. But everything that the Democratic

Labour Party has done since we came into power, sir, they have started something that they did not complete, sir. And they have indicated, sir, that they started in 2002, some six years after the Democratic Labour Party came to power, and recognised that the things that they said they started in 2002 were not done. We came across in 2008, some six years after the year 2002.

And, sir, the honourable Member for St. Andrew in his speech today, sir, behaved like some ranging short bull from St. Andrew that sees some red flag waved in front of him, sir, and he launched a strengthened attack on decent public servants in the office of the Attorney General. The only reason that he raised this matter is because he was in this House, sir, and questioned the presence or the absence of persons from the Solicitor General's office. And, sir, you would have sat in the chair, sir, and saw persons from the Solicitor General's office in these chambers. But you know, sir, the problem that the honourable Member for St. Andrew would have seen - he and his master scarcely attend these sittings. So when those persons are here, sir, and he behaved as if persons who don't have - they're not human, sir - go to the washroom or somewhere. But he did not even have the common decency that when he looked down the road and reflected, that he saw that the person - the only thing is he did not call the person anything other than human. And the piece of legislation is the worst thing in the world.

But you know, sir, it is amazing that by the sweat of man's brow, you should eat bread. That particular member ate bread from the same people that he gets in here today and curses. He is the head of his firm and his firm completed no less than six transactions as a result of the policies of the Democratic Labour Party. Six. The persons ask for nothing. So, sir, they want to believe that law begins and ends at their law chambers and nobody else knows anything about law other than them, sir. You understand, sir. But you see, some persons who are washed in the blood of the Lamb - the blood of the wicked - cannot behave different, sir.

The biggest problem that exists in this country, particularly politically, sir, is that the persons who purport to be true representatives of the people on the Barbados Labour Party side believe that the only persons that exist in this country are the people who are from a certain class and creed. But any time that you are from the working class or the class of the person who they say is less fortunate, you shall achieve nothing in this country. And as soon as you achieve anything, it came through ill-gotten gain, sir. But we must sing praises to the Almighty and to the wisdom He has given the Right Honourable E. W. Barrow to decide, sir, that it does not matter what race, class or creed you come from, sir, that all persons born in this country, sir, shall have free education from the time you are born to the time you go to your grave. And the Barbados Labour Party

every time they move, every time they move, they stick them in their crawl because they see young Black people rise up.

That is a legislation, sir, that allows the average Barbadian who at the time could not own a piece of the rock. So they decided, let me get a rental unit to put shelter over my family. And having a delegate committed - declared sin - because they would not be able, sir, to build anything on the west coast. But it was the person of the behaviour of the honourable Member for St. Andrew who was immensely responsible for transport and he spent a lot of resources trying to redesign the road that was too close to his house. So he did not want Black people to pass on that road that is close to his house. He does not want that, sir. Too close to his house, sir.

And then, sir, they are talking about waste. Every time you pick up - all the Democratic Labour Party waste money on the waste - the next I would like for somebody - but the honourable Member for St. Peter clearly indicates that he can take the blame for everything. So I want to know: at page 57 of the Auditor General's report we have unexplained accounting transactions under their watch with funds from the Ministry of Housing and Lands - some \$15 million - to recognise work on the behalf of the company. But the Barbados Tourism Investment was included in the accounts of the National Housing Corporation, sir. And there were no supporting documentation presented for audit and inspection in respect of what this work entailed, sir. And they are talking, sir, about wastage. That \$15 million, sir, could have built lots of units for the poor.

And the Barbados Labour Party - both in vice about policy - creating a land bank with 20 lots in this land bank. So you could not get into the land bank to get one square metre of land, sir. Persons who were knocking at the doors of the National Housing Corporation every week after week for a unit were unable, sir, to access that, sir. And the whole question of squatting has escalated under the Barbados Labour Party. As a result of the Barbados Labour Party we fear to unlock the keys to the land bank. So if I was Barbados' nearest hotspot, sir - until let them say that I am wrong when I say that under their watch squatting increased in this country, sir, for 14 years, sir. Never stopped there, sir.

So if they had at least released all the land in this land bank - released a couple of those lots - those persons, sir, would be in a position, sir, to rent the house product first and then put their structure on it or their things. Then they would be in a position, sir, to use the equity to then purchase that land or vice versa. But all their response to talk about housing policy, sir, is about country, not sir. This government has decided that the basic wants of mankind - food, clothes and shelter, sir - we will look at. And we

decided, sir, that we should take the lead in the question of shelter, sir.

And this government - we should not be ashamed, we should continue to repeat it. When you go to Lancaster, provision of shelter. When you go to Workhole, provision of shelter. When you go to Valerie Trees and Road. When you go to your constituency at the top of White Park Road, sir, wherein you pass there, sir - I wonder if the present Minister of Health was the Minister of Death, if he would not bring an action against the government for the overgrown bush there, sir, and the rusting steel that was left there, sir. That is what exists under the Barbados Labour Party. But when you pass now, yes, sir, you cannot see any steel. You can probably see some metal, but this metal, sir, is the design of the patio. This is under the patio. So I know, sir, that very soon persons will get their keys for Faraway and all those other places, sir. I know they cannot get keys for land that was in the land bank, but we have taken land out of the land bank. We have unlocked the land bank, sir, and released the land and put structures on them, sir, to provide shelter for the people in this country, sir.

The list and the rated. Only yesterday, sir, I received a call from a constituent which indicates that she was on the waiting list of the National Housing Corporation for 19 years. Fourteen of those years, sir, she said she has been going down there week after week. I believe her trips down there, sir, will be more times than the honourable Member for St. Peter has spent in here for this whole session, sir. But yes, sir, you want to lead this country, refusing to come to work, but bad faith. I want to lead this country and in a state of insanity launching attacks on our education system in a smart way. God is saying that if you come from Deacons and you are poor and you come from a housing area, you should not achieve anything. If you are from St. Andrew and you are the son of a hawker, you should not achieve anything. Only the people of a certain class should achieve, you know? But the worst thing you could ever do is to forget where you come from. Forget where you come from.

I am proud of my roots. I am proud of where I came from. I am proud of the occupation that my mother had, sir. And I know that a lot of the members on this side - but we are hurting them - that the son of a fisherman, the son of a police, a hawker, a tailor, are making decisions in this country for the benefit of the future of this country. And they cannot take it. They cannot take it.

What happens? I will not repeat it again. They talk about people declaring their assets - you have to declare assets before, during and after coming here. Produce a little piece of paper. A piece of paper has no value at all, at all in this House. And again - oh, I have declared my assets. And I talk all the talk. But I do not know anything about law. But I know, sir, about settlement. Where you have more

property that has to be settled, you go by proportion either directly or indirectly by this side or the other side, sir. But that will be left there for the people in this country to ponder, to recognise. To recognise that those persons who are castigating people - that persons who came in here as the son of a shopkeeper could have asked me to do a partition of \$4 million plus, a partition of maximal property of \$4 million plus what we were calling bail and parallel settlement. Or if you said half. So we could only assume, sir, that the evidence of the things we think, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: But Honourable Member, I am here trying to see the relevance - and I would like you to get relevant.

Mr. K. St.C. BEST: Sir, property - the Honourable Member for St. Andrew referred to the Property Act. If you go to the Property Act having a conjunction with the Family Law Act, sir, they are all tied into property, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I was not asking you to justify whether or not you are relevant. I was ruling that the lane you are going down is not relevant and directing you to get on track.

Mr. K. St.C. BEST: I'm guided by the ruling, sir. I'm guided by the thing, sir. I'm guided, sir. I'm guided, sir. But I know, sir, that this piece of legislation, sir, that the people, the good people in the Ivy housing area are extremely happy. Extremely happy. Extremely happy, sir. They're overjoyed when I mentioned to them, sir, that literally we would be going to Parliament, sir, to debate the legislation. You should see the gleam and the glitter in the eyes to know, sir, that at least, sir, we will have a piece of the rock, sir.

