
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

The House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Tuesday, April 25, 2017.

PRESENT

His Honour MICHAEL A. CARRINGTON, Q.C., B.A., LL.B. (Speaker) Her Honour Mrs. M-J. MARA THOMPSON, M.Sc. (Ph.Ed.) B.A.(Deputy Speaker)
Mr. GLINE A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P.
Hon. DENIS ST.E. KELLMAN
(Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development)
Hon. Miss MIA A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B.
(Leader of the Opposition)
Miss CYNTHIA Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.
Hon. RONALD D. JONES, J.P., B.A. (Hons.) M.A. (Ed.) (Minister of Education, Science and Technology and Innovation)
Mr. DALE D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C.
Hon. MICHAEL A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.)
(Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. RICHARD L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.
(Minister of Tourism and International Transport)
Right. Hon. FREUNDEL J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M.
(Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development)
Hon. JOHN D. E. BOYCE, B.C.H., MRAC, M.Sc., C. Eng.
(Minister of Transport and Works) (Leader of Government Business)
Hon. STEVEN D. BLACKETT
(Minister of the Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development)
Mr. JAMES D. PAUL, B.Sc.
(Chairman of Committees)

Dr. the Hon. DENIS S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip. Theology
(Minister of Environment and Drainage)
Hon. STEPHEN A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.
(Minister of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports)
Hon. DONVILLE O'N. INNISS, Dip., B.Sc., M.B.A.
(Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development)
Hon. CHRISTOPHER P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc.
(Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Mr. TREVOR PRESCOD, B.A.
Mr. KERRIE D. SYMMONDS, B. A., LL.B.
Lt. Col. JEFFREY D. BOSTIC, M.V.O., B.A. (Hons.)
Mr. EDMUND G. HINKSON, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., LL.M. Mr. DWIGHT G. SUTHERLAND, M.Sc., M.B.A. (Dist.), B.Sc.
Miss SANTIA J.O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.)

ABSENT

Rt. Hon. OWEN S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)
Mr. GEORGE W. PAYNE, Q.C.
Mr. RONALD St.C TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)
Dr. the Hon. DAVID C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B.,B.S.
(Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management)
Hon. ADRIEL D. BRATHWAITE, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.)
(Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs.)
Dr. Ms. MARIA M. AGARD, J.P., D.Ds., B.Sc. (Hons.)
(Prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood)
MR. SPEAKER: Good morning, Honourable Members, this House is now in Session. Members, just let me welcome you back after a very short break, as we continue to do the people's business.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: I have with me the Minutes of the meetings held on Monday, March 13, and Friday, March 24, 2017, respectively.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes referred to be taken as read.

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

The question that the Minutes be taken as read was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

MR. SPEAKER: Unless there are any objections or corrections, then let those Minutes stand confirmed.

PAPERS

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the National Petroleum Corporation Annual Report, April 2009 to March 2010.

BILLS

Hon. F.J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Offshore Petroleum Amendment Bill be read a First Time.

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

The question that the Offshore Petroleum Amendment Bill be read for the First Time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

A Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Chapter 225, the Vesting in the National Housing Corporation of the parcel of land, the property of the Crown, situate at London Bourne Towers, Bay Street, in the Parish of St. Michael in this Island, for housing development and road improvement.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Resolution and to say that we are just continuing a policy that we would have started as far back as the 1990s when we went to Church Village in St. Philip and constructed some high-rise apartments. At that time, the Minister of Housing would have been the Honourable Harold Blackman. We decided that we needed to ensure that we utilise and maximise the usage of land in the particular area, and that was when Church Village was built. After that, the Barbados Labour Party under Dame Billie Miller would have constructed these at London Bourne Towers; a continuation of a policy left by the Democratic Labour Party, and today we are here to vest it.

I said that just as a brief outline so that people would understand that this was not the first type of development of this kind, and that foresight of the Democratic Labour Party would have influenced the person who would have requested that these be constructed in that particular area. Mr. Speaker, when one listens to the public debate that is going on about high-rises, one would get the impression that there is some novelty that is occurring and that there would not have been housing development prior to this which would have created the impetus and would have seen the need for such. As you know, Mr. Speaker, as we deal with the urban areas, we do not have the land spaces where we can afford to get the number of units or the number of single units that one would expect. There is an expectation that if you are going to satisfy the demand in the urban areas, you would have to look to go up instead of going across. Instead of having single units, you would have to have multiple units to satisfy the demand.

We also have to look at the possibility to see if we can speak about urban and the City as the same, because when we speak about the City it does not necessarily mean that we are also speaking about urban. Since 2008, the urban areas of Barbados have expanded so rapidly that when we refer to "urban" and urban development, we could easily be speaking of some area in St. Philip or some area in St. Lucy because the urban area has now stretched from Harrison Point to Ragged point and we have to acknowledge that is because of the infrastructure that has been put in place by Government and that the development that has been driven by individuals.

10.29 a.m.

When one goes to the Harrison Point area and one sees the type of housing that has been constructed in that area, in these times, one must ask him/herself if what you are hearing from the Opposition is really true because when one sees the construction that has occurred it is a lot better and the sizes are a lot larger than what has been offered by

the private sector under companies and also what has been offered by the NHC. That is why you cannot relate all the radio talk you hear. You have to actually get on the ground and go around and you will see that housing in Barbados today has taken a leap, even though we are supposed to be in a crisis that once you have empowered the people by giving them land those persons have maximised the use of the land. What they have produced is a lot better than can solutions that had been given to us. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I was listening this week to a criticism of this Government and the person making the criticism made the point that Government said that they were going to build some houses and how the houses are small but some persons who had been able to buy land and that the structures on the lands that were provided are so large now that you can easily differentiate between the ones built by the persons who purchased the land and the ones that were built by Government. It was supposed to be a criticism not recognising that this Government have always recognised that once you give land to the masses of people of Barbados that they end up having a solution much better than when there is Government intervention. I want to say this is something that is not new to the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) because when one looks at the housing projects the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) did and one goes to the Wanstead areas, Wanstead Heights, Wanstead Gardens, Husbands, et cetera, one would see that those are areas where the land was given to the people and when you see the output one can appreciate that there is value in having a balanced approach to housing in this country and that is why I am proud to speak on the behalf of Government because we have been able to offer multiple opportunities for people and we have allowed the market to be satisfied not only by the can solutions but allowed persons to also dictate what they wanted.

A good example is when you drive through a constituency like St. Lucy and St. Philip where you do not have the natural developments but you can easily believe that you are driving into housing developments. I am saying that now we have been able to establish that urban Barbados is not The City anymore, when we speak we have to recognise that housing has taken a leap and it has been for the better of this country because when we go away on conferences and we hear people speak about urban you can always have a relationship between The City and the urban areas because the definition is such that you expect to see these things in The City only but in Barbados today, even in a crisis we have been able to drive the development of housing to such that we can now regarded Barbados as a City State because what you are seeing now in rural Barbados is just as good or better than what you expect to see in urban Barbados. That is why we are always able to take the lead and we are able to point others in the direction of how we have been able to make the corrections using our educational system, and job placements, et cetera, and how we have been able to drive housing this country.

One of the most amazing things in this country also that we cannot ignore - some people see it as a negative but I do not see it as a negative. I see it as a challenge -- is that we hear a lot about we having between 15 000 to 17 0000 unoccupied homes in Barbados. It is rather interesting that when you have a demand about the same of those persons who want to have a solution, either they want to rent or buy you have a situation where people have properties and they are not prepared to part with those properties because for some reason they are not happy. Some may be legal conflicts, some may be a belief that if they were to rent the properties to persons that they would not care them or the persons are just interested in having the land. We might have to look at this other CAP 226 to see how we can deal with this situation when one considers that we have the demand and it is clear that there is a legal problem. It is also clear that there are people who do not want to rent their properties and you can easily come to the conclusion when one considers how the houses become dilapidated that they are not interested in the house. As a small developing country we cannot afford to have homes and allow them to become dilapidated when we have an opportunity seeing that the person only wants the piece of land that we can enter into a rent relation where we can easily take that property and point that person in another direction to get at a piece of land. I am not one who believes that you should take somebody's land and just give them money. I have always said when I was in Opposition that and I will continue to say that the person buying must also respect the right of the person who would have to sell. You would agree that when using the Land Acquisition Act it is not that they are doing it out of their own free will but they are giving into the Government's demand to have that piece of land so we have to have a relationship that at the end of the day, the Government is the winner and the person who is prepared to allow you to have that property, their need is also satisfied so that they would be no conflict. No one can say that they have been "unfair", that the Government has taken their property or anything like that. That is why we are moving forward to ensure that we do not allow real estate to become dilapidated and it cannot be used.

I remember when I was the Minister of Environment I had this discussion with the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) because I have always felt that we needed to identify those properties that could easily be repaired instead of EPD having the right to just mark them and then hire someone to come and bulldoze them and remove them from the property. We are not rich enough to allow that to happen. I think that EPD needs to have a relationship with the Ministry of Housing and Lands through the National Housing Corporation so that we can identify those properties that are good because a lot of people do not know that a derelict house is a house that no one lives in. A lot of people see homes and they say they are derelict but once someone is living in them, they are not

derelict and EPD can only operate if no one is living in the property. One has to be very careful how one describes a house under normal circumstances as being derelict for EPD purposes. I am saying that we, as a small developing country, we have to count and recognise that we need to save foreign exchange and maximum the uses of it that is why it is going to be very important that we come up with some housing policy to ensure that we develop a relationship between those owners.

House D 9 Seq 2 10.39 a.m.

Also At a time when we have been fortunate to be so successful in our tourism industry, we also have to look to see how we can convert some of these homes in urban Barbados and point the owners, because they might not want to have a relationship with locals but they might be better off having a relationship with short-term tourists and those properties can be converted and put in the community tourism pool.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be very careful because at this stage that sector is doing so well that we have to be very careful that do not allow others to influence our decisions and instead of driving the expansion of the community tourism sector in the urban areas that we allow people to force us to have so many controls that instead of people being excited by the opportunity of joining that market that we frustrate them and keep them out of that market allowing those properties not to be converted when they could easily be converted at no cost of additional foreign exchange to the country and allow them to be part of the tourism market.

Mr. Speaker, we know the contribution that community tourism is making to Barbados and we know the amount of jealousy that it has created among some sectors, but we cannot afford to allow our growth patterns to be affected because some persons see a benefit in one section of the section and not the other but because of jealousy people get and decide that they want to see regulations and so on and they want to put the same standards to others as they have been placed under. We have to be very, very careful because at the end of the day we have to understand that the growth and the development of this country is very much dependent on the number of people who can contribute to the tourism industry as it stands right now.

Mr. Speaker, I keep making the point that if we are going to develop the urban areas that we must copy and go back to our history. Barbados was very successful when the sugar industry was able to have small farmers taking part in the industry because those persons who had the lands were quite prepared to cut their canes and because they were quite prepared to cut the canes for themselves they were quite prepared to also work on the plantations.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if we are to drive urban housing we cannot see it as an isolation but we have to understand that we must have the right mix. Mr. Speaker, that is why it is very important, especially as we deal with the London Bourne Towers, that we recognise that we cannot just build the London Bourne Towers and it is a stand-alone but that we must have the necessary development in the area so that the people would feel happy to remain in the area and can see that they can drive and get an opportunity to get a job in that particular area. There must be a mix.

Mr. Speaker, I find it very short-sighted of some people who cannot appreciate that any development that comes close to the London Bourne Towers or Nelson Street or so on can only be a positive and not a negative, and anybody who stands in the way should be seen as the enemy not only of the State but must be seen as an enemy to the people who are also living in the London Bourne Towers because they are depriving them of an opportunity of having a job of being able to provide a service to service the debt or service the liability that they have with the National Housing Corporation at some point in time.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if we want to maintain the population in the Bridgetown areas that the only way we can do it is by going the way we have done by the high-rises. Yes, the cost is not the normal cost, but it is very regrettable how people can expect you could build high-rises and expect the cost of building a high-rise to be the same as if you are building a single unit when you have to involve yourself in very high-cost equipment and so on.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has been very right to ensure that the population status within the urban areas remain or look to increase them when one considers what has been happening previously, and that is why we have to continue to drive the housing development in the urban areas as it relates to The City and the urban sprawl because we need to ensure that we have the population to suit the area.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to understand that when we speak about housing in Barbados it cannot only be about a house, there must be some type of commercial activity in relationship with that. Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting that as we travel and we go across the world, we see that wherever there is a major housing development, you talk about Canada, the United States of America or England, there is some type of commercial activity that is attached because you need to service it and you need to provide employment, et cetera. Mr. Speaker, I find that we in Barbados are very narrow because we speak about housing and we speak as if housing should just stand alone. We do not realise that there must be services that come with these.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that those people who cannot appreciate that point, I am very sorry for them. I think it is backward thinking and I think that it is not in the interest of the masses of people to just come and put them in a housing area and do not provide the other services and then force them to go to the status quo when you can do it and encourage those persons to help support themselves by creating the necessary activity to drive development and help them to create employment for themselves.

We cannot be heard as saying that you must downsize Government in one breath according to the Opposition but at the same time when you create an opportunity for them to also get an opportunity to create work for themselves it is criticised too. Are we saying that we must always have people who are dependent, or are we truly here to make people independent? I believe that after 50 years of independence and over 50 years of free secondary education that this should not be a debate in this Parliament. This should not be something that I have to explain or defend. One should have expected that it is natural that if you speak about housing in this day and age that you have to speak of housing in the broader terms.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I am proud that we have the foresight and we have been criticised but we have been criticised for doing good, and once you have been criticised for doing good you need not worry because there is a greater one than us who came who was even criticised and crucified for doing good. The important thing is that after being criticised and crucified people regretted it, but we have the opportunity now not to regret. We have an opportunity to recognise that everything that has been done has been done for a good reason and it has been done in the interest of the masses of people in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, another thing is that we have to recognise that if we are going to be dealing with the urban areas that there must be open spaces and parks but we cannot have open spaces and parks and people believe that these are areas only for people to come and loiter or play. Wherever there are open spaces and parks there must be some opportunity for some type of commercial activity so that the persons in the area can generate some type of income, and instead of persons having to leave there to go elsewhere looking for services those services should be able to move to the particular area and when the activity has shifted those persons can also display their ware and ensuring that they are displaying it in something that is attractable to the eye and that is moveable to the next location so that there is some type of sustainability to the offerings.

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10.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that it is not just about planting trees, putting down benched and things like that, we also have to recognise that there is a human side to everything that we do and that once we recognised that there is a human side to everything that we do, then we would not have a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the day when we outside of this side recognise that vending has been able to build this country. We would not have called it vending in the day, we would have called them hawkers, but their contribution to the development of this country is so great that no one can question it. Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that if we continue to turn a blind eye to vending, then we would be turning a blind eye to growth in this economy as it relates to manufacturing, agriculture, et cetera. They are the drivers of local products, that is why we have to ensure that we allocate locations across Barbados, wherever we have open spaces that we also create the atmosphere for people to be able to vend, because it is self-employment, it is an opportunity for people to feel proud of themselves, it is an opportunity for people to be able to support their families and it is an opportunity to bring people together as one, with them believing that they have a contribution to make. Mr. Speaker that is why I believe that agencies like the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission have significant roles to play in this country as it relates to developing both the rural and urban areas.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that fortunately for the Urban Development Commission a lot of that work has been done for it but the Rural Development Commission must now appreciate that it has the largest land mass to cultivate and that because it has the largest land mass to cultivate and the largest numbers of opportunities, it now must find the necessary resources to develop these areas because we cannot be asking more people to come to Barbados, yet at the same time we do not have the opportunities to offer them. We also cannot afford to have staleness. The truth is, there is no need for our tourism product to be stale because we are one of the most fortunate countries in the world in relation to tourism because our people are our greatest assets, therefore when you combine our greatest assets with their offerings, you can imagine what we would be doing for the development of this country Barbados and its people, that is why from Archers Bay to Consett Bay, the national park of Barbados...

Yes, you cannot build it out like how you would build out the other areas for housing but you can build it out to create economic activities for the people, and they can be shared both between urban and rural because the land space is such that once they are built out the correct way, the urban people can then move to the rural.

Mr. Speaker, let me stop to tell you why I am making this point. Mr. Speaker, I am making this point because a lot of people when they travel overseas, one gets the impression that the only way that you can see glory is when the rural people move to the urban. Mr. Speaker, many times I have to tell them that is not so in Barbados, for the simpler reason that the rural areas now offer so many opportunities that you see now more urban people leaving to go into rural areas to work, than visa-versa and that the more we treat to the rural areas, the more we will see more economic activity occurring and there can be a niche between the urban and rural which can make the right mix.

Mr. Speaker, another thing I have found is that when people speak about urban they can tell you about all of the disadvantages such as crime, transportation problem, environmental problem, climate problem, yet they ask the people in rural who are not suffering from those things to come to the urban areas. I am saying that is why we have to continue using Barbados as the best example of a city State and an example for others to follow. It is true that we do not have slums as we would hear about them when we travel but as I said before, we have derelict properties and that we need to look at them. We have properties that might be dilapidated and we need to look at them, but one of the things I want to say, and we had to proffer this as a solution to those countries that suffer from slums, most of these slums are found on expensive land, so that if you really want to solve the slum problem and you want to help those persons, it might be better to sell the slums areas because of the real estate and use the money to buy land elsewhere where when you relocate those persons they would now have the opportunity not only of having a housing solution but to have an opportunity to be able to have something that is workable, something that helps to employ themselves, something that helps to empower them.

Mr. Speaker, in Barbados we do not have, in Barbados what we need, because of the size, is to ensure that we look after the housing aspect, that is why this Government has been pushing the high-rise programme, that is why we have been solving the housing problem by using high-rise programme, and a lot of people seem not to understand just because we are dealing with the masses of people that they too deserve money to be spent on them. Mr. Speaker, this is a country where when one looks to see the contribution to many other things, one would be surprised at the amount of money the Government will give elsewhere and nobody would raise their voice, but when it comes to spending money on the masses of people in Barbados you can find all sorts of excuses.

Mr. Speaker, I have even see a situation in urban Barbados where you made a shift from three to five, displaced a couple of car parks but the car parks do not have a cost but nobody has stopped to recognised that the

foundation will be more expensive than the car parks and then people question the cost and said that there were savings because you did not put in car parks but they never stopped to recognise that you would have to put in two foundations. Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that one of the most substantial cost of a building is the foundation because of the steel, especially when one speaks of high-rise projects, because since you have to build up, you have to make sure that the foundation is much stronger because if you are going to build four storeys up, then the base floor must be able to hold the other buildings that are going on top.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes when you sees these things one must question the logic, one must ask what have we done with our educational system that people can only look at one side of the equation without looking at the other side. I have always been taught in accounting that assets equal liability so that if you look at one side that you should look at the other. Mr. Speaker, I want to make that point because you are always hearing about displacements of car parks and so on but nobody tells you about the additional foundations that would have to be constructed.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue our housing policy, we have been driving it not only under the National Housing Corporation with high-rise buildings, we have also been using the Urban Development Commission in a very creative way to ensure that we better lives of Barbadians in urban areas. Mr. Speaker, sometimes we hear about many things, because I was in this Honourable House when I was told that the place that was backward was that of the rural areas, but even though rural areas representing 20 constituencies were supposed to be backward areas. I saw a budget where even though the backward areas only got \$100, the Urban Development Commission got \$2 million.

11.06 a.m.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: That is what I was told in here. I cannot even call that back roads because anything in rural cannot be backward. The Barbados Labour Party called it backward, but rural has never been able to get more in the budget than Urban, other than under the Democratic Labour Party and under the former project. Have you heard what I said?

Sir, all the talk about rural being backward by them, they have never given rural money. So when you hear them talk about rural being backward and what they are going to do, they had an opportunity when the money was there but they never used it. They gave all the money to urban areas even though you might not have been able to see it.

Mr. Speaker, what we to find is the right mix and recognise that we now must see Barbados as a city state. We must recognise that rural has an opportunity not only as it relates to housing, but rural has a very important developmental role to play in this country. Rural must find manufacturing. Rural must drive the cultural industries. Rural must drive community tourism. Rural must drive agriculture. If we want to ensure that the productive sectors improve in this country, we must give rural the necessary resources so they can use the vast lands that to empower the people so they can thrive.

Another thing under Urban. We have to recognise the prison cannot be seen as a white elephant. We must see it as an opportunity for community tourism. We must see it as an opportunity for the cultural industries, and we must see it as an opportunity for driving agriculture, because you cannot have the prison at Station Hill without an agricultural programme and they are housing people. Sir, because they have been able to make a shift, we do not seize the opportunity now to move it from a social cost to an economic cost. An economic cost generates revenue expenditure to create revenue. That is, the building should be sustainable while making a contribution to the economy which should benefit the agricultural sector. The persons in the area should be able to use the vast land up there - I do not want to see singular relationship where one person believes they can take over the whole thing and ignore the agricultural aspect of it, when we have an opportunity for the agriculture to service tourism. This is where we now have to develop that relationship and create the right niches.

Sir, I cannot understand how we can be running a country, Barbados, and we could be doing so well in tourism, yet the tourism players do not understand they have an obligation to the manufacturing sector and an obligation to the agricultural sector and the cultural industries.

Sir, if we can only get our key industry to appreciate its contribution to the development of the country, Barbados will not have a problem. What is interesting, every year the Government of Barbados spend over \$100 million in the tourism industry advertising, et cetera, to promote the tourists to come to Barbados, yet still some players do not believe they have a contribution to make to the persons who give, through taxes and so on, to contribution towards the development of themselves.

In this crisis we need to sit with these players, to educate them to what is causing the economic hiccups in the country, because they too need to understand that they must make a more direct contribution to the country, for they cannot only be extractors, but must be prepared to inject into the development of the country and to see how much more they can do. I am not saying they are not doing

anything, but if we have to develop urban Barbados it cannot just be about housing. It has to be about the opportunities for the people in urban areas helping themselves.

Sir, after 50 years of free secondary education we know we have moved our people to a stage of independence. There are certain people who try very hard to keep them at a stage of dependency because they believe once they are kept there and once the environmental aspects are frustrated, they stand a better political opportunity. It is not about self. It is about the development of one's country. That is why we are trying so hard to ensure we do the right things to keep those people independent, rather than waiting for the crumbs to fall off the table, as they go around making promises right across Barbados about what crumbs they are going to allocate to this person and what crumbs they will allocate to that person.

Mr. Speaker, we have a proud record as a Party. I do not believe you can find another country coming out of this crisis that has been so bold to ensure the standard of housing in the country has remained at such a high level or even better than before because we have been able to deliver high rise units, we have been able to deliver single units, we have been able to use Urban and Rural to ensure a high standard of living for our people in Barbados. What we also doing is, at the same time trying to ensure that we create enough economic activity to assist those persons capable of doing things for themselves, instead of depending on Government.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that in order to have a social good, we have to do the right things. That is why people have always misunderstood us when we talk about economic and social. We have never told anyone or anyone who listened to our programme would recognise we have always pledged the society and economic connection hand in hand. We have always tried to ensure the people are independent. We do not make people believe they are dependent on us, but at the same time we are not going to lower people's standards.

I hear people speak about a lot of things. They behave as if people should always be dependent. If you have a country where you have delivered so much and your people are still dependent, then one must ask themselves one question. Mr. Speaker, it is clear we have educated them to make them independent, but there are some who believe it is better for them to be dependent than independent. Sir, I am going to say we will continue to turn the corners and build out this country Barbados, so the people living in the urban areas can help themselves and those who cannot help themselves, the State will have the necessary resources to ensure that they are sustained.

Mr. Speaker, those persons living at London Bourne Towers must not only have an opportunity to live there. This Democratic Labour Party has to ensure that it is not only about where you live, it is about the opportunities that are around you. This is a good example of a completion of a housing development. London Bourne Towers would now be regarded as a true housing development when the Hyatt project is completed, because those persons will now have an opportunity to find work and services and to rub shoulders in the right way. At the end of the day they will earn what is in their pockets rather than looking at what is given to them.

Sequence 5

Mr. Speaker, this project, London Bourne Towers, which has been built at Bay Street, has to be complimented. You cannot build a project like this and leave it as a standalone. That is exactly what the Government is now doing, stopping it from being a standalone by bringing the necessary economic activity to ensure those persons have an opportunity to rub shoulders, and to rub their palms with some green in it. So we will do everything and we are not going to stop here, because we are going to develop that whole corridor to ensure that if you have housing that housing must be sustainable and that housing is not a standalone. Sir, right up the corridor we will do it and we will ensure wherever we find the spaces in urban Barbados, we will also look to see how we can add the housing solutions.

Mr. Speaker, so convinced am I about this, if you go to Crumpton Street you would see that the Central Bank has been able under the Barbados Labour Party to build out a lovely green area, but all the houses have been removed from around the green area. I am looking to see how I can make that lovely area a place not only for the people who work at the Central Bank and the Governor to look down upon, but how the persons who represent the City or the people who live in the City can have the same appreciation that the workers of the Central Bank or the people in the area can use the space that is not being used for greening to develop as a business area or be developed for housing. I am committed and I feel strongly about this because I have said that you cannot have open areas without services. There is a connection and there is an economic value for having those things.

Sir, I only hope the Honourable Member for City understands and would not oppose this, and he does not believe this is something that is not worthy. I believe that property next to the Greens by the Central Bank should be used for high rise housing, so they too can enjoy the Greens like the people working at the Central Bank, and they can also be personnel there so that people coming to the area can create economic activity. I am hoping once we do that

there will be a better appreciation for what is happening in the Bridgetown area.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple areas in Bridgetown we have to look at seriously. We have to find some alternative locations where we can build in the City area, if possible, solutions to resite those persons. It is going to be very difficult to make changes to those particular locations where people are still living. Sir, to make the necessary changes there must be some displacement so those persons who remain are in an environmental condition that is suitable to one and all. Also, to ensure that the housing demographics look like what you see in other parts of urban Barbados or even in the rural areas. We cannot expect to correct a problem by leaving the demarcations as they were. We have to ensure when we do it, we do the displacement that will not be a negative but will be a positive for the persons. Also, at the same time create some economic activities in those particular locations so they can be sustainable.

We are looking at a concept that I believe once it is tested, will be able to deliver a cheaper replacement, a more suitable replacement which gives the capacity, instead of dealing with the horizontal aspect, you deal with the vertical aspect and will create the land mass you want, at the same time satisfying the needs of the people of Barbados. At the same time high rise would not allow that concept which is very expensive but you should reduce the cost of the high rise because the roof would be the factor you will have to worry about. You can create duplication as you go up and the roof can be easily replaced. You can put on an additional floor using the same roof as you go up. No matter how high you go, that single roof you have removed can be used because of its layout.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass, and to say that I am very happy to be able to move this Resolution and to say that the urban area is well served because of the housing policy of the Democratic Labour Party and the economic activity driven in these hard times, have been able to influence what has happened in this country in a positive way. If anyone has any doubts, one only has to go look, and see, what has happened between 2008 and 2017 between the areas of Harrison Point, St. Lucy, to Ragged Point and within probably a mile in, and you will see all the hot air and all the negativity that has demonstrated, instead a lot of economic activity has occurred by normal citizens of Barbados along with some who came and enjoyed Barbados better than some who seek to be elsewhere but yet still want to remain and to take control.

With those few words I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City.

Lt. Col. J.D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me say first that obviously the Opposition has no difficulty with this particular Resolution and lending its support. I also want to say that I am not going to take as long as the previous speaker, because if I respond to anything said in relation to the Resolution itself, then I should not have to speak for more than two or three minutes. I am not going to go down the road taken by the Honourable Minister, because the presentation went from the Resolution itself to urban development, rural development, tourism, manufacturing, industry and commerce, agriculture and a whole set of things, but previous little was said with regard to the matter at hand.

I would also say, first of all Mr. Speaker, that I am not going to ask the many questions that have been posed to the Minister on previous occasions in relation to housing matters and land matters because that itself would be an exercise in futility since the Honourable Member does not make use of the opportunities that are presented in this House in order to brief the House on these matters. I would hope the Honourable Member rather than coming into the House and trying to respond to matters raised in the media, Facebook and so on, would actually take the time to respond to legitimate questions posed in this Honourable Chamber about matters for which he has the responsibility.

Sir, when I came to the Chamber this morning looking forward to this debate, I was not sure exactly what it is we were going to be discussing in relation to the Resolution, but certainly I was hoping that the Honourable Member would have spoken to issues relating to the very London Bourne Towers during his presentation, issues of maintenance, for example, and the fact that both London Bourne Towers and Pondsides, having been constructed several years ago, could really do with a facelift right there in the heart of the City. A new paint job, for example, would certainly do a lot to enhance the area.

