
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

The House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 13, 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.
Mr. RONALD St.C TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)
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)
Ms. 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 Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development) Mr. JAMES D. PAUL, B.Sc.

(Chairman of Committees)
Hon. ADRIEL D. BRATHWAITE, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.)
(Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs.)
Hon. STEPHEN A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.
(Minister of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports)
Hon. DONVILLE O'N. INNIS, 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.
Dr. Hon. DAVID C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S.
(Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management)
Dr. the Hon. DENIS S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip. Theology
(Minister of Environment and Drainage)
Dr. Ms. MARIA M. AGARD, J.P., D.Ds., B.Sc. (Hons.)
Mr. Speaker took the Chair at 10.15 a.m.

Prayers were taken by Rev. Father Mark Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning, Honourable Members. This House is now in session. Members, I have

with me the Minutes of our meeting held on Tuesday, May 30, 2017.

MINUTES

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

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

The question that the Minutes of Tuesday, May 30, 2017 be taken as read was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. The Minutes stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: Members, it is my pleasure to welcome among us this morning some students who are engaged in the legal trainee programme for the law schools across the region. Some are attached to the office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and one from the Solicitor General's Chambers, so we welcome you among us and hope that you find the experience rewarding.

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 today's Sitting.

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

The question that the mentioned Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of the day's Sitting was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 16

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, property of the Crown, situate at the former site of District 'E' Police Station, Station Hill, in the Parish of St. Peter in this Island for housing development.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise again in this House to lead a Debate on another Vesting. Mr. Speaker, as it stands, we are seeking permission to vest 5 930 square metres of land or 63

829.99 square feet of Crown land, situated at what used to be the District 'E' Police Station, in the National Housing Corporation for housing development. This is a matter that was dealt with as far back as 2004 when decisions were made to vest this same said land in the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated (BTII). After the land was vested and District 'E' was transferred into Speightstown, the BTII recognised that the land was not suitable for them to do the tourism development because of the area and, one might also say, because of its location away from the beach. A decision was taken that instead of leaving the land there, it should be transferred to the Ministry of Housing and Lands. As you know, Mr. Speaker, those persons who live in those areas would know that to the north of District 'E' there is a housing development called Douglas Development; a pretty high-income development. This fits right into that particular area.

I suspect that because of its elevation on the hill overlooking the Speightstown area, the BTII thought it might have been suitable for an investor who would want that location because of its view. I think at the time that what was not taken into consideration was the distance away from the beach; even though Coleridge and Parry School is nearly in the same location and interest would have been shown in that location at the same said time.

Mr. Speaker, this House has been privileged to hear many debates, and I have been fortunate to be able to discuss housing in this Parliament since 1994. I have put my position very clearly in this House on housing matters. If one looks back at Hansard, one would recognise that as far back as the 1990s I have made my position known on housing, and even before that. Before I entered these Chambers I had always been contributing to housing matters, so much so that, as everyone knows, my political history goes back as far as 1971. I have always taken a very keen interest in these matters.

10.27 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things one would recognise and that I am quite aware of is when there was a norm as it relates to housing that every weekend people were involved in housing in one way or the other because it was normally on weekends that a chattel house would move from one location to the other and where the community would have been involved in that type of activity because at the time most lands were owned by those who could afford to own land and who understand the importance of owning land or those land were owned by the planter class, and the slightest infraction used to create a situation where people were asked to move from that particular location and had to move their house elsewhere. I must admit that I was fortunate and we were never confronted with that situation in life because from the time I was born I found that my father owned a piece of land in a very small village in

Alexander, St. Lucy and was mother was fortunate where her father before her had owned substantial pieces of land in the west of St. Lucy in the Checker Hall area, so that even though I was born in 1958, in 1971, a decision was taken by my parents to resite to the Checker Hall area and in moving from Alexander to Checker Hall, the land we owned was passed to my uncle because at the time my dad felt that the amount of land owned in the Checker Hall area was quite adequate for all his children and he was not going to deprive his uncle's children of having the right of ownership. The record would show that after that occurred that the Cement Plant came, took our land and we intended not being a land owning class and fortunate for my relatives they were able to inherit a substantial amount of land in the Alexander area.

Mr. Speaker, I have said of that to say that those people who know people especially in the parishes of St. George, St. Philip and St. Lucy and sometimes you could say St. Peter also have known them to be people of the land-owning class. They are not people who normally have to suffer the vagaries of having to shift houses from one location to the other. Always when they make that move, they always tend to convert from chattel to stone because of the land ownership because they understand the importance of the conversion and they knew once you build in stone, that you had a better opportunity of reducing your expenditure. Sir, that is why the Democratic Labour Party has always demonstrated that we work on the course up to 1990s of moving from chattel to stone and no one can argue against that point because the last housing structure and the last offering would have been the Cane Garden area up to the 1990s and also the Husbands area. It is true that after the 1990s we saw a conversion back again to chattel but this Party was able to move the ownership and the type of offering from chattel to stone and, Sir, there is common sense to that.

Mr. Speaker, in the rural areas, one would recognise that the majority of persons, especially in the areas I mentioned previously tended not to have the same problem as those in areas where the majority of land was owned by the planter class. You found that the majority of them had to settle for chattel because at any moment they could have been asked by that class to move their houses et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, I have made another observation of those four parishes. The record would also show that in those four parishes, you do not have the same number of fires as you see in certain areas in Barbados, even up to today. Sir, the reason is that some people because of not owning the land, and because people rented the land and did not want them to be on their land, for some strange reason were able to clear their lands without having to ask people to move from the lands. This Democratic Labour Party recognised after the 80s the situation as it relates to this and that is why we had to come back and continue a

policy that we have started in the 70s and that is why you would see places like Wanstead Heights, Wanstead Gardens, Oxnards and all those areas where we did not only offer a canned solution but we offered a solution where we allow people to be able to build their own homes, so there is no doubt when it comes to the Democratic Labour Party and housing where we stand. We have always believe in a mixed housing programme because we recognise that disposable income is not equal and that we had to offer things to suit the disposable income of people and that we also had to accommodate people. Sir, the other side cannot educate me on this because I have been here a long time and I understand exactly the housing policy of the Democratic Labour Party and I am here today to put it for the simply reason we must understand that the Democratic Labour Party would have listened to those old people in those same four districts of which I spoke because they have always recognise that land ownership was wealth. Sir, that is why it was very difficult to go into a rural area and ask an old man to sell you his land because he was very quick to tell you that land belongs to his children, that he has nothing else to leave for them but he has ensured that her purchased this piece of land because he understands that in years to come it would have value and he would have something to leave for his children. He never said the house, he always said the land and there is a good reason for it because history would show that in the 1980s, a piece of land that was bought for \$20 000 is now valued nearly \$300 000 to \$400 000 but if you look at the value of the house, you would not see the same value. Sir, the beautiful thing about it is that the only thing you have to pay for the land is land taxes but as you know once you own the property there are certain expenditures that would occur.

Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance and we also understand the gelling and the community spirit that is created and that is why when the Barbados Labour Party went on their mad rush to provide all canned solutions without offering the opportunity for the people to own the land, it was very painful for a person like myself for the simple reason I understood how they were breaking down the society of Barbados. Sir, the records of this House would show I have always said that we have to create opportunities. Yes, there is nothing wrong in offering canned solutions but at the same time in offering canned solutions, you cannot have a one-fit-all solution. You have to recognise there are independent minds and that there are persons in Barbados who understand the ownership of land and who understand they have a relationship with their neighbours.

Mr. Speaker, when you go into a country district and you decide you are going to build all can solutions without offering opportunities for the artisans in that area, what you are actually doing is dividing the district because I know and those from country districts would tell you that when

you give a house to a large contractor to be constructed that those artisans do not forget, so when the house is completed and there is a maintenance problem and you go to the artisans that you have ignored, you would feel it in the bill because they would say when you had the big money to spend you ignored us and now you have to come back to us.

Sequence 2

That is one of the things I have always said that is something that this party has always understood and that is why we do not only believe in offering canned solutions but we are very careful to ensure that we also offer lots for sale especially in the communities and especially when we are expanding communities.

We do not believe that everybody should mortgage away their lives and we understand the impact of having 100 per cent mortgage in a pure community because we know the suffering that you could occur because it is not only the capital outlay but it is the serving of the loan that has to be taken into account and we cannot afford to allow poor people to mortgage away their lives. When you go into a country district and you see people with a chattel house in front and building stone in the back of the house, those are people who did not go to the bank and who would have worked in the fields of Barbados and have understood that when the crop season is finished that they have to ensure that they have savings to continue to build what they have. People have to understand when you see a cane cutter and he has a stone structure do not turn your nose at him. That man has not gone to any bank. That man, by production, has been able to accumulate money even if through a meeting turn and he has used the meeting turn and the raring of animals to ensure he develops his capital but we tend to believe that those persons are not capable of advocating because they are not known by the banker, but they are known by the society. People in the society would have known how hard they have worked and they would have known that they did a morning job and they also did an evening job and they were able to sustain themselves by increasing the productivity of Barbados. This Democratic Labour Party (DLP) understood all of those things and we cannot and will not move away from those things because we understand that we have an obligation to ensure that the cultural patterns of those people remain and we do not saddle them just because of a too-few but at the same time we also have to understand that if we are to look after the social aspect of them in these economic times because ...

Last Sunday, I was fortunate to attend two churches to make a presentation and when I listened to the two preachers it was like if they had met and decided what was the sermon they were going to take because when I finished listening to them they sounded more educated on world and economic affairs than some people that I expected to know

better. They were able to tell me what we were doing as a Government and the sacrifices we were doing. They were also able to tell me the frustrations that was being placed on my plate but do you know what, they had hope and they understood that we, as a people, have always been able to enter into these battles and come out.

The history will show that every time this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) comes to Government it has to fight a battle. In the 1960s we had to fight a battle. In 1986 when all the money was given to the Japanese, we had to fight a battle. In 2007 when everything was given away and the debt was left for us we are now still fighting a battle. Do you imagine that we speak glowingly in this House about the good times but when one looks at the hand that was left for me in the Ministry of Housing and Lands one cannot believe that after the so-called glorious days of 1994 to 2007 we could have a situation like that? Two years after demitting office, something called Tomás that was not even a hurricane was able to demonstrate to Barbadians especially the parish of St. Lucy the condition of housing stock. St. Lucy was able to face many hurricanes before and never was the damage so great but two years after the great combination and the great group of people who said that they managed so well, Tomás was able to expose the nakedness. We found ourselves in a situation where we had not only to deal with the economic situation of the world in housing but we also had to deal with the debt that was left in housing because, as I keep saying, until this House educates itself on the difference between the cash basis and the accrual basis we will never be able to understand the true extent of the damage that was left by the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) in the housing sector and in other sectors. A lot of people walking around blaming the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) for what it is not accountable for because we not only have to worry about the debt that we incurred but we also have to worry about the debt that was left for us. You cannot have \$10 and spend \$20 for 14 years, do not pay what you owe and then expect another Government to come and pick it up and do not expect the expenditure to be greater. That is the hand we have been dealt and that is the hand we will play but it cannot be business as usual because the masses of people out there who are depending on the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) have an expectation and we cannot do it by debt so we have to find creative ways to ensure that we find the necessary cash to pay to ensure that those masses of people are able to sustain the expected demands that they have of us.

That is why today we have to be very careful because there are a lot of people in this country who believe that you can run a country only on deficit. They will tell you up front you cannot run it on deficit but as soon as you try to do something to clear the deficit you will hear the opposite. We have to be honest with ourselves and understand that an organisation that does not have money

must find money to be able to pay and execute its programmes. When one looks at the statistics one would recognise that we have borne our burden within the Ministry of Housing and Lands and we have not been fortunate, we have not been in the good times and we have had to pay bear our cuts but I am not going because the Minister of Finance has to find money for the productive sectors. I am not going to sit down and cry. I have been given a hand to play and I will play the hand. That hand means that if it means the productive sectors must have the money to be able to generate more revenue to create the atmosphere and the right impetus for the country, I must be prepared to take the sacrifice but I must also be prepared, creative and also ensure that I find creative and honest ways to ensure the Ministry of Housing and Lands can run and create the necessary revenue.

I also want to remind this House that a lot of undermining has occurred within the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

House D 13 Seq 3 10.47 a.m.

i remember one day driving up Cave Hill and saw a stone house, I do not know how many persons could remember that, on the highway right outside Cave Hill Campus at a time when we had a block factory, concrete factories and a cement plant. We got so great that we stopped looking inwardly and went and started importing ready-built houses from Puerto Rico. Anybody who doubts me can leave here, take a drive up Cave Hill, turn left at Hinds Hill and just before you get to the area there before Queens College on your right those first set of stone house there are the houses that were imported into Barbados which deprived the masses of people who were artisans from an opportunity of owning a house in this country. I am aware of that. I fought against it and I am against it because I believe that the masses of people in Barbados have a right to contribute to the housing stock of Barbados.

We also hear a lot of talk about this Government's policy, but we also have to understand that the urban areas do not have the land mass as we have in the rural areas so we have to be creative, and the Government was very creative in coming up with the high-rises for the simple reason if we are to satisfy the needs of the people in the urban areas we must maximise the usage of the land in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is regrettable? I sat in this House when the Honourable Sir Harold Bernard St. John was in here and when he said to his party on many occasions that if they were to maximise the usage of land they must go up. That is a gentleman who was a Prime Minister of that party. Mr. Speaker, now that we have found creative ways and have responded you hear the

criticisms, so I can only come to the conclusion that they never agreed with Sir Harold.

Mr. Speaker, in order for us to continue the satisfy the demands of the people in the urban areas the only way we can do it is by going up if not we would have to get involved in urban sprawl or we would have to shift people from the urban areas to the rural areas and you do not want that because you have to understand that there are some people who believe that where they were born is where they want to remain. It is true that there are some who would have visited the beautiful constituency or the parish of St. Lucy and then do not want to go back, that is true, because when one sees the greenery and the independence one would understand.

You see, Mr. Speaker, sometimes you have to ignore the blue peta sharks. The fishermen would understand quite well what I say when I say the blue peta sharks.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that we have to maximise the usage of land and we also have to understand that we cannot be foolhardy either in taking all of our land and allocating it to housing because if we as a country take all of our land and allocate it to housing it means that we would have a serious problem as it relates to food production. We have to understand that one of the most important things to man is the ability to eat. You can do without clothes and without shelter but you cannot do without food, and any country that allows all of its land to be used for housing and other things and not food is a country that should really stop and think, and that is why in becoming Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development I also had to make a very critical decision on lands that were owned by Springhall Estates or better owned by the BADMC because one has to be very careful. We have to understand, and we will see it sooner rather than later, that if we do not protect our food stock that we are going to feel every impact that occurs in the world. We can get away from the housing aspect, we might even be able to get away from the clothing aspect but when it comes to food we have to be very, very careful.

Mr. Speaker, I will say that we as a Government should feel proud. The main fact that we are discussing the problems of housing tells you that it is not something that will go away, but we will continue to find creative ways in solving the problem. As a Government not only have we offered can solutions in terms of housing for the masses of people and not only have we offered normal priced lots but we were creative enough to understand that we could not look only to the 'two few' but that we also had to find lots for the masses of people in Barbados who had an interest and who under normal circumstances would never have had a look-in until we created something called the 500 lots.

Mr. Speaker, we did not stop there. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North came and created the rent-to-own concept which allows you to enter into the property, pay rent for a number of years and as you move up your status, because a lot of people believe in Barbados and this is something that the oldsters have always taught me and that is why I would always continue to see a man in Checker Hall, I am sorry for this, Sir, but it is not a negative -- by the name of Sylvan Harewood who never had what people regarded as a significant job but he always had the ability of going to his first job, coming home on afternoons, having something to eat and then going and lining ground or doing another job and today if you see that man's status you would have a better understanding of why you should never only depend on one job.

Mr. Speaker, eight hours out of 24 hours cannot be in the interest of country Barbados. We have to recognise that we have to do more for our country. Those people who feel within themselves that they must provide less than eight hours and demand 16 must ask themselves whether the country can afford this to happen. We cannot only depend on those things, and that is why it is very important for people to recognise that they learn the concept of opportunity costs not only when they come to buy a car or a house but even when it comes to their jobs because sometimes you think that the job you have is the best job until you have an opportunity to see another one and the best way to know your real rate of return is by having a choice, so today I want to say to this House that this Democratic Labour Party will continue its housing programme. As I said previously in this House we did Lancaster 1 and all the houses at Lancaster 1 have been allocated, we did Lancaster 2 and likewise, we did Constant and we have allocated those and now we are at Parish Land where 89 properties out of 117 have been allocated and we are in the process of completing the next 29 so that we can have a clean slate at Parish Land. As you know, we previously would have done Country Park Towers, Valery and The Grotto. As it stands there I am told that there is just one more block with some minor work and that will be all be behind us. Never mind what you hear from the Opposition or what you see in the Press, you need to go and see for yourself. At West...we are working on that to ensure that too is completed. There are certain issues beyond my control but I am told that they are working on those things and that too will see the greenlight.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot stop there. We have to recognise that after these projects have been completed even though we do not have cash that we have to find some very creative ways to get opportunities or a solution in the hands of people and if we do not have cash one of the quickest ways we can do it is by offering lots because if we offer lots up front it allows us to convert the land into cash so that we could then use some of that land to continue the housing programme.

House D13 Sequence 4

We are not fortunate to be able to call the Treasury and ask them for that cheques, so that we have to be creative, we have to understand that we have to maximise the returns on some of our lands.

Mr. Speaker, as an organisation we are fortunate where some of our lands are situated in the right locations and just like how the Barbados Labour Party was able to do and some of the arrangements into which they have entered, also some of the arrangements that they should have done, because as far back as 1994 we recognised that prior to 1986 that what the Barbados Labour Party used to do was to buy the land, give that land to the National Housing Corporation and then allow the National Housing Corporation to sell that land.. Mr. Speaker, I want you to hear this, the National Housing Corporation used to sell the land to private developers and the private developers would make the money and the National Housing Corporation would carry the deficits.

Mr. Speaker, we also had a situation where they entered into many joint projects and on every joint project they came out with a deficit, including when they even went to bed with a bank right there in St. James, so that the history is clear. Mr. Speaker, when one asks why the National Housing Corporation is here, I can tell you because the focus was never on ensuring that there was surplus, that focus was always on the social aspects of it when the National Housing Corporation was not only supposed to look at the social aspect but it was also supposed to ensure that it received the amount of money to look after the social aspects and also to keep a cushion to do its projects, but Mr. Speaker, that did not happen so that when you see and hear the lot of long talk about what has happened at the National Housing Corporation, that is what we found there and it has to be and will be corrected. Mr. Speaker, in order to correct it you must have an understanding of what went on before and where we are going. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what has happened, we understood what we found as far back as 1994 where we corrected that problem and thought that it was solved, only to come back in 2007 and found it again.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007 we found it again, so that every time that we correct a problem and we lose Government we then have to come back and solve that problem all over again, therefore I say to you, do not let us lose Government because we do not want to have the same problems all over again. Mr. Speaker, if one looks at the records one would see, never mind what one sees in the Press and so on. Do not go by that, go look at Hansard Records and you will see that we have always had to clean up the mess, but that we do not quarrel, we understand that every time we come to Government whether it is in housing, tourism, industry or the welfare system, we have always had to deal with it and

we have put our hands to the plough, we do not complain, we deal with it, but what gets me angry is when the people who had the money and did not do the things that they should have done, they now expect us to do those things without having any money. Sir that is what gets me angry because it means then that you would have to sit and plan how to get that money, but those who have the money should know what to do to keep the money and to expand that money but they have not done it over the years.

Mr. Speaker, fortunately for us this Dover Fort that we are talking about as I said previously as you know it was a settlement and once you hear the word Fort you would know that it has a relationship with the defense of the country and so on. As I said, it is situated on the borough overlooking Speightstown, overlooking the beach and to the north of it, it has the Douglas Development; further across it has Coleridge and Parry School and some other housing developments; to the west it also has the lovely Port St. Charles, et cetera, but to the east this development could have been much better had the Barbados Labour Party understood the importance of a hospital to that area. This is to the west of where the Democratic Labour Party took over the St. Joseph Hospital and sought to make it the second hospital and the Barbados Labour Party closed it which meant that had they not closed that hospital the attraction of this area would have been much greater.

Mr. Speaker, things happen in this country and people ignore them, they removed the St. Joseph Hospital, they removed the Naval Base and nobody stopped to look at the opportunity cost and look to see the undermining that occurred in St. Peter and in St. Lucy. Mr. Speaker, for example, when they removed the Naval Base those persons who used to build stone structured and rent them to soldiers or the Naval people they were no longer able to have that opportunity and there was a time in the 1970s as you go through St. Lucy you would see stone structures going up and that is why I have always said to the Honourable House that community tourism started in St. Lucy because the people of St. Lucy saw the people from the Naval Base as tourists and they built houses to rent them. Mr. Speaker, the record is there.

Mr. Speaker, it did not only happen in St. Lucy but also in St. Peter; and it went as far as Holders Hill, St. James because when you leave the gas station going up Holders Hill on the left one would see two or three properties that were owned by a man named Carlisle Greaves that he used to rent to the Naval Base. Mr. Speaker, that was not all, he also had a property in Checker Hall that the then Government when they took over from the Democratic Labour Party they pushed down to put up a sign marked the Arawak Cement Plant, a large structure. Mr. Speaker, so that we have wasted resources, we have chased people out. We have incurred expenditure in this

country that could have been used and be saved for our housing stock had we not made bad decisions not only on the St. Joseph Hospital but also with our relationship with the Americans because there were many things that they did.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes when one asks why we are not getting the American tourists and why the North Point Hotel is not there anymore, one has to understand that when people first came to the Naval Base that the North Point Hotel was the hotel at which they used to stay. Mr. Speaker, on top of that, when their families came to visit them, they also went to the North Point Hotel. Mr. Speaker, this is a piece of history that a lot of people need to understand, that when you see parishes suffering they are not only suffering because of decisions made by the people but by decisions sometimes made by Government without thinking. They sometimes think about themselves and not about how it is impacting on the people in the area. Mr. Speaker, St. Lucy has suffered not only because of the St. Joseph Hospital but also because of the closure of the Naval Base which impacted on the North Point Hotel.

Mr. Speaker, that also impacted on the housing stock because the economic opportunities that were bountiful... Mr. Speaker, people say that St. Lucy is not a tourism area but St. Lucy was a tourism area because of the Naval Base and the Barbados Labour Party deprived us of that opportunity and it slowed down the pace that we were converting our houses from chattel to stone and that is why Tomas was able to expose our nakedness.

Mr. Speaker, this Democratic Labour Party will continue to ensure that with limited resources we will continue the \$5 per square foot lots; that we will continue to have some canned solutions; that we will continue to see how we can build out to get the rent-to-own; we will continue to see how we will build out to get the rent-to-buy.

Mr. Speaker, let me pause on this matter, just yesterday I had a meeting with some members of staff from the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development and also the National Housing Corporation which I subjected myself as the employee and they as the employer, because I have heard on the other side people saying that they did not understand what is rent-to-buy and so on and seeing that it is a concept with which I am familiar, I felt that the easiest way to solve it was to subject yourself and let those people who said that they did not understand question you on the matter and so I did that.

11.13 a.m.

I subjected myself and allowed the staff to tell me their problems and why they were not implementing it and so on; and as they asked every question, I was able not only

to answer but to also offer the solution. It was a very simple thing. If you come to NHC to buy a house, and the house is completed and the Board has made its decision, and they say to you that you can have the house, you can enter into an arrangement. If you are renting and paying more than \$500 a month or the conditions under which you are living elsewhere are worse -- obviously it would have to be worse -- you can enter into an arrangement with the NHC where they allow you two documents: one to continue the process for the sale, and one to allow you to rent your property while you finish your documentation with the bank, the legal work and so on. This should have allowed NHC to receive \$500 every month on each property which someone offered to rent, and the person who was seeking to buy the house and was paying \$1 500 or \$1 000 would not then have that money to pay any other landlord but would be able to rent that same house at \$500. The money they would have been saving could then have gone to the mortgage or towards the landscaping or building out the house.

Can anyone tell me what is so difficult and what is so wrong about that? The only thing I would say is that if people feel within themselves that it is new, then I have a problem. We cannot be a country with over 50 years of free secondary education and expect to regurgitate and copy everything. We have to be creative and innovative, and this Government has demonstrated not only that it has been creative but it has demonstrated through its policies that it has been innovative. We cannot allow countries which do not have the educational system we have to continue to lead us. We must lead them. That is why I was very happy when someone sent me the manifesto of one of the political parties in England, where they are now copying the housing policy of the former Minister of Housing from St. Philip North and going to the rent-to-own system. That is where we need to be. We were accustomed to leading the world. There was a time when we owned part of Trinidad. There was a time when we owned part of America, and we have to understand that we are not just followers; that we have always been international players. We have to understand that our location here is not by accident. Too many people take our location by accident, and it cannot continue. We have to understand what we own as a country, we have to understand what we have to protect as a country, and we have to understand that this little rock, even though it is 166 square miles, is important because of its location and the ability of its people.

All of a sudden I am hearing people advocating to people not to demonstrate the ability to do things. We have to ensure that we continue to demonstrate to people that the others are followers and we are leaders. The Right Excellent Errol Barrow understood what he wanted when he introduced free secondary education. That is another mad discussion; I would like to know if it was there why you had to introduce it. We are getting a bit too bright in

this country, you know. We have to be very careful that we do not give up what is ours. For example, it pains me that we as a country would feel satisfied to have over \$13 billion in our banking system and we are in here lamenting the fact that we have some housing stock to be converted. It is a very simple matter, and the last time I spoke about this I was told that there have been some positive reaction occurring already, and I am very glad for it.

Mr. Speaker, the people who are involved in community tourism have said to me that after I spoke in the Budget about the convertibility of those houses that are not being used, they are now getting a demand by the owners for them to take them over and put them in the community tourism pot. I am telling them it is a wise decision and that they need, in the interest of the country, to continue to do it. If a house is not being used, it is not good for the poor person or the owner; so if you can take that house and make it a commercial tool, you should. The multiplier effect due to where it is being rented will be much greater than some of the contributions which some others would expect from other things. I am saying that if the 17 000 properties which we have at the present moment can be converted to community tourism and we can put bodies in there, that is growth for the economy of Barbados. It makes more sense because I am convinced that there are a lot of people who will never rent them out. We are not rich enough to afford to have those houses closed up and not doing anything with them; so the onus is on me that if it is not coming to the housing stock as we know it, then we have to find it for our housing stock in another way. We have to look at the opportunity cost of everything we do. As Minister of Housing, if they are not bringing it in the housing stock, then I must find housing stock another way because, when the houses are counted, they are placed on my plate and I cannot leave them on my plate. I have to think and I have to find creative ways to convert those persons to understand that they have an asset which can be used.