Service and the people. Some 64 units in the Ivy, sir. 48 received letters in phase one, four in phase two. But I have been receiving complaints that certain officers within the Ministry of Housing and the National Housing Corporation, sir, are holding back people's letters. I want persons who are paid, sir, to do the Government's work for the benefit of the citizens of this country to take the politics out of their work and ensure that those persons who are responsible, or who are entitled to get their just due, get their just due, sir. This is what I want to see. If some person qualifies, as long as the Lord - as the Government - you don't have any choice. All you have to do is read a letter, commit of acceptance, get it out, get it to the necessary principal as fast as possible. Let those persons not hold on or pile the file on your desk to satisfy some political gain, sir. I must compliment some other officers, but I have evidence. I will not call that person's name in here today because I have not seen your leave to call the person's name who is the guilty party. I've mentioned it to the Minister and I hope that he will take the necessary action and ensure that persons who have worked hard and paid the

money, who are up to date, receive their just due. We must do that, sir.

And this Government did not only stop, sir, at providing - making sure that those persons get their thing. We have gone ahead in St. Michael East and decided, look, after you have a hall, we are going to put some units there, sir. The infrastructure, sir - the project started and the infrastructure work has been done, sir. And I'm sure, sir, that would provide those lots, sir, and those housing units, sir, will provide a housing solution for some of the constituents of St. Michael East. I'm sure, sir, that when the really necessary allocations are made, sir, some of the good people of St. Michael East will be allocated to various sections and some of the people of St. Michael East will be able, sir, to benefit, sir.

We are delivering. We have not delivered at the pace that we were expecting, and in relation to [Inaudible.], but the amount that we've done - we have done extremely well in four years, Pastor, in comparison to 14 years. The Barbados Labour Party have almost done nothing - just locked away the land in the land bank and refused to release it, sir. But they want to come in here, sir, today and behave as they want to behave, sir, like if they're washed in the holy blood, saying nothing wrong to the people in this country. The army of Barbadians were crying out for land and house spots. They took it on themselves, if they want, to change the land use policies in this country to benefit their friends and folks. But we're not doing that, sir.

This waiting list at the National Housing Corporation is too long. We need to reduce it, sir. The Auditor General's report - the Auditor General gave certain suggestions in relation to what should be done, sir, in relation to the names of people coming in, and saying that what you do is to make sure that you think and then inform those persons. I've seen, sir, changes. If you write to the National Housing Corporation in relation to a financial matter, you get a reply so that your constituent will recognise that you have started the process. So they would have a file number and they can say, listen, so Mr. Best or Mr. Lashley or whoever made representation for a lot - this is the latest position on this lot. And that is what you call improvement in the system at the National Housing Corporation, which was lacking under the Barbados Labour Party, sir.

We have decided, sir, that in our manifesto, which is all related to housing, sir, that those persons who want to build their first-time house, sir, as first-time home owners, will have a rebate on the VAT on materials for the person building the house. Originally we had \$400 000, sir. But recognising, upon gaining Government, that the financial situation in the country was different to when you were on the outside. So we made a necessary adjustment and we were castigated, sir, in this House for making a necessary

adjustment. Oh, you fell away from your promise, sir. But we did more for the people of this country on housing, sir. We did more under the social programme, sir.

But I want the people of this country to be very careful, because I see housing as one of the social programmes of the Democratic Labour Party, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter made it abundantly clear that he will reverse all the social policy that the Democratic Labour Party introduced within the 14 years if he ever gained the reins of power in this country, sir. It means, sir, that those persons who would be fortunate enough to get a \$5-a-square-foot lot, sir, will no longer be able to get that, sir. They will have to pay for those lots at the cost of the ones on the west coast, sir. It means that the person who would have saved to buy a couple more trading boards, a couple more cement boards, or to construct their home, sir, would not be able to do it because they would have to take that money to pay a bus fare for their tender children to school, sir. It means that the person who knows their child who is home on holiday would not have any room because the money would have been absorbed by paying a tax and providing the avenue and food, sir, during some holidays for those children, sir. So you can imagine, sir, a Government party who want to reverse all the social programmes that help the masses of this country, sir. You imagine that, sir.

I am saying, sir, that it is not right. But I will say again that their only quest for power is to disenfranchise the poor and the poor masses of this country for the enrichment of all their friends and their forces, and to continue, sir, with their millionaire dealings, sir - continue with their millionaire dealings.

But thank God the good people in this country recognise, sir, that it is a privilege to own a piece of the rock. The Democratic Labour Party have provided that avenue for them to own a piece of the rock. And I, sir, with those few remarks, support this legislation. And I would hope, sir, that we will continue to look after the welfare and the mark of the people in this country. I thank you, sir.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say a few words. I feel compelled to say a few words even though there are no terrace units in my constituency, but because I am a member of a government that has brought this piece of legislation at this point in our history to allow thousands of ordinary Barbadians to own a piece of this rock, I feel that I should signal to Barbados and to the world at large that I fully support this Bill, sir.

I just want, however, to take exception to a couple of comments made by the Member for St. Andrew earlier this afternoon in his presentation. Indeed, where I should begin - I probably have on the previous occasion reminded this

Honourable Chamber that in 1986 the late Right Excellent Sir Errol Walton Barrow did a presentation to the graduation class of the Sir Hugh Wooding Law School. At that graduation, he said that when they were in London studying law, many students who looked like him were not easily deciphered by their hosts in London, as a result of which they developed a cadre of individuals who became professional exam sitters because they all looked alike as far as their teachers were concerned. And our founding father went on to say that unfortunately, when he came back to Barbados, he recognised many individuals who certainly had their exams sat for them because their presentations at the bar were so poor.

And when I listened to the Member for St. Andrew I thought to myself that certainly there stood an individual who never sat and passed an examination in law. But I was reminded earlier tonight that he indeed did not even study law. Thus I understand why he had so much difficulty in his presentation and no connection to what we are trying to do here now.

The Member for St. Thomas and the Member for St. George North - in fact, the Member for St. George North said that what we are doing here today is a continuation of something that they were trying to do, and the Member for St. Thomas said that we were continuing what they did from 2004. But here is the difference: as a country and as a government, they were unable to put their minds around how they could enable these units to be transferred to ordinary Barbadians. Now, I am not going to be uncharitable and say that they were unable to put their minds around it because the numbers were not big enough, because they are dealing in millions of dollars and these are units to deal with ordinary Barbadians. I am not going to say that. I am going to say that intellectually, in spite of all the attorneys that I heard about this afternoon on that side, and in spite of all the expertise I heard about on that side, they were unable to come to this Parliament like we are doing on this night, to bring a piece of legislation that we can say that when it goes to the other side, thousands of ordinary Barbadians are going to be able to say: I own a unit in Deacons, I own a unit in the NHC where I get my position. Someone reminded me that I pay for it, by the way, because you never paid for it for me. But ordinary Barbadians will be able to say with pride that I own this.

And let me say this, sir: this notion that we have rushed to Parliament at this hour to bring this legislation - sir, we were discussing this, as you very well know, since 2007, 2008. There are a set of individuals who, for various reasons, thought that we were going about it incorrectly. There are a set of individuals who, for various reasons, said that we were going to have problems in terms of having the conveyances done. There were a set of individuals who felt that we were giving away the units. In fact, I heard from

the Member for St. George North that we were giving away the units and we should give away some more.

Now, to me, this is no different from the fact that you and I pay our mortgage every month. Your wife pays a mortgage, I pay mine. But we pay the mortgage every month, sir. At the end of the 25 years, we become the owner of our homes. If all goes well, these individuals are paying rent weekly and we are saying at the end of 20 years, notwithstanding that there was no mortgage in place, that you should become the owner of your unit because you paid for it. So this is not charity. They are not being given something and told: well, look, you have not spent anything here - take, go eat and drink and be merry. They are paying for it. So the first notion that we are giving away these units - we are saying that indeed that is why we have a qualification bar. You must have been in there for 20 years. You must satisfy us, satisfy the NHC, that you are a good candidate legally, that you have been paying for the unit that is being conveyed to you. So this is not charity in the sense that these individuals have not paid anything.