Sequence 6

I was hoping, too, to hear from the Honourable Minister in relation to the space, I believe, that was allocated for a laundromat within the same London Bourne Towers complex, which I believe still remains vacant. That is something which would certainly do a lot to enhance economic activity in the area, as the Minister has spoken about. I would also have been interested in hearing about some collateral developments in the Nelson Street area, where economic activity does take place. A facelift in that area could also enhance that activity.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that, yes, we all want development. That is good for the country and good for the respective areas, but there is also an aspect of this which I would like to speak to. Mr. Speaker, I would like for the

Honourable Minister, through you, in his wrap-up to say if there are going to be any developments in terms of the road network surrounding the London Bourne Towers and the Bay Street area, and if so, what those developments are likely to be. The reason why I am asking that question is because I have a concern, and my concern has to do with a living reality. That is the issue involving the lack of a resource centre and an area where the young people within the environs of Nelson Street, Wellington Street and those areas could really come together in wholesome activities and so on. It is very limited space and there is no such facility in existence today. I believe that the area between the London Bourne Towers hardcourts and the Bay Street end is the only real space that is available, and whatever development is going to be taking place I strongly believe that some consideration has to be given to the possibility of constructing a resource centre of some sort on that last remaining space. It would be able to cater to the needs -- the urgent needs -- of the young boys and young girls within the communities of the London Bourne Towers and Pondsides. Those are things which I believe would be very useful going forward.

Those are my concerns, especially in terms of whatever developments are going to be taking place in the area. Certainly the residents ought to be involved and communicated to, so that they know exactly what is going to be happening. Without anything else, I am going to rest it right there because we support the Resolution and there is nothing really there for us to fight against. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I want to rise and certainly give my support to the Resolution before us; that is the Vesting of some 4 464 square metres of land situated at Wellington Street, Bay Street, Waterloo Alley, et cetera, in the Parish of St. Michael for the creation of what we all refer to now as the London Bourne Towers. The Honourable Member who just sat, one of the few things he referred to was the Pondsides Development. They can be considered one and the same today. Sir, I think that the Honourable Member who just sat may want to reflect on the fact that he would not have taken the opportunity to certainly speak a little more broadly to the aspects of urban development. As a matter of fact, maybe he could have taken a page out of the book of the Minister in seeking to broaden for the consideration of the people of Barbados and to demonstrate a clear position. It is our job as the Government to make sure that the people of Barbados understand what it is we face in terms of development, and in this case especially urban development, Sir.

The Honourable Member who just sat asked if there were any intentions for further development in the area.

There is no question about that. The Government of Barbados recently indicated that permission had been granted for the construction of a new Hyatt Hotel right opposite to the London Bourne Towers site; so the answer to that question is, to my mind, extremely obvious and very clear. I am sure if the Right Honourable Prime Minister chooses to speak, he will certainly refer to some of the details in terms of the permission which has been granted. It is not unheard of, when permissions are granted for substantial developments in any particular area, to include within the construct of that permission undertakings by the developers to do some level of significant community development within the immediate areas of the contemplated project. Sir, I am certain that this has been part of the considerations in executing the permission for the construction.

Sir, the Honourable Member for the City, of course, on other occasions has certainly indicated that he has no objection whatsoever to the planned development, and certainly this Honourable Member does not either. Certainly, we are as sensitive as anyone else to the realities of high-rise development of any kind; tourism development or any kind of business development. In the entire Bay Street area, we could take a casual ride or drive from the immediate Garrison Savannah into Independence Square and understand clearly the kinds of challenges which we face; how much of our beach lands or beach access do we surrender to private development and whether, as has happened in some countries, the policy position should be one which does not allow beach development but makes sure that all such development takes place on the land side.

Sir, one is not questioning in this Resolution the London Bourne Towers Project. There is no question about it. One is seeking merely to tidy up something which maybe the Honourable Member could have made sure that his Administration had tidied up some time ago. The Honourable Minister of Housing needs, rather than be criticised by the Honourable Member for the City, to be thanked by the Honourable Member for the City for bringing this Resolution today and tidying up the entire question of the London Bourne Towers. There are a lot more examples of this which we can find, but there certainly can be no criticism of the Minister of Housing for bringing this Resolution today. There is really nothing else to it.

Mr. Speaker, you speak in this Honourable Chamber on Resolutions and you set the terms in terms of the extent to which we may develop our points around the Resolution, and you certainly have raised no objection to the points that were raised by the Honourable Minister of Housing. I agree with you totally, Sir, because in considering London Bourne Towers one has to look at the overall housing development plan for Barbados, and even more specifically

one has to look at the urban development plan for housing in Barbados.

11.28 a.m.

We are constantly reminded especially by the business sector who traditionally occupied Broad Street, Roebuck Street and all the other streets of Bridgetown for their businesses that we need to bring back activity to The City. The former Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown was a champion of that cause supporting in whatever way he could, the Honourable Senator did. The aspect of the development and bringing back activity into The City. Truth is, Sir, I have my own views on that but this debate does not require me digressing into that area in any detail. We have to ask ourselves the question. Where does the country go? Where do we take the record in this case, the proud record of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) in housing, as we continue to look of aspects of housing development in The City. We have been pilloried for one reason or another for the development which have taken place at Valery and The Grotto, for instance, but the Honourable Member who just sat would have lead the charge in large measure on the behalf of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) in criticising the provision of housing units at Valery and The Grotto in St. Michael. The challenge of high-rise development - and the Honourable Minister made the point -- is well-known and we go into these high-rise solutions often not known even from foundation stages what we are going to encounter. The surveyors and engineers give us a position but the truth is, until that actually opening is made and we get to look at the physical foundations a lot of our, not all - and I am careful as a trained engineer myself - but a lot of our estimates can be challenged as we confront the reality of the digs, et cetera, that occur in executing the foundation work. Then, of course, as we rise, there are other challenges. Neighbours complain about the fact that now they are being limited or restricted in their access. Once you had a vista which you could look upon an unspoilt horizon and now you are confronted with a solid structure around you which really changes the entire ambience of your dwelling and justifiable raises question in terms of the permission, et cetera. These are realities which we face but we can never, as a country, get away from the burning need to satisfy the housing demands of this country. None of our Administration since the establishment of the Housing Authority, as it was first known, the National Housing Authority, as it later became, the National Housing Corporation, as we now refer to it, the Urban Development Commission or the Urban Development Authority as it first was known and then the Urban Development Commission, as it is referred to today, and yes, Sir, the Rural development Commission in terms of satisfying that housing need. The truth is it is any body's guess as to the size of that list of names at the National Housing Corporation waiting for satisfaction in terms of housing

solutions. We all, as Members of Parliament, face it daily. We face it daily, Mr. Speaker, as members of our communities come to us day after day, week after week, at our clinics and they seek some form of assistance in terms of the housing provision and the Honourable Minister is correct. We need the so resource the National Housing Corporation in a way that allows, Sir, it to satisfy this very important need. He is correct that we should occupy our minds around, how do we see a national housing commission of 2017 in place to effect these housing solutions that continue to be so urgently needed, whether the parties can afford the housing that is being offered or whether they can afford to rent. We have turn to solutions in terms of outright purchasing arrangements which are workable in some cases where income satisfy these programmes, whether we move to an environment where the client is allowed to execute a rent to own programme which is slightly more tolerable but in truth can be more expensive if calculated on the strict financial basis.

We have a lot to talk about but I am not surprised that the Honourable Member sat down so quickly and refused to participate in a City debate. I do not know what he is nervous about already. I do not know what it is, as the Barbadians would say, he like he smell a rat. I do not know what the Honourable Member is getting so nervous about. We are talking about urban development but, Sir, the truth is if we start to throw examples of the performance of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) versus the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) in provision of these urban solutions the Honourable Member would be right to sit down. The Honourable Member is justified in taking his seat after a solid two-minute contribution because let us take a short journey across from here up Whitepark Road to Country Park Towers, another urban solution. It is very similar in concept to Pondside or London Bourne, whatever you want to call it. Sir, the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is proud of its record of leaving that development untouched, steel exposed to all the vagaries of the environment for 14 or 15 years just to make sure that nothing started by the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) would be touched by the Honourable Members on That Side so we came to Government in 2008 and immediately set about restoring credibility to the Whitepark Development and today we have a proud solution in terms of housing provision for the poor and needy in Barbados there are Country Park Towers. Rushing back to Bay Street and to London Bourne Towers even as we contemplate the development, yes, there is room for discussion of parallel economic activity be it tourism, manufacturing or commerce. Even in making his brief presentation the Honourable Member talked about a laundromat that could have been provided that was planned for in the same Pondside, as far as he was aware. He said he was not sure whether it had been provided. I would really as a Member of Parliament for a constituency like that to be able to come into the Chamber and admit

that I am not sure whether there is a laundromat at the London Bourne Towers development?

House D 9 Seq 8 11.38 a.m.

I would really question my stewardship as a Member of Parliament for a constituency like that to come into the Chamber and admit that I am not sure whether or not there is a laundromat at the London Bourne Towers Development. Sir, let me say a little bit about that. There are a number of entrepreneurial activities occurring on the ground floor of that development and the laundromat, I believe, which is contemplated is part of that. There is nothing wrong with an interested entrepreneur getting involved in rolling out the laundromat solution if it has not yet been done. It is a business opportunity of which advantage needs to be taken.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: The Honourable Member had his opportunity to contribute and he said that he had nothing more to say. The Honourable Member was frightened, nervous and taken aback so he sat down after two minutes, but I am going to try to take the couple of minutes left to me to discuss with the Honourable Chamber and the people of Barbados the kind of considerations which must accompany this kind of development in the future.

In Bridgetown in particular one has to be acutely mindful of the whole question of our heritage and the fact that we now speak to a new heritage development opportunity around Bridgetown and Its Garrison of which we must take advantage. Sir, only on Sunday the Jewish Committee would have officially open that wonderful project around the Jewish Synagogue, again an example of the kind of business opportunity... We had an opportunity very recently to discuss that entire development here in this Honourable Chamber. What we are saying is that that entire Bay Street area is ripe with opportunities for heritage tourism development with the restoration of a number of beautiful properties along the Bay Street area that can add to that heritage of which we are so proud. Mr. Peter Stevens, the Chairman of the Barbados National Trust, who spoke recently at the Harold Bernard St. John Memorial Lecture at the Christ Church Centre spoke to this question of our heritage and our development. His presentation was entitled "The Opportunity for Heritage Development, Bridgetown to Oistins". He took us on a journey up Highway 7, the coastal highway, from the Garrison to the Oistins area and spoke to what has occurred, what has remained in terms of the villages and the housing solutions that have been part of that road-scape and the opportunities that have been lost because of private properties and indeed public properties falling completely into disrepair and the opportunities that lie ahead for us as we contemplate future

plans to roll out new solutions that include this kind of development.

Sir, certainly, the programme of the Democratic Labour Party has clearly included an understanding of our responsibility in this regard. Mr. Speaker, we are mindful of the hard work that will be required because if there has been any distortion of the role of the National Housing Corporation in respect to carrying out these kinds of developments in Barbados, that distortion occurred carefully and was managed carefully under the hands of the Honourable Member for St. George North in 1998/1999 when that Honourable Member singlehandedly almost piloted a Resolution in this Chamber to make sure that the remit of the National Housing Corporation was varied from providing housing solutions for the poor in Barbados to one which now see its delving into the area of commercial development. Sir, we have the sad example of that handiwork, if you want to call it that, demonstrated in the National Housing Corporation building at Country Road, which I am concerned about - every time I pass there I look at it and say wow -- and worse than that we have the situation of what is now called the Barrack Building at Warrens, a property which sadly we have paid for dearly. The Honourable Member for St. George North really owes it to this Chamber as to where was the thinking of so destroying the remit of the National Housing Corporation, distorting its objectives and diverting its attention away from its prime role of providing housing for the poor in Barbados especially into one of commercial property development.

Sir, I am with the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development in this regard. I support the Resolution fully. The proud record of the Democratic Labour Party in working towards housing solutions is there. There have been challenges in terms of certain aspects of our programme, and this is the reality of management and decision-making, but the point is we have continued to work towards making these solutions available for Barbadians in whatever form, whether they be small or medium sized developments like Pondside, Country Park Towers or Stewart Lodge on Tweedside Road, or if they are high-rise developments like Valery and The Grotto and the other areas like Deacons Road where these high-rise developments have been contemplated and will continue to be actively considered as solutions or if we have land spaces available, as the Minister pointed out, like in Marchfield and Parish Land in St. Philip where you can spread yourself out a little bit.

Indeed, Sir, do not forget that paralleled to the work of the Government through the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, there is of course the private sector development of small and medium sized housing solutions for the people of Barbados.

Sir, in speaking therefore to this Resolution and indeed in supporting the Resolution I want to say that we need as a Parliament to look very broadly at what the next steps would be, what the opportunities would be and what lessons have we learnt from our work so far and how can we bring that confidence to that large population who still require the intervention of Government in a significant way so as to provide them with adequate housing solutions.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I am obliged to you.

Mr. Speaker vacated the Chair and Madam Deputy Speaker assumed the Chair.

House D9 Sequence 9

11.48 a.m.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Madam Deputy Speaker, I too rise on this Resolution, again my learned friend for the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has indicated that we on this side have no objection to this particular Resolution in relation to the London Bourne Towers. Madam Deputy Speaker, at the outset I would want to state that I am particularly concerned, and at the outset I want to say that this is totally a nonpartisan point. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am particularly concerned at the length of time that it takes for us to identify lands in this country which we are going to use for housing development and then the situation arises where it takes such a long time before the actual parcels of land are indeed vested in the National Housing Corporation.

Madam President, I ask the question whether the current Administration certainly is looking at improving the pace at which the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, certainly the Solicitor-General Chambers moves in order to ensure that these properties are vested in a reasonable time because I think that it is clear that under the Barbados Labour Party Administration this particular project would have had its origin but obviously we are nine years later into the terms of a Democratic Labour Party Administration. This project was actually built in the late 1990s and so it begs the question as to why it is that this process is taking so long for us to have parcels of land vested?

Madam Deputy Speaker, it also brings me to a point that there is a situation in this country as well where there needs to be a faster pace at vesting these lands because there is often a lack of clarity in relation to which Ministry is responsible for Crown land, particularly where there may

be matters, for instance, where someone being injured on a playing field for instance, but the lands are under the control of the Crown, but you have a situation where the community centres are under the control of the Ministry of Community Development because the land is perhaps not in the Registry where it is clearly demarcated to whom the lands belong, you often find a situation where even as attorneys we find it difficult to figure out exactly who are we supposed to sue. We know it is under the control of the Crown but it is often not clear which is the particular Ministry that is actually responsible for the control of those parcels of land.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at the outset I just wanted to make those two points and I would hope that the Honourable Member with responsibility for this area would certainly instead of stating on each occasion that the Honourable Member speaks in this Honourable Chamber that he is intending to do certain things or that they are looking at a particular policy, that we would get to a point where we would actually hear a clear policy being articulated by the Minister in relation to a number of these issues that are outstanding.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I heard at the outset the Minister mentioning the issue of open spaces for instance. Ma'am, open spaces in communities are nothing new, in relation to a new housing development you have a situation where it is almost compulsory that you have open spaces, but we have a bigger problem not in relation to new developments but in relation to some of the old developments where there are open spaces but you have densely populated areas in communities and there has been no clear policy introduced by the Ministries to identify specifically what is going to happen with those open spaces.

Madam Deputy Speaker, now you have persons who have squatted on lands, you have a situation where you have persons who have dumped illegally on those lands. Particularly in St. Michael South East you have areas in Parkinson Field, Golden Rock, even in the Haggatt Hall areas where persons who are mechanics, for instance, have in as sense nowhere to go in terms of finding a vacant plot of land and they have basically started their businesses on some of the Crown's land. Ma'am, I would want to hear from the Honourable Member what is the position of this Administration into the removal of some of these vehicles and buses that have now in a sense grown roots on some of these open spaces, because it is not sufficient to come here and talk about the open spaces as though they are necessary, we have a serious problem across constituencies where the inability to properly police the open spaces has resulted in a lot of difficulties for residents living in communities, particularly in the urban communities.

Mr. Speaker, I think that as a matter of urgency it is something that needs to be addressed. Madam Deputy Speaker, let us take for instance the Golden Rock area in the Pine, an area which has not now only become an illegal dumping area, but you have an area where it was once a play park, certainly when I was a child, and now it has become an eye sore to residents in the community as there are now buses that have been allowed to remain on the land, you have persons who in some cases do not even live in that particular area but who have found the ability to leave these vehicles on the land. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development is well-aware of these situations but I would want to hear from the Honourable Member what is the policy of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, in relation to taking proactive steps to have a lot of these open spaces cleaned up and certainly returned to the communities and residents in those communities. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is my first point.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am concerned as well that there has been no clear policy articulated by the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development in relation to housing policy. We have heard this Administration speaking about the H.E.L.P. programme but there are certain realities. Ma'am, the National Housing Corporation is in dire financial straits, I would want to hear from the Honourable Member what is the plan in relation to providing housing in this country, not only providing it but in relation to improving the housing conditions of the existing housing stock, because we can speak in glowing terms about what we are going to build but if we do not address some of the dilapidated conditions that we see amongst our existing housing stock, Madam Deputy Speaker, then I believe we are going nowhere and nowhere fast.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown spoke to the London Bourne Towers and the fact that the laundromat which I believe was allocated in the building has not been assigned. This is not the time to point blame as to whether or not the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party allocated the space, the space needs to be allocated. Madam Deputy Speaker, as I came to Parliament this morning I came down Bay Street and because of the lack of foresight to ensure that this particular facility is provided at the London Bourne Towers, I am seeing that persons are hanging their bed linen out on balcony. Now, surely that does not require blame being passed from one side of the floor to the other, what it requires is a Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development and a Cabinet of Barbados who like me would want to ensure that persons living in high-rise buildings have adequate facilities to be able to wash their laundry. I believe that those are basic things, you have provided the housing, you have provided the ability for persons on the ground floor to be entrepreneurial

but let us be real, persons should not be subjected to having to hang their laundry out on their balconies in 2017. Therefore, I think the Minister seriously needs to address these issues.

Madam Deputy Speaker, yes, the facility needs to be painted, there needs to be an upgrade of the existing facility and Government has not had a great track record of maintaining its buildings but we must have as a policy a programme put in place whereby existing stock belonging to the National Housing Corporation is maintained. I would hope that the policy would also extend to a situation where persons living in communities like the City of Bridgetown, the Pine and the Farm, et cetera, would be the persons who are engaged and employed by the Government of Barbados to be able to get the contract work to be able to improve the communities and the existing housing stock in the country.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not know how we could have a debate on this Resolution without touching on the Special Audit of the National Housing Corporation High-rise Apartments at the Grotto and Valery Projects which was issued by the Auditor-General, I believe in September, 2016. The Minister has spoken about all aspects, the agriculture, the manufacturing and tourism but the Honourable Member has not touched on the policy for this Administration going forward as a result of the comments that have been made by the Auditor-General in this report. Madam Deputy Speaker, I do believe that if Honourable Members on the other side have had not had that opportunity to read this report and if the public has not been able to read this report, I suggest that persons get a copy of this report, because both sides have been involved and engaged in constructing the high-rise apartments, we understand land space is limited and that we would have obviously to build two-storeyed or three-storeyed or even higher high-rise buildings.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we accept that but what this reports points out is that a number of things have been done in relation to the management of these projects at the Valery and at the Grotto which whether you are on the Democratic Labour Party or Barbados Labour Party side you cannot completely ignore the contents of this report.

12.02 p.m.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the first place I believe there are over 6 000 applicants for low-income housing; persons earning under \$1 500 who have a demand for housing in this country. When these projects were talked about by the Democratic Labour Party Administration, the public believed that persons who were in that low-income bracket would have been able to have access to these two particular high-rise buildings. Madam Deputy Speaker, what has actually been the reality is that persons who earn under \$1 500 are not the persons who have acquired these

units, because the cost of the rental of the unit at Valery is \$700. I do not know which low-income person falls within the bracket of those who are able to afford either of the two projects, in particular the project at Valery. To the best of my knowledge, there are no persons in the Grotto at this point in time. If the Minister cares to speak on that, I believe that he should in his wrap-up, but every time I pass the Grotto I am only seeing the facilities overgrown with bush. I am seeing sheep grazing on the pasture. I am not seeing and I am not hearing from the Minister, and the Minister is allowed to interject. I am not hearing from this Administration a clear policy in relation to the Grotto.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the other point that this Report has pointed out is the fact that, apart from the fact that the Cabinet had ignored the tendering process and that these project should have fallen within the Financial Rules because both were over \$100 000, these projects had not gone out to tender. The position it placed the National Housing Corporation (NHC) in at that stage was that the NHC was not able to identify whether it was getting competitive bids in relation to the construction of the two properties. Madam Deputy Speaker, what that has done is that it has now resulted in cost overruns for the property for which persons who are low-income earners are now not able to afford the value of these particular units. If that does not concern this Administration, it certainly concerns Members on this side, because you cannot have a situation where the Financial Rules are ignored and the Minister does not speak about that. You cannot have a situation where the persons who have been led to believe that they are to be the beneficiaries of the taxpayers' money are now no longer the beneficiaries of these projects which Government is now having to subsidise in a large way because it has not properly followed the Financial Rules. We cannot have a debate on this particular Resolution without hearing from Members on the other side what steps are being taken in order to address this.

The overall costs of each of these units at both projects, Valery and the Grotto, have significantly increased. The persons who built the projects have already been paid; and if that is not a problem for those on the other side, it is a problem for us on this side. Money has been expended, but the persons whom this Administration has led to believe that they would have been the beneficiaries of these two low-income projects have not indeed benefited from being able to obtain accommodation. If it is that these units were built within the particular time frame, again, I commend the developer, but at the same time we have to be concerned that the increased costs have affected the NHC's ability to provide further low-income housing in this country. You cannot have a situation where the Grotto Project is continuing to lie dormant, but yet I have people in my constituency -- certainly in the City and others -- where they genuinely want to be able to afford their own unit or want to be able to rent-to-own, but there

are now less options on the market for persons who want to be able to have starter homes.

I remember under a Barbados Labour Party Administration, there were starter homes. Where are the starter homes under this Administration? In many cases, even when you talk about the projects up at Constant in St. George, those have taken so long to get off the ground. Those projects even at Constant were also supposed to be for low-income people, but we find a situation yet again where the very people who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of a Government policy directed at low-income housing has also failed. If this does not concern this Administration, as I said before, it concerns us on this side. I would like to hear from the Honourable Minister instead of him taking us all across the world on all kinds of things, including what is happening in other territories. As far as I am concerned, unless you are going to tell us what is the clear policy and what you are waking up every single morning and doing in the Ministry, it has become now irrelevant to persons across this country, Madam Deputy Speaker. It has become irrelevant to them because they have not been the beneficiaries of any housing solutions by this Administration. Fixing a house for somebody or giving somebody a key does not on its own solve the issues of accommodation in this country in relation to housing. You have densely populated areas in this country for which there needs to be a resolution. Where the units were built in the 1960s, they were supposed to accommodate two or three persons. Now the units are accommodating ten persons. What is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party in relation to this? It is not a case where the Government does not have and has not acquired lands, but what is the policy? Are you taking it step-by-step in relation to building out a society where persons can indeed feel that they can own a piece of the rock? Is it now dependent upon whether a constituency is run by a Minister that persons only believe they have an expectation that they could get a particular housing unit?

Certainly, in a lot of cases on this side, where you are an Opposition Member of Parliament, we constantly battle constituents asking us about acquiring housing accommodation, but they find it difficult to acquire it. On the other hand, persons who are represented by Ministers have an easier time. That is a fact, Ma'am. I have available units in St. Michael South East, but when I check, the persons are coming from other constituencies to occupy the units in St. Michael South East. What is the policy inside of the National Housing Corporation? Should not the first priority be to the persons living within the communities who require housing? When the East Terrace Project was built in Wildey, the first priority for those units under the Barbados Labour Party was given to the people within the Parkinson Field and the Wildey areas. Those are the things that we would want to hear from this Administration in relation to what the housing policy is, but this

Administration has gone silent on those issues. I believe that this debate more than ever must require this Administration to address the cost overruns that have been incurred by these two projects at Valery and the Grotto. It must address what initiatives are being taken to ensure that proper tendering is done in the future. It must address the allocation of units by persons who no doubt constantly bombard certainly me, and I am sure they are bombarding the National Housing Corporation, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I know that the Right Honourable Prime Minister cannot feel good knowing that the Grotto is closed, because I encounter his constituents as well, who from day to day tell me that they too would like to be able to have access to a unit within the Grotto. They have not been even engaged by the Minister of Housing, or told what is going to be the future of the Grotto Project; so let us be real. We have no difficulty with this Resolution. Okay? This should have been tidied up a long time ago and we accept that, but let us deal with a serious discussion in relation to housing, housing planning and the environment around housing.

We have spoken about the issue of the Hyatt. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South spoke very convincingly that any development in relation to the Hyatt in the City would entail development for the people in the surrounding areas. Do you know the difficulty, Madam Deputy Speaker? It is that we have not heard with clarity from those responsible for the project that the Honourable Member who represents the people of the City can go to them and say, "Yes, you are going to have an area that is going to be green. You are going to have a reduction of the number of pit toilets in the City." We have not heard anything about that. We have not heard about the upgrade of the facilities in the City which surround the Hyatt. It is not a difficulty with the Hyatt Project. It is the silence of this Administration on issues that matter to people, and the ability of people to plan their daily lives with which the Barbados Labour Party and the people of this country will continue to have a difficulty in relation to this Administration.

12.07 p.m.

For the Honourable Member for Christ Church South to say he is certain that these things are going to happen, that you will not have any kind of large development without ensuring that there is development in The City is not sufficient. How are people supposed to plan their businesses? If it is that the Hyatt project is getting off of the ground do you now think that the people of The City should be able to be engaged in a way that they, in terms of small businesses, can plan, that they can say well two years from now and the project is built I can basically apply for some funding to set up a business that is ancillary to what the hotel is offering. Do you not think that the Barbadian

public deserves to know what is happening? Do you not think that the people need to understand what is happening around, not just the London Bourne Towers and the Hyatt but a wider vision for The City of Bridgetown. The Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown is tired talking to all of you and if he takes two minutes or if he takes 20 minutes in any debate to talk about The City, the fact of the matter is that this Administration continues to ignore all of the problems that he has highlighted in The City so he is frustrated, as I am, because I am not going to touch it right now, but the Honourable Minister of Housing knows that I have been tirelessly asking for the conveyances for people in the constituencies where there are terrace units and the Minister has ignored and ignored the request. If the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown takes a few minutes to take this Administration to task on this Resolution I am not surprised because I have asked over and over when are the people across this country and particularly in St. Michael South East going to receive the title deeds that the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) promised to the people of this country in the 2008 General Elections? I want to know still. I will ask it every time I stand on my feet in this Chamber because the Honourable Minister continues to remain silent. We have said on This Side, if it is money that needs to be allocated to the legal department to get the conveyances out, start to put the money there. The Barbados Labour Party (BLP) will support it. If you do not know what to do ask Honourable Members on This Side, let us have a joint committee to be able to determine how to move forward but you can no longer sit on your laurels and believe that simply telling people that they own a piece of the rock, they have acquired a unit in a constituency, that is sufficient for people to believe they now own something in this country. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is simply not good enough. Members on the Other Side, again this is not a debate that should take long but it is one that I believe, again, we have to have a clear vision set out by the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) and in particular the Minister of Housing and Lands. The Minister of Housing can speak of all kinds of things on social media but when it comes to addressing the issue of housing and housing policy in this country the Minister is silent. We should not be having to ask question after question and ask the Minister to answer these things and be ignored. So if we do not take long to ask questions we do so because we have not been answered on all of the other questions that we have asked, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that is the reality. There is a frustration on This Side, a frustration that we feel, because our constituents are asking, what is happening in terms of urban development? What is happening in relation to title deeds? What is happening in relation to the allocation of units? I say to people every day, go into Housing and apply for a unit. It should not be the case that you must know a Minister to get a house in this country. I personally do not believe in that. There is a process, let the process be followed. I do not know what the Democratic

Labour Party (DLP) position on it but my position is, it has to be based on needs but every person should have to apply and be evaluated and a determination made as to how desirous of housing at any particular point in time. You have people where the houses burning down all the time and when they go to NHC, NHC is telling them they do not have any accommodation for them. What is the policy in relation to fire victims, in relation to persons who have situations in even relation to domestic violence and need some kind of shelter for a temporary period? What is the Government's policy on these things because I do not know and the public do not know because you have remained silent? We know the Prime Minister is often silent but it is nerve racking when the Minister of Housing has now taken a position on silence on several matters ...