Mr. Speaker, another thing which we have to understand is that there are people who start out with large families and those families then decide they do not want to be part of the family house. They want their own properties. It does not make sense for a husband and a wife to have a house with seven bedrooms and they can only live in part of it and not understand that a house can be an economic tool. It is time they recognise that they need to convert it, separate it, have their own domain and find a way to create some revenue to help service the bill; and instead of belly-aching, use that revenue to impact on what they consider impositions.

Mr. Speaker, it calls for creativity, it calls for reasoning, and it calls for talking. One of the things I have observed in this country is that we need to talk more, we need to listen and we need to pay attention when people are

speaking. We cannot believe that when people are speaking, we know and we do not need to listen, because every fool out there has a contribution to make, and you would be surprised that whereas the so-called bright ones behave....

Asides.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: A lot of people brand people as fools but they have to be very careful how they brand people. People call people fools, but those people who you brand as fools are the ones who give freely to you when it comes to information. The ones who we think are not fools are the ones who tend to hold information and believe that they have to keep something away from you. Always remember that.

Aside.

Hon. DENIS St.E. KELLMAN: Another thing people have to recognise is that data is only information when it passes through the CPU (central processing unit). Too many people in this world believe that everything they say to you is information. Information is something that is processed by you. It might be information for them, but it is not information for you unless you pass it through your CPU. It is true that when you pass it through your CPU, it might come back out looking like data or the same thing, but then that is when it becomes information; not when it is passed to you.

11.16 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, this Democratic Labour Party has been able in difficult times, to offer solution as it relates to land lots. It has been able to able canned solution from Lancaster in St. James up to Parish Land in St. Philip and in River Land. We have also been able to enter into arrangements, which I expect will soon to Cabinet, where we have been able to swap some land with the BADMC because as you know, their mandate is about agriculture and we had some land that was not suitable for agriculture so it was agreed that it would be swapped so that you would not build houses on land that can produce food and they gave us their grasslands so that we could continue our housing programme. Sir, another thing we are looking at, I am sorry the Honourable Member for St. George North is not in his seat, because as far back at 2002, he would visited a field at the Cottage in St. Lucy, where it was agreed that land would have been made available and acquired for housing and also for farm land, where the person would have been able to build a house and able to farm because one of the things I am observing is that most housing solutions now only offer you opportunity to build a house and you cannot keep chickens or pigs, which I think is wrong. If we are going to solve the problem that I spoke to previously, that our fore parents would have taught us,

that a house must also have something in the backyard to help service the cost. We grew up in a relationship where we knew our fore parents had a house, they had sheep, goats and pigs and cows and those were the things that sent us to school or put clothes on our backs but, all of a sudden, we have moved away from that and we have given up on everything that our fore parents have taught us and we are now saddling country Barbados with a lot of imported things that we could have been doing for ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is prepared to make the change and it is prepared to bring back the people where they want to be.

Mr. Speaker, I used to make a comment in this House and it used to be laughed at every time I made it but I will continue to make it and let people continue to laugh because they do not know that when they laugh they are laughing at themselves and not at me. Sir, old people kept fowls in the yard not only for the egg and the meat but they kept them to keep the termites away from the houses. Sir, nowadays we are so 'great', we do not do it anymore and as soon as we put on a roof, within two years, the termites are there but there was never that problem when you lived at your parents or grandparents house because you the fowls would scratch in the yard but you did not understand they were eating the termites. If you go through now, you would see a lot of people, even some are in here now, because there is a particular gentlemen who brags how good the eggs and meat from the yard fowls taste but there a lot of people who understand they need to get them back in their yards to protect their houses and they are going back to them. Sir, I went to a certain area in St. Lucy and saw over 200 yard fowls and when I ask the lady what she does with them, she told me not to worry about them, that she does not eat them.

Asides.

Hon. D. KELLMAN: You understand exactly what I am saying. Sir, I have said all of that to say that we have to understand that we need to get back to our culture and we need to understand there are certain values and virtues we have previously practised that we need to get back to that are in the interest of country Barbados and that those things would allow us to rebuild our country and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I beg that this Resolution that now calls for 5 930 square metres do now stand.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a brief contribution to this debate. The Honourable

Member who just took his seat began in the vicinity of River Land which is in the east. Sir, he would have taken us all the way around Barbados. We have visited Lancaster, we have visited Parish Land, we have had a lecture on community tourism and more recently 'yardfowlism' and, Sir, I am not entirely sure how this helps with the burning issue which is facing the people in my constituency which is that they go by the hundreds to the National Housing Corporation. This is the lived, painful and unpardonable experience of the people I have to represent, so I cannot speak for anybody else but they go by the hundreds to the National Housing Corporation anticipating that a State-owned agency which they finance directly and in directly through direct and indirect taxation would be in a position to lend them some degree of shelter or assistance by way of finding a long-term housing solution or even a short-term housing solution. The experience of the people in my constituency is that if there is a crisis that takes place, or has taken place last night, if you go to the National Housing Corporation and say you need a unit because there is an emergency that there is an emergency that has befallen this particular lady, or her family, or this gentleman and his family, you are told: "We are sorry, we have nothing for you. We can do nothing for you". The experience of the people in my constituency is that they have been asked to put their names on waiting list at the National Housing Corporation, which they do and they are told that there would be result of the waiting, that they are not going to wait in vain, that there would be some solution found for them, and years and years go by. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am on records and perhaps I stand solitary in this matter but all Honourable Members in here know it is true but I am on record of having told this Chamber that it is a fact that there people in Barbados who have been on waiting list in the country for in excess of 25 years. I have made the additional point that then takes us out of that putrid realm of partisan politics to which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy just carried this House through because he waded us through what is really a rhetorical cesspool of party politics and the country wants to rise and lift itself out of that, the country wants to have a Minister of Housing who can see beyond the Democratic Labour Party's interest, or the Barbados Labour Party's interest for that matter and deal with the reality that there are people there with families who apply to the National Housing Corporation when they got their first job at age 21 and at age 49 are still not in a position to have gotten relief from the National Housing Corporation and that means there is a systemic problem facing the corporation that intellects in this Parliament have not been prepared to sit down, confront and wrestle to the ground, Mr. Speaker. Sir, that is the reality facing this constituency that I represent.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to speak for anybody else because all of us in here come to a Parliament, they understand the origin of the word, from the French word

"parlar" to speak and if they choose not to speak, that is a matter entirely for them.

Mr. Speaker, I would say this about the contribution of the Honourable Member. It struck to the heart of what I have been always suspecting is a problem on the Front Bench but more particularly where he sits, the question of competence or rather the lack thereof.

Sequence 7

I was hearten, Sir, when he had the testicular fortitude even if not the intellectual capacity to avoid going to Parish Land because why Minister of Housing the last place on planet earth I would take this Parliament, Sir, was to Parish Land. Parish Land in St. Philip - is a stone's throw from Dodds and I would not go any further about the significance of Dodds at this stage -- was finished years ago, maybe in excess of four years ago. Sir, Parish Land up until a month ago when 28 people from St. Lucy were taken on to the National Housing Corporation and sent up to Parish Land to do repair work on houses, Parish Land was in a state of desolation. The people who were brought from St. Lucy and employed by the National Housing Corporation and carried up specifically after instructions with the National Housing Corporation that you have to fix up Parish Land. Those people went up there and began by cutting down the mimosa trees which were growing through the windows and that had grown up through the flooring boards of houses and come out through the windows and damaging foundations. The job of the people who were brought in by the Minister of Housing from St. Lucy -- and I am glad for them, they got a little work, no problem with that, but let us talk this thing through, let us understand, I do not want him to come and put a little Berger Paint Gloss like how he employed painters to go up to Parish Land to put a little gloss over houses. You had to do over sidings at Parish Land. I will come to Lancaster, do not rush me. There is plenty of time because the country must be given a photograph of what is happening with its money in the hands of this political miscreant of whom I speak. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that ...

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: If it is "unparliamentary" I will withdraw the word miscreant, but there is something reptilian of a circumstance which will admit and allow for people to be bought into a corporation at a time when everybody knows the state of affairs in statutory corporations in Barbados but you know it is also true to say and it should be said here and now, let us get it out there, that there is a reason why the labour survey most recently conducted in Barbados has not been published by this Government because it will reflect that while the private sector ...

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have listened carefully to the Honourable Member and I waited to see where he was going. The de-bushing programme that was done at Parish Land was not done by any staff members that were brought on by the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well, Honourable Member, but I would have to take that as a correction.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I do not recall saying anything about de-bushing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue, Honourable Member. Mr. Speaker, the point I was making before I was interrupted was that there is a reason why the most recent labour survey has not been made public because that reflects the sorted state of afford sordid state of affairs in which Barbados finds itself today where the level of employment in the private sector has been falling but the level of employment in the statutory corporations in Barbados has been increasing even as we were told to prepare ourselves in the last Budget for all the -- we were told what? The language of the Prime Minister is perhaps the best analogy that you know you cannot experience an Easter unless the country has to go through the Good Friday. The Minister of Finance came here in 2013 and told us about how people have to go home, how the statutory corporations were overburden and they will have to be amalgamated to avoid duplication, some would have to be sold off or dispense with. An IMF study is supposed to be being done to see how what the most efficacious way of doing this. What we have never been told is that the statutory corporations are once again being used to feather the nest of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) partisan political interest but the time is nigh so we know what has to happen so it did not surprise me to discover that at Parish Land, I almost said scores, but that would suggest it is more than 40. It is slightly under 40 of people were brought in from the parish of St. Lucy and sent up there to do repair work. That is the point, Mr. Speaker, to do repair work on houses that had been finished four and five years ago but have remained empty and untenanted so the State's money, your money and mine, Mr. Speaker, the money that your taxpayers in your constituency must pay and those in mine, that money has been squandered because houses were built and then houses were allowed to fall into a state of waste and disrepair, windows broken out, tiles lifted off the ground where there was tiling on the ground. I can speak to these things, Mr. Speaker, because I did not just drive through, I stopped and talked to some of the people including one or two gentlemen who were driving L-cars. They told me they were glad for the work, do not hold it against them and I do not, so I could speak with authority on where they came from, Mr. Speaker. I know that when I say they were painting over houses that were finished five years ago because the houses had run to waste, that is what

the taxpayers' money is now doing. Up at Parish Land in St. Philip doing over houses that had been completed for the last five years, the Minister of Housing is present, let him rise and say I am not telling the truth.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that that strikes to the heart of competence in management. What the Minister should not be telling us about is "yard-fowlism" and trespassing in the domain of the Minister of Tourism. I know it is his ambition one day to act as a Deputy Prime Minister in Barbados. He should give thanks for the little bit that he got because if it was not for the good hearted nature of this Prime Minister he would never even have gotten into the Cabinet. The former Member for St. John made it clear he could not sit in any Cabinet that he led. This Prime Minister gave him a lease on life and he now wants to trespass up at the top, he wants to deal with what the

Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is dealing with but the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that where we are is a situation where there has been a clear demonstration ...

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in silence. I sat down and endured him and to use his language, I subjected myself to him. I do not know why he continues to heckle. He can rise if he has something of sense to say. I anxiously await hearing something to fall from his lips. I herald the arrival of it, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that above and beyond that squandermania that is taking place at Parish Land, the building over of houses that have been previously built and paid for, the taxpayers need an accounting because the taxpayers cannot afford in Barbados today with all the hardship a National Social Responsibility Levy that moved from 2 per cent to 10 per cent the knock on inflation through the economy that will carry the cost of living according to the Chamber of Commerce, not the Honourable Member for St. James Central, into the dizzying heights of 15 to 20 per cent, everything in Barbados will be more expensive. Sir, the taxpayers wants to hear a minister get up and tell them, not about "yard-fowlism". Taxpayers want to hear why it is that at Parish Land those houses were allowed to remain for five years shut down to run to waste so that they literally now have to be built over, repainted, sidings put in again, floorings put in again, windows put in again, tiles put in again, Mr. Speaker, redoing the entire project, the entirety of the project done over and not even an accounting from the Minister as to why this state of affairs arose in the first place. What steps, if any, he had taken in order to make sure that it was dealt with as effectively and speedily as

possible even though it could not have been dealt with because it took five years to get there.

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More importantly, why it is that the workers who have been given an opportunity to earn a dollar have not been drawn from around Barbados but have been culled in the naked politically partisan manner from the bowels of St. Lucy when there are people all around Barbados who are funding this project being done over by their money but they cannot get a little pick nowhere. Even the Honourable Member for St. Philip North cannot be pleased about it because it is in his constituency. Not one of the 28 have come from St. Philip North, Mr. Speaker, Sir. He knows that and I know that he knows that. Sir, this is where this situation is becoming completely unacceptable.

The Honourable Member also raised the question of Valery. Now, again I do not know whether the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development pauses to allow what I presume is in his case also, as is in all of ours, a normal biological function as I understand it to take place where the brain is engaged before the mouth opens and says something. It may not work that way in his situation, I do not know, but why take this Parliament to Valery when the Minister must know that it is at Valery that the testimony has been made clear to all of Barbados that this Government holds the public in such low esteem that they were prepared... Let me say I give thanks for the conscience of the developer at Valery. He takes lashes on this side but I say in the Parliament of Barbados I give thanks that that developer at least had a conscience, that he was prepared to stand in the path of the intentions of this Government which was aiming at tenanting Valery without putting in any tiles in the bathrooms or cabinets in the kitchen. That is the contractual arrangement, and it is in writing signed by one Mark Maloney that he cannot allow the Government to go there because it would reflect badly on his company. No, he says: No, I am not going to let you do that to my company's reputation, you do what you want at Valery but I will raise additional money, \$600 000, in order to make sure that the people get kitchen cabinet and tiles in the bathroom. Tell me where on planet earth, Mr. Speaker, have you ever heard of a tenant who went for a unit or a house but is told to bring your own kitchen cupboard with you. I rented my house to the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and I tell him when you move in skipper walk with a kitchen cabinet because I have not put in any for you and walk with toilet bowl and bathroom fittings because I am not putting in any for you. You ask yourself how is it that men can sit in a Cabinet and talk about being a Government for poor working-class black people. He can go and get as much information as he likes from the former Minister of Housing. I know that he has to run to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North because

as I have said before he is intellectually bankrupt about what is happening in his own ministry. He does not know.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that it goes to the philosophical intent. What makes up the men and women on that side? How on earth do you say to poor people in Barbados who come to you for a housing solution, oh, I am going to build you a pristine seven storey building brand-new but I am not putting in any kitchen cabinet for you, walk with your own, I am not putting toilet bowl and tiles and so on, find your own. How do you do that? Then we get these lengthily lecturers from none other than the Prime Minister of Barbados who stands in the breach and tells you that we must not devalue ourselves. Well, we presides over Cabinet policy that devalues the people of Barbados or seeks so to do but I warn him that the time is coming when a Barbados Labour Party will stand in defence of that and rescue the people of this country from him. I do not believe that he is capable of mentally designing that kind of concept but his problem is one of neglect. He is so politically negligent as leader of the land that this kind of morass can take place. He may be hanging on for sheer life but he is doing so while riding in luxurious comfort, a \$700 000 Mercedes Benz, so I mean hey, rock back and relax, the potholes that are humbugging Minister Inniss, the Honourable Member for St. James South, will not humbug the Right Honourable Member. It had to be specially constructed. Did he not say that to the country? It was ordered a year ago but it took a year to specially construct it. I do not know if it got in bulletproof glass but it got to have special things to it but, Sir, I do not want to trouble him today on that.

I say though, Mr. Speaker, that the issue that this country wants to hear from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is not what his view is about community tourism. We know that he is more concerned about the money to be made out of community tourism of which he sees himself as a principal practitioner of community tourism so I know that every speech he makes in here has to do with promoting community tourism because if he did not do that Moon Town would not be well advertised, I get that, we all get that. I have already said on the Floor of this House, Mr. Speaker, that I with my own eyes have seen him on a Thursday at lunch time ushering in people. I nearly crashed and ran into the sea because I thought...

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because I believe I misheard him. He said that he saw me on a Thursday at lunch time and I want to hear a repeat on that one, Sir.

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that on Thursdays at lunch time he should be elsewhere in the precincts of Government Headquarters, but again I say that there is negligence because I do not know how there could be such an oversight that one of my... If ever I were blessed to chair a Cabinet I do not know how, and I probably never will be, it is not my ambition, I am a humble fellow, but if ever I was, I do not know how one of my Cabinet Ministers and colleagues were expected to be present doing the Government's Business at Government Headquarters but low and behold they are not there so I would want to know if he is sick, Cabinet Secretary have you received a message that he is unwell, but do not tell me that he is attending to his own personal avocations, do not tell me that because I would then have to invite a resignation, but Mr. Speaker, these are different times.

The point is that the issue that the country wants to hear from that Honourable Member for St. Lucy is the issue that impacts on their pockets which is the cost of access to low-income housing. Now, again I was mortified during the presentation of the Budget when the Minister of Finance no less stood not in his place but up next to the Prime Minister's shoulder... The Prime Minister allows the Honourable Minister of Finance to get close to him on one occasion every year and that is at budgetary times. Outside of that the Prime Minister keeps the Honourable Minister of Finance as far from him as possible and distances himself as best he can from the Minister of Finance's policy. They are as though they are two different streams.

Sir, on that particular evening when the Budget was presented in here week before the Minister of Finance delivered himself of the following profundity. He said: I do not know what low-income housing is. Now, when I heard that my eye caught the eye of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and he was equally aghast, certainly he looked as though he was equally aghast and shocked as I was because all of Barbados understands what we mean by low-income housing, it is housing for the poor people of the country. Now, I could understand the Minister of Finance perhaps not grasping that when he looks at the fact that Valery and indeed The Grotto that the Honourable Member just told us about, high-end homes.

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Mr. Speaker, every unit in there was constructed at a building cost of \$450 000; every unit in the Grotto was constructed at a building cost of \$450 000, so understand the challenge that the National Housing Corporation has when it began a project under and understanding and with an intent that this was to provide shelter for low-income people as per persons who could pay for a unit that was about \$125 000 in cost, maybe \$140 000, so that you have 22 000 applicants out there, which is the point I began on,

who are on a waiting list waiting with baited breath for assistance from a Government that they elected, low-income housing who have no alternative but then to rely on Government's intervention in the marketplace in order to bring resolution to their immediate difficulties, low and behold those people are now confronted with a situation in which the housing that is available is to become available to them at a cost of just under one-half of a million dollars. Now, what low-income person - and were Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown here the Honourable Member would tell you that there are names when we canvassed in Catts Castle and Greenfield there are people who put their names down -- they have not won the Lotto so how on earth are they going to be able to pay for that?

Mr. Speaker, when I go into my constituency, into Redman's Village, Sea View, Hoytes' Village, St. James, these are not folks who can find the wherewithal financially to finance roof over their heads at the cost of \$450 000, so that when some on that side now suddenly do not know what low-income housing is, it deeply disturbs not only me but it must disturb the body politics of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, what we now have as an Opposition Party to try to grapple with and what we have as a country to try to grapple with is how is it that we could have a situation persisting where the cost overruns have become so astronomical as to push the intended low-income housing solution out of the reach and grasp of those people for whom it was intended to be the beneficiaries?

Mr. Speaker, now I hear this talk about rent-to-own and rent-to-buy and again, Sir, I confess it might be my own limited understanding, it would have been a useful thing for the Minister to have explained to this Parliament what the Honourable Member concedes as the difference between renting-to-buy and renting-to-own. It does not immediately or easily collide with persons of limited understanding. Mr. Speaker, I remember when the concept of zero-lot-line was introduced into Barbadian vernacular and common parlance by the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Honourable Member at least had the intellectual wherewithal to try to explain to the country this concept that the Honourable Member was introducing of a zero-lot-line. That is what took place at Coverley, I make no reference other than passing about Coverley because we know that Coverley is also an embarrassment to this Government for very clear reasons, but that is not for this debate right now.

Mr. Speaker, if you are going to introduce this concept of rent-to-own or rent-to-buy then tell the people out there, many of whom would be anxious to hear how this solution that you are talking about is going to help them, when all they know is that when you call into the National Housing Corporation querying the cost of a unit at the Grotto you get the reply "Well, to tell you the truth we have not made any decision as to whether or not there is

those units will sold but the cost is \$450 000. But the phone put down and I am not calling you back.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House by implicating the members of the National Housing Corporation is political talk that is not true. The Honourable Member cannot repeat that statement.

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to be helpful to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy because The truth of the matter is that if it makes no sense then the people to whom the Honourable Member is hoping to benefit from the project cannot possibly benefit because they cannot understand what it is that the Honourable Member is talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I give you the Grotto as the example, the Grotto is a \$450 000 per unit proposition if you want to own it, so that what is the rent-to-own that is being contemplated by the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development. What are you renting at? Mr. Speaker, one of the most vulgar things about what is transpiring in Barbados with regard to the Grotto, is that the Grotto has become tenanted, the Minister has said that the Honourable Member is tenanting it at least in part if not in whole on the basis of rentals, but the rental is kept a secret. Mr. Speaker, there is no Member on this side who could tell you what is the rate of rental per unit at the Grotto. We do not know if it is one standard rental rate across the board there, or if it varies from party to party as I am made to understand was also a proposal, that some people would rent at one cost, while another would rent at another cost and if that is the case how do you determine who is renting at the higher cost and who is renting at the lower cost? What are the terms of that rental? These are not things that should be out there for speculation Mr. Speaker, Sir, these are issues that should be clear and transparent. There is a duty on the part of Government, if there is going to be rental at the Grotto, for the Government to say that these are the terms and conditions of rental at that particular building. The same should happen with the Valery. We know that the Valery is renting at \$700 per month but the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development should not be standing up in here telling us about yardfowlism and journeys to Airbnb's and what it is doing and about community tourism and all of that irrelevance, the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development should be telling this country what the Honourable Member is prepared to do about the fact that up to the Estimates of this year that arrears at the Valery were in excess of 45 per cent of the tenants. Mr. Speaker, if 45 per cent of the tenants are unable to meet \$700 per month then what steps are being taken in order to nurture these tenants through this process so that the National

Housing Corporation does not find itself faced with financial embarrassment. What is the plan of the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development given the fact that nearly one-half if not a half, because I am made to understand that it may have gone higher, that by today it might be as many as 50 per cent of the people who cannot meet their rental obligations. What is the plan because it cannot be their fault? When they applied for low-income housing Mr. Speaker, Sir they did not know that the Valery was going to be built at a finished cost of \$350 000 per unit and they cannot, with the roll of the dice transmogrify and transform their income so as to be no longer low-income persons but to be riding with the cushion of comfort that the Cabinet of Barbados rides on. They do not enjoy the luxury of being able to walk in a Parliament and with the stroke of a pen give themselves back a restoration of 10 per cent of their salaries because they want to have a higher lifestyle as the cabinet has done, so that it cannot be the fault of the people who are the tenants at Valery, it has to be a problem dealing with the allocation on the one hand and the ability of people to access low-income housing in circumstances where the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development is poisoning the environment by its bad management.

11.57 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, what is the policy of the Ministry of Housing after all the long talk? Week after week when this Government has nothing better to do, or when Ministers who have been told they have to bring certain Papers to lay and Bills to debate find an excuse not so to do? The Leader of Government Business tells you, "We will deal with a housing Resolution," and a housing Resolution now takes a day. Sir, I have been on these precincts now for 15 years and I know when housing Resolutions could have been dealt with and disposed of within an hour-and-a-half to two hours, and you get on to other substantive business. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is....

Aside.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Do not tell me to sit down. I was sent in here the same way as the Member for Christ Church South, and the Member for Christ Church South is in no position to determine when I sit down or how long I talk. In fact, let me edify the Member that I am the first speaker on this side and I have unlimited time.

Asides.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Yes, he took 35 years to find himself in here and on the eve of leaving, he will tell me to sit down. Who made him? I know his problem; there is a thorn in his side. I know his problem. Thirty-five years he was trying to get a seat in here, and now he is halfway out through the door he is telling me to sit down. Asides.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have a situation facing us where there is in the Ministry of Housing a failure of that Ministry to be able to adequately deal with the very legitimate questions that people are asking, about even the basic things such as “what is happening with my application?” I do not like to see the heads over there nod in agreement when I say that we have people who have been waiting for 20 years and cannot get any resolution. They know it and I know it, and I know that they know it, but the issue has to be what is it that are we doing about it, Mr. Speaker.

How does a Member of Parliament, holding a constituency clinic, deal with a situation in which somebody comes in through the door, sits down in front of you and tells you “I made an application to NHC but I have not heard anything from them,” or “I tried to find out what is happening with my application. I cannot find out anything about where it is in the system. All I can tell you is that the application is in and I applied for Lancaster, or I applied for Parish Land.” Does the Government not have a duty to say to all of the people who applied for housing solutions at Parish Land, “These are the particular problems facing Parish Land? These are the problems that have been affecting us for the last five years, which is why we have done sweet nothing at Parish Land. What we are hoping to do to solve this problem is the following: A,B,C and D.” Does there not exist on the part of the Government of Barbados a duty to have open data where people in this country are not asked to live in Stygian darkness and the ignorance of bygone times, but should be able to be brought up to speed about matters that impact on their ability to house themselves and their families?

Mr. Speaker, we have a Minister of Housing who comes in here and makes mock sport about yardfowls and how long you keep yardfowl eggs and if they taste good.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, direct your comments to the Chair and do not talk to Members directly.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Through you, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy effectively buffered a situation which was led by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance when 11 of them were eager to rescue Barbados. I felt sorry then, but maybe they understood what was happening earlier on, Sir. They tried to correct what clearly now the Minister of Agriculture calls a disastrous failure.