And we are also noting - because it was raised earlier - that indeed, subject to the fact that you would pay all legal costs involved, because there was this suggestion that as a government we should absorb those costs, we are saying: look, you need to at least pay something. So not only will you pay - we heard today that in fact, since we told Barbados that we are going to do this, we collected \$1.2 million, I believe, Minister - \$2 million in arrears and the legal costs, which we are glad to hear. And we want all Barbadians who qualify to know that all members on that side said that they are willing to absorb, they are willing to perform the services for free. Now the only caveat I will say, sir, is that there is no such thing as free. So I want persons to be careful - in particular when the Member for St. Andrew says that he is going to do something for free. There is no such thing as far as I know, and I have known that individual for several years. But let us accept his word that indeed they are willing to work for free. We will see.

But the point, sir, is that we have found a way to do this. The Member for St. Andrew held up the paper because he believed that for legislation to be effective there must be 200 pages. This is not a difficult piece of legislation. You know, sir, the difficulty has been that we needed to find a way to address the fundamental problem that was being faced in terms of how do we get conveyances conveyed - which is that the Chief Town Planner was saying that where there are extensions, they were not prepared to issue the certificate of compliance. And we sat with them for several months. And when I say we, I mean the Government, not myself. And I am sure I am speaking of the Minister of Housing, and this has been going to and fro for several months until we arrived at a position where as a Government we have said we are going to go forward with what we have, because at some point in time you need to

draw a line in the sand and say this is good enough - we need to move forward because we have so many people who are dependent on us.

And indeed I believe the figure that I saw is that there are about 1 200 families who are willing to move forward, because only 200 today have been able to satisfy the requirements of the Chief Town Planner. And we have said as a Government we are committed to doing this. We brought this Bill here and yes, there are one or two areas that we have looked at and said, well, we need to change - we do that in committee. But the fundamental tenet of the Bill, which is that we have brought this Bill here to ensure that we can legitimately transfer these terrace units to individuals in this country, remains sound. And therefore I want to support - and that is why we on this side support it - because, to repeat myself, they, for 40 years, if you believe what they said, were contemplating it, had it planned, and were going to find a solution. But now that we have found a solution, here is what we are being told: we took too long, we only brought it at the last hour, we should have done it before.

Now this sounds quite familiar because we have been hearing this for the last four or five years. Every time we do something that they could not get done, the criticism has been either that they were going to do it or that we took too long to do it. And in some cases all they ever do is look and say: well, you have an idea but you do not have the dot on the i, and you have a 't' there and it should be a capital T and not a common t, et cetera. Now if that is the only criticism that they have when we bring legislation here, then let them criticise it. Let them criticise it.

But I have to say that I love the honesty of the Member for St. Andrew. He says he does not support it, we have it wrong, nobody who knows what conveyancing is would accept title. The Member for St. Michael North - but you know, he does not support anything when it comes to poor people. So he went along the same road about all the errors and everything that is wrong with it, et cetera. Notwithstanding the fact that there are individuals in his constituency, notwithstanding the fact that there are individuals in either Lodge who would benefit from this. He is so against us as a Government, he is so against their party doing the right thing for ordinary Barbadians, that notwithstanding that individuals who would vote for him and who he would be going to ask to support him will benefit, he still does not support this Bill.

As we have brought it here tonight, we are not perfect and we would accept legitimate criticism. We would accept if members on that side, or if the public from wherever, say to us: well, have you considered X? Have you looked at the Housing Act? Would that not have been a better solution? Have you looked at the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, et cetera? We have looked at all

these things. We welcome criticism, we welcome interventions from other individuals because we want to get it right.

And while I am speaking of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, sir, let me make this point. There is no piece of legislation that over time will not be tested. The Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act has been touted by that side as the best piece of social legislation in the history of Barbados. That is on one side. On the other side, I have sat here in this Parliament and heard a Member for St. Michael North say that if the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act were enacted today, it would not stand up in the courts today because it would be attacked under our Constitution - it would likely be found to be unconstitutional. The point is - and remember, we have not denied that piece of legislation, which I think was in 1979, I am not going to declare who normally remembers these dates, but I think it is 1979 and 1980 - we are not denying that piece of legislation was effective in its time. But like everything else, there is another side of the coin, which is that there are many ordinary Barbadians who rented land and who had hoped that this land would be passed on to their children, and who then found that they had tenants who had a legitimate right to become owners. And as a result of which, there are many landowners in this country who refuse to rent land to individuals today because they are afraid that the land they want to have for their children - I am told the legislation was passed some 80 or 90 years ago - they are afraid that if they allow tenants onto this land, it would indeed pass to the tenants instead.

The point I am making is this: here and now in 2012, in 2013, here and now in this Parliament, we are enacting this piece of legislation to cure a particular problem. We believe it is the right piece of legislation to bring to this Chamber at this time to enable at least 2 500 families to own a piece of the rock. Twenty-five years from now, as legal thinking may change, someone may say - and hopefully I will still be wrong - that in fact it is not correct, given the change of legal thinking. But today, tonight, when we are finished and when the Member for St. Philip North is finished, hopefully, and it goes to the other place, we will be able by the end of this week, if all goes well, and certainly by next week, to say to Barbadians that yes, we took a bit longer than we would have liked, but we have delivered - because we have delivered on almost every piece of social programme that we want to bring to the people of Barbados.

But we have also said that if you want to criticise us, the criticism is this: we wanted to do too much too quickly, and in reality it is not possible for us to do everything that we would have liked to do in a manifesto in five years. But we have delivered on the most important aspects. We have delivered in terms of housing - there is no question about that. In fact, the only criticism that we have of housing has

been that we are moving too slowly. Now, in one year we did more houses than the other side did in five, if not in ten. We have delivered in terms of international business. They criticise us and say that we do not know enough about international business - we have done better than they have done. We have delivered in terms of the health care system in this country at a time when we did not have the financial resources to transform the healthcare system like we would like to, because we have a bigger vision. They say that we have not built a new hospital.

Everything we have done they have criticised, and we can put it down to opposition politics - that in fact they see their role as opposing. But what they have not done in the five years I have been back here is brought one single idea to this Parliament that I looked at and thought: let us have a look at that because it is worthy of further consideration. They have never done that. They have brought up all kinds of ideas. They want to send everything to committee so that they can stall it. They love speeches. Let us put it in a committee and get the best brains to consider it - which really means that they do not want us to move on with the programme. That is really what it means. Let us send it to the Bar Association so that the Bar can comment - which really means they do not want us to enact the legislation. Let us send it to the widest possible circulation in Barbados. We received half a dozen comments. We had a Bill in libraries, on the net, at post offices, here in Parliament, at constituency offices - we begged people to submit comments. We received half a dozen. If we waited like they wanted to wait and said: let us wait and let everyone comment and hear what they have to say, we would not have gotten that Bill enacted in this Parliament. I am not saying we should not have consultation, but I am saying that consultation should not be used as a means of not moving forward on our programmes.

And we have taken ownership of our agenda. And yes, we would have liked to have done this, as many other things, quicker. But it is untrue - and I want to repeat that it is untrue and uncharitable, not only to us. If you want to criticise us as politicians or as a Government, it is uncharitable to the public servants who work hard. It is uncharitable to the public servants in the National Housing Corporation, in the Ministry of Housing. It is uncharitable to the public servants in the Chief Town Planner's office who have been working on this. It is uncharitable to the Chief Town Planner who has been in meetings discussing this for months upon months, for months upon months. It is uncharitable to them to suggest that we have now come and that this is something that was only bred a couple of weeks or a couple of days ago. There have been wide consultations. We have agreed, we have disagreed, we have drafted, redrafted - we are where we are tonight. And for those on that side who believe that we need to have 100 pages for legislation to be effective, we are saying that

these five or six pages will accomplish what we want to accomplish, which will enable us to transfer terrace units to ordinary Barbadians who qualify.