Asides.

Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW: No, no, no. He is silent on the Ministry that he has responsibility for and it is not good enough to come to this Chamber and speak in a way as if he is so far removed from his Ministry, as if he is not a Member of the Cabinet. I am tired of that. Ministers on the Other Side are now speaking as though they are not part of any collective responsibility. Let us be real. Deal with the issues. You should be coming here and speaking to what it is you plan to do not articulating policy on the Floor of Parliament. The last time the Minister announced some \$5 lot programme, Members on the Other Side had never even heard of it. Everybody looked in shock as the policy was unfolding in this Chamber and that is the nature of what we have come to in this country where the Minister of Housing takes a position and none of the other Members of Cabinet know what is going on.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Honourable Member knows quite well that even before I came to this Cabinet the \$5 lot programme was in place.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order taken. That is so.

Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Madam Deputy Speaker, the more the Minister of Housing speaks the more you realise why housing in this country and housing development is in trouble because the Minister well knows that he articulated a policy on the Floor of this Parliament that none of the other Members of his Cabinet were aware of and he also knows that when constituents across this country asked the Ministry, where do we apply for these lots, nobody knows, because it happened in here. Those are the dangerous precedents that are being set in this country, Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to bring an end to. We have no difficulty with pronouncements of what a Government would want to do but the time is coming

where people are becoming weary of these pronouncements without any serious follow through or any though in relation to how it will affect average Barbadians in this country, how it will impact on the livelihood of people and how it is that housing policy in this country will be developed so I would hope, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Honourable Minister in his wrap up will take the opportunity, if he is not enlightened now, that he will give the undertaking that he will enlighten us at a later stage.

With those few words, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am obliged.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Thank you so much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I just want to contribute to this debate a brief contribution.

First of all, from all that the last Honourable Member, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has said, we can see that she is definitely suffering from sleep deprivation and nervousness. Obviously her nerves are frayed ever since the announcements two weeks ago of three confirmed candidates of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). You are going to see a lot more of these frayed nerves over the next number of weeks, Madam Deputy Speaker, and it is obvious and it is quite evident that her nerves are frayed. She is at her wits end.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to contribute briefly as I said to the vesting of 3 801 square metres at London Bourne Towers and I am really surprised also that my good friend, the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown could not muster more than 300 seconds of contribution, just short of five minutes to a constituency that he is the confirmed Member of Parliament of. Of course, he too is a little bit frayed in the nerves because of the confirmed political opponent. Madam Deputy Speaker, he too is concerned because of his fleeting political capital but there is time for all of this. He musters in his five minute contribution, Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of The City and in those general environs want to see a facelift and some paint jobs on the buildings in that area.

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It is a collateral development in adjoining communities. That area is bereft of such. I want to see roadworks. There is a lack of resource centres and other amenities and all of that. The Honourable Member packed all of that into his five minutes, but I listened to his confirmed opponent and he was much more expansive in what he was anticipating and expecting for his well-deserving constituents, and he was only on the job for a

short few weeks but the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has been there for the last four years.

The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown confirmed opponent wants to see some dialogue with the National Cultural Foundation. He has entered into dialogue with the National Cultural Foundation, the general residents, the stakeholders and the shop owners around Baxters Road because he wants to see a re-introduction of the Baxters Road Mall. That is the kind of programme that I was really missing. I strained my ears to hear if the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown would have introduced such in this debate. As a matter of fact, the introducer of the debate spread the debate so wide that he could have captured all of this in his contribution.

The Honourable Member confirmed opponent also wants to see the Ponside people get their 20-year programme. They want to be recipients of the 20-year programme which will, of course, come shortly. His confirmed opponent made a case for the building of the Hyatt Hotel. An interview was done by two reputable newspapers in this country and they spoke to the residents of Ponside and London Bourne Towers and the people in the general environs and they were all ad idem that that particular project would bring much needed jobs in that general area, and that is what his confirmed opponent has also signed on to. The residents and the occupants of all of the buildings around there are clamouring for the building of the Hyatt Hotel, and I thought that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown would have spoken to that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to verve off of that a little bit and get to the housing policy of this Administration which is second to none. This particular Administration has eclipsed all that has been done by this backward Barbados Labour Party over several years. This programme of housing by this Administration is second to none. I heard all of the talk about the Auditor General Report. Yes, the Auditor General Report makes sense, and we can speak to that from now until the cows come home, but the point remains that The Grotto and Valery are all built and people are occupying them.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want the Barbados Labour Party to assemble their groups of canvassers and rubbing shoulders participants and go up to The Grotto and Valery and tell the residents all about the Auditor General Report and that they should not be in there. Where the Auditor General Report speaks to this matter I want them to tell the residents of The Grotto and Valery that they should not be living in there, that where those buildings are now located they should not have been built. I want the candidates for St. Michael South Central

and St. Michael South to assemble a group of people and go and address the residents of The Grotto and Valery.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: All of the talk about the Auditor General Report, go and speak to the residents in those particular housing estates. If there are three, or 30 or 300, there are residents in there. Where there was grass, old steel, bush and cow-itch, there are now buildings located on those locations. When I pass there I can see people living in those buildings, eating, washing clothes and recreating.

The Barbados Labour Party has absolutely no moral authority to speak on anything when it comes to housing by the Democratic Labour Party. I only hear them because I am not deaf.

The Government, this Democratic Labour Party, since coming to office brought several rental, rent-to-own, outright purchase, land purchase and all kinds of housing solutions to Barbados for the residents of Barbados. We are not like the Barbados Labour Party which has introduced into this country something that is foreign to our cultural norms and our cultural nuances. They introduced plywood houses. I said before in this Honourable House and I will say it again that the Barbados Labour Party introduced something that militates against what is normal to Barbadians in this country. The lumber companies in Barbados sold more plywood sheets at any time in the history of the selling of lumber in this country under the Barbados Labour Party. The Barbados Labour Party turned Barbadians into a strange cultural norm and differences with plywood houses. Not only that, they introduced something else that is also strange to Barbados. Barbadians for the first time in their lives had to turn to renting rooms in Barbados under the Barbados Labour Party and people were going into their mother's and father's yards and building plywood houses. All of that occurred under the Barbados Labour Party because they had no housing policy and no housing plans. That particular philosophy was strange to Barbadians.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Madam Deputy Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East talking about over the last 25 years this and that. Madam Deputy Speaker, in The City in particular the Barbados Labour Party representation eclipsed that of the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want you to rescue me from the Honourable Member for

St. James Central, the self-appointed President General of the Barbados Association of Upholsters because I cannot say anything without... This Honourable Member has pledged singlehandedly to provide all of the work for all of the upholsters in Barbados. This Honourable Member is interrupting me all of the time. As a matter of fact, he brought a better work ethic to this job than he brought to the job when he was in the ministry...

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James Central, would you be less disrupted, please?

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Madam Deputy Speaker, have you rescued me from him? I am begging you "fuh trute". I need the rescue because I cannot deal with the bombast of the Honourable Member for St. James Central.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James Central, would you please allow the Honourable Member to make his contribution?

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: I was saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Barbados Labour Party occupied the halls of this Honourable House more than any Honourable Member on this side in the last 25 years and what they were interested in was building boardwalks, dredging the Careenage and decorating Broad Street and Swan Street. They brought no firm housing and social solutions to the people of The City.

When the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown traverses that particular constituency, the same way it was back in the 60s it probably is the same thing now. I passed through New Orleans and see the kind of road degradation in that particular constituency. The housing is still the same. They still have the green fields. They still have all of the other deprived areas that they found since the Member of Parliament from the Barbados Labour Party and now they are putting it on us.

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12.27 p.m.

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber. The Honourable Member said that no housing construction was done in the City of Bridgetown under the Barbados Labour Party Administration. Ma'am, I say that because Kensington Lodge, Pondside and London Bourne Towers all represent construction that was done under the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Madam Deputy Speaker, in inner Bridgetown: the Orleans, Greenfield, Chapman Lane and all those areas are still deprived and neglected by the

Barbados Labour Party and now they would want us to take it upon our backs, like a monkey, that we did not do anything for the people of the city. Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say that I am unswervingly supporting the Resolution brought before this Honourable House today by the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development and the Honourable Member has my full support. Ma'am, the record of the Democratic Labour Party is one that is stellar and cannot be questioned when it is stacked up against the record of the Barbados Labour Party, theirs pales into insignificance and therefore I have every reason for supporting the vesting of this land at London Bourne Towers. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I now beg to move that this Honourable House be suspended for lunch, to be resumed at 2.00 p.m. this afternoon.

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

The question was put to the Honourable the House and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Madam Deputy Speaker suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.31 p.m.

RESUMPTION

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the Suspension was taken, we were at Order No. 16, and with that we shall continue. Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would want to support the Resolution and also speak briefly on some of the things that I heard during the morning session. I want to say from the outset, though, that we are now apparently going into the season which is called "silly", and Members apparently have become very frustrated and very disturbed and unsettled on the Government benches. Surely, they are not following the calm leadership of their Prime Minister who is very calm and appears to be very collected. When I listened to the Member for St. Michael Central, it worries me a lot. He is not normally bent on being agitated, and I am worried for him. I also want to say that I have never worried about elections. Elections come and elections go, and I have always said to people, "You have to do what you have to do." I have never been worried about my failing at the polls, because the people have a right to make you fail or

the people have a right to choose your successor. These things happen, but if you are true to your calling and if you understand this whole nature of politics, that you have to do the things which the people have elected you to do, then you have no need to worry. You can move a marginal seat into a seat that is into the party's column. This is what it is all about.

I want to say that when I heard Members saying that there is no housing programme or housing policy on this side, it worries me a lot. Madam Deputy Speaker, I was listening to a programme and one moderator said only about two weeks ago that there are many persons in Parliament who have not even read their party's Manifesto, and they get up and speak. It is worrying to me, because we want to be able to put forward the best debate in this Parliament from time to time. We have to read and understand and look at the programmes. Our programme may not very well be in keeping with what you may think is a programme, but both political parties from time to time have espoused housing programmes. Surely, if one reads the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party of 1951, of which I think I have given Members copies before; I do not know how many of them have read it. There is also the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party of 1961, and these manifestos do speak to enlightened programmes which were fully developed by 1961. Therefore, to suggest that there is no housing programme would not really be telling the story as it is. I can speak to that, and I have said to this House before that despite our achievements in housing, we are still far behind what we set out to do.

I have heard Members ask how did we get to a position, and what brought forth a housing programme and policy which were enunciated by this side surely before 1950. It was highly developed, and a need for social engineering in Barbados was preached by both political parties. I speak calmly. I am not struggling and I speak because I want Members to understand that before 1950 there was social engineering to a point where Members spoke about how they could uplift the masses. When you look at Documents like the Moyne Commission Document and at other housing programmes even before self-government, they spoke to the need for housing programmes for the masses of this people. The tenancies programme was developed out of this need. It is true that the Democratic Labour Party had a programme where they felt that the tenants should be tenants on the land which they occupied. We had a different concept. It was the Democratic Labour Party which felt that the Tenancies Development Act was important, and they felt that tenants should not be moved off the land which they occupied. That was the programme which they developed in the 1960s. We, on the other hand, felt that the tenants had a right to the land, and hence the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act.

There is a clear distinction today between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party as far as the tenancies programme is concerned. They may not want to admit it but it is true. The Democratic Labour Party has never fully embraced the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. It was first passed in 1980-81 and it was an Act in which we felt that the tenants who were living on those plantation lands for all those years had a right to the land; whether they were occupying five acres, 500 square feet or whatever, they had a right to it at ten cents a square foot. The Democratic Labour Party, after they won the Government in 1986, amended the legislation and immediately disenfranchised a lot of persons. That is a fact. The Act first stated that if you were living on the land with two or more, you were a tenant. The Democratic Labour Party moved it to five, and that was the amended Act of 1991-92. It showed the difference between the two political parties.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it was then changed back. When we got into office, we felt that we had to make also the urban tenancies a part of the Laws of Barbados, and a further Amendment was done to bring in the other tenancies and the private tenancies into that loop, and in that loop I think members need to understand that amendment of the 1990s was done to give urban tenancies and urban tenants the right to purchase the land at \$2.50 per square foot.

2.21 p.m.

At the same time the app did not disadvantage the landlord. The landlord could get his full market value of the land so that if the land was valued at \$10 a square foot, the tenant paid only \$2.50 per square foot and Government, under the Act, was supposed to pay the balance of that Act. The Democratic Labour Party (DLP) has not fully embrace the Act today because that Act, Madam Deputy Speaker, itself was to be implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the urban tenancies here in the St. Michael area, whereas the Rural Development Commission was to look after the rural and other lands other than the plantation tenants, like private tenancies and so on. I am saying that this present Administration has done very little in terms of pushing forward that programme to give the urban tenants the right to own those lands. I would want to ask the Minister of Housing and Lands if he could enlighten us as to how many persons within the urban corridor have now completed their transactions. In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am told that it has been on the back burner of the Ministry of Housing and Lands for a long time and that the Ministry of Housing and Lands has not been carrying forward the programme and that many people have not been given the opportunity. There is very little, if there is money at all. I do not know what money is in the Estimates for that programme and thus where we have a problem that the urban tenancies have remained as collective tenants

and we have problems. The Minister of Housing and Lands have said that he is going to see a distinct between rural Barbados and urban Barbados because the rural people have been able to development the lands and live in relatively comfortable situations. Whereas there is a need to upgrade the urban St. Michael. There is a need for a further renewal of what is happening in the urban corridor. When I look at urban tenancies today, Madam Deputy Speaker, I see a need for further renewal in these parts of Barbados. There is a need to upgrade and to ensure that persons own the land. I do not want to hear that I have built high-rise units. The tenants do not own them. You told me that you built London Bourne Complex, you built Country Park towards, we built all of these things but this is not necessarily a housing policy. What is the policy here? Is the policy to ensure that these people remain renters for the rest of their lives or are you having a situation where persons can rent to own? I hear the Minister from time-to-time talk about rent-to-own but when you go to the National Housing Corporation, you cannot get any programme or any situation where persons can rent to own. I am saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we have a problem and the problem must be:

The Ministry must annunciate their programme in clear terms. The Minister spoke for almost two hours today and I cannot tell you any policy that he has clarify. He was very general. He has not spoken to what is happening to London Bourne. The London Bourne Towers was open more than 15 years ago. It was the first high-rise units that were built and in those times we were looking at the Condominium Act to sell off those lots after a few years and I have not heard from the Minister what is happening to London Bourne Towers and what the policy of the Government will be or is as far as the London Bourne Towers and the high-rise units are concerned but to say that we built these units but not announcing a policy. What is the clear policy of the Government as it refers to the high-rise units? What is the policy of the tenancies programme as it refers to the urban corridor. I want to hear on these matters because when discuss with many persons in the St. Michael area about the need to clean up the urban corridor. People want to have a better environment. I heard the Minister talking about the Church Village Development. I was very instrumental, Madam Deputy Speaker, with the Church Village Development by the Central Bank of Barbados and I heard the Minister saying that he wanted to put back another slum dwelling at Church Village. The Minister is talking about putting another slum development at Church Village because there is no clarity. He is talking about housing. The Minister said he wanted to put back another housing development at Church Village.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have never said that I wanted to put back a slum back at Church Village but I am glad that

the Honourable Member is saying that they created slums. What I said in my speech is that Barbados does not have any slums like other places so if the Honourable Member is admitting that they have created slums I cannot stop him, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say to the Minister that it was the policy of our Government at the time and the policy of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) at the time too because it was fully supported that slums and persons living under certain conditions should be improved and it was embraced then by the then Democratic Labour Party (DLP) at the time that Church Village and a number of derelict areas within the urban corridor should be cleaned up and many persons should have been relocated, Church Village, Greenfields, Nelson Street and all of the other areas were supposed to be properly developed under a programme.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House again. The Honourable Member knows that if you have derelict properties you cannot be reciting people and referring to derelict properties because the Honourable Member knows that any house that you have and someone is living in it, it cannot be referred to as derelict but it would be referred to as dilapidated because a derelict property is one that no one is living in.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order taken.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Madam Deputy Speaker, there are a number of derelict properties in Barbados that persons still occupy. There are many derelict or dilapidated properties, if the Minister prefers the term dilapidated, but the question is what do you do with these derelict properties? What do you do with communities that are under stress? What do you do with communities that do not have proper garbage collections, do not have proper roads, proper utilities and so on? We found a situation, Madam Deputy Speaker, that Church Village, the Garden Lands and all of these areas were in need of refurbishing and we have to approach these things with a calm head. You have to understand the people cannot continue to live in these situations.

House D 9 Seq 16 2.31 p.m.

When we relocated those persons from Church Village to Lower Burney and some of the other areas... At first people do not want to go. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you are aware that when we relocated persons from Emmerton, the Mighty Gabby wrote the song "Emmerton" because people were relocated to better conditions. We had to do it and Government has to do what it has to do. The Tom Adams Government in the 1980s was criticised by the

Mighty Gabby in a song entitled "Emmerton", but these people who were relocated from Emmerton to Upper Clapham Heights and so on are now living comfortably whereas some of their neighbours who would have remained there are still living in some derelict conditions.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I heard Honourable Members talking about Murphy Pasture and New Orleans and that there is a need for the Government to do something about these areas and I want the Honourable Members, especially the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, to understand that it was the Barbados Labour Party Government that brought in the Housing and Neighbourhood Upgrading Programme which we did with the Inter-American Development Bank because we wanted to find money to help uplift certain communities. It is unfortunate that the present Government did not carry through that programme to its full potential. That programme which saw more than US\$50 million in a programme to help these communities was the first start, and we need to understand that it has to be done. We must not continue to believe that all is well in these communities. There must be better roads, better garbage collection and proper housing. I am shocked in the year 2017 at the conditions that exist in some corridors within urban Barbados.

As I go through certain villages, I went to St. Michael Central, the City of Bridgetown and a number of areas, I saw for myself that there are people who are still living without electricity and running water and I want to find out if the Government is satisfied that there are people within your constituency who cannot pay their water bills or their electricity bills. Some persons electricity service have been cut off for more than six months and therefore the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited came and took out the metres. We cannot be satisfied as a Government that persons are still living in conditions that are not suitable for human habitation.

I am saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we have to have a programme to uplift these people. We must have a programme to ensure that if persons cannot house themselves that the Government would provide. You cannot get anything at the National Housing Corporation today for the poor because I heard the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development said, and this is the Government policy, that there is no such thing as a social programme anymore. He said a couple months ago in this Parliament that there is no social programme anymore, so you would find that at a place like Constant Phase 1 where in my time we were able to subsidise the lots at \$5 a square foot but if you are living at Constant Phase 2 you are paying \$18 a square foot, and the time factor is not too far, it is five years apart, so that persons who are living at Constant Phase 1 paid \$30 000 for a spot and those at Phase 2 are paying over \$80 000.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not only this. The Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development has introduced a programme called “Kellmanonics” that persons must pay the highest for land so that they brought in a sewerage programme at Constant in my constituency, which must be reversed, that persons who are hooked up to the sewerage system must pay \$100 per month. Madam Deputy Speaker, this does not exist in other parts of Barbados because as I know that persons in St. Michael who are hooked up to the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant do not pay. If you are hooked up to any sewerage plant in Barbados you do not pay. The Government carries that load as far as I know. The Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development has now asked the people at Constant, St. George to pay an additional \$100 every month because they are hooked up to the sewerage system. This cannot be right, and I want to inform the Government that the people at Constant in St. George pay taxes and that taxes have to be included in carrying these sewerage projects. Madam Deputy Speaker, you cannot have one rule for one set of people and a second rule for somebody else, it cannot work so.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It cannot be a policy of Government to do that, so we have to make a clear policy as far as this sewerage system is concerned. The people who are hooked up to the sewerage system in the Bridgetown area and on the West Coast do not pay \$100 a month, the Government absorbs that cost and therefore I want to ask the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development to review that situation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in 1994 before the Barbados Labour Party took over we had a similar situation at Lower Estates, and when the Democratic Labour Party Government, through the Minister of Housing and Lands at the time, were asking the people at Lower Estates to pay \$4 a square foot for the land that was changed in 1995 when we said it was a tenantry and that persons had to pay, because they were tenants, the 10 cents per square foot. We have to be fair.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: At Parish Land, the people are supposed to pay ten cents as well. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Prime Minister who is from St. Philip must know that the Carpenters’ Trust was a Trust designed to help poor people, and all the parish lands across Barbados were brought for poor people. The policy of both Governments, up to now and still is, is that parish lands should be treated as tenancies and therefore persons should pay only the 10 cents per square foot because these lands were brought thousands of years ago by the Carpenter’s Trust for the poor people. It is just

like in St. John with the Zoare’s Project just up Bath. All of these lands were part of the tenancies programme that must be carried forward by the Government and that is the policy. I do not want to see a new Government come in and take it upon themselves to change the policy that have been in existence for a long time.

House D9 Sequence 17

2.42 p.m.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes left in which to conclude.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to treat the tenantry programme with some degree of certainty. I want to see the backtracking and I want to hear from the Minister how many persons over the last eight years have completed their purchase so that they can go to the bank. Madam Deputy Speaker, you must understand that if I have my conveyance I can borrow money to be able to develop my home and that was the difference. Ma’am, if you go to a place in your constituency like Pool Land, St. John, you would see the difference. Ma’am, Pool Land used to be a derelict place, today it is a bright place, with persons owning their lands and are able to pass on that land to the next generation. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is what we really want, we want a landowning democracy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is what makes the tenantry programme so important, that is why both parties were able to highlight that programme when we go to housing conferences all over the world, that this is a revolutionary piece of legislation to help poor people. Madam Deputy Speaker, we want to be able to carry it forward, we want the Government to expand that programme. We want to be able to ensure that the urban tenancies.... Madam Deputy Speaker, I made the point that we have to look carefully at the renewal of St. Michael especially, as it is still a desolate and derelict place and we have to do more for it. I am obliged to you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you. I rise to enter this debate briefly. First, let me rise to support this Resolution and the fact that the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development has brought this Resolution today to vest the London Bourne Towers by virtue of the Crown’s Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act in the National Housing Corporation. Indeed, what now happens is that the National Housing Corporation through its 20-year programme, which I believe that the London Bourne Towers was built for some time and could obviously be involved in the mix in terms of that 20-year

programme. It therefore means that if the tenants at the London Bourne Towers so desire to own their unit, they can now do so by the Act of the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development by bringing this Resolution today and vesting it into the National Housing Corporation, which can now convey to those tenants who have expressed the desire to own a piece of the rock, of course, in keeping with the statement of the Honourable Member for St. George North, in keeping with the principle of a land-owning democracy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me say from the outset that we are looking today at housing in the urban corridors and I would want to say that any Government that seeks to provide housing in the urban corridor there would be challenges and so of course a number of challenges existed. Madam Deputy Speaker, for certain in the urban corridors persons residing there, there is always the issue of insecurity of tenure. First, persons living in the urban corridors do not own the land on which they live though they may own the house and so it exists to the whims and fancies of the landlord. Secondly, they might own the house but might not own the land, and there are some instances where they neither own house or land but are occupying illegally and so these are the challenges with which we have to confront. Of course, if one takes a look or does research of the quality or character of the housing stock in the urban corridors...

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Parliament did a Paper on Housing, I think it was in 1997, but that White Paper on Housing mentioned that among the issues pertaining to urban renewal there were issues of insecurity of tenure, poor housing conditions, poor maintenance of the built environment, traffic congestion, poor road conditions and inadequate drainage. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North is well-seized of these facts and at the time becoming Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development the Honourable Member would have had enough evidence to act upon and of course really to explode into the urban corridor a number of housing policies.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am saying that based on the challenges that existed in the urban corridor the State had to intervene, so that when I hear the Honourable Member talking about the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act and that this Administration is now walking slowly or that we are in fact ignoring the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act, that really is, I do not want to say is a lie, but that of course the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber because if we were not acting upon the requirement of the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act we would have come to Parliament and repealed it, but it is still the law of the land.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you know full-well that Bath Tenantry existed for years, persons know that under the Act they were entitled to a piece of the lot. Ma'am, the problem that existed was that a lot of those persons who do qualify were not informed of their rights and obligations under the Act. What we then did in the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development was that we came into the community, went out there and explained to them their rights and how those rights apply, we explained to them what they were entitled to under that Act.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North is interfering with me. Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that we met with some success because a lot of people, as a result of us going into the community, applied. I believe some were successful and received their conveyances, so I just want to put that to rest.

Madam Deputy Speaker, again, it was this Administration - I do not want to go down that line, only to make it clear - that the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act was passed and supported by both parties. Again, that Act protected the rights of tenants and controlled the landlord's actions or inactions towards the tenants, so that there was some protection of the vulnerable by the law by this Administration. Madam Deputy Speaker, so how are we now to approach this matter? Madam Deputy Speaker, it is amazing, I believe the Barbados Labour Party Administration did a check on a number of vacant lots in the urban corridors that were owned by the Crown and there are lots of lots owned by the Crown in the urban corridors. In fact, the White Paper on Housing mentioned at that time that there were some 1 525 parcels of land containing approximately 600 acres within the greater Bridgetown area which are vacant at that time and appeared to be underutilized. I do recall that we made a clarion call for owners of land within the urban corridors who wanted to dispose of the lands so as to help our programme, because the fact that we had information... In fact, as you go into areas such as Chapman Lane, Greenfield and others, you would recognise the poor conditions and quality of the housing stock in those areas.

2.55 p.m.

What we did was acquire land at Whitepark Road. There is land owned by the Crown in Country Road facing the National Housing Corporation building. All of these were acquired and Town Planning permission was granted to build out apartments to assist those persons, bring them out of their living conditions and improve their conditions within the urban corridor. That is the approach which the Ministry of Housing is taking.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: The Member is misleading the House because that was his programme. As Minister of Housing, he carried forward that programme. I am not sure if that programme is still ongoing. For the last four years, nothing has been done after he left the Ministry of Housing. It is really not the policy of the Democratic Labour Party. It may have been the policy of the Minister at the time. I am not sure anything is being done at this time as far as the tenancies programme is concerned.

Aside.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, that is not even a ball outside the off stump or even a no-ball. In fact, it is not even any ball at all. Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not know and we have not checked the information in this Document to see if it is still relevant, but even today there are some 20 000 vacant lots in Barbados. The question is, Madam Deputy Speaker, how are we going to get these lots that are not owned or are owned by the State into the hands of persons who really need a piece of land to purchase so that they can go to their financial institution to get their monies to build out a house? That is the way we have to look at it. How are we going to make land accessible? Indeed, Madam Deputy Speaker, the land prices in the urban corridor are extremely high, so the development of housing in the urban corridor will be high. Madam Deputy Speaker, I must commend the approach which was taken at London Bourne Towers, because the bottom tier of London Bourne Towers gave opportunities to small businesspeople in the surrounding areas. I know full well because I have experienced it. I go out there. Even before I was involved in politics, I used to be in that area and I recognised that most of the business owners were from within the area, so that is a way of empowering, enfranchising and giving people an opportunity, as well as engaging and exploring employment opportunities for persons within the area who were previously unemployed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to take this debate to another point. When we look at land ownership and when we look at the State in terms of acquiring lands for housing, I must say that when we look at the vacant lots or do a thorough investigation of the vacant lots, whether they are owned by the Crown or not, the Crown by virtue of the Land Acquisition Act can acquire these lands or engage in discussions or negotiations with the landowners to see if we can enter into the smallest of joint ventures to bring about some sort of housing to persons living in the area or persons who want to live in the St. Michael area. Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Member for St. Michael South East mentioned the issue of terrace units. I became Minister of Housing and there were a number of issues in relation to transferring the units to the tenants: One, I came and found that there were issues in relation to surveyors and the

payment of the surveyors. Secondly, there was a commitment by the Government to do electrical upgrades, and it was costly. Thirdly, particularly in the constituency of the Member for St. Michael South East, we did a check and we did recognise that in terms of the encroachments, this area had significant encroachments and illegal extensions.

I am not condoning these illegal extensions but we understand the issues of overcrowding. We understand the fact that families have outgrown some of the units. We understand that. What Parliament did, as the Minister of Housing, was bring legislation to this Parliament called the Transfer of Terrace Units, but of course the Transfer of Terrace Units goes hand-in-hand with the Vesting of the units in the National Housing Corporation. My belief is that the title issue in the Pine has been worked out. I am speaking subject to correction but I think that title has been worked out, so you can now vest the units in the National Housing Corporation, and this would now give the NHC the ability to convey the units to the tenants in the Pine. The only issue would be the one of the number of extensions and whether these extensions cover the common areas, because the extensions that cover the common areas cannot be condoned; but there are some extensions that, under the Terrace Units legislation, call for the requirement of an engineering certificate.