Asides.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter, though, is this is not a small matter. We are talking a Barbados in 2017 on the eve of 2020. There must be an

opportunity for people to have access to data and information that impacts on their day-to-day living. Mr. Speaker, you cannot ask for people to blindly go to the constituency office of the Member for Christ Church South if he cares to open it and hold a clinic ever, and then he says, “You have an application in,” but you cannot say what is the status of the application, where is it, when is it likely that we would have a solution to this problem, when is it likely that we would be able to give you a solution to your housing needs, and if we cannot give you a solution to your housing needs why we cannot do it. Mr. Speaker, you are just asking for people to put their lives on pause indefinitely, and that cannot be fair to the people we represent.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about Barbados Labour Party politics or Democratic Labour Party politics now; this is about the Barbados that we are going to bequeath to generations to come. It cannot be acceptable that you just ask people to arrest all of their ambitions, all of their anticipation because of the National Housing Corporation. Indeed it is not only NHC; there are others as well. There are other statutory bodies that are supposed to be there to deal with the public on a one-on-one manner, face-to-face, to interact and provide solutions. If they cannot do so, they should be in a position where they are required to explain to people why you cannot do it. You cannot just ask people to wait indefinitely in vain and then not lose confidence in the very system that you are going to come in a few months’ time and ask them to participate in.

Why is there need for an Election in Barbados if the governmental system and the governance structure are so unresponsive to the people who send us here to govern? That is the question, and I do not understand why that should be so difficult for Honourable Members on that side to grasp, Mr. Speaker. Life cannot only be about the comfort of raking in and counting the cash that you make privately while you are a Minister of Government publicly, when gravity is measuring the width of a rice bowl so as to charge people for that. Life cannot only be about that. Sir, there are people out there who have real-term, immediate needs, and some of them are in crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I began by making the point that if you had a crisis in your constituency -- not you, Mr. Speaker, because you are a Member of the Democratic Labour Party and you might be treated differently -- but if I had a crisis in my constituency tonight....

Asides.

POINT OF ORDER

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House about weighing, Sir. The first person who ever weighed anybody in this House was when the Honourable Member for St. James South, as he was then, weighed the Leader of the Opposition and came up with 1 000 pounds.

MR. SPEAKER: No Point of Order found. Honourable Member, I would appreciate if you left me out of your mouthings because you know I cannot defend myself on this Floor. Please.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: I apologise, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: That certainly is not within the convention of Parliament. I have never been a Member for St. James South so I do not know what he is talking about. Again, I have said that that particular Honourable Member suffers under a particular difficulty. He has a special difficulty; an impediment. It is an impediment that he labours under, where he opens his mouth before he engages his brain. The Prime Minister has described it as one of the prices you have to pay for democracy. That is what it is. That is one of the prices we pay for democracy.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have, as I say to you, to be able now to offer this country far more. When a Minister of Housing comes here to pilot a Resolution, it may on its face seem to be a matter of simplicities; nothing too substantial, but below that superficial level there are depths and depths of problems confronting people in Barbados who are forced to rely on the State to help them with housing solutions for their families, Sir. Those people require answers. Those people require access to information, Mr. Speaker.

12.05 p.m.

Those people do not expect that games would be played with their very livelihood because if I cannot provide shelter for my family, Sir, my situation is one of dire dismay and possible disaster. Sir, it is that level of maturity that I want the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to try to find. This is not one of his Facebook escapades, this is now the people of Barbados and he must try to make that transition. He must try hard to make the transition. This is not like on Facebook where he would take off his clothes as far as the naked eye can see and give a lecture on water quality. This is the Parliament of Barbados where you must be jacketed and tied and present himself a certain way and hopefully deliver of himself a certain way. Sir, the reality is that when you speak about the problems at the National Housing Corporation it goes further than that because one of the things that this Minister of Housing needed to say to this country especially as we come now in

the aftermath of a Budget is how the National Housing Corporation expects to deal with the existing arrears that it does have in the context of an increasing cost of living of which the Minister is a part has created. Mr. Speaker, Sir, let us not fool ourselves, as I have alluded to before, we are about to be confronted from July 1st with a 15 per cent to 20 per cent inflation rate in Barbados, that is what has been put out there by the private sector and by economic analysts. Mr. Speaker, Sir, if you have people who are currently in arrears at National Housing Corporation, you say you want to have a recovery programme, well, how do you anticipate your recovery programme to be impacted if people are themselves now worse off as a result of the policy that has been implemented two weeks ago? How realistic is that you will see the level of recovery that you say that you expect to see, or is this just another exercise in old talk, as though we are in somebody's gallery with a foot up, watching the cars go by and whatever comes to your mind you say. Sir, there is a question of recovery of revenue that National Housing Corporation must be able to must be able to speak to. The National Housing Corporation cannot be falling short on the revenue side but increasing expenditure by bringing in people from the Honourable Member's constituency at the same time because that is financial recklessness, that is financial foolishness and the taxpayers in my constituency should not be asked to pay for it.

Mr. Speaker, if the National Housing Corporation is serious about having a recovery of revenue to deal with that issue seriously and substantively within the context of an increasing and escalating cost of living cannot at the same time as it is struggling to find revenue be engaging in largess by bringing on people so that you now have four telephone operators when one can do and three maids when one can do, and six driver messengers when one can do, and all of them coming from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy's constituency. Sir, that cannot be right or sensible or fair ...

Hon. D. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. I believe that this Honourable Member must be informed that there is something in this House that speaks to the truth.

MR. SPEAKER: Go ahead, Honourable Member.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the Honourable Member very carefully but what I did not hear the Honourable Member say is that it is untrue that there has been an escalation of the level of employment at the National Housing Corporation, and I know why he cannot get up and tell me so. Sir, I will give way to the Honourable Member because I am quite prepared to call names.

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Do not back down because you never back down. Sir, I will continue. Sir, this Honourable Member is out to sea when I pointed out that at the Grotto there was a security company linked very closely to persons in the hierarchy of the Democratic Labour Party that was being paid \$10 000 a month approximately in order to provide security over, at the time, a completely empty Grotto. The Honourable Member made noise until I was able to establish that I was right and then he made an issue about how many weeks they got in the air, so therefore it might not be quite \$10 000, it might be \$9,600. Well, the point is that neither me and quite frankly, not the person who is in the hierarchy of the Democratic Labour Party is humbug by that. Sir, where the humbug comes is that the National Housing Corporation has a substantial Budget. It is expected that the National Housing Corporation would utilise that Budget in a manner that is in the best interest of the governance of the people of Barbados, that is in the best interest of the taxpayers of Barbados. It is not expected that Budget would be utilise in a partisan political way. It is not expected that Budget would be utilise to further squandermania so that what the late Honourable Member for St. John described as feeding the fatted calf would take place, and what did he mean when he talked about feeding the fatted calf. He meant that if you were part of the Party faithful, you would be welcomed to the table and given all you could get. Sir, all of a sudden, the economy of Barbados is like a hog trough, where you 'juck' your stout in and if you cannot, you put your trotters in it too. Sir, everybody who close up can get and those who are not part of the faithful would have to suck salt. Sir, that is not the Barbados that we on this side intended to allow to be perpetuated and certainly not to be bequeathed to generations born and unborn.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I say this finally about this presentation that the Honourable Member just made. The time has come when a Minister of Housing must cease coming to this Place without being prepared. The time has come when a Minister of Housing must cease coming to this Place, just to pilot a Resolution and talk without dealing with the substantive issues that continue to humbug Barbadians but are running under thing surface of what is on the paper of this Resolution. We have conveyances which are being awarded now in a last minute rush up at the Pine, that is one place, within the last couple of weeks. They tell you to come in and get the conveyance for nine years, since 2008 to 2013.

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: The issue about not having the conveyances was that there no satisfactory work done in order to properly the title to units because of the fact that

one, you did not have firewalls, two, you had common areas that were not ...

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: The Honourable Member is...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will have that struck from the records. (8:10)I keep having to warn you about these Asides. You are on your feet speaking.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: I will withdraw it, Sir. You have no firewalls. You have bad plumbing, you had bad electrical problems but more importantly, the common areas, whether or not sewerage areas, the car park, the wells and so on, all of those common areas, there was no defined and understood way of dealing with who has the responsibility for the maintenance of these things. Sir, that situation stopped this Government from awarding the conveyances then. Mr. Speaker, Sir, would you believe that today conveyances are being awarded but the issue of the common areas still remain the same way and nobody knows who has responsibility if a well is blocked up and a drain is not working. I have six houses using the well and the same six houses using the drain. Mr. Speaker, Sir, where does the responsibility for the plumbing bill lies?

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, who as I have said, in fairness to him before he was removed was at least prepared to grapple intellectually with this matter, retained counsel, I think the person was Milton Pierce. Sir, outside counsel was brought into the National Housing Corporation to give advice on this issue, and also to speak to research the question of whether or not the Condominium Act should not properly be brought to bear.

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That is also a matter I have spoken to in this House before, whether the Condominium Act should not be brought to bear on these conveyances and the way in which you will manage the units before you give people title and find them in confusion, fighting with one another and quarrelling with one another over what do you do about the common areas. Well it is not my fault, it is the fault of the person next door and why am I being asked to pay. Those are the issues that we have as a Government to address and to re-dress, to make life uneasy for people who live in the area, to foster social dis-cohesion among the people in the area but these are the things, Sir, that Government is expected to deal with, not just because you are six to nine or how many every months from an election, so you sharing out as many conveyances as you can as though you are pelting scratch grain behind the "yard-fowls" that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy likes to talk about. There is solid substantive issues that had to be confronted and were not confronted but the Minister of Housing does not

tell you about that. He does not get into those things that is too tall for him. The issue now, Sir, of giving people a conveyance it is the same thing as happened only last week, Mr. Speaker, when appointments were given out in the teaching service a matter which previously was done by my mailing out or Government mailing out a letter of appointment to you but all of a sudden in Barbados you are invited up to the Wildey Gymnasium where 300 people must sit before a minister and rise to kiss the ring of the God-father. Children left unattended across Barbados on Friday at short notice. Notice was sent out on Friday to come to get your thing from the Minister when before it was just sent out in the mail but children left unattended because hundreds of teachers had to go up to kiss the ring of the God-father who presides personally over bestowing benefaction. I am giving you an appointment. Notice that it is me, look at my face, it is not anybody from the Barbados Labour Party (BLP), it is me and I expect that you will never forget that. That is the paramountcy of the politic party that now operates in Barbados and I hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central telling me there is more to come and I believe him. He is not a stranger to the truth in this regard because he believes in that.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Of course. When he had to go and hand out keys he did the same thing because the Government of Barbados has become the personal play things of ministers of the Crown. The same thing is practiced at Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. Do you know that there is a People's Business every Sunday night and all of a sudden in Barbados the Labour Party and the voices surrounding or connected to the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) have nothing to do with the People's Business under this Government? This effort to manipulate minds, this effort to toy with people, this propaganda type approach to governance, Mr. Speaker, that is what has to be arrested and roll back in Barbados so that the time for self-worship and self-adulation is going to soon come to an end. The time for self-adulation will soon come to an end but I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that as far as this particular ministry is concerned, Housing, there is a level of mismanagement, there is an abysmal level of incompetence and I urge that the Minister, before the country shuts the door in his face, at least he try his best to apply himself to what is before him because you cannot be wrong on so many issues. You cannot be reflecting incompetence on so many issues. You cannot be out of touch on so many issues and at the same time call yourself a sensible and reasonable minister.

I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a brief and supportive intervention in this debate on the Resolution which calls on this Honourable House to vest in the National Housing Corporation a parcel of land, just about an acre and a half of land, the old site of the District E Police Station in the National Housing Corporation for housing development.

I first entered this House in September 1994 and from then until now, the House has had to deal with Resolutions on acquisitions and/or vestings because the issue of housing in Barbados has continued to be a challenge. I am pleased that I am rising to speak immediately after the Honourable Member who has just sat down. I have said from this seat over and over again that I am quite accustomed to the hollow rage and the mock indignation which characterises the interventions of that Honourable Member and I did not have to wait, thankfully, until he was on the Other Side of the House to accustom myself to it. I knew him as the Assistant General Secretary of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). I knew him as a young Democrat and the same incendiary and inflammatory utterances were evident then. I well recall those occasions on Democratic Labour Party (DLP) platforms when he was even more caustic than he is now. Those were the days when the law of defamation was put on high notice as references to Arson Trust and when the insults to the women in the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) were at their maximum when people were described very derogatorily as a thousand pounds of blubber because, of course, they happened to be obese. Those were the days when he had hoped to be the Member of Parliament for St. James South and because the then incumbent Member for St. James South was a little obese she was lumped among those who weighed a thousand pounds so I am accustomed to all of this. Recently I received a call from a constituent who thought that she had to inform me about how he was in St. Michael South as part of a mass campaign carrying on against me, but I had difficulty in getting her to establish the identity of the person she was talking about because she did not know his name and I prodded her, and prodded her, and prodded her and then she remembered that there was a photograph in the newspaper of the person who had been badmouthing me to her and she checked the newspaper and came back to me and said, "I do not know his name but he is a lanky red man with a long cap peak" and I thought the description quite picturesque. The "lanky red man with a long cap peak" and here he was this morning again, the Honourable Member for St. James Central railing against the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) and with all the mock rage and hollow indignation he could muster. I have said in this House as recently as the just concluded Budget debate that the issue of housing is one of the issues that the State has had to pursue because it is one of the issues in respect of which we have had to play a lot of catch-up as a result of the neglect that took place in Barbados, not only here in Barbados but in other parts of the Caribbean in the period

between 1838 and 1938, that 100-year period before the riots. The Moyne's Commission Report of 1945 made clear that housing conditions in the English-speaking Caribbean were so deplorable that rehabilitative and restorative and corrective action had to be taken, and from then until now governments have been wrestling with trying to deal with the issue of housing.

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There are people in Barbados who have determined not only that they want housing but that the house that they want they want from the National Housing Corporation so that routinely you run into people all across Barbados who will tell you they had an application at the National Housing Corporation since 1979 or since 1982 or something like that because they are waiting on the National Housing Corporation for a house of some kind, and to the extent that the National Housing Corporation has not been able to respond to the demand because the demand has always outstripped supply in relation to the housing in Barbados, the National Housing Corporation and by extension the State has been made to appear to be inefficient in that regard.

This is an issue with a long history, and successive Governments of Barbados have tried their best. When we came to office in 2008 the reality was that there were 28 000 outstanding applications at the National Housing Corporation. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North can testify to the veracity of that. There were 28 000 outstanding applications at the National Housing Corporation in January 2008. In addition to that, there was rusting steel and an incomplete structure at the corner of Country Road which is now called Country Park Towers which this Government had to resurrect and finish because like the present Government the previous Government was having some challenges coming on to the end of their term with finding the financial resources to complete that project, but successive Governments have tried their best to deal with the issue of low-income and middle-income houses in Barbados, and I think all things considered that the country has done reasonably well in that regard.

Now, the problem threatens to become a lot more acute as a result of the fact that a strange trend had been developing in Barbados, a trend which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and I have discussed quite a lot recently, the tendency on the part of the mothers of young daughters with children to ask them to leave the house along with the children and go and find accommodation somewhere else, saying that they cannot cope with the noise the children are making anymore, and that has created additional pressures because then these young mothers along with their children have to be housed somewhere and the place to which they invariably turn is the National Housing Corporation, and all of this is

happening in the context of a scarcity of financial resources to meet the demand.

From the time a housing committee was set up in Barbados sometime in the 1930s until today, from Housing Committee to Housing Board to Housing Authority to the Urban Development Corporation to the National Housing Corporation and nowadays the Urban Development Commission - we had a Urban Development Corporation in the 60s and early 70s and we now have an Urban Development Commission - but in spite of all of these institutions and their efforts getting supply to equal demand has been a challenge, so this is not an issue that I think should be politicised in the way in which I am hearing because quite frankly both sides have faced the challenge and both sides have had to deal with it and if one side had succeeded when we came to office in January 2008 nobody would be able to complain that 28 000 outstanding applications could be found at the National Housing Corporation and you would not find people in Barbados today meeting you and telling you that they are waiting on a National Housing Corporation house since the 1970s, but we have to do the best we can in all of these circumstances, so the Government since coming to office took care of Country Park Towers, built Valery, Stewart's Lodge, Workhall in St. Philip, Four Roads, Marchfield and The Grotto.

Now, I know that historically housing projects have always attracted a strange kind of attention. I well recall the late 60s when a No-Confidence Motion was laid in this House against Arlington DaCosta Edwards, a very fertile Minister of Housing, but so much was happening at the time that it was thought by the then Opposition that he had to be corrupt and the then Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown filed a No-Confidence Motion against him. One of the ironies of all of that was that while he was being called a thief his constituents in St. Andrew were saying that if he is a thief at least he brings some of what he steals and shares with us.

Later, we had the Hanschell Commission which inquired into the National Housing Corporation and the focus of that was not only the same Minister but the gentleman we know today as Sir Philip Greaves and attempts were made to create some controversy around his name as well, so these things have a long history but the reality is that we as a State have been playing catch up in the area of housing from the time universal adult suffrage was introduced in Barbados and from the time black governments in earnest took responsibility for these matters.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to work out some kind of formula to accelerate the rate at which we can get houses into people's hands. At one stage we thought that we could transition from the provision of low-income

houses of a nature, quality and kind that large numbers of people would want to rent but that rental class far from contracting is getting larger and larger as I said because a large number of young women in particular with children, jettison as it were by their parents or asked to leave their place of ordinary residence by their parents have to appear to the National Housing Corporation and most of them are unemployed with deadbeat fathers, large number of children and the only place they could turn to is the State, and the National Housing Corporation has been put under enormous pressure as a result of that.

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Mr. Speaker, I know what I am saying, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North knows what I am saying as well because I know of a case with which the Honourable Member had to deal recently, where the Honourable Member not only had to find accommodation but to provide a refrigerator, a stove and all of that from his own resources because that is where we are here in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of low-income housing is as fresh an issue in 2017 as perhaps it was in the 1940s. As I said recently there are some other issues that the National Housing Corporation and its predecessors were never able to deal with. I heard Honourable Member for St. James Central mentioned Catts Castle and Greenfield, those are areas that had to be dealt with and that successive Governments have not been able to tackle at yet. Fortunately we were able to tackle Church Village and Emmerton and even when Emmerton was being tackled that led to a little controversy, but there are some areas in Barbados where housing conditions are far below acceptable standard and the infrastructure around these housing settlements leave much to be desired and therefore as a State, whether that State is controlled by the Democratic Labour Party or by the Barbados Labour Party, that is an emergency to which we all have to respond and to which we all have to respond sympathetically.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the solution to all of this the Government also came up with the 500-lots programme and we have been dealing with that. We have also been dealing with the transfer of terraced units and so on to their tenants since then quite a few of those tenants had satisfied the requirements put in place or identified for the transfer. Mr. Speaker, even then other complications arose in respect of the electrification and the common services and that kind of things which are not always easy issues to deal with when they surface, especially when you require people to live together and to share expenses and that kind of thing. Mr. Speaker, these are problems that we are continuing to deal with as a Government and that any Government of Barbados will have to continue to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I am not into the points-scoring politics that has now become so fashionable in Barbados. That is a luxury that I personally cannot afford, I think that there are some genuine social problems in Barbados and that housing is one of those social problems because it has so many other implications for the stability of our families, the stability of our children in particular who are very often the victims of that movement of parents from one place to another because they cannot settle one place for one reason or other. Fortunately for me I have never had to be chased anywhere by any landlord because although my means were very modest, my late father had taken the precaution the year after I was born to buy a piece of land, so that I have never had to deal with a landlord coming and demanding rent and if you did not have that rent, asking you to leave, but I have known too many people whose lives have been disquieted and whose lives have been rendered chaotic by the fact that they have had to move from place to place because they did not have their own dwelling, and children going to school one place and because the parents had to move and go someplace else, not because the parents wanted to but because the landlord was insisting on getting his rent or getting back his house or getting his house spot has created a lot of instability for a lot of our family. But these are not issues... we can argue about them, we can say that we have the better solution, a better solution than the other side but when all is said and done we have to face the issue that low-income housing in Barbados and middle-income housing too are issues as fresh in 2017 as they were in the 1940s because the supply has lagged behind demand and we have been playing catchup as a result.

The State has to take all the lashes it gets, whoever controls the State because the truth is, and people believe that these problems admit of easy solution. We who sit in positions of decisions-making know that it is not as easy as people think and when you have to husband very scarce resources and allocate resources between low-income housing, public transport, education, health, security and so on, the asymmetry between supply and demand continues to present a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I lend my support to this Resolution and I have lent my support to all such Resolutions when I was sitting over there and now I am sitting over here because I understand the problem. The Housing Committee of the 1930s dealt with it, the Housing Board dealt with it. After Hurricane Janet the Housing Authority tried to deal with it. The Urban Development Commission tried to deal with it and the National Housing Corporation from 1973 on when it was established has tried to deal with it but these problems are not going to go away. This is not the kind of problem that you can solve in a once-for-all way because even as we solve a problem for one, two or families at a given time, there are scores of others behind wanting the same solution and in the context of scarce resources the

problem becomes more and more difficult but we have to be empathetic, understanding and do the best we can to bring some calm, some stability and some dignity to the lives of people affected by an absence of stable household.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for bringing this Resolution and this initiative, the intention of which is to try to make yet another dent in this vexed problem of housing development.

12.53 p.m.

We can debate as much as we like whether there was a cost overrun at the Valery or whether there was a cost overrun at Country Park Towers or at London Bourne Towers or anywhere else in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, what I know is this: The occupants of Country Park Towers or of Valery or of Grotto or of Forde's Road or Stuart's Lodge or anywhere else do not care whether there was a cost overrun or not. What they care about is that they did not have housing yesterday but they have it today, and that is what concerns them. This debate is an academic debate so far as they are concerned, because their need was for housing for themselves and their children in the absence, sometimes, of a responsible father, but sometimes the father is also there. They really do not care how the Government came by the houses or how the NHC came by the houses. What they care about is that a solution has been found for them. That is not another way of saying that there is no responsibility devolving on the shoulders of the NHC or on the shoulders of the Government to be prudent and principled in the management of the country's resources. I am just making the point that when we get past all of that, the persons who come to us on both sides of the political divide and ask for housing do not say, "I want a house but before I move in, you have to satisfy me, Mr. Member of Parliament or Mr. Minister, that there was no cost overrun in relation to it." You do not hear that. They want the keys and once they get the keys, they are comfortable, because that means that some stability has been brought to their situation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Minister. I want to say thanks to the National Housing Corporation and its staff for all the effort it has made over the years to deal with this very stubborn problem. I want to thank those in the private sector, who have tried to deal with this problem as well. There are some well-known names in the private sector who have made their own contribution to the provision of low and middle income housing in Barbados over the years. However, we are a far distance away from wrestling this problem to the ground, because, as I said, the numbers keep growing all the time and there are always new applicants for the resources of the National Housing Corporation; but we cannot relax our efforts and we must continue to ensure that we accord to the provision of housing the priority which it absolutely

and necessarily deserves. Mr. Speaker, thanks for allowing me this brief intervention and I want to just indicate once again that this Resolution has my full support. I am obliged to you.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, Mr. Clerk of Parliament.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to lay before this Honourable Chamber the following Parliamentary Questions:

1. To ask the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs: Is the Minister aware that plans are presently made to close the Weston Fire Station in Weston, St. James? Any such closure will mean that there would be no fire stations in any of the northern parishes, namely St. James, St. Peter, St. Lucy, St. Andrew and St. Joseph. This Notice was given on May 11 of 2017 and not 2016 as I see it here printed, so that is a typo.
2. If the Minister is aware of such plans, will the Minister state: (a) when such closure is expected to take place; (b) whether there are presently any plans to repair, refurbish and/or renovate this fire station; (c) if there are such plans, how long is it expected that these repairs, refurbishments and/or renovations will take to be completed and the fire station reopened; (d) what arrangements, if any, are there to service those parishes, districts and communities which are presently being serviced in emergencies and otherwise by fire officers, trucks and other equipment stationed at this fire station, and (e) what plans, if any, are there for the future of this site in the event that there are no such plans to repair, refurbish and/or renovate and subsequently reopen the fire station?

I am obliged, Your Honour. MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, Clerk of Parliament. Aside. MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Sitting be now suspended until 2:30 this afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.30 p.m. for lunch was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MR. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.51 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 16, and with that we shall continue.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

MISS S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise, Mr. Speaker, to speak on the current Resolution with respect to the vesting of lands which were once the location of the District E Police Station into the hands of National Housing Corporation. Sir, I like my colleague, who has spoken on this side already, who led in this debate also share some of similar sentiments that have been expressed earlier, that in the Minister of Housing's presentation, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, that in his opening presentation in introducing this Resolution, he failed to collide not only with Ministry but he failed to collide in any way with a proper understanding of what is required in relation to housing policy and housing development in the country. Sir, at the outset, I would want to mention that this is not the first time that this Minister has introduced a Resolution of this nature and has failed certainly to have the plan of the land attached to the actual document so that members of this Chamber and certainly the public could see the particular parcel of land that is actually being vested in the Crown but it is not also not the first time on which we have had a situation where there has been a lack of details from the Minister in relation to what the housing development that this current administration is requiring this parcel of land for and is actually going to be used for at some future event. Sir, instead the Minister spent much time speaking about the Democratic Labour Party's policy on housing in the past. He took us through allegations towards the Barbados Labour Party in relation to it, and what I could only glean from it that what he was trying to saying is that we seemed to have had a policy which encouraged people to build low-income houses which were chattel dwellings but that the Democratic Labour Party was a Party that encouraged people to build stone and cement structures, which could be no further from the truth, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to set the record straight from the outset because there are people who will hear the Honourable Minister, there are people who will read comments from the Honourable Minister and The Honourable Member for St. Lucy and sometimes believe

that what he believes is correct is actually the truth. Sir, I would want to set the record straight in relation to the Barbados Labour Party's proud record in relation to housing because it was the Barbados Labour Party that introduced the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, which empowered persons living in tenancies to be able to acquire land at \$2.50 per square foot, with that ability to be able to own a piece of land, we saw a number of developments taking place in the country where persons were able to construct on the land, they were able to make to their properties over a period of time. Sir, it also meant that having allowed persons to have ownership of the land, we would have set up the General Workers Loan Fund and through that fund, persons who were working at the time were able to repair and maintain their homes. Sir, we went further, there was also the Housing Credit Trust Fund and under a Barbados Labour Party administration a number of loans were disbursed in the sum of over \$56 million to allow persons to further construct and purchase their homes. The Barbados Labour Party was at the forefront of negotiating the \$60 million from IDB in relation to the Neighbourhood Upgrading Programme and Honourable Members on the other side may want to trivalise this but the fact of the matter is that have negotiated it, the Democratic Labour Party came to office and nothing has been done in relation to the Housing Upgrade Programme for the people in the areas that had been designated by the Barbados Labour Party that needed upgrades to their properties.

Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party stand in this Chamber and attempt to grandstand as though they have been the leaders in dealing with housing policies, nothing could be further from the truth. Sir, the fact of the matter is that the Barbados Labour Party also introduced 100 mortgage financing through the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company and we saw credit unions also following on the backs of that with also attempting now to introduce that to persons so that they would be unable to get the 100 per cent financing. There is no doubt as far as I am concerned and certainly the record, if the record is spoken to in a truthful manner, that yes, both political Parties have in their own way sought to assist in the advancement of housing in the country but I do feel it is unfair for Honourable Members of this Chamber to seek to tarnish the reputation of the Barbados Labour Party by suggesting in any way that the Barbados Labour Party did not seek to elevate the plight of the poor people in the country because nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise that even in relation to our introduction of what we would call the green heart houses and the wooden houses that there were persons who had a preference for wooden houses, there were persons who had a preference for a combination of stone as well as wooden dwellings and we encourage the development of

those things because we recognise that while we had opened up the market...

Asides.

MISS S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Sir, Honourable Members would do well to listen to the thinking of the Barbados Labour Party because understanding that we had opened up the market in relation to CSME to allow artisans from the Caribbean to come into our country not only to work but certainly to pass on their trade to persons living in Barbados also meant there was a market for persons to be able to deal with the hard wood and to be able to build hard wood houses. Sir, in a lot of cases, it is cheaper to construct than the stone dwellings. Sir, we have always pursued a policy of a combination of various types of housing policies for persons whether at the low income level, whether are at the higher level in order to encourage persons who were interesting in improving their housing conditions and social conditions to be able to do so. Sir, we understood that even for those persons who had chattel dwellings, that those persons would benefit from what we introduce before we left office back in 2007, the Catastrophe Fund, which the Democratic Labour Party has since sought in coming to office to totally dismantle. We understood that persons who would have been affected by dwelling houses that were wooden structures that had succumbed to the vagaries of hurricanes and storms that they would require assistance if the value of their properties were under \$125 000, so we did not simply seek about to construct houses for persons that, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would like to suggest that these houses did not improve the conditions of persons. We understood that we had to work with persons with where their means were at a point in time but we also provided a safety net for persons in the event they were the subject of any catastrophe of the nature of a storm or a hurricane. Sir, I think it is important to put that in a context.

Mr. Speaker, the housing policy of the Barbados Labour Party has been founded on some very fundamental principles. It is a recognition that you have to obviously encourage housing development in order to ensure there is encouragement of micro businesses, of small and medium size enterprises and people who are small contractors because once you are able to stimulate the housing sector in turn there is a knock on effect from the construction sector and in turn there is a knock on effect on the wider economy. What we have seen over the last few year is a decline in the number of small and medium size contractors in the country who under a Barbados Labour Party were able to obtain contracts to be able to work in the country to provide housing for low income persons, to be able to provide housing to the housing stock to enable persons again to improve their social conditions. Sir, we recognise that once people are able to improve their social conditions

they are also going to sometimes spend more money with the economy as well, so it has a knock on effect.

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On its own, Sir, what we have seen over the past few years is a situation where a lot of the projects that the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) had done have actually concentrated wealth into the hands of a few and while we accept that there is room for everyone, we believe on This Side that there has to be a levelling of the playing field in relation to the awarding of contracts in this country. An Administration could not come to office, Sir, on the basis that they would have a 40 per cent procurement of contracts to small businesses in this country and completely then disregard over the course of the last nine years, the need to be able to honour its commitment to small contractors in this country to be able to have a first option to be able to do a number of the contracts that are required in this country. It is not enough for a Minister of Housing to come here and speak wide and far and on this Resolution, Sir, but not address the issues that affect the ordinary contractor, the ordinary tenant in a housing unit, the average person who is seeking to acquire housing. As I said before, the Honourable Member on This Side who spoke earlier addressed a number of those issues.

Mr. Speaker, a Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Administration would have hoped and would hope that even things like the Physical Development Plan, an appreciation by this Administration that we are seeing in some developments in Barbados particularly in the Southern areas of the country. We are seeing obviously a more densely populated set of developments. Whereas there was a recognition by us, Sir, that we would have to development areas like St. Lucy because, as we know in those parts there are not as populated and there is a lot land that is available to be able to allow persons in the more densely populated areas to be able to build houses. We also recognised that areas such as Speightstown would also require some emphasis in terms being able to build out the area of Speightstown as well. We understood that but we have not heard and I am sure that Members on the Other Side acknowledge that these things have to be done. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy constantly speaks about St. Lucy and would have to see development in St. Lucy and so would we but the fact remains that apart from Pickering we have heard nothing over the past few years of any substantial developments taking place in the parish of St. Lucy or in the northern part of the island that would suggest to the people of this country and certainly to the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Members that the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) understand what is even written in the Physical Development Plan. No Member on the Other Side even mentions the Physical Development Plan and I say, Sir, we have to get to a point where instead of speaking loosely in these debates that reference is made

to some of the documents that our civil servants have taken the time to prepared, that commissions have been engaged to prepare in relation to a number of these topics and not just housing but we have to start to examine whether we need more studies done even in relation to this issue of housing and the requirements for housing because the Honourable Minister and Honourable Member for St. Lucy has not even spoken to the fact of whether any recent studies have been done to deal with the issues of how much housing is required or the demands of housing. We are quoting figures from 2008 but the reality is the dynamics of our situation have changed and the reality is that particularly in, for instance, the housing areas where I heard the Honourable Prime Minister address this morning the fact that you have a situation where these areas are overcrowded. This Administration has failed not only to upkeep and maintain these properties over the course of the past few years but now with the introduction of the National Social Responsibility Levy you had a situation where the Honourable Minister has not even spoken to the fact that you will now have an increase in materials which the National Housing Corporation is now not able to even purchase to repair a number of these units in the various housing areas. He has not spoken to it and in introducing the Budget you would have hoped that even then the Honourable Minister would have said that he had spoken to the Minister of Finance and he appreciated that even with the introduction of these stringent measures that these were the steps that were being taken by the National Housing Corporation to carry out repairs to a number of the units across this country. Mr. Speaker, I speak from personal experience in dealing with the area of the Pineland Housing Area. I am tired standing in this Chamber and speaking to this issue because I believe that Members on the Other Side while all of you may not have, and even on This Side, housing areas, these estates, particularly in the Pinelands area which is one of the largest housing estates, these areas are in dire need of attention. It is not sufficient for a minister to get up in here, Sir, and speak to the fact that solutions cannot be found because people have erected illegal structures therefore the officers have been unable to find solutions to dealing with the issues. It is not sufficient, Sir. It is not sufficient, Sir, to give people the impression and to convey the impression that they will become homeowners of these units and for nine years they have waited patiently for their paperwork and after nine years they still do not have any title deed in their possession, Sir, that they can extend their properties, they can go to their bank, that they have clarity in relation to the boundaries of their property or as we have heard earlier, that they even understand how the use of the common areas are going to be dealt with. I have housing estates in the Pinelands Area where people have put up fencing and enclosed wells that the National Housing Corporation are supposed to be cleaning so what happens, Sir? The units then, all of their waste have been continued to go into the units but you have a situation where the National Housing Corporation when

you call them to ask them to clean the wells you are told that they do not have the trucks. How are we, when July 1 comes, to expect that a National Housing Corporation which is already heavily indebted is going to be able to grapple with the addition issues that these people in these communities are facing? Mr. Speaker, these are the things that I would like the Honourable Minister of Housing to address. He continues to run from the real issues that are facing people in these communities but the fact of the matter, Sir, is that it is the people at the end of the day who live in these types of accommodations that daily have to face sewerage running into their road, sewerage running into the road affecting their businesses, sewerage running into the road affecting their livelihood. They are not on the south coast where there are hotels, they are in densely populated areas where you have serious concerns where children are running through the areas on the roads, playing in these communities but have to face the issues of wells and sewerage running into the roads, Sir. I appeal to the Minister of Housing, if he does nothing else in his wrap up to message the officers at the National Housing Corporation and address some of these issues in his wrap up and at least make a pledge to the people of this country and the people in these housing areas that he will address these problem, Sir. It is not sufficient, Sir, either for the Minister to come to this Chamber and not speak to the issue of the fact that the National Housing Corporation debt is in excess of half a billion dollars. The fact that the funds that are transferred from the Treasury to the National Housing Corporation are now being used primarily to pay salaries is of concern because it speaks to the fact that this Administration is certainly not going to be able to repair the units, they are not going to be able to provide any additional housing unless they have contractors who are prepared to build for exorbitant costs and then, they get the money and people are still waiting for years to be able to be accommodated. It means, Sir, that an answer needs to come from this Administration and in particular from the Minister of Housing in relation to how these issues are going to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me that the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) does not understand, not just the concept of low income housing and I think we had an admission from the Minister of Finance in relation to that but perhaps what was more telling this morning was when the Prime Minister attempted to give an explanation as to why in the last nine years this Administration has not been able to find solutions to the issues of persons who want to rent units, to the persons who want to be able to purchase lots, to the persons who want to be able to acquire any middle income homes across this country. Sir, it made me realise that this Administration is out of its depths and I do not think it is just the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I believe it is the entire Administration and certainly the entire Cabinet and I will say why.

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The Honourable Prime Minister in his commentary alluded to the fact that there are a number of mothers out there who are putting out their children and that has placed a burden on the National Housing Corporation as persons seek to acquire additional units from the National Housing Corporation.

Sir, I do not know if that is the only reason the Honourable Prime Minister is able to advance but a Democratic Labour Party Administration that accepts and has held as its mantra that Barbados is more than an economy, it is a society, would also have to have an understanding that it is not simply mothers putting out their children that has put a burden on the National Housing Corporation and that it is not simply the deadbeat fathers according to the Prime Minister that has caused the demand on the National Housing Corporation. What the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Honourable Prime Minister and others need to understand, if they are speaking about a society, is that since the units particularly in The Pine were built in the 1960s there has been little development in those areas, that people have grappled with the fact that they put in applications but in some cases even when units have been available in the constituency that they are often overlooked, they do not get the first ability to be able to rent the units for whatever reasons. These are things that I believe that if the Honourable Members on the other side fully appreciated the magnitude of the problem that the Honourable Prime Minister would not simply seek to speak to the fact that mothers put out their children.

You have had situations where some of these units were built for two persons to be living in but over the years the houses have become overcrowded, families have become extended and in some cases where the Town and Country Planning Office has failed to basically deal with the issue of the extensions or in some cases responding quickly to applications for extensions, you have had persons obviously building illegally to try to ensure that they can actually be close to their families and in the same neighbourhood that they would have grown up. That, Sir, requires an understanding of what is happening in these communities and it certainly paints a picture that this Administration does not fully understand the magnitude of the problem.

The other fact, Mr. Speaker, is that no housing assessment of needs generally has been done. I have spoken to the former Minister of Housing and Lands and I know that there were studies done before but it seems as though the current Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development has not collided with those documents either because I will not accept that because the Barbados Labour Party did not find all of the solutions and the Democratic Labour Party has found no solutions in the last nine years

that there are no solutions at all to the problem of housing in this country. It is unacceptable, Sir. Mr. Speaker, it speaks to the fact that this Administration is unwilling to find the solutions to the poor people in this country.

How can you explain to people that you have built The Grotto and Valery and that there are cost overruns which the learned Prime Minister would want us to believe that the people do not care about costs overruns, that all the people care about is that they have accommodation. While that may be true in principle what hurts me, Sir, is that it is almost an acceptance by the Prime Minister and Honourable Members on the other side that once the people are happy we are not prepared as politicians to explain to them that they may be happy for the time but that their children will inherit a debt for future generations that they will have to pay back.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this debate and this issue of housing and solving the housing problem has to take us into the realm of education as well and not just education of our people, it has to also begin with educating our politicians because it can no longer be sufficient that a person living in various communities across this country believe that the only way to have housing in this country is if you know a Minister or if you are affiliated to a Minister in some way that you are able to be provided for in terms of providing for housing for you and your family. It is no longer acceptable, Sir, and I maintain that until our politicians appreciate that giving someone a house or giving someone a house for rental or for short-term does not equate to a vote we will continue to have a situation in this country where Ministers find it difficult to find solutions to these problems.

Mr. Speaker, I have had people who have been the victims of fire and cannot get accommodation readily. There are families who have been dislocated and as much as Ministers would come in here and talk about housing developments when you find yourself in a situation where you need housing it is the most difficult thing for families to be able to find accommodation in this country readily through the National Housing Corporation. We have had persons before the law courts, women who have been the victims of domestic violence who because the sons that they have are too old cannot find shelter within the shelters that have been assigned and needs some kind of temporary accommodation to be able to get on with their lives. When you turn to the National Housing Corporation there is no assistance there for you either. You have persons with disabilities who in some cases have not been accommodated in a lot of these developments, and Sir, I say to you unless Members of Parliament start to find the solutions to the problems instead of spending the first three years that they are in office trying to fulfil promises and trying to, according to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, deal with 'yarfowlism' and spend the next two years trying

to win an election, we will continue to have problems in our society in relation to finding adequate housing for our people, and it comes with the attitude being changed from the people who have the ability to make the change. I sat at lunch and spoke to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and I said to her I do not understand why this is so difficult. I will not stand here and say that the Barbados Labour Party found all of the solutions but surely with all of the bright minds that we have educated over the years, surely there are solutions that can be found in the short to medium term to be able to ease the housing circumstances of people in this country.

It is not sufficient, Sir, for us to just blindside and continue to blindside the situation as though people do not matter and unless the approach that is taken by Members of Parliament in relation to how they deal with persons who are seeking accommodation changes, we will continue to have this problem.

When people ask me about acquiring a housing unit, Sir, very candidly I say to them go to the National Housing Corporation and apply and I follow that up by saying to them that I believe that there needs to be a needs assessment done within the National Housing Corporation to determine the needs of persons who are applying. It is not sufficient to send people into the National Housing Corporation and because they know that Minister that they are able to get housing or because I write a letter that they are able to get housing, those days are gone. We need to have a policy where people have certainty in terms of knowing they are applying, they are sending in the application and there is a time frame within which the responses are given. There is also a time-frame within which there is a follow up but you have people in the system who have been there for years applying, and I have to say to them on occasions keep going back to the National Housing Corporation because if you do not keep going back even though you are frustrated and you have pretty much given up on the National Housing Corporation trying to find a solution for you sometimes the persistence is the only thing that allows you to be able to get the opportunity to have housing accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, it pains me that there are still deficiencies in the system. I think that until we strive to improve the system and by extension seek to improve the lot of the people who we are here to serve, we will continue to find ourselves in a situation where comments from the Prime Minister will abound that both political parties never found a solution. How is it possible that in 2017 we cannot find solutions? I will continue to go back to this that on both sides you would find people who understand these issues but the internal workings of this Parliament in the last nine years have not facilitated for the meeting of minds on both sides to find solutions to the various problems in our sectors.

We have systems that can work but it requires political will in order to enable these systems to work. On neither side will you find all of the brightest minds or all of the people who understand what needs to be done, but we have had former Ministers of Housing and Lands and I believe we would have had persons on the other side who have experience in housing as well, so why is it that we could not have a meeting of minds?

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

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, these are things that concern me because as I wrap up, I believe that we must move past this point where we continue to point fingers across the Floor. We need to accept that we are at this juncture where have to find solutions and that in finding solutions sometimes you have to accept that you have done a little wrong, but you cannot dismiss the fact that the Auditor-General Report after Auditor-General Report speaks to the fact that tendering processes have not taken place, that the Valery and Grotto Projects that the cost overruns were so ridiculous in both cases that nobody is being locked up for that, that nobody even wants to come before the Public Accounts Committee but I had the privilege yesterday to watch the President of the United States of America being charged in America on alleged charges of corruption. They had a starting point in relation to their Constitution and the things that the Founding Fathers in America would tolerate and accept in their society and corruption and rooting out corruption was at the core of the principles of what they stood for. Mr. Speaker, what it showed me was that if a President of the United States of America could be called to account then Members of this Parliament where there are cost overruns, whether individually or collectively, that there is proof that persons have aided and abetted in spending the taxpayers money wrongfully or are doing things which are corrupt and bringing this Honourable Chamber into disrepute, and cause people on the street to believe that all politicians are the same, that we need to bring an end to that. Mr. Speaker, if it means that in relation to issues of National Housing Corporation that there needs to be a cleanup then this Administration needs to proclaim the Integrity legislation that it would have passed in the Senate back in 2013 and that it has not proclaimed since then.

Mr. Speaker, the National Housing Corporation needs its own investigation in relation to the issues of corruption as well.

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

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, in closing I would say that we have to have a different approach to governance in this country. The words of accountability and transparency means nothing if Members of this Honourable Chamber are not going to hold themselves to account but also hold other Members of this Parliament to account as well. I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: I rise to join this debate on the vesting of lands at the site formerly known as the District "E" Police Station into the National Housing Corporation for the purpose of housing and just as a reminder to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East as to the nature of the debate.

Mr. Speaker, the reality about it is that we have just once again heard a 30 minutes discourse on what is wrong in society, the challenges that constituents face, et cetera but what is missing all along is what the sustainable solutions are. Mr. Speaker, recently we heard in this Honourable Chamber the perilous state of the economy, how bad things are with public finances, then persons after persons on Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition Bench today gets up and makes the case for more to be done by the State to provide housing solutions.

Mr. Speaker, so that you hear that the National Housing Corporation is broke, but that it has to do more, that it has to do more for those who are welfare cases that it has to do more for those who are fire victims that it has to do more for those who are victims of domestic abuse. Mr. Speaker, I think we really need to have a very constructive dialogue in the Parliament that relates to the realities of Barbados today, of course, being ever mindful of where we want our country to go in the foreseeable future. Therefore this political wishy-washy thing where on the one hand you have no money, the country is broke, then five minutes later, the State has to provide all of these housing solutions just do not connect.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that successive Government in Barbados, both Democratic Labour Party and Barbados Labour Party have done reasonably well in terms of the State providing housing solutions to Barbadians and housing solutions is not just about constructing what we call National Housing Corporation units it is also about providing land that individuals may be able to build on, it is also about the State making meaningful interventions in the marketplace to first contain and wherever possible to decrease the cost of land in Barbados; it is also about the fiscal policies or programmes that allow for construction cost or the cost of construction of residential properties in Barbados to be contained and that wherever possible to be bought down as well. Mr.

Speaker, it is not just a National Housing Corporation unit issue per se', there is a wider issue that we have to look at in terms of the role that the State has been playing in the last 50 or so years in providing housing solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the conversation from a historical perspective must also be about how we have evolved as a society and the role of the State in providing those housing solutions in a changing Barbadian environment, so that when we were predominately an agrarian society the housing solutions provided back then may not be relevant or may not be as important to when we became a non-agrarian society and perhaps one where there is a greater and larger middle income grouping in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, it is also about the role of the State in terms of housing policies that has helped to transform this nation because having provided the educational opportunities to individuals to move themselves up the ladder, the State also went a step further and provided some meaningful housing solutions that allow those new intellectuals or public servants and such like to own a piece of the rock and start to move themselves up, really went into what we call the chance of economic empowerment in Barbados in the last 40 or 50 years. Mr. Speaker, I represent a constituency that perhaps has benefited most in Barbados on the housing policies of successive Governments, especially the Democratic Labour Party Government.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at Paradise Heights, for example, which hitherto was a place where many university professors and staff resided, that too in many respects was the brainchild of the Democratic Labour Party and the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow who recognised that in building a university that you had to provide accommodation for the staff therein and today I can go through Paradise Heights and recognise families first and second generations who have some affinity or relationship to the University of the West Indies. When you go a further step up the hill and look at Wanstead and you recognised that back then 7 000 square feet of land and a three-bedroomed two-bathroom house at a cost of \$17 000 was provided for public officers and today in Wanstead you find retired firemen, policemen, teachers, civil servants of second and third generations who have benefited from that. When you go down to West Terrace and you recognised that that too was primarily a housing development entirely done through the State apparatus. Mr. Speaker, in Husbands, Oxenards, Husbands Heights where I live today, all of that was land acquired by the State and developed in many respects and there are many of us who can point to the fact that the State intervention between the last 10 to 50 years have provided the level of transformation needed for housing in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, that is why recognising that solid foundation that we have to look at where Barbados is today and ask ourselves where Barbados must be 10 or 15 years

from now and what is the role of the State in providing housing solutions. Mr. Speaker, I do not think the conversation can just reside in this continuing dialogue about the masses of poor people and the State giving this and that, et cetera, we need to have more enlightened dialogue about the role of the State in housing solutions across the board.

Mr. Speaker, we must recognise that Barbados is at a crossroad and that this continuing belief that the State must provide everything to everyone is something of the past. Mr. Speaker, I know it is not politically correct in many respects but when Opposition Members of Parliament get in here and say that things are bad but that we must still provide all of the free education, all of the free healthcare, all of the free housing to society, we must ask ourselves is this direction in which Barbados must go.

3.29 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, sad to say, it may not be politically palatable

but I think we have to face a bit of reality in Barbados: The State cannot continue to provide everything to everyone. Therefore, you ask yourself where the important housing policies are. Mr. Speaker, there are a few things I think we must focus on; some of them have been tried in the past and some we have removed, but there are some things I feel strongly we must certainly wrap our minds around if we are talking about moving this society forward in terms of housing. Each individual in this society has a right to comfortable housing. I make no bones about that. I live in a physically comfortable structure, and I believe everybody else has a right to be in a similar structure as well; or a similarly comfortable structure, whether it be wall, chattel or whatever. I am not discounting that whatsoever, and there are certain things the State can perhaps do; for example mortgage interest allowances for tax purposes can and should be considered as a tool to spur ownership of property in Barbados. Reverse tax credit is another issue we have looked at.

Mr. Speaker, we must also recognise the changing demographics in Barbados, and we cannot have a conversation about housing policies that do not bear relationship to the changing demographics in Barbados. We are an ageing population, for example -- time is not on my side so I cannot speak to everything -- and therefore that tells me we must find housing solutions which bear relation to that changing demographic. Mr. Speaker, that is why I am not opposed to, or rather -- put another way -- I am in favour of reverse mortgages. I am in favour of Barbados giving serious attention to and making firm decisions in respect of reverse mortgages. Gone are the days when....

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNIS: Gone are the days when 60 years old may be considered old. Gone are the days when you had the ability to depend on your children to take care of you in your old age. That is why as an ageing population we must be prepared to be bold and say to financial institutions, "I have reached the age of 60 or 65, my mortgage is paid up, and according to the stats I may have another 25 years to live, so provide me with perhaps \$1 000 per month attributed to the value of my real estate so that I can live in comfort." Mr. Speaker, that means a couple of things: There is less of a dependence on the State to provide interventions for the elderly in this society. It also means there is less of a dependence on the elderly for the younger folks to take care of them in their golden age. It also means, of course, that you are putting assets which you have acquired over your lifetime to good use for you in your old age. We all know, and I see it so often as a Member of Parliament, parents who have worked so hard to own a piece of 'the Rock' and they get to the stage where they have a \$400 000 property or properties but they are living in a very desperate situation. They are struggling to pay their bills, they are struggling to get....

POINT OF ORDER

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member. What is the Point of Order?

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House when he suggests that this is bold and new when in fact it is a proposal contained in the 2008 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, no Point of Order found. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: If it is in 2008, Sir, it is a question of governing. He has been on the Front Bench since that time. Otherwise, it is just old talk.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, sit down please.

Hon. D.O'N. INNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I never said it was bold and imaginative. As a matter of fact, it has been practised for many years, but the Honourable Member for St. James Central, who would have helped to draft the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto for 2008, has a far greater recollection of these matters.

Aside.

Hon. D.O'N. INNIS: Mr. Speaker, the reality about it, as I was saying, is that we cannot allow our elderly folk to feel that they have to live in very challenged situations while still maintaining sizeable parcels of real estate in this country, just because you want to leave something behind

for your children. I have children, and I am determined -- I have told them upfront -- that whatever I have worked for and owned, let me make it abundantly clear, when I reach the age and stage of retirement I intend to use my assets to take care of myself and their mother in our golden years. You get up and work for what you want and for whatever you desire.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: When I close my eyes and there is something left behind, I hope you can continue with it.

Mr. Speaker, seriously, the reality about it is that these are the kinds of conversations we must embrace. It might mean some changes in legislation, it may mean a reorientation of the thinking in the financial markets, but the reality about it is that this also must be embraced. Mr. Speaker, we also recognise -- and I speak without recourse to any empirical evidence but merely anecdotal because I too have been investing in the real estate market in Barbados for several years -- that apartment rentals, townhouses and condominiums seem more to be becoming the norm in Barbados today than before. Therefore, it begs the question that if this is the route in which the society is going, what kind of incentives can we grant to such to ensure that Barbadians get a roof over their heads?

Mr. Speaker, let me make it abundantly clear that this does not mean the State will not take care of the most vulnerable in society. What bothers me, though, is our definition of the most vulnerable. I will be frank about it: On a weekly basis I encounter Barbadians who are really down and out when it comes to housing. You know that they do not have the financial wherewithal to own a piece of 'the Rock' or to pay rent and so on. You really meet those hardship cases, but I also meet many who, quite frankly, can do better but they have an attitude that somebody owes them a favour and the State must provide a housing solution to them, Mr. Speaker. These are individuals who have no difficulty in paying \$1 000 a month for a car loan, have no difficulty in paying \$300 per month for a cell phone, but have a difficulty in helping to contribute towards their housing in this country.

We must therefore be very careful as politicians that we do not perpetuate a mendicant attitude in this country. I think it is my duty first and foremost as a Member of Parliament, for anyone who comes before me asking for assistance for housing, to sit down and have a conversation with you about your personal situation; not just to say "write a letter to NHC", not just to say "call the general manager at NHC or the Minister Kellman or whoever", but to sit down with you and ask, "How much do you make on a monthly basis? What is the income? How much can you afford? What are the things you can cut back on? What are

the things you cannot cut back on?" Mr. Speaker, you would then be amazed, when you have those conversations with constituents and others, that you help them to come to the realisation that, first, housing is a costly and very responsible undertaking, and secondly, you yourself get to the position where you really understand who is desperately in need and those who just want it because they may have issues.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in Barbados today, and I guess it has happened many times before too, where you get children who live at home with their parents, they have a noise which may be over the issue of the boyfriend or girlfriend you have, your attitude, the time you are coming in, et cetera, and you get vexed with your parents and then feel that you therefore need to get a piece of 'the Rock'. You are vexed with your mother because she has told you about the boyfriend you have, so the belief is that NHC should provide you with housing. No. I feel you should go and apologise to your mother for your bad behaviour -- as long as you are living under my roof, you are living by my rules as far as possible -- and not feel that you must therefore become a burden to the State because you cannot get along with your mother or father. Mr. Speaker, these are the kinds of realities which I have to face as a Member of Parliament, and which I believe all of us must face.