One final comment, sir, to the Member for St. Andrew. You know, last week I did a presentation about his colleague - whether or not it was ignorance or confusion. Well, again, a similar presentation, but in this Chamber, sir, a similar space, because his presentation again was either ignorance or confusion. I must say this though, sir: for once I sat here and I thought to myself he almost sounded like he knew what he was talking about, but then he went down the road about us not having a specimen conveyance. As if any time you are dealing with a transfer of property you must have a specimen conveyance. So when I came to Barbados law, when I looked at the Public Transfer Act, when I look at the public act, when I look at the tenantry conveyance - well, for the benefit of the Member, Professor Andrew, there are people in his chambers who are new, and for the Members of St. Michael East who have worked on conveyances for terrace units in this country. I am not sure if they charged but I know that they have worked on them, so they know how to convey them even if he does not know. But as I said, it does not surprise me because either his exams were sat for him or, as was suggested, he had no connection with the law until he became a manufacturer of increased counsel designations. But we also understand that, and we also understand why some people went on the road that they are going.

And if I talk personally, sir, about this thing - I am just annoyed. I am very annoyed about the fact that we can have a divide on a Bill like this. I can take criticism, sir. We are not perfect. And as I said, if you say to us: well, instead of going down a new piece of legislation we could have used the Housing Act - as I said, notwithstanding that we heard on that side that several years ago the Member for St. Michael North suggested to them that the way to cure this problem was to do a piece of legislation, notwithstanding the fact that they had several Ministers of Housing, that they had several Attorneys General - they could not get it done. But we have done it.

And to the Minister of Housing I want to say to you, sir, comrade and colleague - congratulations for ensuring that we fulfil our promise to the people of Barbados. I am happy to support this Bill. But lest you think that all is well between us, I want to say this to you: there are certain things that I would also like to see us do, and in particular there are some squatters in Rock Hall that I believe there is a solution for. There is a solution that if we work together, like how we have worked on this, we will be able to address this issue of squatting in Rock Hall. And I am saying to you publicly - this is not political. I am saying to you publicly because I want the people to know that we have a possibility to do something that has not been done in

years. And I am challenging you: just like we sat down and spent hours on this, let us sit down, my friend, and work on a solution to the squatting in Rock Hall. And maybe once we have done that we might be able to use that as an example of the model to find solutions for other parts of Barbados.

Sir, I thank you. And to the Minister of Housing, again - keep on carrying on. You have my fullest support for this Bill. Thank you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I do join my voice to this Bill before this Honourable House. And it is a Bill essentially long and coming through no fault of this side. It has already been stated that there was a search - or many searches - for a solution to the issue of the additions to those units in several parts of Barbados. And true, and we have to support the position taken by the Chief Town Planner under law that he could not give the economy certificates of compliance relative to these particular units. And this frustrated the process. So we have come thus far in relation to this particular matter. Sometimes the road of governance can be a bit steep, but we have had in the past several validation bills to deal with so many issues which have occurred. I remember coming to this House in 2003 and the first validation bill, which I believe the seven of us encountered, was a validation bill dealing with Port St. Charles. That was a validation bill to deal with matters which had taken place not fully covered by what the particular statute or stipulation was. And in this instance, this Bill is almost akin to that kind of process.

There were persons, and you have to understand sometimes the needs of people and why they do certain things. I don't think that any of the citizens of Barbados who reside in these areas wanted to break the law. I don't think so. By and large there are law-abiding citizens. They want to satisfy the needs of their families just like we want to satisfy the needs of our families. They felt distressed. That is the point. And to alleviate the distress they added to the housing units owned by the National Housing Corporation. I looked, Mr. Speaker, at Watton, which is in the constituency of Christ Church East Central. And from the good statistics held by the National Housing Corporation, one saw of the 120 units that 14 of those units had extensions to them. 14 of those units. And I am somewhat familiar with some of these extensions and the same claim I made earlier, that these are not deviant criminal minds or criminal individuals, but they too were feeling distress. Distress in relation to space to accommodate the children, to accommodate their families, and in many instances of what we would refer to as the yard space, they constructed something. In the olden days,

some people call them lean-tos. They constructed something to ease the pressure off of the unit.

But in relation to the policy developed by the party way back in 2003, when we were being led at that time by an individual who now is in the deep embrace of the Barbados Labour Party, you would find that in the manifesto of that period that this programme was placed - 2003, clear. The people of Barbados voted for the Barbados Labour Party in 2003 and therefore this particular policy could not have been followed through on in the manifesto of that period. The particular statement was: in many government housing estates, tenants have been paying rent for 20, 30, 40 years. These persons would have already paid for these houses if they had been paying a mortgage. That was a statement delivered, crafted by the leader at the time and fully supported by the other members of the organisation. And the emphatic statement was made - this is what we will do. That is a statement of affirmation. Allow persons living in NHC housing and paying rent for a period of 20 years or more to own these houses or units with a payment of a small fee for his or her title deeds. That is the legal fee attached. Before I went on to say that persons living in the units for less than that stipulated period will be given the opportunity to own the units through the provision of an interest-free loan. The Government, the Democratic Labour Party, came to office in 2008 and in 2011 adjusted that policy to say that on maturity of 20 years, those persons will also benefit from the original provision. That is what was stated.

Now we speak of enlightened policies. We speak of social engineering, social transformation. This is what we speak of. These are words which are captured in the bosoms of members on this side, because it is a sound and deep philosophical position that we have taken when we look at the whole social fabric of Barbados. How we can make the lives of people better - that is our mantra, that is our call. That is what we are here for. That is why we are called to service. How can we make the lives of people better knowing that when we make their lives better, our lives become even better? That is what happens when we make the changes to the lives of people. We also make changes to our own lives when we lift people up from their vulnerable state to a greater state of satisfaction based on self-development, full development of self-esteem, of self-actualisation. Where the man or woman who hitherto could not smile, but we put a smile on that man or woman's face, then we know that at least a small part of our journey would have been fulfilled. We may not have accomplished anything else, but we have brought a high level of satisfaction into the bosoms of so many. This small piece of legislation would bring a smile of satisfaction to the faces of so many.

This is not privatisation. This is not taking from anybody and giving away to anybody. It is wrapped around

an understanding that we need to move people from the position of renters, of persons forced to rent, to persons who own - particularly coming out of our history of this nation, particularly those people who crossed the Middle Passage. And I am sure you all remember, for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East would understand this very well. A people who never owned anything - that which they settled into was part of the property of the plantation and they could have been displaced at any time. Even when slavery was abolished, they were tied to the plantation because where they lived belonged to the plantation. They could say: done. You and I are going somewhere else. I am finished with you. I no longer want to be associated - because they needed shelter, so they had to be associated. And then to get some of them off, you offered them land - rob land - as tenants on the periphery of the plantations. You said, carry up your structure, build your structure. And the photographic history of those circumstances is stark and telling.

The Government must be applauded because I am sure it looked back into history, conscious and with a deep understanding that these realities must not continue deep into the 21st century. That persons must find comfort within their homes, persons must find comfort within places that they can sleep at night and be comfortable, that the band which they wear around their bellies to keep it in because the pain is so deep will be ameliorated as a result of a caring, responsible government who journeyed with them over time, who looked into the circumstances which have befallen so many people. And a government must make a difference in the lives of its people. Otherwise, pack up, go home, if you cannot make a difference. And we have by this simple piece of legislation made a significant difference to those persons - and eight and ten years down the road, because of the restrictions that exist, they will be able to say to somebody: I have an asset, an asset that can give me a loan to help a son or daughter to get some base of their own. Really one of the many housing solutions being developed across Barbados even now. And we will continue under this Democratic Labour Party.