Asides.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He has misled himself certainly, because exactly nine years ago, April 2008, that same Honourable Member as Minister of Housing, as he then was, walked about in the Pine delivering letters and telling people that they now owned the property, that they could carry the letter to the bank, that it was a conveyance and that the title was transferred to them. That Minister is now here saying that they have not got the land and that it has been vested. No property has been vested in the Pine or in any of these housing areas in Barbados after exactly nine years when the Honourable Member, who is speaking, as Minister of Housing told people that they now had title to their properties by these letters. I remember him hugging up a woman. I can see it right now on the Front Page of the paper, and that she was owner of the property.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, again the Member for St. James North is wrong. That is why I mentioned that it gives the NHC now the power to convey the units, because we have vested London Bourne Towers in the NHC. I can tell you for a fact that as Minister

of Housing, a number of properties were vested in the NHC and people got terrace units. It is a fact. They also got conveyances. Look, it is here. All of them are there. They were vested. In fact, the programme started and units were vested; Haynesville, Ivy. I can call the names. Send the Document here. Ivy vested in the National Housing Corporation. Deacons is now ready; I can tell you that. Deacons is now ready to be conveyed; I can tell you that for a fact. All of those were vested, and people got their conveyances.

3.00 p.m.

The reason why is because we had challenges with extensions and the Terrace Units legislation now gives National Housing Corporation the power to convey the units. The challenge in the piece of legislation is that it requires an engineering certificate and the engineers are carrying out their work. That is my information and I believe very shortly the Minister of Housing and Lands will pronounce on it as to the readiness of the units to be conveyed but the programme resulted in people in Barbados getting conveyances.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I could tell you that 224 persons... In fact I am not going to carrying on conversation with you anymore. When you get up challenge it.

Let me say, Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact is that we have started a programme of empowering the people and the fact that the programme worked. I really and truly want to say that the State, in its obligation to persons, the vulnerable groups, persons who want to own a piece of this rock, the fact that we have passed that piece of legislation, the fact that Parliament over the years have looked at tenantry legislation whether it is the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) or the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) we have participated and contributed to persons the ownership of land and the access to land in this country. That is a fact but I am saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that there are a number of issues to be tackled.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East mentioned the fact that we have some clarity in terms of this agency can dispose of land or own the land or who have the title to the land. In some instances you can go to BADMC and get a house spot but the question is whether under the law of Barbados, they too can sell or lease house spots but given the fact that there is a dire need for house spots particular in terms of persons who have lost their house due to fire, persons who have been ejected by the Court of Law or persons who have been served with notice to remove as soon as possible, that provides an avenue for

that persons to become an owner of a piece of land and to put them back in the position they were before.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North spin a googly and said he wants to know about the \$5 lots, he wants to know about this and he wants to know about that, but Madam Deputy Speaker, you know full well that your constituents are persons have benefitted from the acquisition of lands by this Parliament sold at \$5 a square foot in your constituency in St. John. The Ministry of Housing and National Housing Corporation have conveyed lots in this country at \$5 per square foot. In Vineyard, St. Philip, there are 45 ready to be conveyed. In Colleton, St. John; Blackmans, St. Joseph; Cherry Grove, St. John; Henley, St. John; Poll, St. John, all of those areas.5:25

INCOMPLETE JULIETTE

House D 9 Seq 20 3.10 p.m.

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: We made a commitment for electrical upgrades so we may even have to look at that again and see whether some responsibility must be placed on the tenants to assist in terms of the electrical upgrades or whatever so that all of these impediments can be removed and we can be able to move into these tenancies and give the conveyances over to these people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I recall that in a Sunday newspaper the issue of squatting in St. Philip came up again. There is a report called "A Report on Occupiers Without Titles Squatting on Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Barbados". It is dated 2007/0905. In fact, the Honourable Member for St. James Central would have been in the Cabinet at the time. This Report provides some good information on the areas in Barbados where we have these squatters or occupiers without title. It listed a number of areas and also what the Cabinet at the time would do, and this is the approach that they took. They said that Government should maintain its policy of not conveying squatters. It should become mandatory that all applicants for water and electricity submit permission for development from the Town and Country Planning in addition to proof of ownership or permission from the property owner which should be submitted to the respective companies. The Ministry of Housing and Lands should take early action to police Crown lands to stop squatting. The Ministry of Housing and Lands and/or our National Housing Corporation should facilitate squatters in seeking housing solutions in the private sector. Destitute and indigent persons should be accommodated by the Government under the programme of the Poverty Alleviation Bureau. Government would continue to provide land for persons affected by land slippage, flooding and

other natural disasters as well as for persons who need to be relocated for health, safety or public purposes. This was the stated policy even before that. What I am saying is that this is an issue we have to confront and deal with.

In 2008 we again had discussions with the various stakeholder agencies to deal with the issue of squatting, and what I believe we have to look at is the vacant lands. As I said, there are a number of vacant lands and residual lands that are owned by the Crown that can be turned into housing. I also believe that some of the \$5 lots can also be utilised to assist these persons and of course the State would have to take on the most vulnerable out of these groups to assist them to ensure that they have access to housing and better facilities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to make a brief intervention.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I crave your indulgence just to make a few observations in this debate provoked so to do by the contribution of the Honourable Member who just took his seat, most specifically, Ma'am, with respect to the suggestion that residents of housing units in certain parts of Barbados would shortly see their long awaited title deeds.

Ma'am, the obvious thing is that we have heard about this title deeds coming soon business for a long time. Ma'am, I want to take the Honourable Member at his word. He is a former Minister of Housing and he himself would have promised on the Floor of this House while he was Minister of Housing that they were coming shortly so that if they are to come shortly it would be a promise which he previously broke finally coming true albeit under another Minister five years later, but, Ma'am, that is not the point.

The point is that I think that it is not too late to try to save this Government from the sorry mess that it is creating for itself with respect to this particular issue of the way in which units are being conveyed first of all and secondly and more importantly what happens in the aftermath of the conveyances. Ma'am, picture if you will, because you do not have them in St. John to the best of my knowledge and belief, the housing units, for example, that obtained in The Pine or those that would have obtained in the constituency of the Minister of Finance where in the Farm, for example, where you have expanded amounts of units. Ma'am, if everybody in one building was to benefit from the grant of their conveyance and every person having benefitted from the grant of the conveyance then decides, as it is currently structured in law, that he or she has the right to do as he or she feels with his or her unit, so I am going to paint my unit blue and the one next door is painted green, the fellow next

door is painted red, the fellow next door is purple, et cetera, and because it is his or her unit and they live there for however long they are going to do whatever they feel like with respect to the portion of the...

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: No, it is not just a matter of bureaucracy because the units have common areas. The structure shares a common area. It shares a common car park for argument sake and they share other common areas. The issue, Ma'am, that I think has escaped the eyes and the mind of legislators thus far is that there is really no difference in function between those units and those buildings which we have commonly referred to in Barbados as condominiums. They too are defined in a Condominium Act of this country along the same definition as would be the units but unlike the units a requirement is made for the owners of every condominium within the block of condominiums to carry a certain responsibility towards his or her neighbour so as to make sure that an unholy mess does not break loose by people living next door to one another acting in a manner entirely independent of the people who live an arm's length or stone's throw from you doing whatever you feel like doing but really creating confusion for the others who have to be your neighbours, so that the management of the common areas, for example, common staircases, because we are also now talking about moving towards more and more high-rise units...

Ma'am, I have no difficulty with the concept of taking tenants who have been paying rent to the National Housing Corporation for a number of years and so to speak liberating them from the bondage of the tenancy and making them property owners, that is something that I fully philosophically am on board with, let us be clear of that. If you continue with this policy you cannot just simply leave it to the pre-existing units in Silver Hill, The Pine and so on, you must now see how this can be fleshed out to speak to one day a Valery, one day a Grotto and to one day London Bourne Towers which are high-rise units, one day any other which would have more common areas, staircases, et cetera and so forth, so the issue then arises how are these to be maintained, how is the lighting supposed to be replaced and who assumes responsibility for the common area. Right now the problem is that there is a complete dearth of legislation to deal with and to govern those matters.

I urge the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, having listened to his predecessor who did not urge him because I had talked to his predecessor before, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and I believe that he understood then the wisdom of looking at the Condominium Act as it currently exists so that you have a body of property owners under one roof called the

building for those purposes of the Act called the condominium... Let us not get caught up with whether a condominium is something for middle class or upper class people. Let us understand that what we are talking about is a philosophical concept, a group of buildings or a building with a group of units under one roof, and so therefore the units that the National Housing Corporation is seeking to convey pretty much falls within the concept of what the Condominium Act requires.

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Madam Deputy Speaker, more importantly, it seeks to bring owners together under an association of owners so that the owners individually have a responsibility towards each other and to themselves for the maintenance and upkeep of the common areas of the building in which they are living. Madam Deputy Speaker, it therefore stands to reason that issues, for example, the lighting in the staircases if you get to the point where you are conveying at London Bourne Towers or the way in which the car park and so on is maintained, the way in which the car park is maintained, the way in which you manage the issue of the dumping of garbage, the way in which you manage the issue of playing of loud music, et cetera. Ma'am, there are a number of things which tenants must be able to manage in common and do so without having the friction caused by one person going off on a frolic of his or her own and therefore creating a nuisance to others who are sharing with them under the same roof.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I say to you that is not right now, as I stand before you, the approach taken by Government on this matter. I am concerned, Ma'am, that Government may have acted with good philosophical intent in the execution of the idea of having these conveyances done, clearly Government did not think the thing through clearly because the problem that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has pointed to is not just a question of the time for the conveyances.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: No, I am sure that the Honourable Member is not any outgoing anything, the Honourable Member will be here. Do not get too caught up with your new candidate, he is not in winner's row by any stretch of the imagination, but that is a different matter. Madam Deputy Speaker, the point I am making is that the Government clearly did not think this thing through well from the beginning because the issue of firewalls... In fact, this is where the problems lay and that is what the former Honourable Member who spoke should have addressed, the delay came about because the National Housing Corporation itself was not in a position to execute the conveyances.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. James Central is misleading this Honourable House. Madam Deputy Speaker, the transfer of terraced units started some time in 2003-2004 by the then Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, the Honourable Member for St. James South and they encountered the same issues that the now Honourable Member for St. James Central is mentioning. Madam Deputy Speaker, in fact, the programme was then carried on but we looked at a 20-year transfer for those persons who were qualified and were living in units for 20 years. What happened is that the issues that Honourable Member for St. James Central has talked about were still there, there were issues of surveyors, electrical upgrades and illegal extensions under the Town Planning Department Act, among others. Madam Deputy Speaker, what we did was that we produced to this Parliament free transfer of terraced unit legislation which gave the National Housing Corporation the power to convey those units in spite of all the extensions that were noted by the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I have heard the Honourable Member but I am not entirely sure what was the benefit of the Honourable Member's interruption because all the Honourable Member has done is to say exactly that which I was saying. Madam Deputy Speaker, if it makes the Honourable Member happy, a process began approximately in 2004. Ma'am, I want to urge on the Honourable Member to let us put aside even for a few minutes the political partisanship. Ma'am, the reality is that the National Housing Corporation, under whatever Administration of day, has clearly not thought this thing through as properly as it could have been thought through. The reality is that now that we are on the output end, we are still dealing with a potentially serious problem in that there is no legislative framework to deal with how we manage and maintain common areas in buildings which will be owned by individuals, perhaps 20 or more individuals in one common areas; also, who takes responsibility for a number of things, for example, the electrical maintenance, the panels on the outside; who takes responsibility for the cleaning of the wells and drains, they are on the outside but they are common areas; who takes responsibility for the maintenance of the garbage systems such as they may be, so that, Ma'am, there is an important aspect of this that must be followed through by Government in order to save people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries from having to carry an unnecessary burden. Madam Deputy Speaker, if you are going to make sure that people own a piece of land or as it is said, own a piece of the rock, then, Ma'am, let us do so in such a manner as not to frustrate and harass them after they have been given the opportunity to own it. Ma'am, that is the simple point that I am trying to convey to the former Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development and indeed to the current Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural

Development if the Honourable Member is minded to listen.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is another aspect of this debate which is obviously the governance aspect as it touches and concerns the National Housing Corporation. When I speak to the governance aspect, I do not want my friend from St. Philip North to become unduly concerned. I am not speaking about the recklessness, the fiscal lawlessness of borrowing \$2.4 million a month in order to pay salaries at the National Housing Corporation, that is a matter that will be dealt with at another time, in a different way and in a different place, when what the Right Honourable Prime Minister calls the small voice. When that small voice is heard those issues will be aired at that time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the issue of governance at the National Housing Corporation is this, we have heard today about... Ma'am, I want to quote the Honourable Member as best as I can recall him. The Honourable Member spoke about the cost of car parks, displacement of trees and the cost of foundations. Ma'am, having talked about those things in that vague way, the Honourable Member declined to speak specifically to the area in Barbados where there is a set of units that those issues came into question.

Ma'am, I believe that the Honourable Member is speaking about the place in Britain Hill which we call the Grotto.

Ma'am, if I am reading the Honourable Member wrong, then the Honourable Member will have an opportunity to clarify when the Honourable Member wraps up this debate. Ma'am, the fact of the matter is that there, as well as at Valery, we are dealing with a situation where the National Housing Corporation, cash-strapped as it was at that time, did not know how it was going to pay for the units which were being constructed. In fact, Ma'am, in both of those cases those units were constructed at approximately at the Grotto \$9 million in cost overruns and at Valery probably slightly less than that, between \$6 million and \$9 million for sure. Ma'am, the issue that I have here is now the question of suitability for a purpose, because at inception these units were understood to be efforts by the Government to create housing solution for low-income persons.

Ma'am, the reason the Grotto has in so few tenants today, some have alleged that it is hardly more than three. I do not know the figure because the Honourable Member who has the figures has not condescended to share them with this Honourable House, so that is that though the taxpayers money have already paid in full for the Grotto, the Minister has not condescended to particulars on the extent to which the Grotto has now been tenanted. That, in

my mind, is a deplorable development that should be corrected sooner rather than later because it is not the Minister's private personal doll house, but the public's investment for which the public has fully paid and therefore the public should be in a position to know to what extent it has been tenanted or remains untenanted. Madam President, that should not be an issue for debate.

3.36 p.m.

Ma'am, unfortunately when the first tenants moved in around Christmas of last year, the Minister declined to state with any specificity how many tenants had moved in, and to this day that still remains a mystery to all the rest of us who are outside of the Cabinet of Barbados and inside the National Housing Corporation. The issue is suitability for purpose, because how many other people are in there? Ma'am, we know that having been built at \$9 million in cost overruns, it can no longer be commercially viable for the National Housing Corporation to house those tenants as low-income tenants; understanding that low-income tenants around Barbados are not paying over \$1 000 a month in order to be housed in the apartments or units that they are living in.

Ma'am, I happen to know that there have been a number of efforts made by the National Housing Corporation to come to terms with this financial disaster; that units were built at \$9 million over the costs they were anticipated to be built for, and that you now have to find a commercially viable solution for the National Housing Corporation. What does the NHC do? It was meant to be low-income housing. Can you sell them to the people? Ma'am, the solution really cannot be "yes" because it would not be commercially viable. The cost per square foot at the Grotto is exorbitant, Ma'am. Therefore, the question is, "Can you rent them out to be commercially viable?" Again, studies were commissioned by the National Housing Corporation, one of which went so far as to say that you should change the name of the Grotto to Dalkeith Woods, giving it an "en-bourgeois-ified" name, making it sound sexy. If possible, put in a swimming pool somewhere so that it would become even more attractive, and, yes, that is where the talk of a further carpark came about because when you were thinking originally of low-income housing, you did not envisage such a great need for carparks, but now you would have to try and find a place for another carpark. Ma'am, the reality is, however, that at the end of the day the issue is this: Is it fit for the purpose of low-income housing in Barbados or is it now a middle-class development?

That is the other point I want to bring before this House, Ma'am, because it is a disgrace. Not only does the Minister of Housing not choose to condescend to particulars as to how many people are tenanted in the Grotto but the Minister has not even had the common

courtesy to say to this House and to the rest of Barbados, "The units at the Grotto are being rented for X amount of dollars every month." If there is a variation across the units, as I am told may actually be the case, where some may be rented for one figure and another rented for a different figure, and God only knows how you would draw the distinction between the two, what is the criteria for the higher number or the lower number? Nobody has heard. Ma'am, again if there is that range, then we should know what is the range and what are the figures that the State is receiving for renting the State's property.

Ma'am, I want to say this in the context of governance of this country, because it is an abomination, it is an absolute disgrace, it is making a mockery of serious people's business, it is making a mockery of people's concern about the state of the public purse, when the Minister of Housing can have a set of units fully paid for by the people of Barbados and does not say to the people of Barbados, "The amount of people who are now tenanted in this fully paid-up building are X number or Y number." Why do the people of Barbados not deserve to know how many units remain empty at the Grotto today, Madam Deputy Speaker? If there are units still empty at the Grotto today, why do the people of Barbados not deserve to be told and given an explanation as to why they continue to be empty, especially after we know that between the date of practical completion in October of 2014 and the date when the Minister announced that he had started to move in tenants in December of 2017, there was a security company with connections to the Democratic Labour Party's hierarchy that was being paid \$10 000-odd a month for security at that same place? Ma'am, this is a situation of.... Yes, the Honourable Minister of Education looks at me startled as though he is hearing this for the first time. As I look at him, he looks even grayer than he was before. Ma'am, the truth of the matter is that what I say to him is as true as John 3:16. The concern that should have been raised before I raise it now is why the Minister has not chosen to explain to the public of Barbados as well what is the amount of money he is receiving or his Ministry is receiving, more importantly National Housing Corporation, from the tenancy of these units. It cannot be a secret. The matter has attracted far too much public concern and speculation.

Ma'am, I now go beyond the question simply of suitability for purpose to the issue of allocation. I think that at some point in talking about housing, we have now to come out of the partisan politics of the matter and let us look at the people of Barbados and the wellbeing of the people who sent us here to represent their interests. Ma'am, there are too many people, not only with respect to the Grotto, but too many people across Barbados. My last check was that there were about 18 000 people who were waiting in line at the National Housing Corporation for housing solutions as tenants. I concede that check was

made during the latter part of last year. I have no reason to believe that it has substantially fallen between then and now. Ma'am, the point that I make to you is: How is it possible that you can have a list of over 10 000 people for sure looking to be tenants of the National Housing Corporation, but if you take a drive through the constituency of the Minister of Public Works and the northern part of St. Philip, you would come to a place called Parish Land, and if you go to Parish Land now, you would find vines growing out of empty houses that were built for the National Housing Corporation? You would find limbs of trees -- when I say trees I mean bush -- coming out of windows of houses in Parish Land built for the National Housing Corporation at the taxpayers' expense with no explanation, not a word, not a cursory word given to anybody in Barbados as to why that sorry and sordid state of affairs remains the way it is today. The Minister of Finance jogs past it every morning. In fact, he goes jogging but he runs past there because of his fear that somebody would come out of the bush and molest him. The empty houses in Parish Land: this is the disgraceful nature of what is taking place in Barbados.

Ma'am, there is the question of allocations. How is it that there are people?... We have to solve this problem and we have to work out as a Parliament the way in which we go forward. If you go now to the National Housing Corporation and you express an interest in being a tenant, you give your name, address, telephone number and all your contact information, email, everything. You are even told that you can log on and trace your application, which sounds good. It makes the applicant feel that he or she is important. There is no quarrel with that, but what is the reality? When you peel away that façade and you peep behind the veil, what do you find, Madam Deputy Speaker? You find a situation where there are today people in Barbados who have been waiting on the National Housing Corporation for a housing solution, as a tenant in some instances and as a purchaser in other instances, for over 20 years. Madam Deputy Speaker, I have a lady in my constituency who has been waiting, and she has shown me the documentation, for 32 years on the National Housing Corporation. Here is the rub: I cannot, unlike the Member for Christ Church South whose mind is so slender that it only enables him to see things in a partisan political manner, subject myself to that limited form of analysis. Ma'am, I have to realise that over 32 years there have been several regimes, several Administrations, in Barbados. Ma'am, it goes back to the Sandiford years, comes through the Arthur years, goes through the Thompson years into the Stuart years.

3.39 p.m.

It tells me, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there is a tail of systemic failure at the National Housing Corporation whereby people who went and made applications to

purchase when they were in their 30s in the prime of life and able to get a mortgage at 60 odd when nobody in the world is going to lend them 5 cent because of their inability or lack of likelihood of ability to pay back, those people are still hoping to get assistance from the State. That is something, Madam Deputy Speaker, about which none of us should feel proud. We have to find a way of solving that problem. It is a chronic systemic failure. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is one instance that I have come across but I have come across plenty more who are in their 20s, 20 something years and if it is happening in my constituency then, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to believe that cannot just be an aberration it is likely to be happening across the landscape of Barbados and one of the things that I think we have to come to, Madam Deputy Speaker, is to recognise that this is not a partisan political issue. This is a question of how we as legislatures in this country are being able to affectively and adequately find solutions to the legitimate expectations of the people who sent us up here and the families of the people who have sent us here and clearly, Madam Deputy Speaker, is a challenge that has to be confronted. There are parts of the world where the matter is taken completely out of the hands of the political establishment and one of the problems I believe in Barbados is that for too long it has been a political establishment issue to the extent that a Minister has some control over a matter then the Minister makes recommendations about allocations and those people who are closer to the Minister are likely to benefit and those who are not so close will not benefit. That, I know was a criticism about the former Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, from within his own Cabinet when certain Members on his Cabinet use to curse him and vilify him in the worst way about how he would not help them, who he feels he is and so on. I believe that is why he was moved from the Ministry of Housing and put into the Ministry of Public Works where hopefully he would have been inclined to share a little bit more in the largesse. I am not sure that he has done so but that is a different matter. Madam Deputy Speaker, the point is this, for those of us who languish in the Opposition Benches, we know that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and most certainly the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not condescend even to look in our direction. You can send any signal you want in any form you want. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Housing is not going to solve anybody in the Barbados Labour Party's constituency problems. He is very clear about that, completely indifferent therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe the time has come ... I want to be fair because in previous Administrations the same argument has been made about previous Ministers of Housing in other Administrations so let me say, sir, before others jump up to make that very tripe point. I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, the way forward has to be better than this because the people of Barbados generally are not so concerned either about the internecine warfare of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP)

or the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) nor are they concerned about the fact that you have spiteful, hard-hearted men who became Ministers of Housing and decided that they are going to alienate the people on the Other Side. They are concern about seeing ... The Minister laughed but I was not joking when I said spiteful and hard-hearted, very hard-hearted. Madam Deputy Speaker, people are interested in seeing solutions to the problem.

In the United States of America (USA), for example, some of this is done by way of a lottery, taking completely out of the hands of a political establishment process therefore it is a question of luck and chance as to whether your name comes up. Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe it is true in Trinidad, but other people have said look, this is a like, you join the queue, first come, first serve. However we do it, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to bring a greater degree of transparency to the process because this issue about the fatted calf. I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, I genuinely believe that is what this is all about. Under this Administration it is about ... A former Prime Minister who you may know, Madam Deputy Speaker, made the point that his Administration was about the politics of the fatted calf and as you know, you kill the fatted calf and fed it to the family when the prodigal son had returned home. If you are part of the tent and you find favour in the tent then you stand to benefit, for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy I do not intend to go under any tent where he is so he must not get excited about that prospect. I want to see him from under this roof, Madam Deputy Speaker, is what I want to see.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time is up.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I say to you with respect to the question of allocation I genuinely believe that we can do better. I say again to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that with respect to the question of suitability for purpose that we have squandered an opportunity to make sure that we find appropriate housing solutions to some of the people who are most in need and, Madam Deputy Speaker, above and beyond all of that, with respect to the way in which we deal with common areas, we have to begin now to empower the people of Barbados so that they can become committees of owners in the buildings which they ultimately will own and be able to take some responsibility for the management and share among themselves as is already envisage under the Condominium Act of this country but has, for some strange reason, not been extended to deal with the business of the National Housing Corporation.

I am obliged to you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to be very long. I really do not because the truth is that we have had so many of these debates on housing over the course of this term so far and even in the last term of office of the Government that sometimes I wonder whether or not we are making any progress in basically doing what could only be considered to be a pedantic recitation of all of these issues, particularly by Members of the Opposition as it relates to the issues of the National Housing Corporation and its woes and shortcomings. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in fact only recently I thought it had ran out of steam. In fact, I was pretty much sure that it had ran out of steam and apart from the Honourable Member for St. George North who would usually get up and give his 5 cents worth, actually it is more like 2 cents worth, in these housing debates on national housing that they had basically come to an end. For them, they think it is fortunately but unfortunately they had some process going in the Public Accounts Committee that drove certain things to be spoken about in that particular Committee, the report of which has not yet been laid in Parliament therefore I cannot respond to it as we probably should but I guess somebody has said that they are waiting for the small voice or something. They are waiting on some process or some time to come when we can respond or when they can present what they think is the information they have so they rekindle it by every speech now that is given on housing about the Auditor General's Report into the National Housing Corporation but as the Honourable Member for St. James Central said, there is going to be a time for that and we are going to respond to all of those issues in particular but something that really, I would say it bothers me, but it does not bother me anymore. It is something that just amazes me now. I cannot call it false concern because that would reflect negatively on Members of the House but this concern which comes over from Members on the Other Side - you hear it particularly from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and you hear it sometimes laterally from the Honourable Member for St. James Central I guess because he has a housing area in his constituency and he has to speak to the constituents whom he has only recently rediscovered existed through this Rubbing Shoulders thing that he has been doing but this concern about...

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Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. Speaker.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I withdraw it willingly, Mr. Speaker, because I do not want to cast any aspersions or anything negative on the Honourable Member for St. James

Central even though he takes the opportunity every time he speaks to do the same to me but I am not going to be so generous with him.

The point I am making is that it is under a Barbados Labour Party Administration that this whole question of divesting, whether divesting for money or divesting for free but in their case divesting for money, of the National Housing Corporation units sold to tenants first emerged when everybody knew what the Democratic Labour Party's position was at the time. I believe it was back in 2002, 2003 or something like that and we stated what our position was in relation to it. They did not agree. They felt that to do what the Democratic Labour Party was suggesting was to give people something they were not entitled to and that people who wanted to get these units should buy them and therefore they should be sold to members of the public who were renting these estates. Fair enough. That is a policy divide and we agree with it.

Mr. Speaker, what, however, is of concern to me, and I think it should at least put some of them on pause when they try to criticise the Democratic Labour Party's programme for whatever flaws they may identify have been in the programme... I listened very carefully to the Honourable Member for St. James Central and what he has identified are not really flaws. I do not call those flaws, I call them opportunities to intercede, this is the Government and the National Housing Corporation, to ensure that people can have clean title and after having clean title can live and prosper in those units collectively and individually in the context of it, so I do not consider it to be flaws.

Mr. Speaker, what concerns me is to set abroad that somehow or the other the Democratic Labour Party however well-intentioned bundled this thing, caused all of this confusion with these housing units and have put people at some particular special disadvantage. I am concerned about it, Mr. Speaker, coming from Honourable Members of the Opposition because they were warned or cautioned by the then Attorney-General under their Administration, who happens to be now the Leader of the Opposition in that Opposition, at a meeting convened of several public authorities and representatives of public authorities, that they were not in a position to proceed with any such sales. I will make this a document of the House. It is the Minutes of the Meeting of the Subcommittee of Cabinet appointed to oversee the sale of the National Housing Corporation terrace units on the 8th of April 2002 at 9.00 a.m. which was attended by the Minister of Housing, Lands, the Honourable G. Clarke, attended; the Attorney-General, the Honourable M. Mottley; the Minister of Social Transformation, the Honourable H. Lashley; the Minister of Physical Development and Environment, the Honourable E. Thompson; and it goes on with the public officers there: the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Deputy Permanent Secretary,

Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Chief Planning Officer; and the National Housing Corporation General Manager. The whole list of them were there at this meeting. In fact, I will quote the Minutes which states that the Attorney-General expressed shock at the surveying work completed to date and noted that the Corporation was nowhere near to completing the sale of units listed under Phase 1 of the divestment programme.

Would you believe, Mr. Speaker, that the same people that were cautioned and warned that they were not even anywhere near prepared to begin to start selling units actually collected money from people in Deacons Farm and other housing areas in my constituency and other parts of Barbados? Mr. Speaker, based on this, they would have been collecting that money under false pretences because the Chief Legal Officer in the Government at the time indicated that they were nowhere near ready to start selling units, so on what basis could they have been extracting money from the very poor people that the Honourable Member for St. James Central is in here crying crocodile tears over?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member must be misleading the House for first of all he uses the phrase 'crying crocodile tears over'. Sir, I distinctly recall saying that as far as I was concerned, and mind you I was not a Member of Parliament at that time at all...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute. I am not going to permit you to give another speech. Just succinctly tell me what is your point of order, please.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: The point of order is that the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: In what way?