3.32 p.m.

It does not dispel the view that all of us must own a piece of the rock. The other issue I want to speak to is the housing issue in the country. Sir, Barbadians must appreciate that owning a piece of real estate must not just be construed as just a housing solution but must also be seen as an investment and perhaps that is not deeply embedded in the psyche of us as a people. Perhaps, it is related to slavery, perhaps it is related to the chattel house syndrome as the Minister of Housing spoke so eloquently to but, Sir, do you know what? If I had to give advice to young people in Barbados today, I would say to them that from their first paycheck they should put aside a little bit of it, five per cent, 10 per cent, whatever you can and put it in a little account, whether it is the credit union or the commercial bank, whatever they can afford. It is principle so whatever they can afford, they should put it one side in an account that cannot be touch easily on a daily basis and start saving towards ownership of a piece of the rock. Mr. Speaker, I ask myself every day and each one of us, all 30 of us in this Parliament must ask ourselves this question: Are we encouraging the next generation to become true owners of capital, assets and wealth in the country or are we teaching the next generation that it must just be about the material things in life that are not so relevant to you as you go forward. Are we teaching our young people about investment and ownership or are we teaching them just to borrow other people's things and enjoy a good life?

Mr. Speaker, not all of them will make it but if each young person in Barbados is taught from a very early age that whatever you make in income to put aside a 'tralla' towards ownership you would be amazed at how the thinking in the country as a whole can change. Sir, all of a sudden, a \$60 000 motor car is not critical any more, all of a sudden twice annual vacations are not important anymore. Sir, when you teach them that at the age of 30, you are able to own a \$250 000 property, appreciate that by the age of 45 and that property has increased in value to maybe \$400 000 but you have paid your mortgage and your equity in that has grown tremendously. You are now in a position to take some of that equity out and buy a second property or take something out and invest towards your children education. Sir, these are the kinds of conversations that we cannot run away from in this Chamber but when we want to limit our conversations about more and more pressure applied to the National Housing Corporation, about fire victims. Mr. Speaker, Sir, by the way, if I had to speak to that, there are some people who cannot find money to pay house insurance on an annual basis which may work out to about \$30 a month but can find \$150 a month to top up their cellphones. Let us get real in this country, sir. We have to focus on these things and then when the fire occurs....

Sir, let me say there are some hard cases where they just cannot afford it because of rent and whatever but when it does occur then the pressure is on the State to find the wherewithal to provide that housing. Mr. Speaker, this country is ripe for a national dialogue and conversation about some of these social issues. Sir, housing is also in this respect a social good and the Democratic Labour Party has never ran away from its responsibility in terms of the social goods in the country but, as I have said at the very beginning, we are at the cross roads and we are at the point where we have to have a conversation quickly and come to a firm decision as to what the State can and must realistically be asked to provide to all citizens in the country and in that conversation it must be about what are the responsibility of individuals in Barbados. Sir, what I am hearing from the other side does not give me hope that things will change if given the opportunity because it would still redound to politicians calling the manager of the National Housing Corporation saying that so-and-so needs a house or a unit to rent and to accommodate them now, that so-and-so has not paid the rent so do not put them out. Mr. Speaker, we can do better. I think this country wants us to do better. I think therefore we must be open minded and willing to embrace several of the issues that must move this country forward.

Mr. Speaker, as I wrap up and as I look towards the future, let me say this. There is a mindset among Honourable Members of the Opposition that individuals who live in Haynesville for example can and must not do any better, that they must always be renting from

Government, that their and their second and third generation but also be getting help from housing. Sir, as a Government, the Democratic Labour Party has been able to provide almost 326 families in that community with opportunities to stop paying rent and start to move from being tenants to being owners, that is the kind of transformation we must talk about in the country. It means that children of parents who grew up in Haynesville can now have the change to move towards ownership of real estate elsewhere in this society. It is not about saying that because you are from Haynesville that you cannot do better. Sir, I am from Bayfield, St. Philip, the son of a fisherman and agriculture labourer and look where I am today. Sir, if you surround yourself and listen to people who are constantly negative, you will do no better. The Opposition bench likes to have this mendicant attitude perpetrating in this society feeling that you must beg somebody for a favour, that you do not have a right to housing, that I have a right as a politician to give it to you but, you have the same rights that I have as a citizen of this country to own a piece of the rock, so ease off the people of Haynesville, out-going Member of Parliament for St. Thomas.

Mr. Speaker, by the way, the Member of Parliament for St. Michael South East is all tipped now to replace the Honourable Member for St. Thomas as a candidate there next elections, that is why I note her passionate farewell speak just now to the people of the Pine. Sir, the reality about it is that we can do better.

Mr. Speaker, my last point as I look towards the future is that the housing solutions in Barbados that we speak to cannot just be about the traditional brick and mortar, it cannot be about the antiquated designs we have had over the years and whatnot. They must be designs that embrace renewal energy for example because at the end of the day, we want to get utility cost down. They must be the kind of designs that lend themselves to extended family situation as well. Sir, I am satisfied that Barbados can and will do better. I am satisfied that as we move forwards in debates in the House of Assembly about housing, let us open our minds, let us move away from the 1930s, 1960s and 1970s conversations about the National Housing Corporation and let us start talking about how we can empower a new group of entrepreneurs in Barbados, a new class of owners in Barbados, who can really and truly transform housing in Barbados, who can drive the cost of housing down. Let us have conversations about how we can empower and encourage more of citizens to feel that they can own a piece of the rock, not to feel that we have to depend on a handout from anyone. Let us talk to our young people about saving and investing towards their future, not about complaining about what the Government can and cannot do. (8:40) I think the role of the State is to provide the best enabling environment that no matter your socio-

economic circumstances you can pull yourself upwards and onwards.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I sat and listened the Honourable Member for St. James South and I really would have said that he is not in tuned with what is really happening in Barbados. I believe that if the Honourable Member had his ears to the ground, he would recognise the large percentage of Barbadians and some of the visitors among us too who are really suffering on a daily basis, sometimes for food and toiletries. I believe that is why the Honourable Member at Christmas time would take his packages because people look forward to getting it because some can do absolutely no better. I happen to live in a real world. I do not think the Honourable Member really understands what is really happening on the ground. I supposed with those criticisms he has made he has lost sight of the fact ...

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Miss C. Y. FORDE: There are still families within the last five, six and ten years in St. Thomas who are squatting at neighbours and friends and who are at the mercy of the churches and other community groups for them to survive because I do not expect that the Welfare Department would be able to pay for housing facilities on a temporary basis for all of them, and therefore we understand it is a social responsibility the Government has as they have for transport, education, health and so on and therefore I am not going to be making small talk about it because it is a matter that we must address in this country sooner rather than later.

The dislocation, Mr. Speaker, and you know because you got your own constituency... About two or three years ago there were, I think, about five houses that were burnt flat in the general area of St. Michael West and therefore once one is in tune with what is happening within the community they understand. Perhaps the Honourable Minister might want to tell us if insurance is being paid by the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development for the housing units that have not been allocated to residents. Not all persons have got access to the ownership of the housing units and therefore the Honourable Minister might want to use the good time he has to be able to refer to that and give the assurance to those persons living in housing

units that have not been allocated to the tenants that insurance is paid for them in their shelter.

I also want to refer to the homeless. This is the first time ever in my life of more than three decades that I have seen so many people homeless. Yes, we have been able to work towards the Lancaster House as a temporary measure and we know that the Vauxhall Senior Citizens' Home would have been accommodating some of them but when we go through Bridgetown...

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I do not know, Mr. Speaker, why the Honourable Member for St. James South do not go and drive the Mercedes that the tyre almost broke off in some single pothole when all of us are suffering with the potholes as we speak and are not getting any help.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, homelessness in this country is growing by leaps and bounds and it is not only because people want to come to town to be able... They gravitate towards Bridgetown because they know they would probably get something to eat. Mr. Speaker, I shudder when I learn of women with children who have been evicted that have nowhere to go and because families are so large particularly in housing units... I have not got any but in my canvassing and moving around with my colleagues I see units that were built for a husband and a wife and probably a single child as would be in The Pine and in sections of Fernihurst, Haynesville, Eden Lodge and so on and now those houses have a mother, daughter, son and grandchildren to sometimes there are ten and 12 persons living in a housing unit, and of course when those children now developed and get their own there is not enough space so there would always be conflict and confusion, and therefore when persons are evicted because they cannot pay the rent that have been asked of them, they then gravitate towards town and they suffer.

I was amazed in 2008/09 when the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and his team with the then late Prime Minister went up to Marchfield, shut down Barbados a whole Sunday evening, the television station and the radio station, to be able to dangle a few keys at persons who wanted to access the properties. I believe that Barbadians have their dignity. This spectacle has continued, Mr. Speaker, even up to a few weeks ago where old people who were living in run-down conditions received a house from the Urban Development Commission and the television had to be there to expose them. In rural, there are similar stories.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party repaired and built hundreds of houses over the 14-year period. Well, it would not quite be 14 years, it might have been from 1996 when the Rural Development Commission and Urban

Development Commission came into fruition, but we built so many houses in our time and never ever have we dangled a key or made it public unless the person said that the Rural Development Commission built this for me or the Urban Development Commission built this for me. Barbadians have their dignity and it should be preserved and respected in every area. I felt hurt. Mr. Speaker, do you know what was added to that spectacle up there in Marchfield? Champagne and 'food grandmother', and persons who did not apply said on the radio that they got one of the houses but they did not apply. I hope that the funds are being paid for them if it is rent-to-own or whatever and that persons have not received those houses for free because there are many others who are working and they are paying \$800 and \$900 for rent when the month comes who would want to be able to access a house but if they have ever smelt or looked at or assumed that they are Barbados Labour Party supporters crapaud smoke their house when they go to the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development to get a house. It is wrong for us to divide this small country where everybody is somebody else's family or friend down that road that I have witnessed this Democratic Labour Party is putting a wedge down the centre of the people of Barbados to be able to separate the Ds from the Bs because at the end of the day we are one family and we need to make sure that we continue to look after the needs of Barbadians without making them feel that they are inferior or that they have done the wrong thing in that respect.

I believe, Sir, that all Honourable Members of Parliament in Barbados on either side of this Chamber should be accorded the facility to be able to access some of the houses that are being built and some of the lands that are being sold so that at the end of the day there is development across the entire Barbados. It is the taxpayers' money and I feel that it should be well spent.

I am not going to spend any time, Mr. Speaker, as I have made in my notes, to refer to the Throne Speech of the Democratic Labour Party in this country which says on page 11 that the Government will continue to focus on reducing the backlog of housing solutions for low to middle income wage earners and will partner with private sector to construct houses for middle income families and so on and so forth.

I am still extremely concerned, Mr. Speaker, about what is happening to the low-income workers and indeed to some of those persons who are receiving properties and homes from the private sector. Whether it is a private public partnership I am not concerned but I have a tremendous difficulty in understanding why in small Barbados persons are being given housing... We all know what is a turnkey solution. The concept before of some of those private contractors was to offer a turnkey solution, you push your key in your door, your cupboards are in,

your floors are tiled, your plumbing is in order and your electricity is connected and I am afraid that that is not quite the case at this point in time, Mr. Speaker. I have witnessed houses in the constituency where I happen to live where persons got houses with no tiles, no cupboards, sometimes you hardly can see a step and no railings and some of the houses are as high as this Honourable Chamber's roof and people are paying \$250 000 for a two-bedroom house and \$300-and-something thousand for a three-bedroom house and there is little or no security. I have seen some that were completed that are allocated where there was no electricity connected and the persons who bought them were told they have to pay for the light pole. How could poor people be treated like that and expect that they can have a comfortable life, it cannot work. I have a problem with that and I would like to ask the Honourable Minister to make sure that best practices take place where if there are going to be private developments that people are given the best of service and quality property for their money. It is going too far. People are accepting them because they really want the house or the land but unfortunately it is too costly and the houses are not up to scratch in the way we expect if you are talking about purchasing a house with a turnkey solution. I am saddened at what I have been witnessing within the past couple of years.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister spoke about the Station Hill project at St. Peter and I want to refer to what the Honourable Minister said when he said that the land was allocated, I believe that was the expression, to the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. but was not suitable for them because of the area where the land was. Mr. Speaker, as far as I remember, where that District "E" police station was located in the past, I know that it is somewhere near the entrance to Douglas Development as well as to the Coleridge and Parry School, but the level at which that District E Police Station was there is a panoramic view of the west coast.

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I believe in inland tourism. I know that Villa Nova is a property that is inland and because of the greenery and vegetation and so on that was planted around it and the historic connection was in the structure of that Great House that it was aesthetically pleasing to the eye and I am sure that those persons including those dignitaries who came to Barbados enjoy life. I believe that Eastry House would have been an inland property as well, I believe that rather than now saturating our coastlines with properties, with large hotels some of which do not even fit into the character of the locations where they will go, I believe that some inland construction of villas or hotels will make a difference. It will also bring business to the communities and it will bring employment as well but it will also add another kind of flavour. I know internationally that is what is happening as there are tourism properties and so on that

is being built inland to facilitate visitors and others among us.

Mr. Speaker, I would have wished that it was not have been said by the Honourable Member but if the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., said that they no longer have an interest in that property then I really have no problem. I trust however that the properties to be constructed there would meet those persons in Barbados who are on that exhaustive list and I wonder if the Honourable Member in his work through his officers have been trying to lessen the numbers, having learnt whether persons who were relying on that listing for the last 10, 15 and 20 years have now acquired properties and should be taken off that list. Mr. Speaker, there are too many persons who come asking for housing and are turned away.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday downtown a gentleman told me that he has been calling nonstop to make an appointment, that he has applied for housing, that he has the money but that nobody has returned his call whenever he visits. Mr. Speaker, that is another part of our culture that is not Barbadian, if we do not have the properties then we do not have them but for people to be calling continuously and are not getting a response or a return phone call, because of an answering machine and I do not know what is happening in some of our ministries, but I think it is unfortunate for people to be out there not getting a response or even going to the Ministry of Housing every two weeks checking on their applications only to come out empty-handed as a result of that situation.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to indicate to a comment I made earlier where I support what the Honourable Member said about the acquisition and vesting in the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development I want to say that both the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission were extremely impactful in changing the social structure and life of Barbadians. I mentioned houses and roads. There is also lighting that is not happening anymore and so many of our communities are overgrown with bush that it is dangerous especially for people who have to traverse the streets at nights, from work, church, the hospital, et cetera. Mr. Speaker, I believe that is something that the Honourable Member needs to look at.

Mr. Speaker, however, I want to refer to housing for the disabled, that was a part of the Poverty Alleviation Project. I am not hearing much about it but I know it comes under, I believe either the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development as well as with communication with that of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development. The disabled among us are suffering a lot too. Yes, some of them get help from private agencies putting in ramps and other assistances but there are many living in houses that are in

poor conditions who really required upgrades as a result of the deterioration of their properties, particularly wooden properties; persons living with HIV/AIDS, many of them were facilitated because they were chased away from their homes as a result of the stigma that many Barbadians have towards them. Therefore I think it is unfortunate if it is not happening again when we heard that only recently our numbers seem to be growing again.

Mr. Speaker, those who are squatting and the Honourable Member knows about a case or so where I referred to him quietly where these persons have not been living in a house for quite a few months but who were living out in the open, their bodies are exposed to the elements and to the dangers that we all know can unfold. The homeless I mentioned before but more particularly the plight of the elderly and that is where both the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission have to play their role.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I want to raise is associated with the H.E.L.P. Programme that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North would have been working towards. We can see that some efforts were made but not enough and it is unfortunate that there are so many large tenancies in urban Barbados that are private tenancies that those persons are not given the chance to erect a waterborne facility because of the fact that the landlord says that that land is for his children and therefore he cannot afford to allow the persons to stay there even though that person might have been there for 20 or 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, there are other private tenancies where persons are given the opportunity to purchase but sad to say the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development seems to have limited land surveyors because there is legislation that was piloted through this Honourable Chamber in the Barbados Labour Party time where persons in urban Barbados could purchase their lots for \$2.50 per square foot and then the Government would subsidise the remainder if the cost was at \$5, \$15 or whatever per square foot, but because there are no land surveyors available to be able to do the surveying that has fallen through the cracks.

Mr. Speaker, similarly those in rural Barbados especially the plantation tenancies where persons were allowed to purchase their spots at ten cents per square foot that is another challenge because there are not enough land surveyors, those individuals are still holding on for 15, 20 and 30 years in order for them to be able to have the surveying done so that they can pay the funding towards their properties.

Mr. Speaker, we know what it is with ownership as when one owns something it gives that person security of

tenure and when that does not happen as is the case with some of the housing units and the conveyances that creates a lot of confusion. Only week before last we were somewhere in Belleville and the residents were saying that they heard that those residents have the houses but that they cannot change the windows or the doors, that money is lacking and that there are difficulties, that their families are growing and that they really need some help. If they are going to charge that National Social Responsibility Levy it is the Government's money coming through the taxpayers and Barbadians who need help who are properly investigated should get the help if they are to continue to enjoy the quality of life that we envisage that they would have. There are a litany of woes associated with it, Sir.

The other comment I wish to make is associated with the General Workers Fund. I know of a period where...

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, it is my error. You started at twenty to and your time would expire now, but since it was my error I will give you two minutes to wind up.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: I thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

The General Workers Fund and the Housing Credit Fund, I know in particular the General Workers Fund would be reinstituted because those are small people who are the ones that benefit by a \$10 000 amount to help to upgrade their facilities. I trust, Sir, that will help to make a difference.

4.13 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, my time would not allow me to speak to the whole issue of the housing neighbourhood project which the Right Honourable Prime Minister, I believe, might have made mention of this morning, except to say that the folks of St. Thomas, even though there are no housing units there, eagerly await the Government's intervention in working towards the housing lots at Forty Acres and the request for Kingsland in Spring Farm so that housing development can take place.

Aside.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Yes, Barbadians love to build from the back and come forward, and I trust that the opportunity will come for those persons to be able to build their own houses and live in a more peaceful and congenial atmosphere where families will feel safer and feel empowered because they would have had a piece of 'the Rock' which they so long have yearned to have. Because of circumstances they would not have been able to do a lot before, and because of the policies of this Government which have failed them, they have been put in a position

where unfortunately they have to wait on the State at times and wait on others in the society to help them to be able to live a better life. I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am obliged.

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

Aside.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to involve myself in this debate on the Vesting of 5 930 square metres of land, the former site of the District 'E' Police Station in St. Peter. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that first of all housing of our people in Barbados is or should be a priority of any Government. It must be a priority, and it figures really highly in our social service offerings among education, educational requirements and, of course, our health needs; so housing is right up there with those social service offerings. As a matter of fact, Abraham Maslow in his book, 'Hierarchy of Needs', pointed clearly to food, clothing and shelter as the basic needs of man, and of course, up until today housing, of all of those needs, remains one of the most elusive and costly of those basic needs. I want to refer to our ISEE (Identification Stabilisation Enablement Empowerment) Bridge programme because even in that particular intervention, the housing pillar of the ISEE Bridge programme remains one of the most troublesome features of the programme because sometimes when we stabilise, enable and empower the clients out of the ISEE Bridge programme, the housing component of the programme always remains the most troublesome of all the pillars we need to address.

Mr. Speaker, adequate shelter leads and contributes to any person's self-actualisation, to my mind. It spawns self-esteem and it also spawns achievement in that particular individual or household. Mr. Speaker, any Government with a socialist democratic agenda -- any Government -- must engineer its programmatic timetable to, first of all, elevate the living standards and conditions of the people whom they govern; must promote the upliftment of our people throughout Barbados or any country which is being governed; and it also must enhance the personal gratification of that individual, especially if those individuals could be found among the poor and the indigent, the elderly, the disabled or those affected or afflicted by HIV-AIDS. I believe as a Government we need to identify those target groups, and wherever possible have a State intervention where we especially look out for the poor, indigent, elderly and disabled community, and those affected or afflicted by HIV-AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, we, this particular Government, the Democratic Labour Party Administration, did this by ushering in a quality of life evident in our structures that

we provide through our HELP (Housing Every Last Person) programme back in 2008. As a new Government back then, it was featured in our 2008 Manifesto where we said we were going to intervene with our HELP programme and where we would do some house-building, some land sales where we offered land at \$5 a square foot, and also where we said we would proceed on a deliberate policy of divesting ourselves of rental units in the 20-year programme. Mr. Speaker, under the Barbados Labour Party the housing solutions were eclipsed by the housing needs and requirements in this country. Mr. Speaker, when we came to office back in 2008, the Barbados' barn was bare and bereft of any focus, any planning or any objectivity whatsoever. I hear the Barbados Labour Party talking about the kinds of housing solutions they brought to this country. I do not know where they were. The central focus of the Barbados Labour Party when we came to office back in 2008 was, of course, the construction of office buildings and the large deposits that they often spoke about in the Land Bank which they had in the Ministry of Housing. Their focus was the construction of office buildings and the accumulation of land in the Land Bank.

Mr. Speaker, they had back in 2008 when we came to office an abysmal record and legacy in house-building and land allocation. Mr. Speaker, they made a feeble attempt at house-building, as was alluded to earlier in this debate, when they attempted some Hardwood Housing and another housing project where they had some houses tied down at the National Housing Corporation, as if they were straight out of the story of Gulliver's Travels; tied down as if they were in the land of Lilliput. They were tied down; those houses.

Mr. Speaker, when we came to office in 2008 over 25 000 people were on the waiting list at the NHC, waiting for houses, believe it or not; so we had to usher in an introduction. Before I get to that, and I said it before in a previous debate, along with the feeble attempts they were making with the housing solutions in Barbados, they were principally responsible for ushering in plywood houses in Barbados. They were also responsible for ushering in this rent-a-room thing in Barbados; under the Barbados Labour Party. That was their policy. We hear this talk about vagrants in Barbados? The advent of vagrancy in Barbados started under the Barbados Labour Party. So stark was the incidence of vagrancy and vagrants in Barbados that they had to go into Hindsbury Road and open the Clyde Gollop Centre for the Homeless. That is what they did. So stark were the cases of vagrancy in Barbados that they had to find a solution back then. Of course, we inherited the Clyde Gollop Centre which now falls under the National Assistance Board. We had to refurbish, expand and upgrade it to where we now accommodate a number of homeless men when the nights come.

This question of vagrancy which they want to pin on us -- as they want to pin pit toilets on this Democratic Labour Party Administration -- those scourges did not start with the Democratic Labour Party. They started under the Barbados Labour Party; pit toilets and vagrants. When we see vagrants now walking about Bridgetown or about Barbados, they want to pin that on us as if that is something which started with this Democratic Labour Party. We inherited vagrancy from the Barbados Labour Party. So stark was it that they had to open the Clyde Gollop Centre, Mr. Speaker. I want to go further. The Democratic Labour Party has nothing -- absolutely nothing -- to be ashamed of in this country when it comes to housing. I hear the Honourable Member for St. James Central trying to pin that on us too. Our policy is established clearly on a philosophy of social equity and social provisioning. The Barbados Labour Party has absolutely no moral or any other right to point the fingers of criticism at the Democratic Labour Party when it comes to house-building in this country. I really do not want to hear them. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I believe you too only hear them because you are not deaf. The Barbados Labour Party has nothing to say to the Democratic Labour Party when it comes to the question of house-building.

4.20 p.m.

We have heard all the criticisms regarding our housing projects. I heard them today criticising Parish Land. I heard them today criticising Constant, Lancaster, the Grotto. They complained about Valery, how high cost it was but I want to say that it did not even enter the contemplation of the planner or those who set in Government and in the Cabinet at the time to even consider putting housing projects at these places I just itemized, it did not enter their contemplation, it was not part of their programme. We here, in this Democratic Labour Party administration conceptualized these housing projects and where these housing projects are now under the Barbados Labour Party there was cow-itch, grass, rust and steel and barren land, under the Barbados Labour Party, so it is under us that we conceptualised these housing projects and put them where they are, where 700 odd people now live in comfort, in splendor and ease, in modern facilities, lifted from their state of squalor, using pit toilets and other things and we have put them in the kinds of facilities where they are now comfortable. Sir, over 700 families were afforded the opportunity in the country of Barbados under the Democratic Labour Party to raise their standard of living, realise some kind of self-actualisation, experience stabilisation in their lives and sampling the taste of enablement under the Democratic Labour Party. They are also enjoying a feeling of empowerment for first time in their lives and now experiencing the kind of empowerment that this Democratic Labour Party led them to. They talked in the past about dangling keys when we go to open a new housing project in Barbados and embarrassing people.

Well, Sir, we dangle keys in public but under the Barbados Labour Party several of those same prospect house owners subjected themselves to indignities in private under the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, do you believe that. They are complaining that we embarrass people by dangling keys in public but understand the Barbados Labour Party they subjected people to some indignities in private and I hear when people come to my clinic. I am sure that Honourable Members of the Frontbench have heard it too, that when you coming for houses under the Barbados Labour Party some of my people told me they had to bathe first and come fully powdered. Sir, some people told me that they could not other than fully powdered or bathe. Sir, that is what used to happen under the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister alluded to this earlier when he contributed to this debate. He challenged the Barbados Labour Party to go and tell the people who now occupy the houses that we built how expensive they were and how much have arisen. I want to add to what the Prime Minister said about that. Sir, I want them next time they go out rubbing shoulders, all over Barbados they are rubbing shoulder, so I want them next time they go out rubbing shoulders to set up a platform in front of Valery and in front of the Grotto and convince the tenants who now occupy those housing estates that the accommodation is too good for them, look them squarely in the face and tell them the apartments that you now occupy at Valery and the apartments you now occupy at the Grotto are too good for you because we feel in this administration that if we lifted those particular housing projects from where they are and put them on the west coast, on the platinum coast that they would not be out of place, that is the kind of accommodation that we have built for the people of Barbados. Sir, they would not be out of place so we do not think they are good for them. I want them to set up their platforms in front of the Grotto and in front of Valery and tell the disabled people who are occupying the apartments we have added at Valery that they are too good and too well appointed for them.