I was flabbergasted, Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. I do not like normally to comment on what our member says, but I know when panic creeps into the bosom. A few hundred people, Mr. Speaker, if you are not aware, were in Belleplaine on Sunday last. Young women and men, the old, the mature, they all came out in numbers and made pledges. We will, they said, whenever we go to the polls again, relieve ourselves of a burden, they said, we will relieve ourselves of a pain. And therefore the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, feeling that pain, thought that he would make his voice loud in order to denigrate this piece of legislation. But by denigrating this piece of legislation, the Honourable Member by extension - I do not even believe it was deliberate - by extension will be denigrating

these 2 000-plus persons, nearly 2 500 - Honourable Member for St. Philip North, nearly 2 500 members - who will be owning their own homes.

Look, I remember Belleplaine having some housing solutions built by the State. The State has to intervene in the capitalist market because capitalism can sometimes be so uncaring, unfeeling to those who are poor and dispossessed and vulnerable, because on many instances they cannot get up and fight against the mighty and all they do is cling to the Almighty in some hope that manna will come from heaven. But we know that we have to work by the sweat of our brow to eat bread. And there are some who cannot do that to the extent that we would want. So we have to lift them up as men of God. That is what we have to do. And government should be men of God working on behalf of its people. That is what governance should be.

Housing solutions started in Belleplaine way back in the 1950s. I want credit where credit is due. Then we had other housing solutions being developed at Gall Hill after Janet in 1955 when there were some people who had to move from Lodge Road - because you remember the resident Holiness church, called Pilgrim Holiness Church then, who were sheltering so many because of the conditions of the homes. A few people died because the shelter was destroyed. That is the history. That is the history we have to connect to - to understand the relevance of what we do now. So those single units were developed all on that ridge at Gall Hill and over time they developed so many more of those solutions. There is a view that we cannot do too much more of those types of housing solutions, and I support that. The expansive type cluster - we have to go up and we have to provide better housing solutions for our people. And this is being rolled out under this Honourable Minister for St. Philip North, definitely part of the policy of the Democratic Labour Party and fully supported by the Cabinet and members of parliament on this side. That will not change. That cannot change. You cannot say you care tomorrow and be uncaring the next day. There must be a consistency of purpose. There must be a delivery of what we have said that we will try to do in this five-year cycle.

The Honourable Member at the end of the period would have delivered or started nearly 3 000 solutions. This is magnificent. The Honourable Member does not thump his chest - he might pump somebody else's chest but he does not thump his own. Nearly 3 000 solutions: completed units which persons will be living in; housing lots to satisfy those who want to build with the contributions of family and friends - that is another method; partially completing units because it is a process of constantly rolling out and doing it. Mr. Speaker, against the backdrop of an agency, though willing to do more, that does not have the total wherewithal to do more because of what we found. So the Honourable Member and the board

of the NHC and the leaders in the Ministry of Housing had to create an alliance. And one way of creating that was saying: look, we will appeal to those decent, hardworking Barbadians who might have some surplus resources to join with us to build houses, units, apartments. We need to stop calling them units. They are apartments - that is what they are. Well-fitted apartments for our people. And I have lived in some; when I spent some time out of this country, I have lived in some. There are people who come from Canada and they look and say: ah, you have some nice townhouses there. That is what they say. And you know what we call them in Barbados? Units. They call them townhouses because we prefer to sell ourselves short. We prefer to call them that because the persons who generally go there do not earn \$10 000 a month, because there is a ceiling. And sometimes that ceiling disadvantages the individual who works for \$3 500 a month. There is no great demarcation between \$3 000 a month and \$3 500. That person is still exposed to the vagaries of the financial marketplace. So we have to look at that.

That is why I am pleased about the 72 homes being built at Les Paris, which will seek to meet some of what people call the middle-class needs of Barbadians. And the middle-class needs of Barbadians must also be satisfied by loans from credit unions and from banks. That is the nature of our society. A country that has only moved some 200-odd years after emancipation is still a young country compared to so many others and without the natural resources to do so many other things - the difficulties of how to spend what little you have to satisfy great needs.

One of the difficulties that we have encountered - some pain, some anger - is that even though in this short period of time these housing solutions have been rolled out, because of the length of the list and the demand, there are persons who will tell you: I cannot get any. I remember when the one in Six Roads was made available. There are 52 or so houses. You know how many people wanted one of those? 1 800. The ratio is almost one to 36 - in other words, 36 persons to every one house - and that was eight or nine years ago. You know what that is saying? It is saying that in the previous period the satisfaction of the needs of those persons was substantially denied. That is what that is saying. It is not rocket science. You do not have to be Einstein to think through that. Or C.L.R. James. You do not have to go beyond the boundaries to think through these things. It is right there before your eyes in front of all. And when we satisfy that demand there is another demand that has to be satisfied.

You go about parts of Barbados and there are housing conditions under which people live still - notwithstanding the good work of the Rural Development Commission, the Urban Development Commission, notwithstanding that good work - whose conditions are in fact awful. We are committed to changing that. We will

work to change that. We will deal with the issues in the urban corridor, in those areas served by so many members of this side: by the Honourable Member for the City, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. Because St. Michael is the most populous parish - even though there has been some suburban and rural migration it still remains an extremely attractive parish and therefore you will find greater clustering in the most attractive parish. So we have to transform without interfering with Bridgetown and the Garrison - maintain that UNESCO heritage position.

But let me say, as I have noticed - I do not know how the State can deal with it - you drive through every street and there have been houses that have been rotten to the ground for the last 20 years, 30 years. It means somehow that either a family line has disappeared or somebody does not care about what is there, or it might be a dispute - no one knows. But a country of 166 square miles cannot have 10 000 to 15 000 houses rotten to the ground in previous communities. But some enterprising individual is going to go into the breadbasket of Barbados and get permission to chop up agricultural land that we have, because somehow we will be breathing air as though it is food so we will exist on contaminated air anyhow, because it is easier to do that. We have to find a way of dealing with all of these empty houses in Barbados. Persons who left for Panama and never returned. The lawyers must bend their minds - if the Honourable Member for St. Andrew wants to show his legal luminance, he should come up with a solution to help lead and guide that process. Let the brilliance of his brain be wrapped around something useful. That is what has to happen - to see how we can manage this process.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have one minute to go. This is a journey through which we must continue. It is the road that we cannot abandon, regardless of how difficult it might seem now. Because there are still, Mr. Speaker, thousands upon thousands who bring tears to our eyes and anguish in our hearts because they want to find shelter. Who do not speak to us because they were not necessarily first in the queue, but they want to be first in the queue. But that is the nature of politics. That is the nature of human life. But we would hope that as we continue to govern this country, that we will set the pace up even more as a State enterprise, that the private sector, in their own commercial exploits, will also meet a substantial segment of that population. And that one day you will open your windows and you will see a friendly face of a neighbour that you had not seen for a while. And you two will shout out: I did not know that you had moved in up here too. I did not know that you were able to join me in this day of blissfulness. Because now I feel contented. I can concentrate on doing other things in my life. And that is what we should be

proud of as a people and as a government, notwithstanding our own hesitations in life.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill, with the amendments which will come, is an important piece of social transformation. I am proud, Mr. Speaker, that on the 8th day of the first month of 2013 that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North would have brought this piece of legislation. Long may he continue. Long may this Government continue with the help of the people. Long may we continue to alleviate the angst, the pain and the distress from the minds and backs of our people. Mr. Speaker, 100 per cent support.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I rise to wrap up this debate. And first I want to congratulate all those members who contributed to the debate. Of course, the member for Christ Church East Central no doubt finished in fine form. And it is like coming in after Brian Lara at the Oval in Trinidad. And of course I will now have to wrap up the innings.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I would like to start with the responses, or lack thereof, of the opposition. Mr. Speaker, sir, the late spokesman for the opposition - the member for St. George North - I would speak to what he mentioned during his debate. I did not hear a lot from the member for St. Michael North, because I normally treat his presentation as a time to go to the bathroom. So I did not get a chance to listen to him. But of course, Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised. I am not surprised at the comments of the lonesome member for St. Michael North. In fact, he said that he has a number of constituents who have applied and, of course, accepted the offer of the National Housing Corporation as a result of our policy - that those living in units for 20 years or more who have paid up their rent would get their conveyances free, with minimal legal fees. But what is surprising, Mr. Speaker, sir, I have on record - because he made mention of the fact that nobody has benefited, nobody has benefited from this programme, that he cannot see a conveyance from any of his constituents under this programme - but I can say to him, Mr. Speaker, that if he checks 14 Crest View Terrace, that is a conveyance completed by attorney-at-law Francis [Inaudible.].