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: He cannot say that I cried any crocodile tears. I said that the National Housing Corporation not any political party or Administration had not thought through the process.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, no point of order found. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not blaming the Honourable Member for St. James Central. He was not there because he was still in George Street confusing people over there about becoming leader of the Democratic Labour Party. He had not made his decision to transition into the Barbados Labour Party yet but we will get to that, or perhaps he did and nobody knew, so I cannot blame him for this. What I am saying is that Honourable

Members of the other side should... There is always a saying that you have to wipe your glass first before you point out how dirty somebody else's glass is or how foggy somebody's else glass is because what you might actually be looking at and seeing through is the fog in your own glass.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I know that. I am not going so biblical. I am taking it very simple. You are looking through your dirty glass and saying how dirty the person over there glass is before you clean your window, that is the problem. I am not going with all of the fancy thing.

The fact of the matter is that there are still people in my constituency... Up to the other day I went to a funeral and a lady came up to me and said that she is not even bothering with it anymore Mr. Sinckler, but it hurts to know that even though the Barbados Labour Party is criticising us for giving people the units they are trying to excuse themselves from the fact that they extracted money from people knowing full well under warning from their Chief Legal Officer that they were not in a position to convey the units to the people or not even near being able to convey those units.

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Mr. Speaker, they then came back and said that they were not trying to give a political speech or that they were trying to be political. Mr. Speaker, they are not trying to be political, they do not want to be partisan, yet they are trying to heap all kinds of criticisms on the Democratic Labour Party and on the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who is the Minister with responsibility for the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development.

Asides.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. The document to which the Honourable Member refers, to the best of my knowledge, addresses very specific areas in this country in relation to divestment and the difficulties that prevailed at that time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I cannot entertain that as a point of order. Do you have the document?

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I have seen the document.

Mr. SPEAKER: And you are seeking to put another interpretation on it?

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: No, Mr. Speaker, I seek to say that the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber by giving the impression that this was an issue of divestment across the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is not a matter on which I can rule. There is no point of order found. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, that is the thing that bothers me, when Honourable Members come here to lay all of these criticisms, accusations and various levels of prosecution of this Administration, you must come here fully seized of what your party when it was in Government has done or did, so that we can get a full understanding in the public as to what these issues are all about. Mr. Speaker, the one thing I will agree with Honourable Member for St. James Central and this is not a new issue, the Barbados Labour Party had its turn at it, they chose to extract money from people even though they knew that the units could not be conveyed. Furthermore, the Barbados Labour Party did not prepare any particular plan for conveying those units, they did not deal with the issue of the extensions in the units which would have arisen as it did under us, but we had to come here and amended an Act in Parliament to allow for that to happen, yet the Barbados Labour Party collected money, rather than saying to the people in my constituency of Deacons Farm and elsewhere, to hold onto their money, let us get this sorted out first and then the Barbados Labour Party will get back to them, instead they extracted the money from the people, they did absolutely nothing but now could come and ask why did the Government not given it back.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Well, by the time we came to Government the money was already spent, you extracted the money and spent it. On what I do not know because you did not upgrade the units, you did not improve their electrical works, you did not put on new windows or doors but you extracted money from people. I am saying that in any of these constituencies that have housing units, that any Barbados Labour Party candidate who comes around, including the sitting Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and talking about people needing to have their units, those persons need to be ran out of that constituency.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, the other point is this issue of the Auditor-General Report. Mr. Speaker, it amazes me, the things that are written in these reports.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: I will appear anywhere where I am properly summoned to go, properly is the word. Mr. Speaker, the point is this, I heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central talking about cost overruns, that the Grotto was a cost overrun. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared at any day and at any time, once it is properly constituted, to dispute any interpretation that there was a cost overrun at the Grotto. In fact, I am absolutely sure that there was no costs overruns at the Grotto or at Valery for that matter. In fact, any additional cost which would have been incurred because...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, we seem to be wanting to change the basic rules on how this business is done. There are several Honourable Members here who have ministries that run projects. My Ministry does not do a lot of projects but we are involved obviously because it is the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and obviously there is some level at which we are involved. Mr. Speaker, we normally have a process that goes as follows: a performa estimate is done, it identifies a basic cost estimate, it says we will look at the project and we say, let us say \$10 million is the cost of it...

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. If the Honourable Member speaks of what would have happened via a performa tender, Mr. Speaker, there was no tender in the matter at either Valery or the Grotto.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, no point of order found. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Members would keep quiet and let me speak in peace, I would be able to speak when I am ready. Mr. Speaker, on all projects, regardless to whether they are eventually tendered or not, estimates are done, an original based estimate is done and in many respects those estimates can come to Cabinet as they do go to Boards, as they do go to Ministry's Departments. They may tell you what a basic price is estimated for a particular set of works, whatever those works may be. It does not mean, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that that is the be-all and end-all, it does not mean that that is the beginning and end of the costing of that particular set of works, that just gives you a general idea of what your cost might be.

Mr. Speaker, if you are making a decision at whatever level you may say that you do accept that it is going to cost "X" or "Y" amount of dollars, \$10 million. Mr. Speaker, that has happened across all Administrations, it also happens across companies in the private sector. Mr. Speaker, in between when that original based estimate is done and when the construction work actually starts,

depending on what happens between there determines what that price might be in terms of when that construction starts. Mr. Speaker, in fact, in between when the construction starts and when the project finishes you can have a different cost too, based on what you encounter, for example, so that, for example, like Valery where we started out with a basic set of high-rise units and you say you want them built for “X” cost, that is agreed by Cabinet, it is agreed by the National Housing Corporation and by everybody.

4.18 p.m.

Then, in the process of working out towards the actual breaking of the soil and the starting of civil works, Cabinet says, “I want to have ten bedsitters at the bottom for the physically challenged because they cannot climb up to the top,” that is an additional cost. That is nothing to do with the original estimate; that is an additional cost to the original estimate if the Cabinet agrees to it. If the Town Planner says, “Given the density of the place that you have there, I want you to put in a sewage treatment facility,” and such a facility costs an average of \$2 million to \$3 million, that is an additional amount of money added to the original estimate. The scope of works has changed. If the Town Planner says, “I want fire exit arrangements in terms of the stairways wider than you have them in the design”, that is additional work added on and more costs. If he says, “I want additional car parking space....”

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: You all only have certain files but I have the rest, and that is why.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let us have some order, please.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, the thing is that the Barbados Labour Party arrived at a conviction before they had a trial and they went looking for an accused. That is the problem, and so the files they got were not the correct files or the complete files, but I have the correct and complete files and I will speak in full to it; not only to them but to the Auditor General too. The Auditor General does not ask politicians anything. They do not come and ask the policymakers for any explanations. They deal only with public servants, but it is the politicians who have to take the blame even though the politicians are not asked a question.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I do not keep files. The Ministry of Finance keeps files, the Ministry of Housing

keeps files, and the Ministry of the Environment keeps files. Files are there.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not speaking to anybody else here, but when people start out on a mission of mischief and wickedness to try to impute improper motives on people’s characters and then walk around trying to find the evidence to support their preconceived conclusion, then that is when you run into problems. In time we will speak to it. I even heard the Member for St. Michael South East saying that the thing was not tendered; that it was \$100 000 and it was not tendered. Nobody explained to the Member for St. Michael South East, who claims she is preparing herself for Government, that she should read the Financial Rules to see that the threshold for tendering has gone to \$200 000.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, the point is this: The level, not in here, Sir, because I cannot speak about in here....

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: The level of political hypocrisy, not in here but outside of here, which pervades these issues, amazes me. Everybody pretends now that the first time they have heard about untendered projects is when the Democratic Labour Party came to office. It is the first time we have heard about untendered projects. Up to now we do not know who has tendered on the highway that the company 3S got.

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Nobody has seen the tenders for that either.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: One person said it was BDS\$300 million, somebody said no it was not Barbados dollars but it was really United States money we were talking about. All of that, Mr. Speaker. We know that both Administrations have had unsolicited proposals to build stuff. We know that both Administrations in the statutory state corporations have had those proposals too, and we know that under both Administrations things were built without a tendering, because the person who came and made the proposal brought their money. If you are spending public funds up front, you have to tender it, but if somebody is bringing their own money or accessing money from the bank, you cannot ask somebody to do a tender on

their own money which they are taking the risk to borrow. Foolishness. Yes, it is nonsense. I would contest that any day of the week.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Bring the Financial Rules, because if that is the case, all of you all in there who sat in the last Cabinet are culpable in relation to that. Bring the tenders for the recycling facility. Bring the tenders for the prison. Bring the public tender process and show me who made bids on them and what did they bid, and how the people who got the contracts got them in the end. Show me who tendered on Dover Convention Centre to build Sapphire at Dover. Show me the tenders.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: You all get in here, as you get out there, trying to give the impression. I saw what the Auditor General wrote. I have no problem with the Auditor General; he is a good gentleman, the said very Auditor General who they quote all the time and whose salary increase they got in here and blocked. They refused to support the Constitutional Amendment but they love to talk about "Auditor General". I saw the Auditor General, and that is why I say I can speak clearly on these things. I saw in an Auditor General's Report that information could not be had on the arrangement for the loan from ANSA Merchant Bank for Four Seasons. I saw that in an Auditor General's Report. Mr. Speaker, do you know that an Act of Parliament was passed in here creating Clearwater Bay, setting out very clearly the terms and conditions under which that loan was borrowed, and under which the facility was Guaranteed by the Government of Barbados for Paradise Limited through Clearwater Bay, a company, an SPV (special purpose vehicle) created by the Government of Barbados under legal advice from a Member of the Opposition? I was the Minister of Finance. I came in very early as Minister of Finance. It happened under the late Minister of Finance. I came and took over and brought the Bill here to Parliament. Do you know I saw in an Auditor General's Report that they have no information on it? It is a gazetted public document. Everybody was running around and saying that a loan was borrowed for a hundred and so on and nobody has any information on how it was approved, and it was approved by the Parliament of Barbados. Everything somebody puts into a Report.... That is why I say they do not talk to politicians. If they had talked to me, I would have told them exactly where to go and find the information because it is public information; it is nothing that is hidden.

When you hear people talking.... That is why I tell you I am waiting. I am waiting for the time to come when we will discuss these issues, because he who comes to equity must come with clean hands. I am obliged to you for

that time being, but we will have an opportunity later to discuss all of these issues, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I really have to say that I am embarrassed for the Minister of Finance. He has introduced into the system of governance something called a pro-forma estimate and all kinds of bizarre explanations.

Aside.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: A pro-forma estimate? Good Lord. Clearly, the Ministry of Finance relies on them, which is perhaps the reason for the morass that we are in. Mr. Speaker, I have had the honour to have served in a Cabinet of Barbados.

4.18 p.m.

I am aware of the provisions of the financial rules and I am aware of the exceptions to those rules insofar as they relate to the requirement for tender. I have served in a Cabinet that had to decisions great and small involving large and small sums of money. I have never heard that a Cabinet of Barbados would make a decision based upon a Board recommendation of the National Housing Corporation that as based on nothing more than a pro forma Estimate. I think that if that is really what the Minister of Finance is admitting to this Chamber that he and the entity of the Cabinet should pack up their bags and go home.

Mr. Speaker, we are either in the business of governance or we are not in the business of governance. Mr. Speaker, it suits the Minister of Finance to criticise the Auditor General's Report, it suits the Minister of Finance to say that the Auditor General does not ask Ministers for any information, it suits him to say all of these things. I also suits the Minister of Finance not to appear on a summons before the Public Accounts Committee where he can be cross examined on evidence but to come into this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and to grandstand and to tell us about all of the things he would say and that he would have said and feel like saying but does not choose to subject himself to the processes of the Parliament to which he is elected and in which he serves. Mr. Speaker, nowhere has the Minister of Finance challenged any of the findings of the Auditor General. You either accept that the individual serves in a constitutional post and operates are a particular level of professionalism or you do not, but certainly the Minister of Finance has said that the Cabinet of Barbados made a decision to award a contract to a named entity based, Mr. Speaker, on a pro forma estimate. Mr. Speaker, the public of Barbados may now generally be aware of the

provisions of the financial rules so permit me just to give an overview.

The financial rules used to provide that any contract to be entered into by a Government agency that was in excess of \$100 000 had to go to tender. Those rules were amended in about 2004 or 2005 to increase the limit of \$100 000 to \$200 000 simply because the cost benefit analysis showed that the smaller contracts really did not need that level of oversight. Anything contract entered into by Government for more than \$200 000 had to go to tender. The regulations however, provided that they were exceptions and those exceptions quite simple, firstly if the contract which was required to be engaged in was urgent, you had the opportunity to award the contract outside of the tender process. Such a contract, Sir, would have been the prison contract. You could also avoid the provisions or you could also award the contract outside of the tender provisions if the nature of the contract required a level of expertise that was not readily available in Barbados so if the expertise was not readily available then you could go and contract directly with the individual. Those are the two circumstances, Sir, but the Minister of Finance wants to tell this Parliament ...

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: You could remind of the third one but that is alright, but the Minister of Finance wants to tell this Parliament that where an individual comes with his own money he does not have to go to tender. I have never heard anything so absurd. You see, Mr. Speaker, the National Housing Corporation is bound by the tender rules, is bound by the financial rules therefore where the National Housing Corporation ...

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Did you listen to the same Attorney General that told you that you could declare a dividend on the Housing Credit Fund whose office then said that it was unlawful. So you listen to that, Auditor General. The National Housing is bound by the Financial Administration and Audit rules therefore any contract to be entered into by the National Housing Corporation needs to comply with those rules and just because a private entity comes and says we can build this for the Government or we can build this for the National Housing Corporation, it does not allow the National Housing Corporation to escape from the provisions of the rules especially in circumstances ... I am surprised that the Minister of Finance would even want to contemplate that the National Housing Corporation was not bound by those rules because the National Housing Corporation was broke at the time, is broke now, will be broke tomorrow and the Minister of Finance had to break the Housing Credit Fund so as to pay the National Housing Corporation \$27 million. Does the Minister of Finance, Mr.

Speaker, honestly want to tell this Chamber and the people of Barbados that a statutory corporations in Barbados are not bound by the financial rules when those same statutory corporations have to come cap in hand to him to pay salaries when the month comes? Is that what he wants to tell us? Is it that the Minister of Finance wants to tell us that in circumstances where he and his Cabinet knew that the National Housing Corporation had no money, not a penny, a Cabinet of Barbados would accept a pro forma estimate as to what work would involve. Mr. Speaker, there was no pro forma estimate about the salary cut that we all took in here. There is no pro forma estimates of the number of people who got sent home. When the Minister of Finance gave his Estimates speech only a month ago, I never heard him in relation to a multibillion dollar Budget mentioned any word about pro forma or estimate. It did not suit him to mention estimate or pro forma then but it suits him in a situation where a Cabinet of Barbados could be invited to approve a contract for \$18 million based, as we now know, on nothing more than a pro forma estimate. The Minister should be ashamed. Not that Minister but also the Minister of Housing and Lands at the time. It does not matter whether or not a Cabinet Paper is a contract. A Cabinet of Barbados met and agreed that National Housing Corporation could build a building ...

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading the House as he is misleading himself. The Cabinet of Barbados never approved a contract to build any housing complex for \$18 million. I challenge the Honourable Member to produce the Cabinet Paper and the contract attached to it which shows that the Cabinet approved a contract for \$18 million.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's Report says that Cabinet approved the construction of, I think it was The Grotto, at \$18 million.

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The Cabinet approved the contract because Cabinet had to approve the contract, but if the Honourable Minister does not want to say that the Cabinet approved the contract that is no problem. Would the Minister agree or disagree that Cabinet approved the construction of the particular housing project at a cost of \$18 million and that that housing project would be awarded to a particular company? Would the Minister agree with that? Would the Minister also agree that that particular project was increased from \$18 million to \$27.85 million? Would the Minister agree to Paragraph 3(1) (3) of the Auditor General's Report which specifically says that Cabinet was asked to approve a price increase from \$18 million to \$27.85 million? Now, implicit in that is that Cabinet had originally agreed to \$18 million so Cabinet is now being asked...

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, that is the problem because it was agreed by Cabinet based on a pro forma estimate, because that is how the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs is running things in Barbados in 2017. It goes on to say that the Cabinet was also informed that the contract for the project had already been signed and its decision on 30th May 2013 agreed to the price increase from \$18 million to \$27.85 million.

Sir, we have a situation where a Cabinet of Barbados agrees to award a contract for \$18 million based on a pro forma estimate and the National Housing Corporation agrees to increase the price from \$18 to \$27.85 million and Cabinet hears about it after the fact and Cabinet also hears that the contract was already signed.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister and I can trade legal interpretations all he likes about the proper application of the Financial Administration and Audit Rules. Sir, even if there was an argument, and I do not accept it, in circumstances where the Ministry of Finance said they do not support this project because the National Housing Corporation cannot pay for it and they will come to the Government for it, I believe that this Minister of Finance should have been wearied of how this project was being dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's Report is here. It suits the Minister to say that the Auditor General does not ask him anything and that the Public Accounts Committee asked for the wrong files. All that tells us is that this particular Administration relishes a state of affairs where everything is not made available. The Minister in his excitement says that we requested, and by we I mean the Public Accounts Committee, the wrong things. The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs who is responsible for the financial matters of Barbados should wish to ensure that the Public Accounts Committee in fact has the benefit of everything that it should have. I am aware that we asked for all of the files but the Minister says that he does not have the files that the public servants have the files, so if we asked for all of the files relating to The Grotto and the public servants send some but not the rest then somebody on the Frontbench should be saying what on earth is going on.

This represents a dark day but you know what, Sir, in the same way that the Ministry kept part of the files and send some, it is interesting to note that the Minister made a document of the House the Minutes of a Meeting of a Subcommittee of Cabinet, and I do not dare say that the Minister misrepresented what was in these Minutes, but I had the benefit of reading the very Minutes and at Paragraph 2 under a rubric "Update on Surveying Works" - it does not say update on sales nor update on divestment, the rubric is update on surveying works - the Paragraph reads: The General Manager of the National Housing

Corporation stated that of the 3 571 units to be sold surveying works had been completed on 15 units at Haynesville, St. James and on 51 units at Church Village, St. Philip while surveying work was now being undertaken at Bonnetts, Brittons Hill, St. Michael, Lammings St. Joseph and Deans Town St. James. It goes on: The Attorney-General expressed shock at the surveying work completed to date -- this is what it says Sir - and noted that the Corporation was nowhere near to completing the sale of the units listed under Phase 1 of the divestment programme.

The Minister of Finance sought to create an impression that the then Attorney-General expressed shock that the National Housing Corporation was trying to sell units that in law they could not sell. That is the impression that the Minister of Finance created to this Chamber and intentionally so, that the then Attorney-General expressed shock that the National Housing Corporation was trying to do something that was beyond the pale, that they could not do, when in fact all this says is that the Attorney-General expressed shock at the surveying work completed to date and noted that the Corporation was nowhere near to completing the sale of the units listed under Phase 1 of the divestment programme. It is fortunate that these documents are made documents of the House. I contend that the Minister completely and intentionally misled this Chamber when he sought to characterise these Minutes as suggesting that the National Housing Corporation was doing something improper and that the Attorney-General was horrified when in truth and in fact all that this Minutes said is that she was horrified at the progress to date.

Mr. Speaker, that does not surprise me because in the same way that the Minister seeks intentionally to mischaracterise the content of this Minutes, it is the same way that the Minister seeks to rely and encourage his whole Cabinet to rely on something as amorphous as a pro forma estimate to spend taxpayers' dollars at The Grotto and Valery when the National Housing Corporation had no money to pay for it, when his own officers and Permanent Secretary said they do not support it and when the very Minister of Finance minuted to Cabinet that he did not support it either. I dare the Minister of Finance to get up in here and deny that was the position that he and his officers took.

Mr. Speaker, we have a country that is sinking fast, and the Minister, like the captain on the ship Costa Concordia, seeks to jump off first leaving the rest of his colleagues, the rest of this Parliament and the rest of this country to perish and perish slowly.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I join this debate in support of this Resolution first of all to really get back to the Resolution before the House in relation to the vesting of the property at the London Bourne Towers.

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Mr. Speaker, of course, the debate has gone far and wide in relation to issues of housing. I am sure there will be a time in this Honourable Chamber when we will be able to debate housing in its full entirety and deal with all of the issues that are raised, some by the Honourable Member who last spoke. Of course, I would have to take a completely different view about how the Opposition speaks about Barbados and where we are as a nation. Mr. Speaker, the notion that Barbados is sinking fast is really a travesty in relation to the language being used by the Members of the Opposition but it reflects what they think of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we are here debating the vesting of land in the London Bourne Towers but then we could hear coming from the Opposition words to the effect that they believe that our country is sinking fast. Mr. Speaker, it is the kind of language that in recent times that has been associated with the Barbados Labour Party because they really have no notion of nationalism, they do not seem to like Barbados, and they do not seem to like anything other than naked ambition of seeking power. Mr. Speaker, I have to say that because on every debate that comes up in this Honourable House they really lambaste our country and say some nasty things about Barbados that I hope that members of the public listening to this debate would pay very keen attention to. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this debate really ought to have been seen within a very bipartisan basis, we are talking about the London Bourne Towers and the vesting of lands that paves the way for the land to be finally vested after so many years in the National Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, it raises other issues in relation to the whole renewal of our Historic City of Bridgetown. I believe that those are large issues that speak to where we as a country are going and ought not to be narrowed by what I consider to be really narrow partisan political mind sets which always come from the Benches of the Opposition Party.

Mr. Speaker, in my research this is where I have been impressed because I want to also say that the vision of naming these towers after London Bourne I want to commend. I believe that when member of the public are listening to these debates that they would want to take something from it. Mr. Speaker, if we cast our minds within the context of what does the public of Barbados want to hear from this Parliament at this point in time in our history in relation to the development of our country and in relation to the development of our city, I thought that this particular Resolution opens up vistas to be able to

speak to these issues. I want to say at the onset that I think that the naming of these towers after London Bourne was a good decision. I think that within the context of who London Bourne was certainly speaks to what has been the whole focus of Administrations in terms of housing in the city and it has been built solidly on an empowerment model.

Mr. Speaker, London Bourne was a former Barbadian slave between the year 1793 and 1869. I believe he would have been a slave up to the age of 23-25. He was able through very poor means and of course sacrificing quite a bit of time... His father before him was a slave but because of their hard work, their notion of conscience, the father was able to purchase his son's freedom, who went on to becoming one of the most respected and certainly richest owners of business in Bridgetown. It was as a result of not only what he had accomplished but certainly he became somebody who believed in the notion of emancipation. In fact, my research tells me that he was one of the strong supporters of Samuel Jackman Prescod at the time and therefore it would have been fitting, Mr. Speaker... He was made a free man when his father bought his freedom, in fact, the father himself would have used his earnings and connections and so on to purchase his own freedom and that of his wife and family. He then went on to buy various plantations. Of course, in 1997, after the demolition of his primary business address, known as the Exchange Building, in order to create low-income house and development, the development was appropriately named after him, the London Bourne Towers.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to this history because I think that this is really where the debate should be rooted in relation to this champion of black enfranchisement, this champion of the notion of black ownership, this champion of the precepts of emancipation and therefore of the kind of hard work that he would have had to sacrifice in order to be recognised in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I think this speaks to our City of Bridgetown. Of course, the fact that his prior residence had to make way for low-income housing speaks to the policy that underpins the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party. Mr. Speaker, that philosophy had been shared by various Administrations.

Mr. Speaker, I would not say in this Honourable House that the Barbados Labour Party did nothing to address housing in the City of Bridgetown, but I would hear it being echoed from the other side notions that are contemptuous, in my view, in relation to what has happened to the City of Bridgetown. Mr. Speaker, I heard on Honourable Member speaking to the fact that there is so much poverty in the City of Bridgetown and that there is neglect. I believe the Honourable Member for St. George North spoke in rather nefarious connotations in relation to the City of Bridgetown. Mr. Speaker, I happened to know that though there are areas in the City of Bridgetown that

are in need of attention, certainly quite a lot has happened in the City of Bridgetown. Mr. Speaker, it ought not to be that we speak, because if we were to say that and were to follow the Honourable Member for St. George North, not only would we be condemning the Barbados Labour Party but also the Democratic Labour Party. Mr. Speaker, that is not to say that there is not much work to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the whole question of urban renewal which got prime of place in our Manifesto of 2013 when we focussed a lot on urban renewal because we recognised that the urban corridor has certainly been the subject of various attempts from various Administrations to deal with not only developing the entire urban corridor but to ensure that housing, particularly low-income housing can be a feature of the development of our capital city.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I want to challenge the notion that we are talking about a Barbados that is sinking fast, only on Sunday we had, to my mind, a very historic development happening in the City of Bridgetown, that is the opening of the Jewish Synagogue Development Project which, in fact, is a \$14 million investment by the Tabor Foundation (Barbados) to bring renewal to an area of the City of Bridgetown that will have significant impact on the entire surrounding areas. Mr. Speaker, it is not only dealing with the Synagogue because in my speech on that occasion I made the point that this particular project is much more far-reaching than just the Jewish Synagogue because it dealt with Codd's House which as we know was the first seat of Parliament in our country, it was the place that Samuel Jackman Prescod as the first free man of colour would have gone to represent Barbadians.

5.01 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is also the place where we had the restoration of the old Fire Service Department and the old shoemaker shops as well, so it speaks not only of the history of the Jewish community but it speaks also of the significant contribution of black men and women in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, if we are to seriously talk about urban renewal, we have to speak of it in practical terms. In terms of this project -- certainly it is my view and the view of experts -- if you look at housing and if you look at London Bourne Towers, that was a good example of bringing affordable housing to the City, in addition to providing avenues for persons to vend and to have entrepreneurial activities right below the housing aspects of London Bourne Towers. We have to look beyond that, Mr. Speaker. The Synagogue Redevelopment Project will have the ricocheting effect of positively impacting other properties in the immediate vicinity of that particular corridor. We have seen it already. Upon the completion of that project, we already have business owners of properties starting to restore and start work on their properties as well.

The renewal of the City, in my view, while benefiting from the direct intervention of Government in relation to restoration and in relation to housing, will have also to depend on specific investments similar to the one which, of course, would have been done as a result of financing from the Tabor Foundation. We are going to have to look at pockets of the City where, due to the intervention of the private sector, combined of course with the Government, we can see the circular effect of interventionist development being used. We have seen it already. We have seen, for example, what the Central Bank would have done in relation to the Church Village Green; significant investment. We had the Exchange Museum being developed there as well. Mr. Speaker, that whole area leading up to Queen's Park has now been changed considerably; and as a result of that, we have had the direct and positive impact on the kind of development -- whether it has been housing development or commercial development -- which has impacted positively on those areas.

By extension, Mr. Speaker, that is why I cannot share the view that Barbados is sinking or Bridgetown is sinking. This Government has just embarked on a project to the tune of about \$5.3 million in the restoration of the Queen's Park Buildings. That is a positive development. In fact, I could level an accusation that nothing has happened to the Queen's Park Buildings since 1981 when the last CARIFESTA was held in Barbados. This is an area that housed the Daphne Joseph-Hackett Theatre; a place which many of our outstanding artistic icons have used not only for their own artistic development but a place which would have assisted in the continuous artistic and cultural development of Barbados. The closure of the Queen's Park Buildings and the Daphne Joseph-Hackett Theatre impacted negatively on the development of the arts in Barbados for many years. We had nothing being done on that building since 1981, and as we are about to host CARIFESTA for the second time, from August 17 to 27 this year, I feel proud that we can say that this Government will be in a position to have CARIFESTA held at the Queen's Park and that the Daphne Joseph-Hackett Theatre will be fully restored.

Mr. Speaker, what this does within the context of urban renewal is that it creates a significant shift in relation to the empowerment model that I believe, and certainly that this Government believes, must be built within the context of what we do with our historic City. It cannot be that we dwell on childish play in relation to who did what, and engage in nefarious arguments in this House about this thing and the next. Mr. Speaker, there are issues to be fixed in the City and, I dare say, because of how we deploy and prioritise our resources over time, you will have what has happened to the City. Mr. Speaker, we have had significant losses of historic structures in our capital city. Indeed, I heard a criticism being made by someone who I believe

should know better, in relation to whether or not the UNESCO World Heritage status has paid the dividends that it should pay. In fact, that speaker said that in his view, rather than seeing the kinds of benefits, we have seen the loss of some of our historic structures. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address that because sometimes one can be shortsighted in one's analysis.