Mr. Speaker, I want them to set up their platform next time they go out rubbing shoulders and also tell the elderly people we have provided for at Valery and at the Grotto and tell them they should not be living in such well-appointed apartments but they should be in the almshouse. Sir, I want them to tell them that. Sir, for all the talk the Opposition is criticising about the apartments and the properties we have built for the people of Barbados tell them that they are too good for them. I want you look them squarely in the face and tell them they are too good for them.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party's, nothing as far as we are concerned are too good or expensive for the people of Barbados. The best money that any Government can spend is on taxpayers themselves. It is

the taxpayers' money and we feel we can spend it on them. We will not resile from provisioning for those who have to be provisioned for. I want to say that and say it very clearly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to see more of what is happening today in this Honourable House when it comes to the vesting of land in the National Housing Corporation. Sir, between 2008 and 2013, when we came to this office, housing was our flag ship programme and still remains our flag ship programme. We have provided more houses in the first five years of our stewardship in the country than the Barbados Labour Party provided in 14 years. They cannot argue about that because that is a given. We have provided all kinds of housing solutions, rent-to-own, sale and also distribution of lots. We have a stellar record when it comes to housing solutions in Barbados and it cannot be eclipsed in any form or any fashion by the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, I want to see some more of that happening here in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, vesting of land in the National Housing Corporation, we should continue to do just that. I would advise the Minister of Housing to pursue a policy, a deliberate policy of vesting more lands across Barbados in the National Housing Corporation. The land bank is now flushed with an abundance of land and I feel that we can find solutions in high end value, medium income and also within the working class reach. They say to divest the land, sell it and the proceeds from the sales should be lodged within the National Housing Corporation to pursue a deliberate policy of building housing for the poor in the country. The National Housing Corporation is not in a financial state to pursue this particular policy but they have land. It is a case of the National Housing Corporation being land rich and cash poor. If you are land rich, Sir, you can have an asset, sell that asset, realise the proceeds from it and transform it into housing solutions for higher income, middle income and working class people in the country.

Mr. Speaker, as a Government, we have to provide housing solutions especially for the poor and working class and middle income people in Barbados and we have the source and we have the resources and therefore, we should exploit those resources wherever possible. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we should expand the HELT Programme by divesting ourselves of substantial tracks of land and using the proceeds, as I have said before, to realise this particular mission and construct scores of terrace units. I believe that is the way we should go.

Mr. Speaker, we have set up a number of high-rise apartments in Barbados but I feel it militates against what we, as a people from a cultural point of view believe. I believe that we like to have our own little front yard. It is alright to have high-rise buildings but for me, personally, I

am against high-rise buildings and I think that we should go back to terrace units.

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Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to look at the public sector, in fact at that agency that is set up to deal with housing for the low-income group and indeed what we have done over the years. Under both parties the National Housing Corporation embarked on building out a number of estates. Those estates were geared towards that low-income group, some civil servants too, and general workers. What has happened over time is that the maintenance costs of these units became burdensome to the National Housing Corporation, and as Minister at the time, when we looked at the cost of maintenance overtime, and indeed the other party recognised that too because their divestment programme at the time was to sell the units based on a valuation of the housing units...

At the time this policy was conceptualised in 2003 the aim of the then Government was to sell some 3 571 units but little did they know that they had some issues that would have confronted them (1) they had an issue with the lack of land surveyors, (2) they had to grapple with the removal of asbestos, yes it was done and we know who it was done by but this is not the time to deal with that (3) after recognising that they wanted to conceptualise this programme there was a proposal by the then Government to expand the Legal Department at the National Housing Corporation, (4) the number of illegal extensions and (5) on top of that there was some debate...

I remember the then Government sought the services of a noted Queen's Counsel who mentioned to them that this programme will result in some problems and said there is some need for special legislation to get these units transferred to persons who would be buying them under the Barbados Labour Party conceptualisation. The programme got off the ground and deposits were taken from a lot of tenants but the issue of transferring them met with a number of difficulties, and that is why I said from the outset, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central was correct when he said this, that we need to have a rigorous vesting programme because at the time the National Housing Corporation not having title by virtue of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act could not transfer the units by way of conveyance so what happened thereafter is that the Democratic Labour Party came into power and recognised the problem, that there was a desire by many of those tenants coming to the National Housing Corporation to someday own these units.

Our programme is different because we recognised that living in the unit for 20 years or so accumulating so much rent would indirectly have resulted in or could be calculated as a direct purchase or an indirect purchase by the said tenants and so we laid down a policy but we recognised that we too had the issues that the previous Government had, that is, the illegal extensions. We also recognised that the space became extremely small for the families living in those units as the family expanded. Not only that, some of the illegal extensions were part of the family business because nobody in the family were working so they became small businessmen and some of them established shops to sustain their families so we had to treat it very humanely and we obviously had to have discussions with the Town and Country Planning and with the tenants, so we contemplated a tenants' association so that the tenants grievances and issues would have been represented at the National Housing Corporation. It started in some of the areas and sometime in January 2013 the State, that is this Government, intervened by virtue of passing legislation, that is, the National Housing Corporation (Transfer of Terrace Units Programme) so that we can make these units accessible to those persons who had the desire to purchase and obviously we were able to deal with some of the extensions as a result of this piece of legislation. Indeed, that process is continuing.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East sometimes would get up and try to make us believe that nothing was done in this programme but my report tells me that by December 21, 179 conveyances were conveyed and completed. I do recall that in the debate when we passed this legislation that I went through the number of illegal extensions. Lammings had four, The Ivy 31, Haynesville 67, Bonnetts 39, Deacons Farms 132, Eden Lodge 81, Fernihurst 49, Golden Acres 20, Grazettes 113, and for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, the Pine had 299 at the time this was debated in Parliament. As I said before we have to treat to the issue of illegal extensions. We had to walk very carefully in dealing with these illegal extensions because we understand what was going on. As Minister of Housing and Lands I recognised the fact that people outgrow their space. In fact, some families even built plywood houses in the back of the housing estates, that is a fact. Once you are getting on good with the family, they were living good because there was just a room for them to sleep in and then they would go over to the house and use the bathroom and cook and whatever and go back. I looked at it because I said that these were poor people having the desire to own their own units but they could not do any better.

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Mr. Speaker, they set up their small shops where workers from Ministry of Transport and Works would visit and would fraternise those shops, the people got their

income coming in but the focus behind the divestment of those units we believe that it was in keeping with our philosophy of ensuring that every Barbadian could own a piece of the rock. We believe that giving Barbadians a conveyance in their hands would ensure that they stop paying rent, of course the condition for that was that tenants had to be paid up in full because the programme ensured that the State was protected.

Mr. Speaker, what happened thereafter is that as soon as we announced the policy it acted as a catalyst, persons who owed moneys to the National Housing Corporation came into the National Housing Corporation and paid up their arrears. Mr. Speaker, these 179 people could not have gotten their conveyances unless they met the conditions as were set out. Mr. Speaker, not only that, having the conveyances in their hands they can now use those conveyances as security or collateral for a loan, for educational purposes for their children, to maintain their homes or to beautify their surroundings. Mr. Speaker, I believe that both sides agreed to the divestment of these units but that there was a difference in the method because the Barbados Labour Party believes that its sale outright but we believe in transferring once a person lives after 20 years and whose rent were paid up in full. Mr. Speaker, that was the divide.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to put it on record that the programme not only worked but that we made sure that Parliament intervened in ensuring that the poor people in those estates such as Pineland, Ivy and others... Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was not the Honourable Member for St. Michael East at the time but the people in that constituency benefited from this programme and the Honourable Member cannot deny that they did benefit. When we go to the Pine where they had issues with imperfection in title where we had to sort that out, including vestings, so that Mr. Speaker, I just want to put that on the record.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly believe that once we treat to those poor people and the vulnerable groups in the housing units that we now have to look at the other vulnerable groups that need a house spot and those who need a house to rent or that could only rent a house. Mr. Speaker, the Government at the time and I was acting as Minister of Housing decided to let us look at available lands throughout this country that we can acquire, lands that already have the utility or ridge lots in place and we made most of those lots available and we made acquisition.. In fact we came to Parliament and utilising the Land Acquisition Act most of them were in plantations most of them were in St. John and in other part of the country that had the utilities ready all we had to do was to acquire the land and to make the land available to these poor people.

Mr. Speaker, I can say to this Honourable Chamber that I know that there are lots available, that we intervened in the market because of the land prices that existed at the time, that general workers in the public service can now access those lots, ordinary workers in the private sector. I believe that those lands, 3 500 square feet of land at \$5 per square foot in Brighton, Vineyard, Henley all over St. John are now available to poor people.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East trumpeted that the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act was so revolutionary and that it was a benefit but if a Government could come to Parliament and could use the Land Acquisition Act and acquire lots all over this country and selling those lots at \$5 per square foot, I am saying that is revolutionary too, given the state of the circumstances and the prices of land in the private market.

Mr. Speaker, there are 47 lots at Forty Acres, in fact, the whole field is available because when we acquired these lots at the Ridge site we decided that once there is a field beyond that that we will acquire the whole field for further development and that we create a buffer zone between and that is what we did.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear Honourable Member for St. James Central as in his normal flamboyant and lanky style can speak to Valery and that we wanted to build without waterborne toilets, et cetera. Sir, I really do not want to go down this line because there is... I remember when Apes Hill was built and there was an Apes Hill Community Committee and they sent a letter to the National Housing Corporation and it came to me, because we were still grappling with some of the issues. They formed a Committee because of the issues associated with the housing development at Apes Hill, St. James. The residents said that the lumber being used to construct those houses were of inferior quality, there was poor workmanship, that toilet bowls were not stationary in some houses, there were no tiles around face basin or on the floors; that the houses were badly positioned; that wood ants were on the sides of the houses; that the houses were within close proximity of the wells and that there was no room for extension. Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on but this is not the time to deal with that, this is history, the fact is that Valery has been completed and people are already living in those houses.

Mr. Speaker, The Honourable Member for St. James South did not touch on that areas, that there needs to be a concerted effort in terms of educating Barbadians to pursue insurance on their own private homes. Mr. Speaker, I do agree with that. There might be a time in Barbados when we have to institute a scheme of compulsory home insurance. I indeed will support it. In fact, the Honourable Member for St. George North I do not agree because if the Honourable Member were to peruse the manifestos of the

Barbados Labour Party it was in their manifesto since, I think, 1976 or thereabout, indeed the fact when house fires occur the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development is under tremendous pressure.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in the St. Michael area we have had no more than 10 house fires and indeed we are going into the hurricane season now so we do not know what will happen but indeed we need to probably do an analysis of what would it take if some countries can have a compensation fund for victims and if we can provide Legal Aid for persons committing crimes why it is that the State cannot be involved in a compulsory form of home insurance to protect the poor and vulnerable in this country? That is my view and I will support any Member of Cabinet who comes with a proposal to make sure that there is some form of compulsory home insurance. Mr. Speaker, I know that the State will have difficulty because we cannot impose a measure on a man's property because of the fact that man has a constitutional right to his property.

H:D13(30)

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

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Yes, Sir. I will wrap up in five minutes but I am saying that, given the philosophy and the social agenda of the Democratic Labour Party and given the fact that public sector involvement in public housing is really to treat to those vulnerable and disadvantaged groups -- the persons who cannot get a piece of land, the persons who can only rent, and the persons who want to purchase a house directly -- then we have to make sure that our programmes touch all of these groups. Mr. Speaker, I have no problem in the utilisation of the Land Acquisition Act to acquire large tracts of land. In fact, there are reports. Although when I look at the 2003 Physical Development Plan, it did mention that 1 000 acres was taken out of agriculture every year since 2003 for housing; but the question we have to ask ourselves is how many out of these acres go to Government, and how many touch the poor and vulnerable in this country? Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we must gear our programmes.

Mr. Speaker, I have a difficulty with persons going to NHC and who are of a certain income category who are outside of the category of low-income housing, but their debts, liabilities and obligations put them in the category of low-income earners. Then they are told at NHC, "You cannot qualify because your salary speaks to this point." I am saying that there needs to be a real analysis and real needs testing, because a person who has a loan for house repairs -- let us say about \$50 000 -- it would take that person another five years or so, but that person would have

enough disposable income to buy a \$5 lot or to get a rental unit but based on the salary which they present,... I do not know if it is the quality. I have tremendous respect for the workers at NHC. I do not know if we probably need to look at that department and put some specialist skills in there to deal with applicants, so that persons now in that income group or according to their disposable income could get their just due from the Government and from the State. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member who just sat took a long time to articulate with some clarity the policy of the Democratic Labour Party. As a result of the way in which he explained things, I forgot exactly who the Minister of Housing and Lands was. His student -- with all the efforts that have been made to give us some philosophical insight -- for the first time, as the former speaker was about to conclude his presentation, made that connection which is so necessary in helping us to understand the philosophical mooring as it relates to housing for the poor. I will also say that I was also impressed somewhat by the effort to ease the pressure off the Minister of Housing -- the de jure Minister of Housing, the representative of St. Lucy -- by the Prime Minister who came immediately after the Member for St. James Central. However, there is still a lot of work to be done. A man cannot be so flawed, and in one or two presentations you help to redeem him from his incompetencies.

Sir, I think the first thing we need to fully understand is where we are, because one Minister referred to what was happening in the public demand for housing as "we cannot expect people to be mendicant", indicating that all of these applicants who were over 30 000 in 2001 were devoid of the basic commonsense or did not know what their needs were, that as long as people come to the State or the NHC requesting a unit from the NHC somebody is encouraging them to be mendicant all their lives, and that the people in Haynesville and those areas should not be perceived as mendicant by suggesting that the people on this side were hoping to see people remaining mendicants in their lives until eternity. That kind of unnecessary clouding of reality is not necessary. This is an important issue and we have to take it as an important issue. Housing is a basic need, and whether you are a sociologist or economist or political scientist or whether you are dealing with governance, the issue of housing is one of the fundamentals which we must focus our attention on. There is a long historical struggle between those who were privileged very early as a result of the people in the planter class depriving us of our basic needs of life. We found ourselves in a situation where we had to struggle in order to be able to enjoy the status as a human being. It was under both parties.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted my head to be clear on these things. Both parties indicated over the years that they were committed to social democratic principles. That is not a hollow sound, if you can describe it that way. If we claim that we are committed to that, and we abandon those principles along the way or some people do not even know what that means.... I believe that many people in this Parliament today do not know what that means and will never understand the role of a State in a social democratic society where people who believe in democratic socialism understand that the State carries certain responsibilities at all times. Nobody is begging. Nobody is begging anything. If you call it a social democratic state or if you call it a welfare state, you have a responsibility in relation to the wellbeing of the people in the society, with special emphasis on the poor because we are here to do everything that we can to eradicate poverty and bring people out of those difficult circumstances. If you have never read a book yet by Karl Marx, by Lenin, by Rosa Luxemburg -- if you have never read those books yet -- before you come back in here on the next occasion, take a little time and peep at them. Marx was very clear. He said, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need," and that is a fundamental principle which goes back as far as the 1870s when Marx first made the statement. It goes back to that date; and we were struggling in 1875 with the tensions between two social extremes at that time.

H:No.D13 (31)

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: It was 1848? I respect the correction but the text which I referred to said 1875 and even then we were experiencing the challenges of the Confederation riots, we were facing the battle between the 1830s and the 1870s at that specific time, so the tension of the two different classes emerges and therefore the ideologies that emerged not only in Europe, in Germany, in France but also in the Caribbean ideology began to emerge among the people and therefore you saw the rise of democratic, socialist parties. Sir, some cases, some of the parties were not in the formal structures but by the time we got into the early 20th Century, we put those structures together and one of the things on the agenda upfront was housing for the poor.

Mr. Speaker, no other Government prior to these two political Parties thought about housing for the poor, none of them. Do not tell me that Marxist-Leninism does not work. You apply a theory based on the historical conditions at the specific time, so do not say it does not work. It is like saying that laws do not work. You take law and you make the adaptation to suit the period of time that you are applying the law. You do not move away from the material condition just like that and say bam, we are changing laws.

Mr. Speaker, we have a duty and we have to be very clear on that or else we keep rambling and we keep confusing each other on both sides. Sir, one of the problems that we keep creating for ourselves is when we are not clear on that philosophical path that would guide us and that is why at the National Housing Corporation we have to be struggling with over 20 000 and 25 000 and up to 2000, we had 34 000 applicants. Sir, if 34 000 apply, 34 000 people want to apply but do not even know how to apply. If you check the tensions in St. Michael as a parliamentary representative never mind how much housing we build in St. Michael, the Prime Minister indicated earlier, the demand continue to increase because the social and cultural condition change every day. Sir, if you look at the figures when 300 and 400 men apply, 3 400 women make application at the same time when the 300 and 400 men are making applicant. Sir, at one time in the society men were perceived as the heads of the household and that they were the persons supposed to be looking for houses for the families but now single women are going to National Housing Corporation and the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission because there are now three agencies that try to tackle the housing problem in the country. Sir, we have to get serious because we are wasting a lot of time concentrating on cutting down each other on this important issue. I can make reference to the Grotto and I can give it a political twist. I can make reference to Lancaster and to Valery but that is not the problem we face you know, it is how are we going to get down these numbers, how are we going to help these poor people (4:05) itsoc, find somewhere that they can live. It is not a matter about any generalization about the Barbados Labour Party building any more houses than anybody else or the Democratic Labour Party as the Ministry of Social Care argued without bringing any statistics to provide what is saying makes sense. I know he cannot bring any but he does not know where all the housing areas are. I want to tell him there is some land in Flint Hall that if he cares about the people in the Bridge Road and in Flint Hall, he would speak to me, or I will speak to the future representative about the lands that are available in Flint Hall and in Bridge Road, so that he can meet the demands of those people all down in Station Hill.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I want you to know that you do not want any housing areas. I listened to you carefully. You were not on your feet at the time, Sir, but unfortunately I heard him say, "I do not want any housing areas". Sir, then all of a sudden he does not want any high-rise and there is all kind of confusion in his head.

Mr. Speaker, I need some clarity on where we are going as a result of the direction of the policy. I do not know what the present Minister of Housing is doing. I think he is trying to play a balancing act, he is trying to

please everybody and I believe he also has a cloud in front of him, a very dark cloud and the former Minister probably could help to give him clear those clouds as well.

Mr. Speaker, in this discussion I want to put this in now too. I am very serious about it because of the unavailability of land and because of people being classified because I heard the word in here being bandied about in the most distasteful word “squatters” that you could ever hear from people who come out of a landless background. Sir, I will tell you the truth, whenever you cite an example about squatters, you come to St. Michael East about squatters and vagrants, these pejorative terms about the vagrants around this and vagrants around that. We have not provided housing and land solutions equal to the demand for housing and land whether there are site and services, whether low-income houses or middle income houses, we have not been able to address that but the people who find themselves in unfortunate conditions, men and women in here that I know are capable of finding more humane and subtle language that would not jar my ears or any else’s ears and create any pain, continue to describe ordinary people by using those terms.

I have seen some imbeciles on the documents in the immigration department. How are talking about our own families and we keep using these words over and over again. When you put that kind of construct in your mind, you are really reducing these people to sub human beings. They are perceived in your mind as a sub human being so you do not have the passion and vision that is required to say I am going to give them the opportunity to be out of these conditions as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, you have a housing estate at Coverley. Sir, we cannot allow that to stay there all the time, we cannot. We would be critical if the Government exclusively was building a housing estate, Even if a private person had an interest in the estate or not and every minutes we are getting a lot of distortion about if the houses are rented, how many were sold, if they would be able to meet the target of 1 200 units. These houses were being constructed since 2009. (The End)

Sequence 32

INSERT S33 JULIETTE

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I can call about 50 names that as the economy continues to contract and we go through all of the difficulties... If you open something down there selling pig tails, a man who got money does buy a whole bond house and outfit the bond house with stoves and everybody start to boast about how many people he employs and everything, but then six small men selling pig

tails go out of business. It is the same thing with a supermarket and it is the same thing with the people down in Pelican. They cannot pay the Government rent, so we have to be serious.

This picture is not only about the basic need for housing, it is about housing of course and it is about housing in particular for low-income people and we must never forget that. I am not the supporter of building any houses for middle-income people and saying that as we make profits from the middle-income people we will use the profits from the middle-income programme to build houses for the poor. None of us in here will never live long enough to pursue a policy like that and be able to help our own people.

Sir, I know that my time is probably nearly up but I just want to put this point in again especially for the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development. Sir, I have some land at Haggatt Hall.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: No, it is not mine, it was the former Prime Minister’s land and an agreement was made to sell it to the Government and the Government purchased the land. It started in my time. I received correspondence on more than one occasion from documents copied to me by the former Prime Minister about that land. Sir, on the eve of the last election, a couple seconds before the date, the same simplistic approach to political strategy was applied, bulldozers went in and cut roads from 2nd Avenue to Barkers and promised individuals within the district that all of them would be privy to having access to a house spot or houses that were going to be built on that land. Since then the entire area where the bulldozer or bobcat cut these pathways all through the communities is no more, the mould wash back in everything. We are not having any discussion on the construction of housing between 2nd Avenue Haggatt Hall and Barkers Road. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to hear the Minister’s view on where we are with that housing project and I just also want to recommend to him that if you come down Haynes Hill in Haggatt Hall and you come down to Pasture Road there is a large portion of land there as a result of the demand for housing in St. Michael in general. I do not expect that because you are building a housing area in my community that you are going to build the houses all for me so all I am asking you for is that I get a reasonable amount. If you give me 90 per cent out of them you could take 10 per cent and share. If I am trying to eliminate the problems in my constituency in the densely populated areas of Martinique, Licorish Village, The Ivy and St. Barnabas, I only want 90 per cent of the units and you can keep the rest.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I am still awaiting something that I could see like a clear trajectory of progressive plans obviously including St. Michael East in terms of addressing the housing needs across Barbados and I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, if not today, at some other date after he makes consultation with the real de facto Minister of housing and probably the Prime Minister on these issues.

Sir, I want to thank you very much for allowing me the few minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the Resolution to compulsorily acquire the land at District "E" Police Station. Mr. Speaker, this vesting of 5 300 square feet of land is very important because I believe if this is put into house spots you could get at least 16 to 18 house spots from this particular vesting. If it is 3 000 to 3 800 square feet of land depending on the size and the roads you can get at least 16 house spots in this particular development.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to continue vesting the land because throughout Barbados there are several parcels of land that belong to the Crown that can be vested in the National Housing Corporation where they can provide house spots for the majority of persons. I want to say from the outset that there are a number of views that were expressed by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East with which I want to associate myself. I have made the point before that the majority of poor people really need land in order to provide a house spot.

This whole notion of building high-rise housing at some ridiculous price per square foot really needs to be looked at very carefully because it is not sustainable, and a correct housing policy must be sustainable. We cannot sustain building high-rise houses for the poor at those prices: \$300 a square foot and more, and then rents for the same housing units sometimes goes as far as \$600, \$700 and \$800 per month which to my mind is not sustainable and therefore we need to provide the solution.

I want to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that Government is really a continuum, that is, that you pass on from one Government to another. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South made the point today that over 50 years ago there were many solutions to housing, that governments of the day were looking at social housing and they were looking at housing for the poor. Today, we are still doing the same thing. We still have a number of pit toilets and we still have a number of persons who are in need of housing. I heard the figure of 30 000 and up. We

have problems throughout the urban corridor as well as the rural corridor.

We need to continue to look at a policy that would move housing beyond theory and that we will pledge ourselves, Mr. Speaker, to find the solution once and for all. It is not going to take five years or 10 years, it might take 20, 25 or 30 years but we have to develop that programme.

I have made the point before and I have heard it mentioned on that side as well that coming out of the riots in 1937 a commission was set up which investigated the causes of that riot, and poor housing and poor wages were highlighted as a problem, and almost 100 years have passed and we are still at this point.

Mr. Speaker, mention was made today of the late Arlington DaCosta Edwards. Now, I was a product of the Federal High School so I knew that gentleman very well. His attempt to build low-income houses, Arlington DaCosta Edwards.

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Mr. Speaker, I was a product of the Federal High School and so I knew that gentleman very well. His attempt to build low-income housing for the people of St. Andrew was very commendable. Mr. Speaker, I am talking about low-income housing because in those days persons were able to get housing at less than fifty cents per square foot. Mr. Speaker, fifty cents per square foot forty years ago may not necessarily translate into \$18 per square foot today and whereas the wages at that time were poor wages, I believe that there was an attempt in the early years of socialist democratic Governments to provide opportunities for the poor.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is fair to say and that we must examine ourselves that over the past 50 or 60 years we have gone away and gone astray from the mission of our foreparents. The mission of, for example, Grantley Adams and the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow was to provide opportunities for the poor, both in terms of housing and education. This is where the social programme came to being but somehow the whole notion of balancing the economy has caused the problem. And this whole quest Mr. Speaker, to keep in terms and balancing the budget has caused to go astray. We therefore must get back. Mr. Speaker, I have recognised this some years ago and attempts were made to provide low-income housing and we need to get back to that position. I believe Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said today about mendicants, vagrants, the poor, overcrowding in some houses, et cetera. Mr. Speaker, what causes all of these things? I have gone into homes within the urban corridors and there was something like 10 or 20 persons living in a small house. I have gone into

some houses and have seen situations where there is no running water or electricity. I have seen situations in both urban and rural developments where there is downright poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I understand in listening to the debate today that there is the view that because someone has a cellphone, because you have a job you may be able to buy a house but it is difficult. We therefore have to ask ourselves today the question that if someone owns a cellphone or a car is it necessarily translated into the fact that that person could pay a mortgage. Mr. Speaker, it is difficult because of the whole aspiration of owning a car, sometimes you own a car in order to get to work because of the public transportation system but I know a number of persons who do not have a car, who do not have a cellphone yet these persons cannot pay mortgage for a home; yet we have a situation where because of this overcrowding within homes many young people especially find themselves squatting.