Yes. It was completed by attorney-at-law [Inaudible.]. So, Mr. Speaker, sir, I just want to put his argument to rest - that his people have benefited, have benefited from our programme. So to say that no one has benefited is totally wrong. And I want to congratulate attorney-at-law Francis [Inaudible.] for working very smoothly, working very quickly and expeditiously to ensure that at least a constituent from St. Michael North received a conveyance and to offer some hope to the other constituents. There are others that were considered, too.

There are others that were concluded, but I raised that one as an example. So I want to dismiss what has been said.

And of course, the member for St. Michael North will have difficulties when it comes - will have a difficulty, sorry - when it comes to poor people, people from the working class. He will have tremendous difficulty with any document, any policy, or any initiative that will advance the poor. Because of his makeup, and because of his class makeup, and because of the political snobbery of the member for St. Michael North. That is the problem. He does not understand the rhythm of poor people. He does not understand the actions or inactions of poor people. He cannot relate to them simply, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to go to the member for St. George North, who admitted in here that we reelected the parliament. He admitted in his speech that we reelected the parliament. He admitted that he used the Ministry of Housing alliance to the benefit of his constituents - that was his focus. He admitted that. So from that premise, I believe his whole speech was tainted. He said that the economy was in a mess. He said a number of things in here that I actually had to cross out because they made no sense. He also said - I thought he said about 30 of the houses at Coverley had been sold. Mr. Speaker, sir, my latest report tells me that we have sold close to 300 houses at Coverley.

And, Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to say to the Barbadian public, because there is this myth that the Government has placed its finances at Coverley - what has happened, Mr. Speaker, sir, is that we have placed the land. The only input from this Government is the land. The developers have provided the finances for the infrastructure; they have provided the finances for the houses. And the risk is totally at the developer and not at the National Housing Corporation. Unlike what happened before with the joint venture programmes that we had to come in and rescue - we had to rescue Body Medals, we had to rescue Company Two, Company Phase One. So to say that the housing record of the Democratic Labour Party from 2008 is not stellar is totally wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the member for St. George North should also be reminded that he can refer to the special audit - the special audit on the UDC. And in that report it was stated that to become a contractor under the Barbados Labour Party, you had to visit parliament, you had to be a criminal deportee, and you had to have criminal convictions. That is stated in the report. That is in the report. So a lot of these matters have tainted the Barbados Labour Party. And of course they have no credibility - no credibility to speak on housing in Barbados. And they have created the housing crisis. They have created the housing crisis, and I will tell you why. Because their focus was not on advising that low-income sector. Their focus was not on getting those 20 000 on the waiting list a housing solution.

But their focus was on the west coast, making sure that the consolidated applications are fast-tracked so that the villas and the condominiums can be constructed and so that the wealthy people of the State of Barbados can benefit, but not ordinary Barbadians. They were not interested in constructing houses in Lancaster One or Lancaster Two or Marchfield or Wardhall. They were not interested in that. Their interest is well captured, Mr. Speaker, in the amendment to the Housing Act.

The member for St. Andrew got in here and he mentioned legislation and preparing documents. He likes to see big documents. He is more interested in legal jargon that does not make any sense, or legal positions that do not make any sense or that are not necessary. But remember, the member for St. Andrew had the opportunity as Minister of Housing to correct these challenges, and all he talked about was amending the Housing Act to facilitate homeownership - he did not do it. He came in here and amended the old act. Not in 1998. He came in here, in the old assembly, in a rush, and amended the long title of the Housing Act and amended section three of the same Housing Act. And this is the amendment. He made sure that the long title was substituted and stated that the Housing Act was to consolidate and revise the laws within housing and to provide for the establishment of the NHC with responsibility for managing the development of areas designated as development areas and for related purposes. And he added one clause. This is the one he added: to permit the National Housing Corporation to invest its resources in building activities and property development other than housing - other than housing - to finance its housing development programmes. And section three: he said policies - ministers are responsible for the formulation of policies related to building investment activities. This is what the member for St. Andrew did, Mr. Speaker. And the reason behind it was to facilitate the Albaric contract. It was not to facilitate housing in this country. It was not to facilitate the acquisition of land to protect the poor or to give to poor people.

And what has happened? We are burdened with this amendment. We are locked in a battle where we have to look for over \$50 million as a result of this amendment - \$50 million - changing the philosophical mandate of the National Housing Corporation. We did not come here to let us focus on finding a piece of legislation that we can fast-track the units into the hands of those poor people - in Belpaine, in St. Andrew, in Silver Hill, in Gall Hill, in Searles Court, in Watton, in Church Village, in the Pine. Mr. Speaker, Barbados. But his focus was on amending the Housing Act. Imagine - the National Housing Corporation was built to build houses. He came here to build offices other than housing development. What madness. What madness, Mr. Speaker. What darkness came upon this House of Assembly with this amendment. What madness came upon this whole assembly with this amendment.

I will say that if it is one thing I would like to see before the member for St. Andrew leaves this House of Assembly, or leaves politics, it is that we must have an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the Albaric contract. That is my position. Because, Mr. Speaker, it is wrapped around the neck of the National Housing Corporation. It is wrapped around the neck of Barbadians - future generations of Barbadians. And the National Housing Corporation, instead of focusing on constructing houses, now has to focus on paying back money for an office building. Imagine that. Imagine that. Therein lies the philosophical divide between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I will say no more to the member for St. Andrew, because he needs to tell this country - he needs to tell this country his role and the circumstances surrounding the contract of the Albaric fiasco. The member for St. Lucy, I believe, was in here when this amendment came. When this amendment came he raised questions about it - the member for St. Lucy was asking, why is there such a rush? Where is it coming from? But he did not say. The member for St. Lucy did not realise it was a googly - a political googly. It was a political googly more dangerous than one from [Inaudible.]. Yes. And you know, we will deal with that in the next couple of years as time goes on.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, I do not listen to advice from the member for St. Michael North. He practised law in this country for a number of years. And I know, I understand the law pretty well. But I know that when members on that side - and you see, the member for St. Michael East makes a very talented point when he always mentions that the son of a hawker, the son of a carpenter, the son of a fisherman can be here making decisions for the future development of this country. And you know that it hurts them in their belly, because they believe that they have a race and that they have a divine right to govern this country - to rule and govern this country. Yes, they are people who can cast all kinds of aspersions on Sunday nights about members on this side, about assets, declaring assets, defaming every single member on this side, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, the member for St. Michael East was speaking about matrimonial property. And, of course, Mr. Speaker, this legislation includes, obviously, the couples who are married under the Family Law Act. And at some point in time, if there is a breakup and a claim comes along, that will form part of the matrimonial property of the tenants - husband and wife. But of course, if there is a settlement, Mr. Speaker, I know that matrimonial settlements are such that you can go to the registry and you can ask the clerk to get your file for you. This is a public document, and you can, of course, do a search and find how the matter was settled - how the matter was settled. Even if it is Lashley versus Lashley, or [Inaudible.] versus

[Inaudible.] - yes, you can pick it up. If it is [Inaudible.] versus [Inaudible.], you should be able to find it. But I will challenge any legal practitioner to go to the law registry tomorrow and search for [Inaudible.] and tell me if they will find it.