The designation of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison as a World Heritage Site was precisely because of not only its history and what it had done in terms of impacting global history, but it was precisely because of the need then to conserve and to preserve that history. That is why UNESCO would have seen it fit to confer on Barbados the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage designation. Mr. Speaker, that has been informed by a management plan created, of course, within the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth by experts in relation to what happens to the future management of this historic site once the World Heritage designation has been applied. It really cannot be as simplistic for someone, who would have been in a very high office in an institution charged with the responsibility of preservation of our heritage, to dismiss the World Heritage status and to suggest that somehow we have not been benefiting from it. We have seen significant benefits. In fact, the Synagogue Redevelopment Project would have been the first cultural project approved under the Cultural Industries Development Act, and is therefore the first such project to benefit from the incentives under the Cultural Industries Development Act. Mr. Speaker, that legislation was enacted by this Parliament with a significant section in there designed to preserve and to conserve our heritage; both our built heritage and, of course, the other elements of our heritage as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this Resolution certainly creates an opportunity to reflect on, yes, housing policy, but housing policy does not exist within a vacuum. There can be no doubt that this Government has put in place a very ambitious and effective housing policy. There is no doubt. Members of the Opposition may have their views on how a particular project has been executed or not, and that is their right, but you have the Grotto Project, you have the Stuart's Lodge Project in Carrington Village, and you have the Country Park Towers. We know the history of the Country Park Towers. I have to say that by completing that project, this Government has totally transformed that area of St. Michael. It is within the City; the urban corridor. That should not be trivialised. These significant investments of hard-earned taxpayers' dollars, it is not for us in this House, because we want to score some cheap political point, to trivialise them.

4.57 p.m.

These are significant things to happen and we should be bold enough to feel proud about these things as

representatives of the people. It concerns me when I listen to these debates and even when I hear people reflecting on some of these statements being made that somehow all of a sudden, rather than being scrupulous of where we are going in relation to our housing policy, that we are about now to speak in a rather degrading fashion about Barbados. I believe, Mr. Speaker, Barbados is poised within the context of how we approach housing, how we approach our heritage, is poised for even further development and further improvement going forward and there is nothing really, in spite of our challenges, there is nothing for us to be ashamed of in relation to where we have come in Barbados. In fact, our world heritage property of Historic Bridgetown stands as a beacon in relation to what we have been doing to date. Now we have private sector interests, we have the Barbados Chamber of Commerce which is very interested in working along with the Government in terms of urban renewal. We have, of course, the whole prospect of a hotel being built now in The City. Of course, you cannot have your cake and eat it at the same time. I would want to hear, coming from Members of the Opposition, they support a hotel being built in The City because it certainly is positive for urban renewal. I have heard the residents of the same London Bourne Towers being reported in the media as expressing keen interests in having the hotel project, which is now, unfortunately, the subject of what I call misinformed litigation before the Court. I call it that because, Mr. Speaker, I can see while, for example, there is the right of any citizen to object to any decision made by a public authority, I also believe I have the right to make a statement as to how that particular objection is being made and where a particular individual who has a particular issue to be the subject of litigation does not wait on the Court to preside over those matters but instead determines that he will hold a press conference almost every time he goes to Court to file an application, I believe that smacks, Mr. Speaker, of jumping before the proverbial gun. Let the Courts do their work and I believe that at the end of the day we are all required to abide by the decisions of the Court but I do believe that this Lone Ranger mentality of anything that seems topical and being popular that I am going to run down to Coleridge Street with relevant legal documents in the hope of bringing some attention to myself does not signify to me that there is a connection by anybody with that kind of mind-set in relation to the purposeful and proactive development of Barbados. I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, because oftentimes there has been the notion that the designation of Historic Bridgetown as a world heritage property is not on all fours with the notion of development and that is so far from the truth. When Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison was designated a World Heritage property, UNESCO did not say to the Government, as a matter of fact, no Government in the world is constrained in relation to new development in that way. Of course, the type of development, in other words, there is nothing that says you cannot have development in a World Heritage Property. What world heritage does, of

course, is that it speaks squarely to conservation and it speaks to preservation. In fact, these are the tenants upon which a country would approach UNESCO to say we believe that this particular property has outstanding universal value. That is the language which is used. It has outstanding universal value which should be protected therefore new development would have to be subjected to some scrutiny in relation to that particular principle therefore a proposed Hyatt project or any project which is new development would also have to be subjected to that but you must have intersperse with heritage preservation the whole question of renewal that is why we speak of urban renewal. If you look carefully at any of the projects which have been completed in Barbados, for example, the Central Bank of Barbados would have completed the Exchange Museum which was formally the Mason Lodge Building. That project, while preserving very significant aspects of our heritage, also has certain aspects that are new. You have a delicate mixture of the old with the new. You will see the same thing, Mr. Speaker, in relation to when the Queen's Park Buildings are completed. Of course, what we found is that we had to look at how we would create new space for our actors, changing rooms which never existed. We had to look at the balconies. How would you approach creating more space for your patrons? All of these had to be looked at within the context of how we are going to create this new attraction and new facilities while preserving our historical aspects of our structures. I think, Mr. Speaker, this is really what the expansion and development of Historic Bridgetown will be about. The marriage of the quest for housing, but interspersed with that must be a full and total renewal where both private and public sectors join together in recognising that we could accomplish great things through the wise and purposeful investment into areas that will become a beneficial to each and every Barbadian.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once we embark on the World Heritage status, of course, the Ministry has embarked on some very interesting, what I call people empowerment strategies and I think we have to intersperse in our argument, how are we going to empower the people of Barbados. As we struggle in our sometimes blinkered view of how we should proceed and making a little political point here and there, that is fine. I happen to believe that persons who listen to these debates want to hear more substance in relation to how we are taking Barbados forward. What are we doing to The City that will make our city the envy of the world? That is our vision, Mr. Speaker. That is our mission. When we embark on the urban renaissance project in which already we have transformed Flower Alley in The City by the use of murals, not only that, we trained about 18 youngsters from Nelson Street and other areas in The City in relation

to how they could do murals and so on and how they can work along, and they were paid stipends. These are all empowerment models so you cannot say to me that as a result of World Heritage Status nothing has happened and Barbados has not benefitted. Barbados has used some very interesting homemade policies and where an investor can come to Barbados somebody who is using their money and saying, I am giving Barbados \$14 million to do an expansion development of the Jewish Synagogue Project in your city, that speaks volumes and we have to attract more of that, Mr. Speaker. We have to attract more of that development in our city. We have to work on getting our Carnegie Library up and running and I am hoping that we can get some philanthropic investors involved in that as well. That is what is going to be necessary to fully transform our city.

House D 9 Seq 32 5.07 p.m.

I think that housing must be a critical part of it not only in relation to the London Bourne Towers. The London Bourne Towers and all of the other projects which have been done by this Government in my mind is a step towards full urban renewal.

The issue of sewerage and how we are going to modernise that in the city is totally linked to the whole picture of how we are going to create better garbage collection; how we are going to transform our city into a 24-hour city; and how we are going to ensure that our road networks are kept refreshed and of an international standard. These are the issues that I think must be part of not only the dialogue because one of the things I always challenge the Opposition on is that these issues, particularly when they come up in the House, warrant not only passing descriptions on what you see but warrant the injection of some sound ideas from the Opposition. We are living in a different Parliament. We are not into that old politics anymore. It warrants the Opposition to somehow get outside of itself and dream for once of what this new Barbados will be; how we are going to invigorate our minds; and how we are going to take Barbados forward beyond the normal traditional political jab here and there.

Sir, when I reflected on the life and times of London Bourne and his significance as a slave... This man was a slave. His father bought his freedom. He used his moneys to buy at least two plantations in Barbados. He owned three outstanding businesses in The City. London Bourne became one of the pioneers working along with Samuel Jackman Prescod to ensure the freedom that we enjoy today.

We need, Mr. Speaker, to build on this historic opportunity and on the desires and passions of our people to truly expand and urbanise our city-scape and to look critically at how we invest within the context of this

opportunity for the urbanisation of housing in our city in addition to protecting and enhancing our heritage which I believe would help us in moving our economy and our city forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The previous speaker made reference to London Bourne and I think that is an interesting point where I should start. You do not pick or select bits and pieces of history and not understand the interconnections between the role of London Bourne, the role of Samuel Jackman Prescod and the Rock Hall Freedom Project. It was all about the liberation of poor people. Certainly, the concept of landlessness was at the root of the struggle at that specific time and also addressing concerns about poverty.

We are at this point today discussing a fundamental element of poverty not just housing but landlessness and homelessness throughout our entire history, a journey that without deceit or misrepresentation in the pronouncements of Honourable Members in here, the journey at the different points of the journey, two major political parties addressed the concerns of landlessness and homelessness in this society. Nobody can refute that. The Pine, especially the houses in Golden Rock and those areas, existed long before 1961 and there are other housing developments across Barbados that addressed it that we established before.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a case of who did it before and who did it after, the reality is that both of us, the two political institutions, recognised that there was a landless problem and a homeless problem in our society and we attempted to do something in order to address that, and I still believe that the mandate is here for us to continue on that journey. You cannot have over 20 000 applicants at the National Housing Corporation concerned with these elements of deprivation and believe that we have done something so miraculously that we have solved the problem overnight that stemmed from poverty, enslavement and colonialism. We cannot fool ourselves. If we are to discuss this matter we have to keep focus.

I understand the previous speaker before me making mention of a broad aspect of development when he talked about urbanisation but if he is talking about urbanisation then he cannot exclude the input of the gentleman who now has the matter of the Hyatt Hotel before the court because you are talking about urbanisation not just housing. That gentleman has a perspective, you might not agree with it, and the court has a responsibility, and if the court believes that there is not a sensible case to answer then the respect

for the separation of power would allow the judiciary to pronounce on that either to approve it or to dismiss it, but that does not even mean that because the judiciary holds a specific view that the political directorates cannot express their views on this matter. Even if the judiciary says tomorrow morning that a wrong was done, it does not prevent me in the House of Assembly from expressing my view on that issue, so we have to get these things clear and not confuse the public because they might not understand these technical divides between the judiciary, the legislator, the executive and all of that. The reality is that Mr. Comissiong - I will just ask you Sir to give me the right to call his name - has a right to do what he did like he did in the fingerprint issue, and we will continue from there, but we need to be clear on what is the role of the State.

I have listened to all kinds of discussions in here, some strange logic foreign to humankind where somebody wants you to believe that you could have an estimate at \$16 million at the beginning of a project and elements of the project have been taken out but on completion of the project it goes up to nearly \$12 million more than the original agreement and you want us to believe that as a consequence of the prestige of the ministry which you hold that we must all accept this view because all of us are lesser mortals and we do not have the basic intelligence to know that there is a reason for people to be concerned about that. We have to be concerned about these things and that is why we are here. We are watchdogs and we must ask questions and you should be in a position to give reasonable answers. If we are accusing you for something that you know is not true then you should be able to provide an answer and satisfy not only us but the general public of Barbados. The people in Barbados who have had exposure to secondary schools and universities are not foolish. You cannot misrepresent things and tell me that you charge me \$16 million at the beginning of a project and then at the end \$28 million without giving me an explanation. You cannot get that arrogant. It cannot happen and it will not happen. We have to be serious about what we are doing and that is the reason why we are finding ourselves in difficult circumstances because we have no respect for objectivity way beyond any partisan view where we are just trying to promote the interest of one party or the other.

House D9 Sequence 33

You are off track, we understand quite well. I was there when this party made mistakes too because if we are addressing homelessness, that is not about people who have millions of dollars or about private sector building middle-income houses or houses for the upper-class wealthy people. Mr. Speaker, the department could not have been set up by using taxpayers money or the bank's money to be paid back by the taxpayers to build housing for middle-class or wealthy people. They do not have to state that clearly or expressing it in detail or in basic simple English

for me to understand that, the reason for the department being set up is to ensure that the State, on the basis of its social conscience and also on the basis of understanding the importance of socialist policies, that they will do all they can to make sure that poor people would be able to enjoy a life where they will know that they have a home. Sir, that is what this is all about. Mr. Speaker, we have made some mistakes and we need to correct them, we cannot afford to continue wasting money.

Mr. Speaker, my concern is this, how do you go into a community during election time and look around and identify the derelict homes, observe the homelessness but when you are finished constructing a house or a housing estate you find yourself carrying out a mathematical calculation and then you discover that the houses are so expensive that the same persons in the same overcrowded districts cannot have access to those houses because they do not have the income that qualifies them. Further, Mr. Speaker, if you do not have the required criteria... Well, they are going to ask how many children are in the house, if you have other expenses, what is the size of your salary or wages, et cetera. Mr. Speaker, a little school boy who probably has four or five "O" Levels certificates is the persons who probably is going to be asking you these questions. You may also have a massive problem at home and want to get out of the house, even it might be a domestic conflict and if you do not respond to these people urgently you might end up with a murder on your hands. These are some of the tough realities that we have in these Small Island States in which as leaders we have to do something, not knee-jerked reactions but we have to have a comprehensive programme and move expeditiously to address some of the social issues in the society. Sir, while you would want to do all of that, you have other financial constraints. We have to maneuver in those difficulties and still, even if it is for our own sake of bragging, do something important within a five-year period in order to help our people and housing is one of the major issues.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing here today is a whole day's debate on this specific item, that is the test that many Members of Parliament see as being fundamental. We see the London Bourne Towers in the City of Bridgetown, there is also the Farm and Ferniehurst, St. Barnabas, the Ivy, Grazettes, the few housing estates, including Parish Land, the Grotto and Valery all being fundamental issues. Mr. Speaker, the Government has a large number of housing estates and if the Government never used to address this problem let us just imagine what would have been happening in Barbados. We would be having so many ninja men at nights sleeping in bags, and you could put up all the grids you like around the Treasury Building still hundreds of people would be beating up each other at night in order to find a warm space there.

Mr. Speaker, we have had people who after being institutionalized and coming back out of prison or the Psychiatric Hospital cannot get acceptance back into their homes because of family fears, they find themselves lingering around Bridgetown and it is a major social problem. I would assume they come to Bridgetown because on a daily basis a lot of people are concentrated in Bridgetown, where these people can get some money or food. Do we not think about these things? Do we not understand that this is an important issue? We have to find a way of pulling it back, it must not be led by contractors or investors, the State has to find a way of providing... Mr. Speaker, you are not going to address the solution as long as people continue to push the price up to the point where it can be described as inflating the prices of the units across Barbados, so the State has to sit and find a way. I do not know if you are going to start with starter homes. I do not know if you are going to make loans available to people at low interest rates but we have to find a way of responding to these concerns.

Mr. Speaker, every now and then we have a lot of fire victims, we have a lot of domestic violence, and sometimes people get put out of their homes. Mr. Speaker, we could create an atmosphere of peace sometimes if we could only find alternative accommodation for these people, but whenever they go to the National Housing Corporation and fill in the forms, they go back once a week... Sometimes you have to go back to the National Housing Corporation for five or six years. They also demand that you visit the National Housing Corporation at least once a week, which is foolishness, for five and six years and the minute that you stopped going there for one month they would probably take your name off the list because when you go back there somebody would be scrambling about looking for your file. Sir, all of these things are happening in the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I say this to you as it comes to mind, I heard a lot about extractions but let me tell you this, in St. Michael East in the five years before I returned to this Parliament, the Government offered housing units to the tenants free and as a consequence of the statutory provisions all the prerequisites and legal work was done in advance, some people in my constituency got their houses by dealing directly with the National Housing Corporation. I am not sure if the full title deeds were ever transferred to these people, that is another point that we can deal with, but I am going to point out the extraction since that is the melody I heard coming from the other side, as though somebody took money out of something, as though you are pulling out a tooth.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. Speaker.

5.30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: ... Honourable Member, that sounds to me like an attack on the character of a member of the public. The Rules have not changed. It is still a situation that if you are going to attack a person like that, you have to attack him or her in a professional capacity and you have to give notice before. You have not given that notice, and I am not going to allow it. I want you to withdraw it and for it to be struck from the Record.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, could you...?

MR. SPEAKER: I am not changing my Ruling. I am following the Standing Orders.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Okay, let me say this: Constituents reported to me that the representative of the day offered himself to work as the attorney-at-law on their behalf. I know, as ignorant as I am, that tenants in the same community did not seek the assistance of any private attorney because the National Housing Corporation was capable of doing the work, not only for itself but also for the prospective owners. Therefore, they did not have to pay any fee at all, and that was and still is allowed in law, especially in a case when the land was free of any encumbrances at all. I know that, so if you are going to be talking about extractions, the same situation occurred with the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, where a parliamentary representative who represented the interest of the people also worked as the attorney expressing concern to the residents that if they experienced any problem with noise or dust or anything, he was given the contract to meet with them and report. As a result of that kind of manoeuvring, he was rewarded. These are things that any reasonable person or even a person with a modicum of basic commonsense would be suspicious about.

That is what I am talking about, so do not distort the arguments and confuse society. If we are going to come in here and have a healthy debate on how we need to move forward on the housing policy, it is important that we do so. You have put many parliamentary representatives.... Probably the Right Honourable Prime Minister would also be a victim of this, in that he would have been concerned about housing in his community. He is now facing the dilemma that if you put the rent at that astronomical point -- and he has people within the community earning less than \$200 a week -- how can he make a decision, without a fallout, to give to the poor people in Grant's Avenue, Kurwens Avenue, Beckles Road or anywhere around there? How can he now tell a Minister or persuade or urge -- I will not say coerce - or use any form of duress to demand that he be given a unit for somebody in his constituency who might be in need? The principle for the construction of the units in the first place is that you must be able to build low-income units so that low-income people can have access to

housing, because you are talking about improving the lives of ordinary people in Barbados.

That is what I am talking about, and we tried to do that in the 1990s when I worked as a consultant in the Urban Development Commission (UDC) and then during my short period of two years as Minister of Social Transformation. During that time I had no UDC, but the point is that UDC really complemented the National Housing Corporation (NHC). This is another aspect because we are talking about housing, and although what we are dealing with here falls under the Ministry of Housing along with the National Housing Corporation, this is a reality that two departments were making an effort to address the housing needs of Barbadians: the UDC and the NHC. I do not know what the UDC is doing now, but I know what we tried to do then. I got my fair share of the cake, although I was not the Minister, and the people of St. Michael East always demonstrate their gratitude. I can go and eat freely at any of those homes in St. Michael East and know that I can walk out and know that I am still alive.

Aside.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: The people demonstrate their gratitude. Sir, I am saying that journey must not be abandoned. I would urge this Minister not to follow the guidelines of the one who preceded him. He was not as prudent as he ought to have been. I do not know if it was deliberate or otherwise, but he was not as prudent as he ought to have been. It has caused too much suspicion when we look at Valery and when we look at the Grotto. There is too much contention about where the costing started and where the costing ends. It does not stop there, because now we have an issue where we have to spend two and three years looking at these estates and asking, "What can we do?", and then you get all types of reactions in the public domain and sometimes pronouncements from Ministers on whether the houses should be sold, whether the houses should be rented, and whether they should be allowed to be rented for a little while with an option to own these units. Those are some of the things that I find myself very concerned about, Sir.

However, I appreciate the Minister's effort to regulate the system in some way, and I think the concept of making sure that the lands are vested in the correct institution is good. I personally believe that you need to go on an expansionist programme in the City. The Minister of Culture made very clear the importance of urbanising, and I would like to believe that urbanising means that he wants to see more modern construction, better network of roads, improvement around the City, and bringing back to life some of the buildings like the Empire Theatre and others. He is Minister of Culture, and I have heard the Minister who introduced this Resolution speak about the urbanisation as far as North Point.

5.36 p.m.

I do not know his definition of urban but let us assume that he is trying to urbanise the whole nation. I do not know how that will go down with all residents because some people strongly believe that ...

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: He is now telling me that is his concept of what he call "a City State".

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Somebody says it is "a silly state".

Sir, I really believe that over the years I have witnessed an expansion of the urbanisation of Bridgetown. We are now seeing the restoration of a lot of commercial activity in Lower Roebuck Street and there are certain areas now that we are seeing a lot of development in even if it is just services, we are seeing some development in those areas. I believe that apart from the vesting of the land since we are talking about urbanisation I would not like to see you construct a Hyatt Hotel and allow the people in Wellington Street or in Nelson Street or any of those streets that we are all familiar with to face the terrorism coming from the tourists cameras, the shots coming from the tourists cameras for amusement purposes, shooting from a 10th, 12th or 13th floor because they see some kind of spectacle that they consider they need to enjoy and video tape and then go back to their homelands enjoying and witnessing that state of poverty around there. In the urbanisation programme let it be commensurate or let it occur simultaneously with whatever you intend to do in response to investors and so on. You have to take into consideration not only employment because the truth is that there might be employment but there might not be any employment for the people in The City. These are realities so nobody is going to fool the people in The City saying that because you build a hotel in The City that everybody that live out Wellington Street, Nelson Street and all around there all of a sudden will be an area of full employment. You cannot fool people with that now. I will hope that some people will still get a little job as a waiter, barman, mixologist, or something at the hotel but I know that these people are going to be looking and making an assessment of people. This is not even a private hotel they are going to be making all types of assumption and you will have to tell them that you are living in Sandy Lane if you want that job.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you sounded as though you were wrapping up so I did not interrupt you. You have two minutes.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I am grateful for your guidance but I cannot determine what makes you think that way. It might be a preconceived view but the position is very clear, that I know from my own experience over the years that there were people in management positions that felt nothing good can come out of ??? therefore I had problems at one time at NPW where I could not get a job for anybody in the Ivy. I could not get a job for anybody in The Pine because there was a view that anytime you bring people from certain districts and if you feel that you can advance a negation to the argument, do it but I know you cannot do it and convince nobody because the people know it is true. They are going to ask for a Police Certificate of Character, they are going to look to see what district they came from, they are going to make them go down by the police station about 12 times because they come back with a document to get a job trimming flowers and fencing and all kinds of vegetation. You will hear, take off your locks you cannot work in here, especially when it comes to that industry. All I am saying is get real. You cannot fool anybody that it is an easy thing that because you build a hotel opposite those districts that overnight 50 per cent of the staff are going to come from there. What is your specialty? We do not have that job in here. You will have to go and do a course at the Hotel School. These are realities and if you face these realities then the Minister of Culture would be able to put a programme in place that can put the training prerequisite so that when the hotels are constructed, he would have people well trained and capable of accepting the jobs but nobody can fool me and I am not so bright. Nobody cannot fool me therefore you cannot fool many people in Barbados. If you are going to help the people there then I need to see you having a commensurate programme inside some of the ministries that have the facilities for those programmes so that the people can be well trained so when the opportunity comes, those people can be absorbed within the system. I cannot tell you whether you are going to do it or not, Sir, but that is my view of an expansion of the whole concept of urbanisation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time has expired, Sir. Please wind up.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Do something for the people within the community as well and I believe that housing is a small element of the general development of our urban community.

Thank you very much, Sir.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 6:00 o'clock this evening.

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

The question that the House do now suspend until 6:00 o'clock was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

House D 9 Seq 36 5.46 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 16 and with that we shall continue. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

ORDER No. 16 (RESUMED)

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in the debate and to indicate at the outset my support for the Resolution. What I believe though is evident is the efforts of the Government to engage in developments that certainly would have an impact on people because in the constituency that I represent, St. Michael West Central, I have one housing area namely Grazettes Housing Area, and certainly we have to encourage development in our housing areas.

When I was listening to the debate we seemed to suggest that we needed to aim not too high in terms of development and sometimes we do not appreciate that we can engage in social experiments that could transform the lives of people especially in urban areas in a very dynamic and progressive way. In the history of Barbados, we have seen housing developments but that is the past. We are here today in which a lot of those housing developments that we have seen are worn and need attention, but unfortunately we are recognising this at a time in our country when we are least able to develop the type of resources to actually deal with them properly.

Mr. Speaker, the issue that we need to face in this current environment is that the demand for housing has not slackened off, it has continued, and that certainly the Government has to be complimented for the fact that it is coming up with what must be considered as novel approaches in terms of trying to deal with the issues of housing. Sir, when we discuss the issues of Valery or The Grotto or whatever it is, we have to discuss it in the context of the realities that we face as far as the current environment is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I am very mindful of the fact that within St. Michael West Central is a housing area which was constructed, I believe, over 30 years ago and to which we have not paid a lot of attention to because what we have seen is successive Government just putting in infrastructure but we have no idea sometimes of how we want to develop it and make it into something more.

Mr. Speaker, in listening to the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, sometimes we have a caricature of working-class people in which we feel that they do not want the best. In other words, we caricature them in a way in which we feel that they do not want the best of what is available and in that regard I think that we are looking down sometimes at the very people we represent.

Sir, for instance, when I think of Grazettes Housing Area, we have roads such as Trellis Walk, Hampton Close and these areas which we have paid very little attention to in the past in terms of development. I really think that when we look at this particular Resolution it reminds us of the fact that we have a responsibility to transform the neighbourhood of housing estates no matter how old they are because we have to recognise that we can transform the lives of people in these neighbourhoods by also transforming the space that they occupy to make it more pleasant. We have talked a lot about the whole question of the creation of green spaces in housing areas and how do we encourage people in those areas to have a sense of pride in themselves. Again, I believe that when we talk about the development of these areas it is not only the physical buildings that we put in but also the ancillary services that we are going to provide in terms of the areas that we give people to recreate. As a matter of fact, when I look at The Grotto there is an attempt at least in that particular housing development to try to preserve that. In other words, all of the trees that were at The Grotto has not been destroyed because in a sense we have to be careful that we do not present a cement jungle in an island which really is tropical at best and which we should try to take advantage of the vegetation to create more appeal in these housing developments because we seem to think sometimes that working-class people do not deserve these types of things.

Sir, the other point I wish to make is that we therefore must look to models of developments in which we have to encourage working-class people to feel that they can be part of it. I know that today what we are seeing is an increased challenge to governments in terms of how do we finance housing and consequently how do we encourage housing developments. One of the things I believe we need to learn from is the models of cooperatives that we have seen in the past which have encouraged people within the society to take a responsibility in terms of helping to develop themselves in partnership with the State. I think we need to use what we call leveraging or bearing in which the State can provide some resources to assist

persons in the area to help to do things to develop themselves. I really think that we need not have a situation where we encourage people to feel, as I hear very often a lot of people say to constituents, that we can do it knowing full well that the State in itself does not possess all of the resources in order to do what it says it is going to do.

Sir, I visit houses on a weekly basis in my constituency and as recently as last week we had people who have problems with their roof and they say they do not want me to fix everything for them that they just want to be given a portion of the cost. Sir, I really think that we need to meet people in the communities at the stage they are at. We have a habit of trying to make people mendicants by trying to give them everything without using the strengths they have in order to empower them in the things they are trying to do. Mr. Speaker, I really think that the whole approach we should have to housing should be one that encourages people to recognise basically what their assets are and how can we leverage the assets they have in order to help them to develop themselves and in that regard I think that we would be able then to mobilise more resources than are currently available to help to improve the quality of housing in the current housing estates and the quality of the environment that we see that is happening in the current housing estates. Sir, I think that represents a correct approach.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend the cooperative model in which you actually encourage people to use the assets they have that we take for granted in order to be able to help to solve the basic problems they are facing within the environment and at the same time and in that way I think that we will have communities that... I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael East who seemed to imply that basically the communities we have in our city should be one that is depressed that people do not feel comfortable living in, but that is not so.

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6:13 p

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown needs to stand up for his people. I think that we need to recognise that this is not a laughing matter and that it is extremely serious but that we need not to "ghettorise" people who live in the city, we have to uplift them in terms of their attitudes. When they are doing something positive we need to find the resources to help them to continue doing those positive things. We must also compliment on their efforts, we do not need to destroy those efforts and their psyche, instead we need to help them to build in their efforts to help to develop their communities because too often we have a situation where political representatives move into those communities and instead of complimenting what the neighbourhood is doing, they try

to break it down, telling people to leave it, that the Government has to do it. Mr. Speaker, that is why sometimes Governments themselves are very stretched in the resources that they have to be able to help uplift communities. Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting a new approach in terms of how we view development because it is necessary taking into consideration where we are. Mr. Speaker, basically, the fact is that when you look at the resources for the future, those resources are relatively limited and we have to be creative in how we come up with the resources that we need to be able to develop people, especially in the housing areas.