Mr. Speaker, we do not want to use the word squatting but it is a term that we understand. Mr. Speaker, I understand and I know that between 1994 and 2008 a position was taken to help those persons who were in need of house spots. Mr. Speaker, opportunities were provided, a White Paper on Housing was done in 1997 and we identified lots across the urban corridor and across Barbados that were able to provide housing solutions for those persons who we now call squatters but no attempt was made, after the Government lost in 2008, to continue the programme to help those persons to be able to find housing legally. Mr. Speaker, for example, in Trinidad and Tobago I made the point some time ago that squatting became a big problem and that the Government at the time not only legalized certain aspects of squatting but that persons were able to buy the land on which they squatted. Mr. Speaker, one could argue that Trinidad and Tobago has a vast acreage of Crown's land or squatting land, which Barbados has never had. Mr. Speaker, after slavery we were never able to identify lands owned by the Crown in large acreages whereas in some Caribbean territories there were vast Crown lands. Mr. Speaker, we had to acquire a lot of land to provide opportunities for the poor. I believe that we must continue to provide land for the poor. The Government has a problem, we know what is the problem, the Government does not have the wherewithal at this point in time but opportunities present themselves and I know that the present The Honourable Member for St. Michael South was not part and parcel of the CLICO International Life Limited experience though the Honourable Member might have supported it but The truth of the matter is that the Honourable Member has to wipe himself of this whole dilemma and that the lands belonging to CLICO International Life Limited -- and I have made this point before -- should be taken up and provided by the Crown. The Crown cannot bail out an insurance company yet the

land goes back to that insurance company. I do not see it, I believe that persons who are in need of land for agriculture purposes or are in need for housing that this is the land that we should be using. How can Government take up taxpayers' money and bail an insurance company out, then to put back the lands into that insurance company? Sir, I cannot understand it.

Mr. Speaker, like the same problem, I did not understand why the Democratic Labour Party in 1993 -- this is my position and not necessarily my party's position -- but between 1991 and 1993 the former Right Honourable Prime Minister took up heavily indebted estates and put them under the Agriculture Credit Trust and then given back to the original owners. I could not understand this, it does not have, to my mind, a proper position but that was what was done a former Right Honourable Prime Minister at the time and I never understood it.

Mr. Speaker, why is it that a heavily indebted estate that owes money to, I think, the Barbados National Bank at the time, then you took back the land, you had an opportunity then to own those lands and to provide house spots across Barbados, it was the former Right Honourable Prime Minister the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow who took up land at West Terrace, Oxnards to provide middle-income housing, it was this side that provided opportunities under the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act, to provide land for the poor. We need to continue the opportunities about finding land for poor people. Mr. Speaker, if you give poor people the opportunities to buy....

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister saying today that the Honourable Member has never had the opportunity to rent a home...

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. I did not say that, I said I never experienced the inconvenience of having to be run out by a landlord because I was raised on land that was owned by my father.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, thank you for the elucidation. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, do not worry about the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Prime Minister is really from the privileged class. Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister has explained today that the Honourable Member is really from the privileged class and there is no argument now, the Honourable Member inherited a position where his parents owned land. Now, I can say that my father did not buy the land as such but that the opportunity was extended to him and he was able to purchase land over a period of time and this is how small landowners developed in Barbados.

H:D13(35)

That is how small landowners developed in Barbados, but I would not say that I am from the privileged class. Mr. Speaker, I would say that the opportunity was there where people were able to buy a small plot of land from the plantation. It was genuine, because my father told me that in the early 1950s he was able to get some help from the same planter class, who provided opportunities for small landowners, and you were able to purchase an acre of land to pass onto your generations. Mr. Speaker, many persons developed themselves in that way; poor people. Mr. Speaker, St. Philip became a landed opportunity for poor people and for those persons who went across to the Panama Canal. Those persons who went and worked in the Panama Canal, who went to Cuba and who went on the immigration programme across the world, were able to send back remittances to buy land to help their families. That was how poor people developed in the heartland of St. Philip, St. George and over the countryside. That is all poor people are asking for. There is no hard and fast thing about this. Take the land of CLICO and allow persons in St. Philip, St. Michael and the whole of Barbados to acquire small house spots, and in that way not only would we be accelerating housing solutions across Barbados, but we would be helping the economy, Mr. Speaker. This is what people want. People want to own house spots, so give the opportunity. When people talk today about persons owning phones and cars, it is because they cannot buy homes, Mr. Speaker. You cannot buy anything in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, imagine in your constituency being able to get a lot for \$3 000, and you pay down \$30 on that, what is wrong with that? Persons want to own house spots. All they need is the opportunity. In your constituency, Mr. Speaker, and in my constituency where poor people exist, they do not need handouts from the Government; they need opportunity. Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you and I have said this already, in my constituency we do not want any help from the Government. We want opportunities. People want houses. Give me the land. Give me the housing solution, and we will pay for it. That is all people want. The persons in the Belle, the persons in St. Philip who are squatting, all they want is an opportunity. Provide the opportunity for them and they will purchase the land. That is what they want. They do not want handouts because you say to me that people go into the Belle and St. Philip and buy some plywood sheets and some galvanised sheets, but they cannot get the money from the bank, Mr. Speaker. They do not own anything, but through their savings, through their hard work, they are able to put down a small house to raise a family, Mr. Speaker. That is all they want to do.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you that any progressive Government must therefore find the opportunity for them. I understand that persons living nextdoor to the airport who

are in St. Philip South cannot buy the land because it is Crown land and it is outside the airport. They cannot construct a decent house there.

Aside.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Rock Hall. It is not Crown land. It is very close to the airport and it is very difficult for them to do anything.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if the opportunity is given for those persons who are at Rock Hall to own a parcel of the land that they would do so. The greatest crisis which we have in Barbados, therefore, is the opportunity to own a house spot. I have seen a situation in my constituency. The Member for St. Philip North has identified the 'Hamills' land, but that land was acquired by Parliament since 2002. We have not been able to do anything.

Aside.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: It is because of the problem of not being a continuum. Government is a continuum. It was acquired by this Parliament, but a former Minister of Housing turned it down. Mr. Speaker, we have a situation which we have look at in terms of why land which was acquired by this Parliament was then rejected, and up to today I do not think the guy has been paid for this land. We have to ask that this be done. Mr. Speaker, it is also important for us to look not only at the availability of land but at opportunities for those persons who find themselves renting. There are many persons who are now renting homes or units, who find themselves unable to pay for them. There is a difficulty because some landlords cannot be paid, and then it is difficult when they go to court and find that they have another six months before they can get this person out of the house. We have great difficulties, but I believe opportunities exist.

I heard Members talk about compulsory home insurance and so on, which is important, but we set up the Catastrophe Fund some years ago which, I believe, can be used to help those persons who are in need of housing. Opportunities exist within this Fund which can be used to help not only persons who have a flood or whose house has been blown down by storm; we need to be creative in how we use this Fund to help those persons who are in need or have a problem with the landlords or have a problem finding homes because of fire. There are a number of single-lot tenants who must still be looked at. Mr. Speaker, I believe that those persons who were disadvantaged because of the Amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act -- those single-lot persons -- should be given opportunity; and in this way the policy would be clear that

all persons who were disadvantaged, who had suffered loss due to fire, who had been ejected from their homes because they could not pay the rent due to poverty or unemployment, we have to look at them very carefully.

Mr. Speaker, I do not subscribe to the view that persons who are working and are doing well and are renting from homes should not pay their rents. I believe persons should pay their rents, especially because it is an investment which some landlords have made. We have to go back and look at that legislation again because many persons have now become very much disadvantaged because of these situations. Mr. Speaker, we have to look at a strong housing policy. I believe the time is right for the Government to look at a new White Paper on Housing. The time is right for the Government to look at a new White Paper on Housing where we put all of these issues and problems over the years and find some sort of solution for them. Housing is expensive but it has to be sustainable. I believe that giving a starter is the right way to go, Mr. Speaker. That is my belief. Give a starter and allow the person to do what he has to do. Mr. Speaker, a starter does not mean that you give him or her money or you provide a foundation. A starter may only mean that you provide the opportunity in terms of a lot for the person. This is a start. Opportunities must be provided, and therefore the Ministry of Housing and Lands ought to bring that White Paper so that we could peruse it and look at a way forward, so that 50 years from now we do not come back here and say that 50 years ago we were still struggling to find what was lower income housing and what was not. I believe that the \$5 per square foot approach which the Democratic Labour Party took some ten years ago may have been on the right course for that time, but it is unfortunate that we do not know where these lots exist.

5.58 p.m.

Sir, when many people go to National Housing Corporation they cannot get a solution. Sir, that is why I have said before that it is very difficult for poor people to go to that institution and get rejected and they do not go back. We have to look at a clear situation over the next five years where we identify what approach would be taken for housing. In fact, I have said that there needs to be a quiet revolution and a sustained approach to housing within the urban corridor and within rural Barbados. I hope that the Minister of Housing can bring a White Paper on housing within the near future so that we can peruse it. I believe that such a paper should be the effort of both sides of Parliament where we can peruse it, identify the problem, identify the solution and let us move forward from this position.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 6.15 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 6.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

Sequence 37

INSERT S38 JULIETTE

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Hon. R. D. JONES: The Rural sector was amazingly beautiful and even though my mom and dad ventured to town I never had the inclination to venture there. If there were shoes to be bought, you took a stick, either pea tree or the vein of the cane trash or the coconut leaf, and you measured from the inside toe right to the back of the heel and you put an extra piece and you would go to town and fit that vein in the shoe. Those were not the days of democracy within the family.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: That democracy was not there. You took what mommy and daddy brought home. There was no shoe with a slash, a tick or a little bump on it. There was no Nike or Adidas or some named shoe. That did not exist within our rural environment. You were thankful and happy to get a pair of shoe otherwise you wore pumps, people used to call you Bata feet, the fellow got on Bata shoes, or you get the moccasins, 'dog mussels', of plastic either brown plastic or the see-through plastic, so there was no democracy but you were happy. Some people could not even afford the moccasins or 'dog mussels' as they were called, beautiful shoes as they were. You could not even wear them with socks. Good days.

When I did come to town I saw these houses all clustered and wondered how people were able to open their windows within the city centre but those people I am sure lived and shared with their neighbours so that was not an issue.

The zero-lot line concept was developed at the villages at Coverley as it is called. In my day growing up we used to say 'Covley'. The plantations with which I was familiar were: Coverley, a large plantation on the left side going to the airport along Highway 7, Fairy Valley on the right side and Spencers above Seawell Airport as it was called then now Grantley Adams International Airport Inc.

The place has changed phenomenally, that is what has happened to Barbados.

We have also brought greater light to the citizens of the country through our efforts in governance where we have tried to equip persons with work and we have tried to equip them with education, health and the social safety net so that they can change their circumstances and housing becoming one of those main pillars through which the circumstances would have been changed. We have developed the banking sector, the credit union sector and the non-banking financial sector, all equipped to provide loans within your means, some of you might even argued sometimes outside of your means, so that you could purchase that which you want.

The point I am making is that the villages at Coverley is really under the management of the private sector entity, the entity that put in every single cent from the development of sites and services. The National Housing Corporation did not put in one cent. None of those things were in fact put in by the National Housing Corporation. The National Housing Corporation benefit would be the cost of the land, et cetera so as far as I am concerned it is in the majority a private sector concern.

There are persons up there but there are still many houses to be occupied, I understand that, and I know that there are persons who would like to move in there but they do not have the wherewithal to so do. Some people argued that some of the houses might be a little on the expensive side, I do not know, I have never enquired really as to the cost, and some Barbadians have shied away because of the zero-lot line concept. It was only this morning on my way here that I heard a resident speak to how she loves being up there, that you do not have to leave to go anywhere, the family and the services from gas station to Barbecue Barn or whatever it is called, a small minimart and health services, et cetera. I am speaking to what is up there. All of that is within that community.

Even though that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East really in his heart wants to do good for a problem that has been in existence for an exceptional long time... I think that it is a problem that can be resolved. We need to really get the reverse osmosis treatment plant into that area and ensure that those persons who are there would be able to now find the space and comfort to exist within the community rather than to say I am going to take them all up and march them to the villages at Coverley. I am sure that even though well-intentioned he would recognise that it would be a leap of madness within our democracy for him to take the residents from the Belle, et cetera and implant them into that area.

We also have done some work on high-rises and they are really costly to construct. We know that with the

kind of foundation and support structures you have to come up from the foundation in order to carry a 8 or 9 or 10 storey building is quite substantial. Yes, we have engineers who can work that out but it is quite substantial to do that and therefore when you start out looking at a cost, let us say of \$300 000, which really moves you into what is called a middle-income salary in reality, it would be to ask Government to carry a deep burden in these challenging times of financial resources of just saying well you are going to pay \$40 a week for these units. The units that were \$40 per week were built at Silver Hill in the 1970s, at Wotton which is a relatively new development and at Golden Rock. Today, units like that are fetching, from my knowledge, between \$700 and \$750 a month so you could work that out at about \$175 or thereabouts a week and that \$700 or \$750 for persons who might be paid twice a month, \$985 every two weeks minus National Insurance Scheme, they do not pay income tax because they have not yet reached that threshold, unless you manage those resources very carefully where for the first two weeks you take out \$350 and you put it there and the next two weeks you take out another \$350 and put it there because if you just follow a routine pattern waiting on the 30th of the month to get the \$985 you are not going to be able to have it, so you have to manage your resources very carefully to stay in those units or there must be two of you in those units to make it work. Barbadians have built their homes based on the salaries of two and that is how they have done it because even if you work for \$3 000 where the banks would take between 33 and 40 per cent of your gross salary as the payment and then they run the calculations you might find that you do not qualify for a house beyond \$185 000 - \$200 000, and that is the crisis that we have.

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Mr. Speaker, that is the crisis that we have and we have not been able to secure materials which will make housing for persons any cheaper. We have not been able to say to workmen to reduce their cost. Mr. Speaker, today for an ordinary labourer who would turn concrete, mortar or who would do these other things around a job sit, he is not taking \$60 per day from you or from anybody, he is looking at \$75 a day, an A-class workman and that is he is doing day work and not job work, he is taking \$200 or \$250 a day to do that, so that the cost of labour is substantial when you extrapolate the cost of material and labour it is almost a three-fifth to labour and two-fifth to the cost of material. This a reality of what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, I have and an opportunity over the 1st two weeks of seeing persons coming to me who might be renting out there who cannot be at home because there are too many persons in the house, they might have a child or two children, for them to find housing. If you go into the private sector, based on their salaries, you are talking \$1 000, \$1 200 or \$1 500 per month and in some instances that

is the salaries or wages of some persons, so that there is a crisis, do not let us deny it, notwithstanding our best efforts so therefore rather than to create the divide and possibly create the divide we should be putting our heads together for the benefit of the population, those who do not have.

Mr. Speaker, I have taken a look at a 900-square-foot, three bedrooms, two bathrooms house. you can well-understand the size of an open plan, dining, living and kitchen with the covers creating the location between the countertop the demarcation between that open space, one bathroom or two and three reasonably small bedrooms, you cannot fit a queen bed in any of them, you have to go to the bed that is smaller than that and that is just around 900 square feet and that runs inclusive of land I believe between \$279 000 and \$319 000. I believe one of the major private sector developments now there used to be one before in the form I think of Ideal Homes they have a major development building in my constituency you do not know many of those houses now because of the way they have been transformed by their owners, but there is a substantial cost.

Mr. Speaker, the National Housing Corporation has tried, do not let us deny that the National Housing Corporation has not tried, \$5 per square foot lots between 3 500 to 4 000 square feet, they are all gone. They were advertised, people applied and people building on them even as I speak. Some houses were also built in work Hall, Four Hill, St. Peter, some of those \$5 lots have houses on them for the citizens of Barbados so they have been utilised, many of those houses being built by small contractors but we still have a substantial amount to be done. Mr. Speaker, this one is a dangerous one but we have in Barbados mostly under family or private sector ownership between 15 000 to 18 000 in some form or shape or fashion. You may have derelict housing but there is a lot. maybe we need to get our lawyers sit down and work out a strategy, because many of them have been vacant for between 10, 20, 25, 30 or 40 years, some of those persons had no progeny to pass on the resources and therefore what is the role of the State in dealing with land like that. Should we just allow it to stay there when we can do the searches, find out to whom they historically belong, and revitalise communities by the rebuilding on the lots where derelict houses were removed by the Ministry of Health I believe, if per chance an error is made -- the lawyers will guide me here -- I am just seeking to find solutions to a crisis -- when you assumed that the person has died in circumstances where they had no progeny, no family and so the State can acquire that property but that somebody emerged and you can trace that ancestry then the State will have the responsibility to make good and if the person wants the property then they would pay the State for the improved value or whatever.

Mr. Speaker, there are 15 000 to 18 000 parcels of such lands knocking around Barbados and in the period 2003 to 2008 the Government of that time did quite a comprehensive study, because I have a report of that I believe was done subsequently, let us utilise some of that.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I do not care who you have, defense force, sailors, soldiers, people who on lands that do not belong to them, I want to get over this point, you cannot keep taking up land that was previously earmarked for agricultural purposes, that becomes another crisis and we are almost close to it. A person who cannot at least provide some food for themselves exposes themselves to the vagaries of others. And we have too many every day as I drive along every part of Barbados. I actually have now developed a fetish looking for housing where nobody exists, where there are no persons. I actually find myself doing that and I do not think that I am too sick, I might be a little sick but not too sick and I think that on both sides we need to look at this because there are bright lawyers in here, some of whom are not so bright, but we need to work out to see how we can find that methodology, some might need minor repairs, some might need major repair, some might need adjustments to the roof or shape of the house et cetera but all of that can be done. The land which previously belonged to the company called CLICO International Life Limited at places like Todds and Wakefield represents some of the most fertile land in Barbados and if we are to keep our attachment to King Sugar, we cannot alienate that land but there is still land across Barbados and what we refer to rab land which hitherto sheep, goats and cows used to graze the sour grass and other grasses that grew along those areas on the edges of ridges and things like that. We have the ability, we have the capacity, and all we have to development is not the knowhow to repair or to rebuild the houses but how to come up with a strategy that works for all Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, the final point I want to make, we are using the notion of middle-class and working class and in a very separate and distinct way.

7.02 p.m.

The so-called middle class of Barbados emerged from the working class, the lower salaried class, really, and it takes no more than missing three paydays to run into serious financial difficulties.

Aside.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, I believe we also have to come up with a strategy. We talked before about the empowerment of people and the enfranchisement of

people; a project which, to me, has stalled a bit but which is still very much in our consciousness. We have to find a way of creating avenues for investment of our people so that they can genuinely move into the middle and upper middle classes of Barbados, where the pain of thinking of what can happen to me tomorrow is somewhat reduced and we can be satisfied that we too can share in the bounty of this country once bounty is available. Let us not continue to fight over this.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in this House since 2003 and on May 20 I celebrated 14 years. I am even taking off some of mine. I could not remember that it was 2017, forgive me. Fourteen years in this House, Mr. Speaker, and now I have the Floor I want to thank all of the people; those who voted for me and those who have never done it, those of the partisan divide - I do not quarrel about that -- for their support over time, and long may that continue, even though red shirts will descend on it this week in a continuous way. I support the Vesting and I look forward to utilising some of those 18 000 derelict houses. I am not talking about who bought a piece of land and is keeping it for his or her child or children, but where families have died. We can research these things and put all of that land and those houses to good use for our people. I thank you.

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

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: I rise to close this Head and to say that we have had a very good debate; educational and enlightening. It is true that some would have strayed, but we must appreciate that there is a problem which we have to deal with and, as has been said previously, a lot of money has been spent and a lot of solutions have been found, but we have to understand that there is a changing dynamic. In previous years, people stayed at home much longer than we did, and there are some who came after us and they are not staying as long as we stayed at home. Another thing one would recognise is that previously, as was said earlier, there were situations where the male was the one who was expected to find the housing solution. Today, you find that the male may find the housing solution but the female is also looking to have her own housing solution. It means that as you put the houses on the market, whereas previously you were able to satisfy one person with one solution, now in a family you have to find two solutions for a couple. We cannot ignore these things. We have to recognise that there is a changing dynamic, that there is something called independence of mind, and that these things are occurring.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make the point that the Honourable Member for St. James Central gave the impression that there is nothing going on at Parish Land and that nothing has occurred in housing, but it is clear to me that his informant who he continues to lock up every

time he speaks has misinformed him and has given him some bad advice as usual. As usual, he stayed very clear from the facts and located himself at the dump near to Hoyte's Terrace where he gathers his information all the time. It is no doubt that we came and we found some very novel situations. The first time we knew about rented rooms was when the Barbados Labour Party claimed that they were doing such a wonderful job in housing. They have changed the dynamics of housing in this country. The records will show that I have already spoken on this issue, where previously in Barbados a house was tenanted to a family and that house was rented, let us say, for \$500 or \$700; but under the Barbados Labour Party a situation was created where someone would come, rent the house for \$500 and then turn around and rent a room for \$500. It was new to Barbados, and the owners and landlords then recognised that if they could rent a property to someone for \$500 and that person could rent part of the property and make a profit of over \$1 500, they could do it too. That is where it was expanded and where it occurred. It is nothing that occurred under the Democratic Labour Party. It is something that we found and we are now trying to solve that particular problem.

Mr. Speaker, some Members spoke to the plywood houses. We found them. I keep making the point to this House that one has to be very careful that you sometimes think you are doing something good and end up creating bigger social problems. It is no doubt that the intention of the 1981 Act was good, but what we did not do -- when I say "we", it was not the Democratic Labour Party -- was a social impact study to see what would have been the spinoff. There is no doubt that even though it was a good policy, it created many social problems in this country, because whereas you were able to provide land for persons using the Plantation Tenantry Act, it also stopped landlords, who previously were prepared to allow people to rent when they came and asked for a right to rent land, from renting land. What occurred was that previously, youngsters who were able to go to landlords and ask them for a piece of land to rent found themselves not having that opportunity, and they had to end up sometimes putting a plywood house in their parents' backyard or sometimes it even got worse; it created squatting.

If one looks at the history of squatting in Barbados, one would recognise that squatting came about after the Plantation Tenantry Act was moved from being only for the plantations and applied to individuals who had land and who, out of the kindness of their hearts, allowed other persons to be able to rent that same land. There is a Report prepared by the Barbados Labour Party, in which they demonstrated and showed where after 1981 you were able to locate all of those areas where people were squatting. So much so that they came in here and they compulsorily acquired land in some areas to correct and solve that particular problem.

Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance of owning land and we do not see it as an opportunity only for a “too few”. We have always seen it as an opportunity to create the ownership. As I have said previously in the debate, if you were to drive through St. Lucy years ago and saw an old man working his land and you offered to buy it from him, he would tell you, “No, that is my saving for my children.”

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Mr. Speaker, I heard somebody said that the biggest land problems came about in the 1930s and that is true but there were some men who as early as the 1930s understood the importance of land not only for voting rights but they ensured they bought land and they bought it in rural Barbados especially because they understand the importance of land. Sir, I keep making the point in Barbados and I will continue to make the point that the problem is not the house, that the problem is the spot. Sir, one of the things we have to do is to ensure we use the scarce resources we have to create house spots because the faster we create house spots the easier it would be to solve the housing problem because if you give a man a piece of land, he will find something to put on that land and whatever he lives in is his own. I have made the point in this House already that a derelict is a property that is not occupied by anyone and that a dilapidated house is a house that someone is occupying, so when one is in a house EDP cannot remove it because that is the man's castle and we have to understand that. We also have to be very careful that if we want to continue to have the policy where people are able to build from the back and come forward that we have to be very careful what policies we put in place because we might be hindering people from accommodating themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to be very careful how we stop development in the country because it is okay to say that a man may have a canned solution but when you allow a man a piece of land and he is allowed to build it from his pocket, it means that you are allowing more startups to occur in the country but when you come to a canned solution, the man must save that amount of money to have the opportunity to approach a bank or financial institution before he can start his house or home but when the man has a piece of land, he will buy a couple of blocks, start his foundation and he will start to build and build and when he gets to a certain stage, he will then approach the bank, when he feels it is comfortable for him to approach the bank. We have to be very careful that sometimes we do not encourage people to go to the bank before they are ready to go to the bank and then end up not owning that property. I want people to listen to this very carefully. I heard the Barbados Labour Party speaking today about 100 per cent mortgages and there is nothing wrong with that but you should not force it on people who cannot afford it but you

should allow an opportunity for people to be able to dictate how and when they want to make that intervention with the bank whether they want their neighbours and friends to help them at a certain stage and then after that approach the bank for a small mortgage so that they would not mortgage away their lives. Sir, that is why we have always been a Party very supportive of issuing lots to people because we understood the cultural patterns of society and we understood that we could not only look after the interest of a two-few but we also have to look after the interest of all, and that is why in rural Barbados you see there is always a demand for lots because they want to be able to involve their friends and neighbours and also want to ensure that once it is done right that they are able to reduce the cost. Sir, I have some friends who always make the joke with me that when my son decides to expand the house when I die, that there is a certain pillar in the house that when he puts the bobcats he is going to find a lot of corned beef tins and biscuits cans. Sir, this is true because we used the old time concepts when we were building the house and on weekends we would have some corn beef and biscuits and we buried the cans in a particular location. Sir, why should I be allowed to have that privilege and we want to deny other people of that privilege.

Asides.

Hon. D. KELLMAN: These biscuit cans and corned beef tins were not in the block holes. They were next to and not in the block holes. Sir, We have to be very careful that we sometimes do not deprive people of opportunities and that is why I am happy of the \$5 a square foot lot because you would find that on the majority of those when you pass through especially St. John, St. Philip and so on that you would see a lot of work going on weekends, and you would see that normal artisans are building those houses at the pace to suit the amount of money that the people have. I am also very interesting when I go into tenancies and see the majority of people especially in rural Barbados that everything seems to be stone and I am very happy for that because they understand wants that is done that the repair cost of the building would be reduced and then they will have more money later on to be able to help their children et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes we think that these people cannot think for themselves but they do, and that they cannot budget for the themselves but they are very good at budgeting and reducing the cost to themselves. Like for example, the Honourable Member for St. James Central today laughed at the masses of people in Barbados when I said how these people were able to keep fowls in their backyard and how when they had the chattel houses that you never saw the deter... you are now saying and he called it ‘yardfowlism’. I do not know how a man who claims to represent the masses of people in Barbados cannot appreciate the brilliance of people who kept yard fowls to

keep the termites away from their house but yet still to call those people yard fowls. We have to understand that some of us were privilege to be born in a stone house but I was not privilege like him to be born in a stone house. Sir, my grandfather was born in a chattel in the 1930s that he owned and he had the land to suit it, so some people who have a history after the 1930s and believe they have now arrive they have to understand that stone structures were not the houses in the 1930s. it was the chattel made of good nice pine and so on, so people who believe they have to look down on people must be very carefully how they replace good common sense because it is quite obvious that the Honourable Member for St. James Central did not appreciate the good common sense of the masses of people in Barbados and he can only relate to a certain group of people in society and if you cannot live in that class, then he looks down on you.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that those are the people who were able even though they kept yard fowls, they were able to keep the economy of Barbados in a state that they were able to see the economy and transform Barbados to what we see it today and that the deficits were not hidden, like how they hid the deficits but were able to create surpluses in their time.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said before this 5 930 square metres of land which equals to 63 829.99 square feet will be vested in the National Housing Corporation and as has been outlined by the whole house today, and people understand and everybody said ...