That is all I have to say on that, Mr. Speaker, particularly.

But he - move on. I will tell you that we are dealing with national housing units. These matters - you didn't hear me earlier, Mr. Speaker. I will move on. I have known that even if I was in St. Michael North, that people are coming to the National Housing Corporation and saying that they do not want to retain the services of the members in St. Michael North, and that they prefer to have the National Housing Corporation's lawyers do the work for them. And that is what we do. They don't want to retain the service anymore. But they retain confidence in these matters, Mr. Speaker.

They talk about deposits - deposits for the National Housing Corporation. You know, Mr. Speaker, the government of the Northwest was sacred. These deposits were taken by the Barbados Labour Party in 2003 and 2004, knowing full well that there were challenges - challenges that they tried to remedy here today. Mr. Speaker, this evening none of the properties were vested, so they couldn't get title. So it is like taking money from a man knowing full well that you do not have money in your bank account to pay back. And it is something short of criminal. It is a near-criminal act, Mr. Speaker. That is what it is.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, just like how they took deposits, the son of a company called Harvard Company took deposits from innocent Barbadians. Now we cannot find where the deposits went. The people who went out there and were induced into depositing their money, hoping that they were going to get their houses, they are still waiting on their deposits too. You imagine - a party, a government, took deposits from tenants. I am not blaming this government. I am blaming the previous government. They committed the wrongdoing. They committed the wrongdoing, Mr. Speaker, sir.

We will remedy the situation. We came here with this legislation to ensure that those thousands of Barbadians living in the Pine, living in Bagatelle, Silver Hill, Bar Hill, Church Village in St. Philip, Watton, Palm Place, Kenneth Lodge, Bonnetts, Deacons - for years - can benefit, and that they can form part of the property-owning class in Barbados. What we are doing is creating a new class and giving hope, Mr. Speaker, sir - giving hope to thousands of Barbadians.

So, Mr. Speaker, I - the Member for Christ Church East Central - we are making a difference in many lives in Barbados. We are making a difference. It is not just talk. It is not like the other side who conceptualise, contemplate, put it on record, had it in encounter papers, but to bring it to practice cannot get it done. They are good at doing papers, they are good at contemplating and conceptualising, but cannot put it into action.

Every time we come in here with a piece of legislation, the Member for St. George North says, "We had that in plan." But from 2004 and before that, they had 14 years, Mr. Speaker - 14 years - to bring a piece of legislation that would impact on the lives of thousands of Barbadians. Those working-class people in the Pine, in Grazettes, in Christ Church, had 14 years to do it. And all the legal luminaries on that side - so-called legal luminaries on that side - could not find a solution, could not come to Parliament with a solution. But as soon as we bring a solution in this Parliament, they criticise it, because it is to advance poor people. It is to advance the working class, the underprivileged.

And it is only because - Mr. Speaker, I believe too that we should enquire into that - why should the government take deposits from innocent Barbadians like savings? I had no title, because under normal circumstances if an individual goes out there and purports to be an owner of a piece of property and signs an agreement and takes a deposit and cannot produce title or produce a conveyance, the fraud squad will be called to play. The police force - it is a fact. The fraud squad will be called to play and that person will be charged. That person will be charged before a judge and jury. It is a fact. No rocket science to do that. But they will continue to criticise the housing programme.

I listened to the Member for St. George North and the Member for St. Michael North. As I said before, when the Member for St. Michael North makes his presentation, that is to me a refreshment break - you go to the bathroom. That is my approach to him, Mr. Speaker. No one will believe, if you listen to the Member for St. George North, that those houses have been occupied and are still occupied through the efforts of this government - that we have prison officers, gardeners, gas station workers, police officers, teachers occupying those houses; that they also have been occupied by ordinary working-class Barbadians and that Barbadians have not benefited from the housing programme of this government.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, I give the Barbados Labour Party a failing grade on housing, and of course a failing grade tonight, because of the way they have treated this legislation. The chart is that they have shown it, and the fact is - how can they go into a housing estate tomorrow and seek to canvass these tenants, having done nothing to

advance their cause or to advance their lives, but to criticise this government for coming here to advance many lives - those lives of the tenants?

So, Mr. Speaker, again I want to say that this government is making a difference. This government is ensuring that families will continue to benefit, that they will have a title deed, and that we will ensure the establishment of tenants' associations - as I mentioned in my opening, as buttressed by the arguments of the Member for St. Michael South East, who said that the tenants' association would ensure that there is a body and a relationship where you have both bodies relating to one another, dealing with grievances, dealing with issues, and of course advancing programmes to build further community spirit among those tenants.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, again - in addition to this Parliament's urban high-rise programme, which we call the Urban Renewal Environment - not to say that this government has done nothing along the line of housing. We recognise the limited landscape in the urban corridor. We recognise the housing conditions in the urban corridor. And so we have decided, we have constructed and finished houses - finished the first high-rise building at Valerie; constructed and finished at Fort Rose; and are now moving very shortly to Ashmore Gardens to build another 96 units for those persons who are living in deplorable conditions and of course those persons who cannot afford a mortgage. So we have really brought about an urban renewal programme and an urban high-rise programme - the first ever in this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to give a brief synopsis of the government's housing solution and also a brief synopsis of the arguments - or lack thereof - advanced by the opposition. And of course I am saying that the Democratic Labour Party has started, Mr. Speaker, on a journey and continued on a journey to advance the people of Barbados. It is not about power. It is about people, Mr. Speaker.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and the Bill was read a second time.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee for further consideration of this Bill.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee, Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee. Clause 1.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the short title of the Bill be amended to state 2013 instead of 2012.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Clause 1, as amended, was passed.

Clause 2 was called and passed.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, clause three, subsection three - I am moving that this section be amended to read that the National Housing Corporation will be made subject to subsection three, rather than five, to transfer ownership of its estate in a terrace unit to the tenant of the unit. I further move that clause three, subsection one, paragraph three, be deleted. And I move that clause three, subsection one, paragraph three be amended to read: notwithstanding subsections one and two, instead of four, a tenant of a unit who has not resided in the unit for 20 years - the Corporation may, in accordance with subsection one, transfer the unit to the tenant at a price to be determined in accordance with the method set out in the schedule.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Clause 3, as amended, was passed.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, in relation to clause four, it should read: notwithstanding anything therein contained, the Town and Country Planning Act has application to this Act only where it is so expressed by this Act. I know that you have removed the original clause four. The new clause four has been inserted and stands part.

The question that the new Clause 4 be inserted and stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I move that the original clauses four and five be renumbered clauses five and six respectively and stand part.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and the original Clauses 4 and 5 were renumbered Clauses 5 and 6 respectively and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee with amendments and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Act, 2013.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, we have come to the end of Government Business for the day. I beg to move that the sitting be adjourned until Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 10.00 in the morning.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while correcting and preparing this report. Members are named as in the 2008–2013 Parliament.

Q1. Front matter. The source does not record the PRESENT list or the officiant at Prayers. The Members listed are those identified from the record; the time of meeting, 10.00 a.m., is as stated in the source. Please supply from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q2. Throughout. The bracketed time-checks in the source are out of sequence (for example '[12.30 a.m.]' and '[1.00 a.m.]' during the morning, and '[12.30 p.m.]' in the evening) and have been omitted.

Q3. First Readings and Order No. 7, title of the Bill. The source gives the Bill variously as the 'National Housing Corporation Transfer of Tenants' Units Bill', the 'Transfer of Tenantry Units Act' and, at the third reading, the 'Transfer of Residential Units Act, 2013'; the recording has 'terrace units' throughout (rendered 'terrorist units' in the captions). Printed as the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Bill, 2012 (Act, 2013), with 'terrace units' where Members refer to the units. Please confirm the title against the Bill.