Mr. Speaker, I really speak to the Grazettes Housing Area again because when we go there... As I said before, we have roads there that have not been repaired for the last 50 years, that is a fact, we have roads that you cannot pass and nothing has been done to those roads. I know that people living along those areas cannot pass and that they complained. The last thing they did was to put mining stuff on the road which was not good enough, so these are areas that we need to address but I think that we need to address them by working with constituents in those areas and seeing how we can embolden certain aspects of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about the playing field at Grazettes, these are things that need development. I believe that if we can create an atmosphere, especially in our housing areas that would make people feel comfortable about their surroundings, that would make them feel that they can engage in activities that are constructive and involving the community in itself in the creation of those activities, I think we can go a long way in looking and solving the whole problem of the urban decay that we tend to see in the City of Bridgetown, in itself. Mr. Speaker, what is happening is that we are seeing situations, especially in our urban communities, where sadly people are moving out. Mr. Speaker, Barbados is only 166 square miles and if we are serious about the whole questions of physical planning and physical development we have to account for the fact that there will areas that from time to time will suffer urban decay.

Mr. Speaker, if we are careful about our whole physical planning and development as it stands, then we cannot continue to use open land spaces because at some point in time you will get to where there is none available and that has tremendous consequences in terms of the environment and in terms of our ability to sustain ourselves. We talk about creating a sustainable society, all of that has serious implications and we cannot do it apart from the fact that we have to involve our people because it must be a sense of shared objective, that is why I believe that the approach has got to be different when it comes to the whole question of housing development, how do we create an environment in which people want to stay or in which they want to belong?

Mr. Speaker, that is why sometimes I hear too the whole question of Hyatt Hotel. Mr. Speaker, here it is that an opportunity is created, one which the country of course sorely needs and we do admit that, to create employment opportunities for people. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we would seek to belittle those persons within the closer area of the Hyatt Hotel by saying that they might not be able to get jobs there. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we make those statements. Mr. Speaker, sometimes you see advertisements in the newspapers. I saw one the other day that was so ridiculous in terms of the kind of people for whom we are applying for work permits and the things that they can do. I saw one where they wanted somebody to cut down trees. I saw one where somebody wants to bring somebody into Barbados to cut down trees and they are applying to the Chief Immigration Officer for a work permit for somebody to come into Barbados to cut down trees.

Mr. Speaker, I asked myself, to what extent are we in this country serious when even employers cannot recognise that they have a responsibility to work with Government to identify areas of employment opportunities that we need to address as far as Barbadians are concerned. We should not have to sit down the next day and recognised that we need somebody like that. Not only that, where is the level of communication that needs to happen between the State and employers in terms of recognising employment opportunities. Why then are employers suggesting that these are areas that they are looking for in the future? Mr. Speaker, you do not sit down and recognise that this is an issue today, this must have been happening for some time.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that instead of “ghettorising” our urban communities in the way in which we seem to be doing, we must stop looking at our people as if they cannot be developed in a very constructive way. Why do we look outside each time that we have to solve a problem, instead of recognising that the strengths lie inward, to the extent that we worry about the fact that we spend so much money on training our people, in trying to help them to develop their skills and then just when we have opportunities opening, whether or not it is a Hyatt, a Sandals or whatever, instead of saying to Barbadians here are the opportunities, how can we partner with Government, how can we create the necessary skills within our population in order to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to you? Mr. Speaker, that is what we should be thinking of, that is how we should be strategizing as Members of Parliament to see how we can work more closely with our business community to see, for instance, the owners or whomever the Hyatt hotel coming and saying that these are the opportunities that they have available in terms of jobs, how can they get the people who live within the environs of Bridgetown to be able to equip themselves to take advantage of those job opportunities?

Do not spring it on them because that is what happens, they leave people guessing about what job opportunities that they would want, where they would then say that they want a chef from “hula-hula” or who could do something funny and then you put our local people at a disadvantage.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that there has to be a bipartisan debate on this, not that the Opposition must think that because they have a chance to get one up on Government in respect of whatever mistakes they think might have happened that they then should seek in some way to exploit that because at the end of the day who wins, the Government does not win, neither does the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, who wins are the very people who are undermining the development of people in this country and at the end of the day the very employment opportunities that we are trying to create or that we should be trying to create for people to take advantage of the people do not get those employment opportunities at the same time. Sir, I really think that we need to have a more bipartisan approach in this debate when it comes to the whole question of discussing development. Mr. Speaker, a debate on development has to be one in which we are trying to bring out the strengths of our people and that where there are weaknesses let us identify those weaknesses, let us therefore find the resources in which we can apply to those weaknesses to try to ensure that our people can take greater advantage of the opportunities that will be provided.

Mr. Speaker, I go back to Grazettes. My friend the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development and the Ministry of Transport and Works talk about these things because I believe that we need to address resources in terms of developing our communities.

6.37 p.m.

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

Let us not view development as just putting down concrete. We also have to look to see how we can work with the people in these housing estates to help to develop them. How do you leverage the resources which they have in order to do that? How can we use rate concepts in order to do that? Again I refer to cooperatives because, in a sense, Barbados has shown that the cooperative movement can make a significant difference in terms of the development of the lives of people. As a matter of fact, it is said that the cooperative movement, in terms of the credit unions, is one of the main factors in terms of the enhanced level of housing which Barbadians are afforded right now. The credit unions have played a role where the banks in the past have failed. When people could not get loans in order to put up, repair and expand their houses, the credit unions were there stepping in to fill the breach. In a sense, it was then a partnership between the credit unions and the Government in that regard. What the Government did then

was create a way in which it encouraged people to have faith in the credit unions, and maybe we need to return to that. When we look right now at the attitude of the banks, despite the fact that they are extremely liquid, we really can solve a lot of the issues that our working class people are finding in terms of the issues they face. Constantly I go to my constituents and they tell me.

I want to encourage the Minister of Housing. We need to pay due regard to the fact that for a lot of the residents of those houses for whom ownership has been transferred, the issue of the legal title is still an issue when they say they want to develop the houses and make them better. That is a big issue still, and we need to put some effort into getting it done. I am suggesting maybe that if we could leverage the tremendous capital resources that exist within the credit unions, find a way that we can actually use that as a means of helping those people to improve their lives and moving forward. We should create excellent housing accommodation in the housing estates if we could have a discussion with the credit unions in terms of finding a way of unlocking that capital that is sitting down there not being lent. This is money which people, ordinary people, have saved in order to improve themselves. That is what cooperatives are about. Cooperatives are not about going for a begging bowl on the part of poor people. What cooperatives teach people about is that, through a process of shared savings, we can help each other to develop. That is what we need to use, and that is the focus of what this debate should be; not what I am hearing in terms of people talking about whether or not people can get jobs. The point is that we need to recognise that people can be responsible for development in their own communities. Too many politicians look at it as if they are coming on some horse, and that they are some white knights or black knights or whatever coming to save people. That is not what it is. People can save themselves. This crass hero-worshipping that we are seeing constantly is happening all the time, as if they are going to solve everything. They cannot solve it. The Opposition really cannot solve it. They know that they have prescriptions, but the prescriptions must be novel and not what they are advertising, because they also know they cannot work.

I am suggesting that there is a way of taking those strengths which people have and doing it in a meaningful way. I suggest to the Minister of Housing that maybe we need to have that kind of creative discussion with the credit unions to help to get it solved. I would say this too: The Government has shown a level of maturity in terms of unlocking funds. Because of the sure way in which Governments are prepared to back loans in certain areas, you get action. Maybe we can use that opportunity. I mentioned the credit unions, but do you know why? It is a working class institution. It has developed from the savings of poor people who have shown that they are willing to invest in themselves, and maybe we should carry this a step

further. If we do not have the necessary capital to do it, maybe in a way we can find a way to have a discussion with credit unions. Some of the persons who are in these estates are credit union members, and credit unions are holding these people's savings. Why can we not unlock those savings if we can give Government Guarantees to help people develop themselves in the units? Invariably, the problem that is there is that sometimes Government does not have the cash-flow in order to facilitate the transactions which need to happen. That is how we are doing it. Let us not think at the end of the day that Government cannot play a facilitating role in terms of unlocking a lot of these things that are there and solving the difficulties I see in terms of addressing the needs of persons within the housing estates.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Thank you very much, Sir. I make a special appeal again to the residents of the Grazettes Housing Area, because I know that there are people there who have that issue. They cannot get a bank loan to develop the property they have. They want to do things, but the point is really that they cannot move forward. I do not think it is fair to these people to have their lives suspended in terms of their development because there is a capital problem. Again I make the point that it can be solved through Government offering or working with financial institutions to solve those problems, and in this case I say the credit unions. Mr. Speaker, I read it again. I support the Resolution, and I believe we should support it in every way and wish the Minister success in what he is trying to do. Thank you very much, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought this morning when we started this Resolution that it would have been a simple matter, but when the Honourable Minister went far and wide, it has led us to be dealing with it at a later stage. However, I am happy because quite a number of issues have been raised, and I would wish for some basic responses from the Honourable Minister in relation to some of the queries I have. Sir, I want to say that the Honourable Minister's pronouncements this morning about Barbados having the urban area now being stretched from Harrison Point to Ragged Point was a very interesting one. Then the Honourable Minister continued to make comments to the effect that Barbados can now be seen as a city state since sections of rural Barbados are now similar to urban Barbados. While that may be true -- we have seen the development of urban Barbados in a real special way -- I believe that the Honourable Minister perhaps might want to now say that there is no need for a Rural Development

Commission under him. Everything now seems to be urban. According to what he said, if it runs from Ragged Point all the way up to Harrison Point, then perhaps the Minister is eliminating himself and perhaps he should, because I am still astounded at the poor management in terms of what is happening with rural Barbados. This is not the debate that will deal with it, since I want to be able to get into this whole urban discussion and the Vesting of the lands in the area of the City.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have been a part of a team and to witness the upgrades of homes and streets, and persons being able to purchase their house spots in urban Barbados at \$2.50 per square foot while the Government would have subsidised the rest. Facilities were put in place in urban Barbados to allow ambulances to get in, or to make sure that rather than the mud tracks, concrete tracks were installed to make life easier for the residents of urban Barbados. That is because of the development of the Urban and Rural Development Commissions in this country between 1994, particularly, and 2008; and I know that plans are continuing even though the pace seems to be so slow, because they were so many derelict buildings and there was so much poverty in rural Barbados but more so in urban Barbados where persons really deserved to have upgrades to their homes and to have water-borne facilities to give them the privacy that they deserve.

6.32 p.m.

We have not been able to cover enough of those needs and the people of urban Barbados are still reeling under the pressure of having to use communal baths and having the pit toilets and so on and many of the houses are still in need of upgrades so that they can live lives that are commensurate with living a good quality life.

I would welcome also the work of the Derelict Housing Projects to come on stream because Bridgetown is really looking very tacky, in sections of St. Michael and the rest of Barbados but particularly now we are talking Bridgetown since we are talking about The City of Bridgetown and the designation by UNESCO for a heritage site so I would welcome the Honourable Minister informing us of the plans for the derelict buildings in The City and not just to say we are working on them because this was a work in progress before and I know that you cannot go and just take up somebody's property that is derelict to want to be able to refurbish the property or to put a house on it without the permission of the owners. Some of them are very litigious situations where families are in dispute because no proper will was given therefore there is confusion but I would like for the Honourable Minister to be able to give us some upgrade on it because too many of them are now an eyesore in this city and some of them are a great danger. When we pass Bank Hall and we see that old chattel house that has shingles, it is only a

matter of time that it will collapse having made the various requests and so by many Barbadians both directly to the Ministry of Housing, of course, on the call-in programmes. People have been calling because we can see it is a terrible eyesore and it is creating some challenges. I know that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) had a vision and I believe the other party had its own vision of Bridgetown but we saw Bridgetown come alive, previous to 1994. Indeed in the late 1970s and then in the early 1980s and then again between 1994 and 2008 when we saw the Country Towers, it has 44 units but 24 were done at that time. We know the London Bourne Towers has 44 units, Pondside had 34 from the mid-1980s. There were 12 that were put up in Bush Hall. We know that some houses were built in Barbarees Gardens to facilitate the people in Pickwick Gap so that you could move then out of the squalor and give them a better quality life. I am wondering what is happening because we know that there was a housing unit or two constructed there and then we heard the people in Pickwick Gap and in the other communities that were supposed to be relocated there were not even accommodated and people came from St. Philip, Christ Church and other sections of St. Michael and so on to populate those environs so the people at Pickwick Gap are still at square one. It is so unfortunate because the houses there are Barbarees Garden and the units were built to relocate those persons and to give them a better quality life. That is a fact, that is not politicking because I will not come here every day to be able to talk politics all the time without really reaching to the hard core areas of the things that will impact on the lives of Barbadians and those who come to live among us. Those are the hard facts.

We have Passage Road. Houses were built in Passage Road. There were a few houses built along the Westbury Road/Baxters Road where the fish and so were fried at night. A couple houses were put there and, of course, the Kensington Lodge that was built previous to 1994 and I know, Sir, that says then that hundreds of houses were put in Bridgetown to help populate the area and bring it alive especially at night. There is not point people coming into Bridgetown just doing a little window shopping but then there are a few people living in and around The City to be able to populate the area and make life easier for them.

I support this Resolution, Mr. Speaker. I believe and I support the idea of businesses being set up in the housing communities as well. I know that London Bourne Towers has the Child Care Facility there. My grandson was recipient and, of course, there are shops. I think there is a Barber Shop, one for a cosmetologist and a small shop for sales of little items that you will not necessarily get when Town is closed and this is general Town I am referring to. I think that is really very important but I also believe that there are some social needs that require urgent attention in the City of Bridgetown. I am not a comfortable person.

When I come into Bridgetown and I see so many homeless people and I know that many of them would not have been people perhaps who arrived from The City or even St. Michael but there are people who leave any and everywhere when they develop mental illnesses or when their families put them out and the hurtful thing about what is happening now is that women and their children are a part of the homelessness that we are seeing going on in The City. Yes, one of the Honourable Members said earlier this morning that perhaps it is because they know they will probably get a meal in Bridgetown, somebody will give them a couple dollars and it will help them to feed themselves but I would want the Honourable Minister to indicate to us what plans there are for facilities, if there are none, to be able to accommodate persons who are evicted. Almost every day, both in rural and urban Barbados, people get evicted, not only from houses that they are rented but evicted from being in a family household and they are lodging. Some of them, especially the women, have to give up their bodies in order to stay at some old man or some other man or some other person in order to survive with their children because they do not want to be on the street. Some sleep in people's cellars, some sleep in patios and I am not creating any story that is not my style. I see it and I know of it happening in Barbados and I think it is so unfortunate so I would like the Honourable Minister to indicate, when people are evicted, what facilities are available. I know in the past the Ministry of Housing would have kept back a few units to be able to accommodate those who had those sudden challenges or that were developing. Sometimes, as the Honourable Member mentioned before, domestic violence. Some women have to run for their lives and some men have to run for their lives and some children have to run for their lives, therefore, what facilities are available? There are so many fires, and it is so sad too, every day to hear of the number of persons who are dislocated as a result of house fires. Sometimes it is no fault of their own. Many of them are not prioritising and then there are many others who would have lost their employment so they cannot even pay to renew the insurance therefore they are losing everything in some of the fires. What facilities are available? I would love to know because I have also had house fires and the residents are now squatting in houses, 22 people in a house and 11 people in a house and so on, and it really is very difficult for them to be able to survive under those circumstances. What facilities are there for flood victims? What facilities are there for those who have wind damage and the house top gets blown off and so on? Will the Minister please inform us as to what plans there are to relieve persons who are experiencing those challenges and if it is to do with housing what spots are available that if the land slips and that house has to be relocated then what actually is happening? I brings me to folk in White Hill who I know require spots for housing by whatever took place are Farmers now seem to have been used up and these folks are still hanging on. We are getting showers again. What plans

does the Minister have for housing for them? In relation to the designation for UNESCO we know that is a project before the change of Government in 2008 and I am happy that it has been continued that the Honourable Minister of Culture could make all the pronouncements and pose and there is nothing wrong with that of being able to achieve such an outstanding goal therefore I am in favour of it although I detest very much, Mr. Speaker, having the name of the Garrison School before moved from what we call Bridgetown and its Environs of the Garrison. For me that would have been an integral part and perhaps another school could have been named after the Honourable gentleman who did much work. I am saying if you call it a heritage site, leave the aspects of it that caused it to be a heritage site and that is all I will say on that.

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Mr. Speaker, I would want to also say that there are so many eyesores in the city beyond the derelict houses. We know that the Child Care Board had a facility in Bay Street, the windows have now got concrete blocks in them, they are shut off, and perhaps that is a good facility for a hotel, I do not know nor am I going to be giving the Government any idea on anything.

We have at Jemmotts Lane the old Audio Visual Aids Department, a good soft stone structure, and nothing is happening there. Then we have the old Drug Service building. I went to a funeral over at the Roman Catholic Church a morning and I saw horses tied on to the railings and the building of the old Drug Service facility. Everything there is derelict. It is a terrible eyesore on that street and it is a tremendous danger for the poorly lit City of Bridgetown. If people are walking from the roundabout all the way down to the traffic lights at Bay Street it is an extremely dangerous place to walk in the daytime but more particularly at night.

There was a supermarket on Bay Street coming down on the left before you get to the lights. I saw some refurbishment there but the area needs to be turned into a business or some kind of activity that will make a difference. Another derelict building is the old fish market. There are so many other areas in there that really need to be upgraded and attention paid to.

I know that we are into a structural economic situation and therefore everything cannot happen at the same time but I believe that there has to be some systematic planning to be able to take advantage of those areas to ensure that it redounds to the benefit not only of the business people but indeed the residents who live in and around The City.

Mr. Speaker, I asked earlier for a copy of the Report of the National Housing Corporation of 2005/06 because I

really wanted to bring to the fore the fact that other Honourable Ministers were speaking, to me, from a background of no knowledge because there is so much information - this is already a document of this Honourable Chamber - in this kind of annual report of the National Housing Corporation, and I was extremely pleased to be able to find with a measure of ease the details of what is at page 32 which speaks to the sale of terrace units and the asbestos roofs.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on to the sale of the terrace units, yes there were persons who paid in quite a few thousand dollars towards their own ownership, and that is what Barbadians like. Barbadians like to work and earn what they own, and that is the culture but there are some people who will never be able to work and earn enough to be able to buy their houses, and I am therefore asking the Honourable Minister to please tell us about the conveyances for those persons who were given their houses for free and what plan there is to reimburse those persons who had paid in for theirs before because for me it does not sound as though it is the logical thing to do for persons to have paid in and not get theirs for free or not to know where their money has gone. I believe that there has been accounts associated with it as has been indicated in the various documents I received from this Honourable Chamber and I would like to know what is happening.

Sir, I learnt that in 2004/05 in an effort for persons to be able to purchase their housing units, 1 212 houses had the asbestos roofs removed, and in 2005/06 there were 49 more bringing it to a total of 1 261 houses where those asbestos roofs were removed, so there were plans afoot to advance the purchase of the housing units so it is not that you were just giving them to people and charging them money.

In 2004/05, 1 550 firewalls were reinforced. The firewalls would be that wall in the middle, as Honourable Members would know, to make it stronger and firmer and fire resistant to ensure that the other units are not damaged if there is any outbreak of a fire. Of course, in 2005/06, there were 581 firewalls done bringing the total number of firewalls to be installed to 2 086.

Mr. Speaker, the communal wells are still a big problem in the housing units. Ponside and Kensington Lodge will have it because they are older units and therefore I would like the Honourable Minister to tell us where we are at with it because with the challenges with those communal wells no three or four sets of neighbours would want for one family to say you would have to clear it. It has to be a concerted community effort with the three or four persons or eight persons for that matter living in that block to be able to do the cleaning in a collective way and the sharing or breaking down of the price so that

everybody plays his or her part. The communal wells are a very niggling situation for the people in those communities.

Mr. Speaker, approximately \$5.38 million were paid for the maintenance of properties at that time. I am not so sure, Mr. Speaker, that at this time much is being done for the maintenance of properties in those housing units. I was in the Wildey area a few days ago and there have been complaints of persons who said they needed their windows change, they needed to get a new door or they got some serious plumbing problems and so and they would really like to get the National Housing Corporation to help them out, but of course if the National Housing Corporation has no money then it cannot do the kind of work that it has grown accustomed to doing in the past and I would like for a measure of ease to take place for those persons to get some help.

Mr. Speaker, I know too that the General Workers' Housing Loans Fund was a very popular Fund that assisted poor people and I would like to know if that Fund is still in place to be able to assist persons to buy spots or to upgrade their houses. I know that there used to be a maximum of \$100 000 at one point to refurbish or relocate houses and I would like the Honourable Minister to give us an idea as to what is happening because for sure the persons in Ponside, London Bourne Towers, Kensington Lodge and so who would have been there for quite a while would really need to be able to get some kind of assistance to be able to improve the quality of their lives. Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the Honourable Minister what plans they have for the General Workers' Housing Loans Fund and the ease that it will offer to Barbadians as a whole.

I know that there are quite some challenges. This query of the Honourable Minister is a serious one because we are always told to bring the facts. I am extremely concerned because a couple residents spoke with me because I know and everybody knows that I am like Poonka's sister, I am all over the place, and asked me to make queries of the Honourable Minister in relation to some funds that were approved to upgrade the electrical services at Block 8 in the Midway Lane area in The Pine which was redirected to a Block 10. The emphasis was that one of the apartments is owned by someone very well known to the Democratic Labour Party who got the house for free under the 20-year programme and now the house is up for rent having been refurbished by this Government to the detriment of that area at Block 8 where there were a number of serious electrical challenges during the period. I do not want the Honourable Minister to answer me here because I am not getting into anybody's personal business but I want transparency. Please, Mr. Minister check into it because it is not speaking well for what has been going on in Barbados.

The other question is: Which National Housing Corporation member of staff has been unfortunately accused, but clarity will come from you Sir, with your investigations through the Honourable Speaker, to have been contracted to dig wells at Lancaster? I have a serious problem with that because for me those are things that are a conflict of interest if they are true. I am not going to blame anybody on it because I do not have the facts but sometimes a rumour goes around and then all over Barbados you would be hearing somebody from the National Housing Corporation, so I want the Honourable Minister to properly investigate it and clear that measure of rumour because I do not want anybody to be accused of doing anything. The other query is: Which security firm is being owned by one of the members that is working in the National Housing Corporation? Those are serious matters.

Mr. Speaker, I am tired of persons in Barbados and the rest of the world who hear about us and the good governance that we have always enjoyed for many centuries who seem to think that because we are small we are always into skulduggery and that we are always fleecing the Government and 'bigging up' ourselves and then they put every politician into one big bag for people to say all of them have dirty hands, it is in somebody's pocket.

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Mr. Speaker, I have already said to you, and I know that it is the annals of this House, anytime that somebody accuses of me being in somebody's back pocket, then I would want that they would disappear off this earth. It is not a good thing, especially when there are females in it because in Africa and in different parts of the world you would hear about men being involved but when females names are called in it then it is a level that we need to look at because we have to educate our young people that you work to earn what you want but that you must work honestly for it, that you must work hard to achieve what you want but that you must do it honestly. Therefore, Mr. Minister, please investigate those allegations and make sure that if it has already happened that it does not happen again. I do not want to know who the persons are if it should come to be a truth.

Mr. Speaker, I want to come closer to the conclusion because I am saddened, even though I am not the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown. Were I the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North could not be sitting here smiling at me like a Cheshire cat, because that Urban Neighbourhood Improvement Project that would have been a tremendous benefit for the people of the City of Bridgetown and Allen View has been thrown through the window and those poor people who should have benefited by that BD\$60 million are still in the dark, with

their houses and the street and personal ownership at zero when that money was drawn down in March 2008 by the then Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Right Honourable Prime Minister now deceased, when they went up and signed off for that Inter-American Development Bank loan.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened that when I went into Greenfield a few weeks ago, I saw the challenges there with those poor people still remaining at 'square one'. Mr. Speaker, no houses have been put in place; no houses have been relocated; there are no proper sewerage systems; there are no waterborne facilities. Mr. Speaker, nothing has happened for them, perhaps the only money spent was on consultation, nothing more. Mr. Speaker, and it is painful for ordinary people for ordinary poor people to have to remain poor because a Government reneged on its responsibilities of making sure that those poor people can get the quality of their lives lifted at least to a level.

Mr. Speaker, had I heard that the money was spent in those communities and that the money was expended, I would not even be crying for the people in Allen View but people at Catts Castle and Greenfield nothing was spent there. Very little was spent in the Garden Land and perhaps that is the only one that has benefited and I am glad that the Honourable Speaker was able to have got a little Bilateral Investment Treaties but nobody else has gotten any money spent in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown is extremely saddened, as I am too, because no work has taken place there. If we are talking about making poor people to have a better quality of life, then the projects that are designed with those people in mind should be properly executed and they should be the ones to get the benefits. Mr. Speaker, the six-year period has elapsed and \$47 million was sent back to the Inter-American Development Bank because the Government did not meet the conditionalities of the time frame.

Mr. Speaker, that is a terrible disgrace, it is a shame that a Government could come and find a project in place and that only within two or three months' time the money could have been drawn down and then those who should have benefited are still living in very dire straits at this time, Greenfield, Catts Castle and the Garden Land and of course Allen View, St. Thomas who are still reeling under the pressure of not being able to have water attachments to their homes because it is an Environmental Protection Zone in which they live and the sewerage project that would have been put in place there would have mitigated all of those challenges that those folks in Allen View are experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, I want the Honourable Member to please do something about these communities. The fact that we have lost the funding for the Housing Neighbourhood Improvement Project then some other special project has to be perceived and implemented to ease the plight of the poor people living in those conditions, where there are five or six of them living in one bedroom, some of whom have boys and girls children, including having partners. We cannot keep picking at them and talking about social decay in the society, about people not supervising their children, about children getting involved in negative activities because there is so much up there to attract their attention. They want to wear the bling, they want to wear the fussy clothes, they want to wear all of the nice expensive shoes, but if there is no environment there for them to be able to gain employment or for any good living conditions, then unfortunately it really means that we are losing sight of our roles as politicians to be able to empower people because politics is still about people.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has four minutes left in which to conclude.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I also want to indicate to the Government and this is directly to the leaders in this country. I would have been glad and extremely proud had I heard the Minister speaking about the Resolution to the communal wells. Since the Minister had gone across both urban and rural Barbados, I would have been happy had I heard about what plans there are for those people in White Hill and about their relocation. Mr. Speaker, I would have been more proud about hearing about the conveyances. Mr. Speaker, as I would want to speak about the homeless in the City of Bridgetown, I would wish for the Minister to indicate if there are any plans for funding or a subvention to be made available for the Vagrant and Homeless Society who I would say have been doing an extremely good job in helping to make sure that the poor and needy in the City of Bridgetown can be able to have a meal or somewhere for them to be able to stay.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to admonish the Government, and I am not saying that in any derogatory way, that when they have dialogue or communication with people it helps them to better understand what plans there are and therefore I have been hearing so much about the Hyatt Hotel. I believe that if people in the City of Bridgetown were brought into one environment and it was explained to them what was being done, or even if they had made a call to have the Environmental Impact Assessment Study available, it would still be able to help people to better understand what is coming their way and how they would benefit by it. Therefore, people would be able to have a say or buy-in in the whole exercise.

Mr. Speaker, when I look to see how many projects that this Government has sought to try to put in place without having that community conversation or that set of conversations it hurts my heart because it says to me that it is like the mentality that we are going to give it to you, you can take it or leave it, but it is still going to happen. Mr. Speaker, we hear about the different styles of management, we hear about autocratic and democratic but that is not a style of management. Mr. Speaker, I believe that that direct dialogue with people, bringing them into your confidence and making them wanting to be interested in the buy-in process is very integral in this time of our history. Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Police Station at Cane Garden, up to this day the Minister of Home Affairs has not said one word to me and I am asking him all the time, as people are always asking what is it that they are building or what are the other facilities, but there has been no dialogue on the exercise.

Mr. Speaker, similarly with the Cahill Project, there was no communication, except you are getting information from all over, including the Internet, but nobody is hearing anything while the people on whom it will directly impacted upon are not having any communication. Mr. Speaker, to this day there has been no communication with the residents of St. Thomas, when "Inferno" was going to be put in place there. It cannot happen if we want people to be an integral part and to buy in.

Mr. Speaker, similarly, there is the Sanitation Service Authority building at Vaucuse, a six-storeyed building which stands out like a sore thumb. We are not seeing any improvements for the road, nobody knows what it is except that it is a Sanitation Service Authority building. Mr. Speaker, we want Government to talk with us, we do not want to nitpick, criticise or tear down and that is not the plan. Mr. Speaker, as politicians, unless we trust each other, who would trust us?