Q4. Suspension of Standing Orders. The source reads 'Standing Orders 61(6), 18, 20(42), 54(3) and 44' (recording: '616, 18, 2042, 543 and 44'). Printed as Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44. Please confirm.

Q5. Order No. 7, Mr. G. A. Clarke. The speech and later interventions are headed 'HIS HONOUR NEIL G. H. ROWE, M.P.' in the source; he was not a Member of the 2008–2013 House. Mr. SPEAKER called the Member for St. George North, Hon. D. St.E. Kellman replied to the Member for St. George North, the speaker refers to his time as Minister of Housing, and the captions name Gline Clarke; printed under Mr. G. A. CLARKE.

Q6. Order No. 7, Hon. C. P. Sinckler. Headed 'HON. CHRISTOPHER D. L. GIBBS, M.P.' in the source; he was not a Member of the 2008–2013 House. Mr. SPEAKER called the Member for St. Michael North West and the captions name Christopher P. Sinckler; printed under Hon. C. P. SINCKLER. The source's 'the constituency of St. Michael West' (recording: 'St. Michael's northwest') is corrected to St. Michael North West.

Q7. Order No. 7, Mr. K. St.C. Best. The evening speech and several interventions (during the speeches of Mr. G. A. Clarke and Mr. R. St.C. Toppin) are headed 'HON. TREVOR A. PRESCOD, J.P., M.P.' in the source; he was not a Member of the 2008–2013 House. The recording has Mr. SPEAKER calling the 'Honourable Member for St. Michael East' before the evening speech (the call and the words 'Mr. Speaker, I rise' are restored from it); the speaker refers to St. Michael East and to 'Mr. Best', and Mr. G. A. Clarke and the Minister refer to the Member for St. Michael East. Printed under Mr. K. St.C. BEST (the Deputy Speaker, speaking from the floor). The interventions during Mr. Toppin's speech carry the same source label and are attributed on that basis; please confirm.

Q8. Order No. 7, Hon. M. A. Lashley. The source has 'the Member for St. Michael South East can attest to this. So I am hoping that she will speak'; the Member for St. Michael South East in 2008–2013 was Mr. H. F. Lashley and the recording has 'you speak'. Corrected to 'he'.

Q9. Order No. 7, words at the ends of speeches. The source places a number of Members' words under Mr. SPEAKER (for example '– in the near future', 'I am not going to be sidetracked', 'people in this country. I thank you, sir.' and 'That is all I have to say on that, Mr. Speaker'), and prints continuing paragraphs of Hon. C. P. Sinckler, Mr. R. St.C. Toppin and Hon. M. A. Lashley under Mr. SPEAKER. These are printed with the Members' speeches. The call 'Thank you very much, Sir Thomas' is printed as a call to the Member for St. Thomas.

Q10. Order No. 7, after Mr. H. F. Lashley. The Deputy Speaker was in the Chair during the speeches of Hon. D. O'N. Inniss and Mr. H. F. Lashley. The next call, and the ruling on Mr. Lashley's objection during the speech of Mr. G. W. Payne, are headed 'Mr. Speaker' in the source and are so printed; please confirm who was in the Chair.

Q11. Order No. 7, Miss C. Y. Forde. Miss Forde said that 'the Honourable Member for St. Philip South earlier spoke of an old lady' asked to pay \$50 000; the account was given by the Minister, Hon. M. A. Lashley, Member for St. Philip North. Left as spoken.

Q12. Order No. 7, between Hon. P. M. T. Todd and Hon. S. A. Lashley. Part 3 of the source is missing. Part 2 ends during the speech of Hon. P. M. T. Todd and Part 4 opens after a suspension with Mr. SPEAKER calling Hon. S. A. Lashley; the rest of Mr. Todd's speech, any other speeches, and the suspension and resumption are not recorded. Mr. SPEAKER's opening words read 'As

Honourable Members, this session continues when the suspension was taken. Your voice is our number seven'; printed as a reference to Order No. 7. Please check against the recording.

Q13. *Order No. 7, Hon. S. A. Lashley.* After a '[Point of Order.]' marker the source runs 'Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading this chamber...' into Hon. S. A. Lashley's speech. As he had been speaking of the Member for St. Thomas and his reply refers to her, the point of order is printed under Miss C. Y. FORDE; please confirm.

Q14. *Order No. 7, after the evening suspension.* The House was suspended until 7.45 p.m. The final Part of the source begins with the call to the Member for St. Michael East and does not record the resumption; part of the proceedings may be missing at this point.

Q15. *Committee.* Mr. CHAIRMAN is not named in the source; the Chairman of Committees, Mr. J. D. Paul, is presumed. The Committee stage is condensed to the Official Report formulae, with the Minister's amendments printed as moved; the wording of the amendments to Clauses 3 and 4 is as recorded and should be checked against the Bill as passed.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 8, 2013, with Mr. SPEAKER presiding. The Minutes of January 4 were deferred on the motion of the Leader of the House, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, who laid the Annual Reports for 2010 and 2011 of Needham's Point Holdings Limited and of Needham's Point Development Incorporated. Hon. M. A. Lashley moved the first reading of the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Bill, 2012, and Standing Orders were suspended. After the luncheon suspension Hon. J. D. E. Boyce gave notice of a resolution to grant \$15 752 814 from the Consolidated Fund under Supplementary Estimates No. Twelve, 2012–2013.

Under Order No. 7 Hon. M. A. Lashley moved the second reading of the Bill, which provides for the transfer of National Housing Corporation units to tenants of 20 years or more whose rent is paid up, subject to a ten-year restriction on resale. He said that \$2.4 million in arrears had been collected and that 2 497 offers had been made and

2 349 accepted; the main obstacle was some 1 218 extensions built without planning permission. Mr. G. A. Clarke supported the Bill for the Opposition, said that the Barbados Labour Party had begun divestment in 2003, and called for stronger management at the Corporation, a faster Land Registry and housing for middle-income earners; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman and Mr. K. St.C. Best disputed parts of his account. Hon. C. P. Sinckler said that 377 persons in his constituency would benefit and accused the former Government of leaving a waiting list of close to 23 000.

In the afternoon Mr. R. St.C. Toppin criticised the drafting of the Bill, including references to subsections that did not exist, and argued that tenants at Eden Lodge and Grazettes had paid for their units in far less than 20 years. Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson listed the Government's housing projects. Hon. D. O'N. Inniss said that of some 3 885 units 2 495 tenants had qualified and 2 349 accepted, and raised illegal dumping and burning. Mr. H. F. Lashley spoke of his 35 years in the housing estates. Mr. G. W. Payne said that he had received the three-page Bill only the night before and called it a statutory lease with an option to purchase. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman spoke of disposable income returned to tenants, and Miss C. Y. Forde asked whether about 200 persons who had paid deposits would be refunded. Hon. P. M. T. Todd began to speak; Part 3 of the record is missing.

After a further suspension Hon. S. A. Lashley spoke for residents of Silver Hill and Gall Hill, Mr. J. D. Paul said that 129 of 131 offer letters at Grazettes had been accepted, and Mr. R. C. Eastmond warned against squatting. On the motion of Hon. R. D. Jones the House was suspended until 7.45 p.m. In the evening Mr. K. St.C. Best cited Democratic Labour Party manifestos of 1991 and 2003 and was directed by Mr. SPEAKER to keep to the Bill. Hon. A. D. Brathwaite said that about 1 200 families wished to proceed but only 200 had satisfied the Chief Town Planner, and Hon. R. D. Jones said that 14 of 120 units at Watton had extensions.

Replying, Hon. M. A. Lashley said that close to 300 houses had been sold at Coverley and called for an inquiry into the Albaric contract. The Bill was read a second time. In Committee the short title was amended to 2013, Clause 3 was amended and a new Clause 4 was inserted providing that the Town and Country Planning Act applies only where the Act so expresses. The Bill was read a third time and passed as the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units) Act, 2013. The House adjourned until Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 10.00 a.m.