Mr. Speaker, there is also the closure of the Arch Hill Fire Station which was supposed to be for six months but it is now six years, yet nobody has said one word until the Honourable Minister say that it is soon going to be reopened and that there has been some cost overruns and that somebody has to answer the Auditor-General for it. Mr. Speaker, I respect the Honourable Member for that part of it because nobody should have done anything with that project, to alter it in any way without having proper communication and instruction as to the next step.

Mr. Speaker, there is also the closure of some roads sometimes. The Honourable Member knows what I am talking about, with a two-ton sign that blocks off a road for weeks; for other roads that have been blocked off without anybody knowing and people are just driving all around and asking questions.

7.06 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking as I close that there be more community meetings and more dialogue with residents in all of the areas. Mr. Speaker, I know that when there was a plan for something to happen in St. Philip, there was meeting after meeting after meeting, because in the republic of St. Philip, if you do not have dialogue with them, then crapaud smoke the pipe of the Member of Parliament or the aspirant.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please wind up.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, all I am asking is that there be dialogue with the residents in the City of Bridgetown about the Hyatt and how they will benefit and so on, so that you can appease them and make them feel "this is going to be a part of our backyard or our front yard or our seascape or whatever, and therefore we are integral to this exercise because Barbados will benefit as a whole and not just the City of Bridgetown". Therefore, I support this Resolution and ask the Honourable Minister to please give us some answers to those integral things I would wish to hear of, because at the end of the day this is one Barbados and one people. I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just rise to lend my voice to this Resolution and also to give it my support. It has been a long time since London Bourne Towers, as that housing complex on Bay Street has been referred to. It was a bit shocking that the land was not previously vested in the appropriate agency, but that is not really the issue or the question that I would want to address. I really am surprised that this debate has gone so far and wide, but it is understandable because we are dealing with a major social issue. If one looks at a scale and places housing on that scale, you will find that in our understanding or analysis of these social issues, education, health and housing would occupy three of the first major positions on that scale. At the end of the day, housing is seen as one of the basic needs of man. It is necessary. We are long past the days when running or walking or doing whatever in a loin cloth was seen as essential in that community or environment. Shelter is absolutely important.

I want to sort of digress from some of the accusations that have been literally pelted on both sides of the House. Housing is a dynamic reality, a dynamic phenomenon, and I am sure that as we write our Manifestos and different policy documents and all of that, we have looked at housing quite critically, but we have never been

able to satisfy the demand by our actions or satisfy the needs of that very mobile population. There are several reasons for this. No agency, either private or public, has the kinds of resources to get rid of this issue in one swipe. In fact, if you attempt to do it that way, because of how human beings evolve and try to have their being, tomorrow you will have another issue in the area of housing. People no longer want to live in houses where you have five, six, seven or eight people living there, regardless as to whether every individual has a bedroom for himself or herself. They want their own space. They want their own place. Therefore, we have to bear that in mind.

There are people today in Barbados who live in four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bathroom houses where one person exists in that house. One person. Then, on the other side there are persons, in some of the areas which Government in its wisdom tried to create over time for some citizens of Barbados, who might have 12 persons in a three-bedroom "scheme" house. It is a name that needs changing, really. It is really pejorative now when you look and see what has happened in some of the areas where those houses are located. Therefore, even the concept of a scheme house is something that we should avoid.

We have done in this Government two major high-rise units, essentially condominiums, at Valery and at the Grotto. They are essentially condominiums.

Aside.

Hon. R.D. JONES: At Country Park Towers as well. We still refer to them as Government housing units. Again, we have created this mindset that lower income persons or low-wage persons should not live in condominiums. If you call them condominiums, they are for another class of people. We have perpetuated that right down through time, and therefore you build those kinds of units knowing this. I do not accept the argument being proffered by the other side that we had no knowledge of the basic costs of those units. Everybody knows that the higher you go, the costlier the building becomes, and in those instances where you have to put in -- it was said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West -- these sewerage systems costing some \$2 million-odd and all of this infrastructure to secure the housing for persons, then your scope of work will in fact change.

I know across the political divide, as we call it, from time to time once the price changes from the original cost, you simply put on it something called a cost overrun, when in fact a changing scope upward or downward would simply mean a variation in cost. What is more insidious in our argument, I think, is that we do not do ourselves any good justice by either subtly or not so subtly insinuating that because the price of a project might have changed over time, then somebody associated with the project is getting a

major kickback. It moves from \$18 million to \$22 million, so somebody walks away with \$2 million or something to that effect. This has continued over time, and it is now becoming even worse, because a few years ago -- I believe it is about three years ago -- when another project was being looked at to deal with our refuse issues, at a town hall meeting a well-known Barbadian got up and asked those persons involved in the project who were paid the finders' fees. Of course, that was a veiled comment to suggest that funds were passed in order for this project to see the light of day. That kind of argument has percolated right down through the society; that every single politician, those who have been and those who will come, will continue to be tainted by that sinister brush.

7.11 p.m.

You have to be corrupt is their argumentation but every citizen of Barbados. I think that we need really to move away from that level of argument. We need to move away from without facts, without knowledge, without information looking at individuals whose character hitherto was not tainted now becomes tainted by simply becoming a politician. In this House, Mr. Speaker, is a Colonel, a man for whom I have a high degree of respect, particularly because of his upbringing and his training to be a soldier and a gentleman but he does not escape the tar brush. In this House sits a teacher of great renown, taught children at Sharon Primary School with an ability that was astounding, many scholars with values imbedded deeply in her soul and then tainted by that sinister brush. It cannot be fair for this to continue, therefore, part of this Housing Debate or some other construction or some association with some contractor has to be tainted by corruption and when I look in this House, Mr. Speaker, this is not a House reflected in the completion of the people that we would have had in the 1900s or 1930s or 1940s, maybe right back to 1955-1960, I see ancestors who made the journey left and right but somehow those who made to feel that you cannot, Mr. Speaker, do any project, activity in anything without having some level of corruption on you and that is unfortunate. I just made that as a tangent because it is dangerous but I am making the point that Government overtime - and there is no BLP or DLP Government there is just a Government -- who try to satisfy the needs of persons in Barbados, lower income or low wage earners, persons who people argue might be in the middle class of Barbados and things of that. There was a major book written by, I do not know if they are Barbadians, who spoke to Government housing policy over time and they identified all of these housing solutions that were built by the State. I cannot read straight off who built what or whatever, the important thing is that housing solutions were develop, Bayville 93 housing solutions, Bonnets 100 housing solutions, Cave Hill 22 housing solutions, Deacons Farm 320 housing solutions, Eden Lodge 357 housing solutions, Feinehurst 154 housing solutions, Grazettes 301,

Husbands 20, The Ivy 64, Kensington Lodge 68, Pinelands and Parkinson Field, one of the largest 923, Pondsides 34, Rosemont 69, St. Barnabus 17, St. Stephen's 37, Wildey 461 and the list goes on, some 4 402 and this is not counting in London Bourne Towers, Church Village and some of those others but this I brought back from 1980 to 1993, et cetera, so there has been an effort to house people but it is not cheap. In that same study, you will find spirally costs, mishaps taking place on the construction sites that change the costs, all of these things happened. If you are aware of anything about housing construction it is the cost of the land. The State has tried by previous arrangements to bring in land below commercial value for the so-called low wage earner, \$5 per square foot lots. The lot of 4 000 is \$20 000, then you have to build something on it. Land where the individual will pay \$2.50 per square foot and Government would pay the rest up to, I believe, \$12 per square foot if it is within that price range but you have to build on that. In today's per square foot price without all kinds of fancy finishes, Mr. Speaker, a bare house with maybe a simple kitchen lay out you are talking between \$1.80 to \$2.10 per square foot. It is expensive. I come from a family of builders so I am very well aware of some of these costs. If you are building a villa those cost can go up to \$3 and something to \$4 and something per square foot. I have looked a little while ago at what people might refer to as low income housing using a 25 and 30 year at 100 per cent mortgage at interest rates of 5 and 6 per cent. If you are dealing with the credit union where there is a fix on the reducing balance. If it is in the banks you can start at 4.5 per cent but that changes every five years so it can go up or down, 4.5 being the basic rate. If you get a home for \$165 000 for 20 years at 6 per cent you are looking to pay per month \$1 182. You have now start to plug in the size of that house and who is working for a salary because I am only using 40 per cent of your salary of \$3 000 per month. Which category of worker in Barbados would be working for that? That goes down to \$120 000, \$859.72 that you must work for \$2 149. It is saying to me that based on the salaries or wages that people get in Barbados it is going to take, in many instances, two persons to go forward to get houses in that price range and if you go for a 30 year mortgage of a \$120 000 house, \$644 at 5 per cent or \$719 at 6 per cent, you are talking \$1 610 in salary or \$1 800 in salary but those are small houses. They are 600 to 800 square feet houses. Yes, we have starter home concepts in Barbados and when you look around there are some very lavish facilities now in the Husbands area, Cane Garden, where you had the Venezuelan projects, if you go into these areas now, you will see changes. People built on and changed up the various architectural designs of ...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: In Lancaster I have started to see that happen. There are many changes because that is the industrious nature of Barbadians but those have houses.

The issue is those who do not have houses. I personally do not believe that the National Housing Corporation has 18 000 or 20 000 in their data bank. I believe that data bank needs cleaning up.

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I do not know if it is all set up in a very dynamic software. They can have a simple App that can be designed by one of these young people around here or have a software programme where they can input all of the data. There are literally scores of young Barbadians who you can tell what you want and they will come and set it up and you can cleanse the system and you would know what people work for or what they do not work so that they can be allocated homes once the numbers are there according to their earning capacity.

The private sector in Barbados has been trying to assist but they will tell you that low income housing does not give them a profit. They are in business to make a profit.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: It is beyond social responsibility. To talk about social responsibility just simply within a capitalist environment is almost contradictory in turn. When a fellow builds a house he wants to know that he can get off of each house A, B or C because he wants to earn some kind of money for himself and his family. This is a business and there might be shareholders of that business, and that is why the intervention of the State over time but we have not been able to do enough even with private sector assistance to facilitate the housing of this very dynamic population we have in Barbados.

We, therefore, have to look at a model especially where low income earners are concerned because at the end of the day many low income workers will not, at their current earning capacity, be able to afford even a 600 square foot house. What Government might have to do - and I do not know how it is going to be done, we have not given it all of the thought necessary - is to provide major subsidies to low income earners based on their incomes. You might be able to say we are going to provide \$40 000 for you, envelope of resources, at the base, you then should be able to go a credit union or a bank and get \$60 000, \$65 000 or \$70 000 or up to \$80 000 to satisfy the salary for which you earn. You might be able to build a two-bedroom house because it is only two of you now and a little later you might be able to add on an additional one or two bedrooms based on your family spread. These are some things that we have to look at and consider.

We have the Housing Credit Fund. Some of that money was used to pay for the houses at The Grotto and there has been a lot of talk. These are the moneys of the people of Barbados for housing of the people of Barbados. I am in a credit union and I remember way back in the day that the credit union that I am in had some of that money to facilitate mortgages for low income persons and by and large the money that you got has been paid back and nobody uses it because the credit unions and the banks got in money so they are no longer using the Housing Credit Fund.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: What is it there for? To take up permanent residence. It must be used for the people through some mechanism, but it is not being accessed. Remember that it is for low income earners but it has to be used by the lending institutions to which the money goes and then on-lend to low wage or low income earners. That is not now happening so the Fund might have in now, I do not know, about \$100 and something million just lying under the control, I believe, of the Central Bank of Barbados doing nothing for the same low income workers. In an economy such as we have where such a cadre of persons exist that money must be buoyant and must be able to contribute to the lives and livelihoods of persons in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, we have to look at the money not to waste it but to see how are we are going to target vulnerable groups to benefit from that resource that we have just lying idle.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is really no need for us to be constantly quarrelling or fighting over the provision of housing. People need housing.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I am just looking at it but I will move from the field into statistics and all kinds of stuff but leave that as it is. I am searching in my own mind now and I am sure we all are because I believe that we all care about the people we represent and about the citizens... Mr. Speaker, in looking at that research done some of the same arguments advanced now were arguments advanced then, that the National Housing Corporation and its predecessor were having issues with managing projects, with the cost of projects rising and with the take up of occupancy taking some prolonged time. Mr. Speaker, all of this existed then. Maybe now it should not exist but it does exist and therefore we quarrel over the same point over and over rather than seek to find solutions which would eliminate all of those findings that have been developed over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I have had opportunity to go into at least one of those units at the London Bourne Towers and I found that persons were reasonably comfortable. Of course, they are not permanent for you to live in. To me I thought it was a holding pattern until your resources change for persons to go somewhere else and build the size home that they want particularly if their family expands because what we are having in several housing areas or parks in Barbados is that some people were not able to do that and therefore the clustering in the one-bedroom or the two-bedroom or the three-bedroom houses, and we have to ensure that that level of housing changes to meet the evolving needs of a buoyant Barbadian population. We also would have to look at people's wages and salaries and all of those things to deal substantially with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I just thought that I would make that contribution, and I wish to support this Resolution. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to wrap up this debate but before I do that I want to say that it was rather interesting to hear an Honourable Member while speaking on this matter stating that the London Bourne Towers were built to be sold after a few years to the tenants. Mr. Speaker, I will study that and see to what extent that could be true or what else might be needed to deal with that particular matter.

There was also another charge from the other side that the Government of the day is transferring \$2.4 million every month to the National Housing Corporation to pay wages and salaries, and I want to report to this House that that has not been so now for over a year and it is clear that those persons who are making charges are just making empty charges. We at the National Housing Corporation have been doing our part. We have recognised the economic situation of the country. From the time I went to the Ministry I have always made the point that the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development needs to recognise that they too must make a contribution or reduce their demands on the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and that wherever possible they must try as efficiently as possible, to ensure that they do not impact on the deficit. Mr. Speaker, we have been trying our part and we have recognised that housing development is not just building a house but that we also have to look see what other services that we can provide and what other revenues that can be created so that we could deal with those particular matters.

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Mr. Speaker, there was also a questions asked, and there were many but I will not get involved in that tonight. I am hearing that there are only three persons living at the Grotto. I do not know if the staff member who leaked the information has mixed up three blocks and has equated them to three people, I am saying that had the Honourable Member said that there were three blocks occupied, then the Honourable Member would have been telling the truth but when the Honourable Member said that there were only three people living at the Grotto, everybody in Barbados knows that that would have to be the furthest thing from the truth when one considers what you have been hearing.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is clear and everybody knows that they are five blocks, each carrying 16 rooms and that three blocks are occupied it means that there are 48 persons occupying there, even if one of those blocks is being used as an office. I do not have to come here and do simple mathematics for people.

Mr. Speaker, I also liked the comment from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas when the Honourable Member said that Bajans like to work and to own their own properties, that is why I find it rather difficult that some Members would get in here and would set up their people to go on the call-in programmes to give the impression that the Government is creating a crime when Government says that it will be doing both the surveying and engineering works. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to make the point that electrical work is a personal thing, you cannot go into a unit and decide what you want to do for someone, you do not know that person's requirements, so that if we are going to do both the surveying and engineering works, then it is only fair for those persons to do those other things that are personal.

Mr. Speaker, in this debate I stood and listened very carefully because even though we have given these properties under the 20-year programme, with only the conveyances to be done, I am hearing that there is an expectation on Government to do the plumbing, to put on a window or a door. Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that after giving so much that there will have Members of Parliament who would be encouraging persons to make demands on the National Housing Corporation for a door or to fix a pipe. Mr. Speaker, let there be logic to it, who would allow themselves to be living and sleeping in a house, with the house wanting a door and leaving themselves unprotected because they would want the National Housing Corporation to fix that door? Mr. Speaker, one would reasonably expect that everybody would try to protect themselves and would put on that door or that window.

Mr. Speaker, when you listen to what people in Barbados are saying, about how high their water bill is,

who would expect someone to know that a tap needs a washer and instead of putting on that washer, they would allow that water bill to get high because they do not want to put on a washer. I do not think that anybody would have sympathy for anyone who is quite prepared to pay a water bill of \$300, instead of buying a washer for fifty cents or \$2, or paying a plumber \$25. Mr. Speaker, there is no commonsense nor logic in that and as Minister I would have no sympathy for persons like that because clearly I would see it as being spiteful and as they believing that the Government must do everything for them and not they doing anything to help themselves but that they are prepared to expend more, only to prove a point which does not make sense.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a lot about the Housing Neighbourhood Improvement Project. Mr. Speaker, I was in this Honourable House when Crab Hill, St. Lucy, was on that list and it disappeared. Mr. Speaker, they robbed all of us asking us for areas and Crab Hill, St. Lucy, was identified as that particular area and it was taken out. I was shocked a couple of Saturdays ago while listening to the television to hear the Barbados Labour Party talking about the housing conditions in Crab Hill, when it was identified long ago that Crab Hill was one of those areas that needed that type of service. The Barbados Labour Party took it out and now has the gall to go into Crab Hill and lament the housing conditions there.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, do not worry about it, I will deal with it, but people would then expect me to ignore the demands of Crab Hill and would go to Allen View that had a problem for as far back as 2001-2003. I remember that well, the conditions that were placed in Allen View were not placed after 2008, those conditions were there as far back as 2001 and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas knows that. Mr. Speaker, for the Honourable Member to get here trying to give the impression that this is a spiteful Government, that we have now come and put on conditions to sabotage Allen View and so on is not true, those conditions were there prior to the bi-election that brought the Honourable Member into this Honourable House and they were discussed in that bi-election.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that this Government is not sleeping on White Hill, this Government came and find White Hill as a problem and for every single year money has been allocated for the removal and resiting of the people in White Hill, of which we will soon be delivering some more houses. We also have money in this year's budget to deal with it. We will also try to use White Hill as a test case to see how we can solve the particular problems in the area and how we might be able to accommodate more housing in that particular location.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we in the Ministry will also have to look to see how we could acquire all of that land in White Hill, because one of the things that we have recognised is that as soon as you solve the problem of one, that there are people who would encourage others to go and set up. Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, I want to make the point that when we remove a house from a site and that site is declared as an area that a house should not be erected, do not come knocking at the door. I think that the best way to deal with that, because it is for Government to acquire all the land so that they could control what goes on at that particular location, because whereas as soon as you remove a house from a private property there is the possibility that another person could come and place a house on the former spot, but the best way to solve that problem is to acquire the land so that you would not have that problem and you would be able to deal with it the way that you would want to do so.

Mr. Speaker, the 20-year programme, as I said started out as a Barbados Labour Party policy where they were prepared to sell the houses to the people as is. I did not hear anything about fixing doors, electrical upgrades or anything but now that we have given those houses to the people under these difficult economic times that were there prior to us coming to Government, all of a sudden now that we do not have any money everyone expects the demands from us.

7.48 p.m.

We must create miracles, and when I hear about the housing condition in urban Barbados, I cannot believe that in 2008 when we came to Government we heard those lamentations after 14 years of so-called prosperity. We are the miracle Government. We can do the most with less. One thing is clear about the Barbados Labour Party: They can do the less with most. When you look to see the demands as you listened to all of them today in this House, all of them have demands for the Minister of Housing; they tell him what they would like to see happen and they tell him what they want done. This Minister of Housing has been able to run the NHC without the rights that all of them had previously. We do not have the overdraft facility to play with. We do not have the Government subventions, but we have the greatest request from the Opposition. However, we will deliver.

We will ensure that we manage what we have efficiently and effectively. I have listened to what the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said about the conflict of interest. She was told by a former member from the NHC who lives in the Pine. I also heard her say that I must investigate those persons who diverted material to their own houses while working at NHC. I will investigate all of

that. She has asked me to look into it, so I will look into it. I will do so and please her to the best of my ability.

Asides.

Hon. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: I am not getting involved in any Hardwood housing. That has passed me, this is present, and she has requested of me to do those things. I will say that the suggestion from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is one that I support, because I believe that the credit unions in Barbados would do themselves well to recognise that we have a programme and that we have a large number of people who are in need. Everybody knows that poor people have a way that once they come and borrow, they pay. I am therefore asking the credit unions that when we have completed the surveying work and the engineering work, they should join with those persons and ensure that they lend them enough money so that they can do electrical upgrades and develop a relationship. A man who is poor today will not necessarily be poor tomorrow. It is good grounding for the credit unions to develop a relationship with these persons to ensure that if their statuses change, they too would be able to benefit in a significant way.

Mr. Speaker, I said before and I acknowledge that we may have some dilapidated houses. I will have to deal with them because, as you know, a dilapidated house is a house that someone lives in. A derelict house is a house that someone does not live in. As I said, under CAP 226 (11), I believe that I will have to review that and see how we can change the outlook of the housing as it relates to these derelict houses, the unused houses and the dilapidated houses. If we are to protect the environment of Barbados and if we are to continue to be a service industry, especially as it relates to tourism and so on, we cannot have these houses and allow them to be dilapidated or derelict when we are pushing a positive attitude to the housing development in Barbados and when we want to ensure that our environment is such that it is a positive one and not a negative one.

Again, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas mentioned Government properties. I have already acknowledged that NHC cannot continue to depend on selling land as a source of revenue. The NHC, the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Cabinet would have to recognise that we must get something more sustainable, and the best way is to look at how NHC uses its human resources to convert the capital resources of the country to its benefit and to accumulate gains and sustainable revenue to make the agency function. We recognise also that there is a need to ensure that the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission are able to continue to help and develop the lives of persons in Barbados. This Government cannot be so bold as to recognise how important a stone structure is to the masses

of people in Barbados, and stop there. This Government would have to recognise that it has a greater role and we cannot behave like plantation managers; and that is why as far back as the 1960s the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow recognised that and moved to ensure that he gave those persons living on plantation lands that necessary protection. His disciples would now have to take another step and go in another direction and concretise that relationship even further. Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I do beg that this Resolution do now pass and I thank you, Sir.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for the day and I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned until Friday, May 5, at 10 o'clock in the morning. Just briefly on the adjournment, Sir: Of course, we are adjourning for another long weekend in Barbados, one which we celebrate first of all on Friday -- our National Heroes Day -- when we certainly seek to recognise the contribution of the ten National Heroes of Barbados. In whatever way Barbadians decide to celebrate that day, I want to wish that they celebrate it with a special sense of safety and the recognition of those whom we seek to honour. There will be special attention being paid to a sport which I enjoy quite a bit. I will not be able to take part, of course, because of the duration of it, where the only living National Hero is celebrated; and that is at the Garfield Sobers Tournament over the weekend at some four golf courses in Barbados. We wish those who have the opportunity to participate a wonderful weekend too.

Then on Monday we will be celebrating the traditional May Day, the first day of May, a holiday which commemorates our workers and which is designed to recognise the very important contribution which they, of course, make to the business of developing and running this country. Certainly, we again wish success to those who will be participating in that very important event. We look forward to the traditional event at Bay Street, at which I hope to be able to spend some time. There will be other events, especially around culture and entertainment, and again we wish all those who participate to do so with restraint but expression, of course. Again, I wish everyone a very safe celebration. Certainly, we have come out of a holiday weekend only this last weekend in celebration of Easter, so this one, as some people would say, is another long weekend upon us. Some will probably comment on the impact it may have in certain other sectors of the community, but these kinds of dates and days must be celebrated in a mature democracy like ours.

7.50 p.m.

Therefore, Sir, I certainly want on behalf of the Government and indeed on the behalf of all Members to wish Barbadians all the happiness during this weekend of celebration and hope that we will all come out renewed and strengthen in our resolve and our energies on Tuesday morning to work but the adjournment is until Friday, 5th May.

With those few words, Sir, I beg that the Sitting do now adjourn until Friday, 5th May, 2017 at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would wish to echo the sentiments of the Honourable Leader of Government Business and for those persons who will be participating in the Sir Gary Tournament. Certainly as a living legend, it is important that we certainly celebrate him since he is the only one that is left right now but also Members of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) will be having a grand occasion on Friday when we get to celebrate on Heroes Day, The Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams, who is one of our great heroes as well. We will be celebrating at the East Coast Road for a Barbados Labour Party (BLP) picnic and we will certainly invite Members on the Other Side and certainly the whole of Barbados to join us in the spirit of reflection for those who have gone before and certainly who have contributed not only to the political landscape of Barbados but also to the labour movement as well which will also be celebrated on May Day also.

I will take the opportunity certainly to congratulate the unions for the work that they have been doing, representing the workers of this country and certainly the employers of this country have also been working very hard to keep persons employed. I too would wish everyone a memorable weekend and certainly to not make light of the fact that we have a short break but to be able to come back here to do the business of the people.

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

The question that the House be adjourned until Friday, 5th May, 2017 at 10 o'clock a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

House D 9 Seq 49 7.53 p.m.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Order No. 16, Mr. J. D. Paul's speech, take-slips House D9 Sequences 38-39, about 6.13-6.37 p.m.. The source types the same stretch of Mr. J. D. Paul's speech twice: nine paragraphs from 'Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown needs to stand up for his people' to 'Mr. Speaker, I go back to *Grazettes*', followed in the second copy by a repeat of the take-slip 'H:D9(39)6.37 p.m.'. The second copy also opens with a fresh speech heading for Mr. Paul restating the end of his earlier paragraph. The first version is printed and the second (about 1,600 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q3. Order No. 16, take-slip about 3.10 p.m.. Before the take-slip 'House D 9 Seq 20 3.10 p.m.' the source carries the heading 'INCOMPLETE JULIETTE', which suggests that part of Hon. M. A. Lashley's speech is missing. Printed as in the source. Please confirm.

Q4. Take-slips. Several take-slips are typed as ordinary paragraphs in the source ('6:13 p', 'House D 9 Seq 20 3.10 p.m.', 'House D 9 Seq 24 3.49 p.m.') and so print as text inside speeches. Printed as in the source.

Q5. PRESENT/ABSENT. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker appear on a single line of the PRESENT list, and the line '(Prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood)' is placed at the end of the ABSENT list. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 16, Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw's speech. Miss Bradshaw once addresses the Chair as 'Madam President' while Madam Deputy Speaker was presiding. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Speech labels. Hon. C. P. Sinckler's name is spelt 'SINKLER' on several speech headings. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 25th April, 2017 at 10.20 a.m., with the Speaker, His Honour Michael

A. Carrington, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood. The Minutes of 13th and 24th March were confirmed, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce laid the National Petroleum Corporation Annual Report for April 2009 to March 2010, the Prime Minister, Hon. F. J. Stuart, presented the Offshore Petroleum Amendment Bill for first reading, and Standing Orders were suspended.

The only Order taken, Order No. 16, was the Resolution to approve under section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of Crown land at London Bourne Towers, Bay Street, St. Michael, for housing development and road improvement. The Minister, Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, said high-rise housing continued a policy begun in the 1990s at Church Village, St. Philip, and that urban land was too scarce for single units. Lt. Col. J. D. Bostic said the Opposition supported the Resolution but complained that the Minister did not brief the House. Mr. Boyce said the site covered some 4 464 square metres and that permission had been granted for a new Hyatt Hotel opposite it.

With Madam Deputy Speaker in the Chair, Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw asked for faster vesting of Crown lands and clarity on which Ministry was responsible for them, and Hon. S. D. Blackett defended the Government's housing record in inner Bridgetown, drawing a point of order from Lt. Col. Bostic. After lunch Mr. G. A. Clarke called for certainty in the tenantry programme, Hon. M. A. Lashley spoke on house spots sold at \$5 a square foot, and Mr. K. D. Symmonds raised the delay in title deeds and the governance of the National Housing Corporation, including the borrowing of \$2.4 million a month to pay salaries.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair. The Minister of Finance, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, withdrew a remark that was ordered expunged, and points of order by Mr. Symmonds and Miss Bradshaw were ruled out; he defended Cabinet's handling of the Auditor-General's report and said figures of BDS\$300 million had been circulated about unsolicited proposals. Mr. D. D. Marshall said the Auditor-General's report showed that Cabinet had approved construction at The Grotto at \$18 million on a pro forma estimate. Hon. S. A. Lashley spoke on the London Bourne heritage, and Mr. T. A. Prescod linked London Bourne, Samuel Jackman Prescod and the Rock Hall Freedom Project; the Speaker ruled that one of his remarks attacked a member of the public without notice.

After a suspension until 6.00 p.m., Mr. J. D. Paul urged a cooperative model for the *Grazettes* Housing Area, Miss C. Y. Forde recalled house spots in urban Barbados sold at \$2.50 a square foot and asked for dialogue with

residents of the City, and Hon. R. D. Jones spoke on Country Park Towers and Lancaster. In reply Mr. Kellman said the \$2.4 million monthly transfer had not been made for over a year and that the five blocks of 16 rooms at London Bourne were partly occupied. The Resolution passed without division.

On the adjournment Mr. Boyce and Miss Bradshaw gave good wishes for National Heroes Day, May Day and the Sir Gary Tournament, and the House was adjourned until Friday, 5th May, 2017 at 10.00 a.m.