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INERT S43 JULIETTE

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Minister made the point just now that one of the reasons for the increase in the limit for Treasury Bills and Tax Certificates, and in particular we are looking at Treasury Bills which typically happen to be 90-day instruments, is largely because of the lack of appetite for longer instruments, Debentures, et cetera. What we have found in the last few years, particularly in the last three years, has been an inclination on the part of both banks and other financial institutions to sell off the longer term instruments because of a lack of confidence in this economy. It is a problem because the Government, and I think he admitted that, hitherto has been unable to finance its deficit without resorting to the Central Bank of Barbados and the National Insurance Scheme purchasing the majority of the Paper. That is now a well-known fact in this country in spite of the fact that it was denied up until a year ago that this was what was happening with almost an inclusive purchase by domestic institutions. We now know where we are.

The Minister has sought to close the gap on the deficit by \$500 million in tax measures, \$481 million to be precise. We do not believe that they would yield the revenues that he intends to yield simply because people do not have it in them to be able to pay. We also feel that the Minister has been advised by his own colleagues that to close that gap purely by tax measures is impractical and unlikely to yield the result. What does that mean? If the ??? does not come, then there would be implications for the financing of the deficit and there would be implications for the financing of the deficit because somebody is going to have to finance it.

Hitherto in the last three years as I said if we look at the situation with the Central Bank of Barbados, in 2008 as we note the Central Bank of Barbados held no Government Securities at all. It now holds at the end of the last quarter \$1.895 billion, less than \$5 million short of \$1.9 billion. The National Insurance Scheme holds in Treasury Bills alone \$199 million but the majority of the National Insurance Scheme debt is in fact Debentures, \$3.827...

Separate from that is the money that the National Insurance Scheme is owed by the Government of Barbados for statutory corporations and for central Government, and the Government has been getting them to trade out some of these arrears into Government Paper in the last few years as I understand it particularly the arrears owed by central Government as opposed to the statutory boards.

Sir, the bottom-line is that we cannot continue and we are fooling ourselves... On each occasion that I speak in this Honourable Chamber now I am going to appeal to this Minister of Finance and this Prime Minister to recognise that they cannot close the gap by the manner in which they are seeking to do so. When I look back at the Article IV Report from last year the notion that the Government of Barbados had turned the corner, and that should be congratulated, was the first sentence but then they went on to make the point very clearly that the directors emphasized that the continued financing of the fiscal deficit by the Central Bank of Barbados is inconsistent with the exchange rate anchor and they encouraged the Central Bank of Barbados also to allow domestic interest rates to rise in line with increases in the US interest rates and to ensure adequate international reserves buffer.

Now, what did we had this year since then? We have had a case where our foreign reserves have dropped. We have had a case where the Central Bank of Barbados has finally formalised that which it was doing informally by raising the reserves requirement to commercial banks in terms of their holding of stipulated securities and we have a situation where we are still on tenterhooks as to what would happen because quite frankly the double difficulty of financing the deficit and the extent to which we have

reserves will continue to bedevilled this country and the management of this economy in this next few months.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if ever there was a time for a Government to pause and to recognise that as I said in another place this evening that if a country cannot take almost \$500 million in taxes, it is telling you so, the reality is that the public servants have a situation where they have not received a salary increase for seven years but yet by the Minister's own admission as he stood here opposite me two weeks ago the cost of living will be the first victim of these tax measures. People are not going to be able to make it, and we deny, we reject the notion that the ultimatum issued by the Minister is the only alternative. He knows it and we know it. The bottom-line is that for the Minister to say that if I do not raise these taxes I have to send home people is a lazy and regrettable approach because we both know that the Minister himself has outlined multiple other alternatives to this Honourable Chamber over the last four year since August 2013, but the problem is that he has not been able to report progress on those multiple other alternatives that he has outlined to this Chamber. Now, the fact that he may not be able to persuade his Prime Minister or his Cabinet may be his problem but what he cannot do is to say that he has not outlined other alternatives to massive taxations and massive layoffs. I am saying to you that this now becomes something that this Government can no longer bury its head in the sand and say that: Um, what you want me to do. That is the executive and if they cannot get their act together then they ought to do the decent thing and demit. What you cannot do is continue to fool a country into believing that they have false options. There are too many unionists on that side. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central served as President of the Barbados Union of Teachers in this country and that he could now want to be associated with a notion that if you do not pay these taxes and if I do not give you a coping subsidy whatever they call it, I call it a cost of living allowance, whatever it is you want to call it... You need something to buffer these people. They cannot face these winds from July 1 without something to buffer them. Water rates went up 60 per cent in this country in 2010, VAT went from 15 to 17.5 per cent and the excise tax went up three/four times significantly. We have consolidation tax, bank assets tax, which of course is ultimately passed on, assets tax on non-banks financial institutions, that is the credit unions, let us go through, land tax, levies, and now the National Social Responsibility Levy, a lash, a high, high measure.

I would like somebody to take the Minister speeches from 2011, let the Media take his speeches, and see all of the things that the Minister has otherwise advised in here but has not yet delivered on. I do not want to be the one relaying it. He knows exactly what I mean. Now, if you cannot get the Cabinet and the Prime Minister to agree to it, then something is fundamentally wrong and you may have

to say I tried unless you have now been persuaded by them that that which you advised is not to be pursued.

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Mr. Speaker, the same goes for the Honourable Member for St. Philip West too, because you cannot continue to sit down and continue to put forward solutions in this country... We are dealing with people's lives now, that is why the public were as angry as they were about the notion that any form of discretionary expenditure could be entertained in the very same week that \$481 million in taxes and \$80 million in cuts in Government expenditure could be coming. How could a Government believe that it was still okay to take delivery of a new car for a Prime Minister after a second one had been bought earlier this year, one for a Chief Justice, one for Judges, there comes a point when we have to lead from in front; the notion that a Government could take 10 per cent back knowing full-well that these challenges and cuts were coming is wrong. It is wrong, it is wrong, it is wrong, it is wrong and we all know that if we work as adults and as teachers and as parents we are dealing with little children we tell them to do as we say and do, not only as we say and that if we are to have creditability with those who are under our charge, those to whom we have a fiduciary duty, then we must appear to be walking the same walk as them and not creating a false idealist set of circumstances that separates us from those from those over whom we have responsibility for.

Mr. Speaker, this country wants Barbados to succeed, Bajans want Barbados to succeed; Bajans are begging this Government to take decisions in the interest of this country and themselves. They know deep down, as does the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, that this budget was about buying time, it was about a stay of execution to be able to allow some more interest in short-term Notes such as these, because we know that the banks alternative energy still not going to be holding the long-termed Debentures with any great gusto and I would not be surprised if the banks continue to come out as they redeem Debentures as they come up for maturity and then transfer, if they want to stay, into short-termed Instruments which are 90-day instruments instead of five-year and seven-year Debentures that they might otherwise have easily participated in perhaps. It is a sign of the times and they are sending us a signal and the signal is that they are not prepared to walk into the medium term with us because they do not trust that we are going to be in a position to do what we have to do in the medium term movement.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what else to ask these Honourable gentlemen who sit opposite us to do in the name of this country and in the interest of the people of this country because when I tell you that the suffering is real, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not a joke and when I tell you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that people do not know how they are going

to get their rents or their mortgages paid while at the same time buying food or paying for utilities... Mr. Speaker, I suspect that they know, they could not live in the Barbados in which we live and not know.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to this Government that you know and I know that the measures which have been put before this Honourable House and all other measures being discussed, quite frankly, are a nonsense in advance of a mandate by the people. But if this Government wants to hold on for a constitutionally stipulated of 12 months, because it wants to draw, God knows, what else or to do what else, so be it but it comes at the price and it comes at the price of people falling through the cracks and it comes at the price of enterprises not being able to meet its expenditure and to be able to find the revenue to meet its expenditure in a way that allows them to remain solvent, because the National Social Responsibility Levy will cause them to see a diminution in business but an increase in expenses.

Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about your store fronts in Swan Street alone, this morning I had calls from two doctors reflecting and stressing on their ability to be able to sustain themselves in their operations particularly given the commitments that they made to invest in new technology in the last two years and how they are going to be able to service now because of the diminution of business. We know it is real but we also know that nothing will change in this country until the country is asked ultimately for that mandate to do that which is necessary and the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, in a moment of rare reflection in a mirror, will pick up his speech from 2010, 2011, 2012, leave the ones out from the election of late 2012 and early 2013 when the Honourable Member said he would learn economics on the job. Come back to the one in August 2013, come back to a few that the Honourable Member made between August and December 2013, his Ministerial Statement of December, 2013, all of the things in there the Honourable Member talked about a whole range of initiatives. His 2016 Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, where the Honourable Member talked about refinancing the contingent liabilities of Government, the State-owned enterprises, this, that and how are we now back where we are seeking...

Mr. Speaker, let me put it into context, when the former the Honourable Member for St. John brought the first budget of this Government upon its election in July, 2008, the Honourable Member was seeking to raise \$108 million in taxes which became the largest single tax take of a Government of Barbados and on that occasion that \$108 million was out of revenue of \$2.5 billion. In other words, the equivalent of 4 per cent of Government existing revenue.

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs came two weeks ago the Honourable Member sought to impose \$481 million in taxes on the same \$2.5 billion in revenue, the equivalent Mr. Speaker, of almost 20 per cent of Government revenue that you are seeking to collect in one fell swoop and I make sure that the letter goes the right place, almost 20 per cent of Government revenue; 500 per cent times what the then Right Honourable Prime Minister the late David Thompson sought to do in 2008 when we said that it was the largest tax take, that is the magnitude of what the Minister feels that is what the Honourable Member would like to do in nine months, that which could not have been done in nine years but will be achieved in nine months; that which will now be five times the tax take of the then Right Honourable Prime Minister in the first budget of this Administration.

Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister has said -- it is interesting that the Honourable Member chose to be motivated by those who he saw at BIMEX, those whom I supposed called him in-between the budget and BIMEX to be motivated by concerns that the 2 per cent commission on foreign exchange will wreak havoc and hardship on large businesses in this country. Well, we are here to let the Right Honourable Prime Minister know that the National Social Responsibility Levy moving from 2 per cent to 10 per cent will wreak havoc on consumers, on households, on doctors, on lawyers, on manufacturers, on store owners, on PSV owners, on almost every single class of persons conducting business in this country or having to purchase food, goods, services, across the board..

7.45 p.m.

If you can hear the voices of a few international businesspeople and one or two large manufacturers who export, then I ask the Government to hear the voice of the union and to hear the voice of the people of this country who have said in no uncertain way, "We cannot bear the extraction of \$481 million in taxes", nor will you get it. More importantly, there are other ways to resolve our problems but it requires a conciliatory approach, it requires the building of partnership, not the declaration of ultimatums and war. It is that, perhaps more than anything else, which I would want to say: This notion that if I do not agree with you I can curse you from larboard to starboard, I can offend you, and I can do all of these things, is what is killing this Government more than anything else.

I ask this Government to put aside its own feeling and recognise that this peculiar moment in this country's history requires us to get a national solution which can only come from a mandate of the people of this country. Mr. Speaker, if we do not do it, this increase in Treasury bill limits is but then an artificial artifice upon which our economic development is now to be premised, and it will

not happen. Just as in 2014 when the Minister came here with confidence that he would not have to be relying on this measure as much as he was in the past; but here we are yet again. Sir, I ask this Honourable House to have Members start to reflect in whose name do we serve and for whom do we act, because this next 12 months -- it is less than 12 months now -- is going to go so fast and the public will be so unforgiving.

Mr. Speaker, what we are putting at risk is anybody who is over 50 and who now is to lose their jobs or have lost their jobs already, and is unlikely to earn back that which they have lost already between now and the end of their working life. Anybody who has to deal with the loss of their house.... If you lose your house in your early 50s you are unlikely to be able to get a mortgage again in this country. Anybody who is in their 20s and who has been knocking about here waiting for a job for four, five or six years and cannot get it are already expressing a desire to move overseas, and we cannot afford for them to move overseas. In order for this country to get back where it needs to get back, it needs growth; and in order for us to have growth, we need people earning; we need productive people earning at the level of households, at the level of individual enterprises and at the level of companies. Therefore, we cannot afford for either emigration or further social depletion, whether it is through health outbreaks or people not having a healthy profile, people leaving the country, crime or other aspects of social decay that are now attending people's living circumstances in this country. We are at that stage where a lost decade has taken root and is threatening now to destabilise our future. We know it can be better. They know deep down too, but they have to start taking decisions that are driven by the interest of the people of this country, and not simply doing a few things that would give them enough breath for a week, a month or two months.

We are going to have this conversation again if nothing is done in two or three months, and we are going to have it again in another month or two thereafter. On each occasion that we have it, our circumstances will continue to get worse unless there is the kind of serious intervention to which the Minister of Finance's speeches adverted from as far back as 2010, and to which the Minister of Agriculture's speeches adverted, but for which we have seen no evidence of progress other than on the front of taxation and some limited form of expenditure cut. This is not working. It is not, Mr. Speaker. I am obliged to you.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, I am obliged. Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for her intervention. It is not unlike anything that we have heard before. Of course, it is pretty much

what we have heard. It is laced with the usual -- I cannot say "hyperbole" because that may be unparliamentary -- talking points and a little brush-up here about how things will collapse in the country and we will all go to Hell in a handbasket, so to speak. I have heard it so often that I do not know. I have run of ways to really respond to some of it. I just allow it to go as it is. What amazes me, though, is the over-generous enthusiasm for trying to be on every side of every point and every issue without really saying what it is that the Leader of the Opposition and her party, the Opposition, wish to propose.

At one point, they say things are bad and we have to run to the Central Bank to raise more money. They say the Central Bank has more Government paper now; \$1.8 billion-plus when in 2007 it did not have any. They say the NIS has about \$1.8 billion or \$1.6 billion and \$3 billion-plus worth of longer paper, short and long respectively. They say we should not be borrowing from the NIS because we owe them money too. They say we definitely should not be borrowing from the Central Bank because that destabilises the monetary system. They say we should bring our deficit down to manageable limits so that we can avoid having to do what we are doing here today. Fair point. They say we should provide all of the services and, as we hear in here in all the debates on housing, education and transport, these are all of the things which Barbadians have become accustomed to and like to have because they define our standard of living and quality of life but cost money to do. We must do all of those things yet have the lowest deficit, borrow no money from the Central Bank, keep away from the commercial banks, and do all of these things. Do not cut expenditure. I do not quite understand it; cut expenditure but do not cut it. I should say, "Cut expenditure but make sure you provide for everything." I heard some Honourable Members say we should take land and just acquire land all over the place and give people. That is all right. I would like everybody to get a plot of land, but it costs money to acquire or, if you are doing private treaty, it costs money upfront to get that. I hear Honourable Members in here making the point that we should not raise bus fares but we should buy more buses because the buses are breaking down on the roads and the Transport Board owes this body money and owes that body money.

I hear that we should try and make sure the QEH has everything it requires; all the drugs, all the personnel, all the equipment. Tiles are falling off the roof and we need to fix those. This body cannot get Phensic, they cannot get Whizz. We need to have all of that provided.

Asides.

7.47 p.m.

I hear that we should not cut university tuition fees, and make students play a little 'tralla' to the university because that is inhumane, it is backward, so we must provide everything for everybody but yet we must keep the deficit down, or do not have any at all, and do not cut expenditure. We know we cannot cut salaries because the last Government passed a constitutional motion in here to make it illegal to cut salaries. Sir, everything we are to do but nothing we are to do and in all of this fury, fluff and vehemence, the repetitive vehemence of it, we are yet to have a properly articulated and publicly announced set of initiatives by the Leader of the Opposition and her colleagues about what to do with the economy of Barbados and, certainly to do with the public finances to get them in the shape that they believe they should be in. The only thing they can say is that the Minister of Finance should go back to his 2011 speech, the Minister of Finance should go back to this, the Minister of Finance should take the ideas of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West but, Sir, there is nothing coming out of the Opposition as to how to get down the deficit. They say do not raise taxes, okay Sir, but if we do not raise taxes, then what can you do? Sir, you can only cut expenditure. Sir, they say to call the elections but calling an election is not an economic strategy and as you said, time is running out, 12 months or less than 12 months and time flies so fast. My question is: What is the insidious hurry? If the time is flying, if you know the Government has no options available to it, just take your time and you will get what you deserve. I do not see anything difficult about that.

Mr. Speaker, I know that that Leader of the Opposition is far more mature than to be picking up papers or going on line reading foolishness that people write to say that I gave somebody an ultimatum. Sir, I did not give anybody no ultimatum, an ultimatum was given to me.

Mr. Speaker, I said in the House of Assembly very clearly when I presented the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals that we have a problem and that we know what is the problem. You do not have to over-describe it or under-describe it because we know what is the problem, and we explained all of that. We said what the options were, basically what were the options presented to the Government, not just options we sat down and thought up. We heard this point, reduce VAT to 15 per cent and eliminate all the zero rates and exemptions, and Sir, I went through the difficulties of it. Sir, when people hear that, they do not know what is involved in the zero rates and the exemptions, like water and the basic food items, like international business and financial services. Sir, what could be worse, a two per cent commission on foreign exchange purchases (3:41) not all transactions, because that is the other thing and I have said the Central Bank of Barbados would issue the guidance notes on it but before we got a chance to do that there was wild speculation driven by people who should really know better saying

"Oh, if somebody sends me some money from overseas and it lands into a foreign exchange account or lands in my bank account commission will be taken off that". Sir, they said a whole set of things that are not even in the contemplation of the Central Bank of Barbados, the Government, the Ministry of Finance or nobody at all. Sir, anyway, we will speak to those in the coming week. Sir, next week the Central Bank of Barbados will issue the guidelines working with banks and those kinds of things.

Mr. Speaker, could you imagine that if they are complaining about a two per cent commission, could you imagine if you remove financial services from being exempt and impose 17.5 per cent what impact that would have on the financial services and international business sector? Sir, if two per cent commission would kill the sector, well 17.5 per cent would obliterate it. I must add, by the way, that there are some countries in the Caribbean that do not exempt financial services from the payment of VAT. Sir, Barbados is one of the few countries that do, a lot of other countries do not do it. Sir, Bahamas has a two per cent stamp on foreign exchange transactions because you would feel Barbados is the first country to have it, that I went somewhere on Mount Whatever and Came up with this thing on my own that nobody has researched and seen how these things have operated in the past and currently operate at present. Sir, when you hear these things, could you imagine if put 17.5 per cent VAT on water? This is what is before you and it is what people have recommended. Mr. Speaker, it sounds sexy, it sounds goods to lower VAT to 15 per cent and eliminate all the zero rates and that way you broaden the base and you get all the money. Sir, the IMF recommended that too in their tax study and we put a review Committee in place that itself said they were not sure whether or not that would make sense in the context of the Barbados economy because it would be exposing a lot of people to stuff.

Mr. Speaker, on this VAT, do you know that in 1997 when the VAT was introduced, we introduced a value added tax on goods and services. The national social responsibility levy is only on goods, it is not on services like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said. It is not on services, it is on goods, largely on the import side but do you know that we introduced a value added tax in 1997 on everything, on goods and services at 15 per cent and, Sir, the Barbados economy did not collapse, people did not suck salt, they did not disappear, so a 10 per cent national social responsibility levy or increased by 8 per cent is going to cause the whole country to disappear and people are going to suffer like dogs but we introduced a VAT at 15 per cent and raise an additional \$200 million more than we had anticipated on top of what was projected, which of course, the Barbados Labour Party then proceeded to lick out, dollar by dollar, cent by cent.

Mr. Speaker, then there is the issue of jobs. I cannot say everybody because that is begging the question but there are people who harassed the Government, mainly those in the private sector but others as well that Government's wages bill is too high, that we have too many people employed, that the size of Government is too large. You hear that every single day and that the focus of Government's adjustment should be on reducing the size of the public sector. Sir, if you reduce the size of the public sector and 90 per cent of the goods and services provided by the Government is done through a human body, what do you think would happen, Mr. Speaker, Sir? It is just coded language for sending home some people.

Mr. Speaker, this administration has said that it has weighed those things in the balance, we have looked at those options and we have chosen not to go that particular route, that is our position. Sir, if we are to be condemned today, next week, next month or whenever and election is called for not sending home 8 000 to 10 000 public servants, then we stand condemned. I ask tonight: What is the position of the Barbados Labour Party Opposition because they have talked all around the issue but have not said anything, the only thing they have said is to call an election, get a mandate and let us do what we have to do. (Done)

Sequence 47

INSERT S48 JULIETTE

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: It cannot be as is being suggested by the Opposition that you can be on all sides of an issue. You cannot be on all sides of an issue, you have to state a position. You cannot have your cake and eat it too, and that is what people say Opposition is about but not in this time. In this time you cannot have your cake and eat it too because these are the times when people need to lead from the front, and I am hoping that as we go forward deeper into the season that we will hear from the Government. I am not confident that will happen though because the Opposition which already believes that it is in Government, the ministries have already been handed out, and they had previously handed out Government House but unfortunately it seems as though that is not going to work out to plan so all of the people who were excitedly jumping in the line after years of retirement from politics and so forth now realised that they are not going to get Government House so they have gone suspiciously quiet. All of these things that have been... I just came from travelling and I already heard names of who is going to be posted where and who is going to be Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados and all of those things. I hear all of those things. I guess the Leader of the Opposition does not want to end up like President Trump where if you win

the Government then you get the transition and then realise you do not have anybody to transition with, so they have already handed out... That is not our culture though but it seems to have crept in.

There is a Barbadian saying 'that if greedy do not wait, hot will cool' so take your time. We will see when that time comes, but for the time being, Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is one that is necessary. As I said we have things to do, we have to protect the citizens of the country, national security, we have to ensure our school children get to school and are taught, our hospitals are functioning, our waste is collected and those things, and we do this in addition to doing what we have proposed in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals and our hope is that working with all Barbadians we will be able to achieve the targets going forward.

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

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

The question that the Resolution do now passed 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 today and I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 10.00 a.m. in the morning.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to make note that the during this period the 43rd Regional Conference of the Caribbean, the Americas and the Atlantic Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will be holding their meeting from the 16th to the 27th of June in St. Kitts and the parliamentary representatives here will be attending that meeting: yourself, the Clerk of the House, the President of the Senate and I believe one Member of the Opposition is going to be accompanying them, so that is the reason for the extended break at this time. We will return then on Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 10 o'clock in the morning for the next Sitting of this Chamber, so I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 10.00 a.m. in the morning.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

House D13 Sequence 49

8.18 p.m.

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2. If the Minister is aware of such plans, will the Minister state: (a) when such closure is expected to take place; (b) whether there are presently any plans to repair, refurbish and/or renovate this fire station; (c) if there are such plans, how long is it expected that these repairs, refurbishments and/or renovations will take to be completed and the fire station reopened; (d) what arrangements, if any, are there to service those parishes, districts and communities which are presently being serviced in emergencies and otherwise by fire officers, trucks and other equipment stationed at this fire station, and (e) what plans, if any, are there for the future of this site in the event that there are no such plans to repair, refurbish and/or renovate and subsequently reopen the fire station?	

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CLARKE, Mr. G.A. (St. George North)
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HINKSON, Mr. E.G. (St. James North)
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JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Hon. D.St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
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SINCKLER, Hon. C.P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Rt. Hon. F.J. (St. Michael South)
SYMMONDS, Mr. K.D. (St. James Central)

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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, close of debate, about 7.00 p.m.. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman's reply breaks off at 'and everybody said ...' (take-slip Sequence 42). The source then goes straight to Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley speaking on an increase in the limit for Treasury Bills and Tax Certificates; it does not record the question on the Order No. 16 Resolution, or the heading and moving of the Resolution that Hon. C. P. Sinckler later moves 'do now pass'. Printed as in the source. Please confirm whether material is missing.

Q3. Throughout. The source carries editorial markers printed as headings: 'INSERT S28 JULIETTE', 'INSERT S33 JULIETTE', 'INSERT S38 JULIETTE', 'INERT S43 JULIETTE' and 'INSERT S48 JULIETTE'. Some take-slips also appear as ordinary paragraphs (e.g. 'House D 13 Seq 13 12.24 p.m.', 'Seq 41'). Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 16, Mr. K. D. Symmonds's speech. After Hon. D. St.E. Kellman's point of order on debushing, the paragraph beginning 'Please continue, Honourable Member. Mr. Speaker, the point I was making before I was interrupted...' carries the label 'Mr. SPEAKER', although from the second sentence it is Mr. Symmonds's speech. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 16, resumption after lunch. Mr. Speaker calls 'The Honourable Member for St. Michael East', but the speech that follows is by Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, whom Hon. D. O'N. Inniss later addresses as the Member for St. Michael South East; Mr. T. A. Prescod is later called as the Member for St. Michael East. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 16, Mr. G. A. Clarke's speech. Mr. Clarke speaks of a 'vesting of 5 300 square feet of land'; the Resolution, as given by the Minister, concerns 5 930 square metres (63 829.99 square feet). Printed as in the source.

Q7. Take-slips about 12.50 p.m.. Take-slip 'H:D13(15)' is timed '12.53 p.m.' and the next, 'H:No.D13 (16)', '12.51 p.m.'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 13th June, 2017, Mr. Speaker in the Chair, and prayers were taken by Rev. Father Mark Harewood. The Minutes of Tuesday, May 30, 2017 were confirmed, and Mr. Speaker welcomed legal trainees attached to the office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Solicitor General's Chambers. On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, seconded by Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42 (5), 43 and 44 were suspended for the rest of the Sitting.

Order No. 16 was the Resolution to approve, under section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Chapter 225, the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of the former site of District 'E' Police Station, Station Hill, St. Peter, for housing development. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, Member for St. Lucy, moved it, describing 5 930 square metres, or 63 829.99 square feet, of Crown land first considered in 2004, and spoke at length on the history of housing and land ownership. Mr. K. D. Symmonds, Member for St. James Central, questioned the Corporation's management and staffing and the unpublished labour survey, and spoke of defects in housing units and missing conveyances; Mr. Kellman raised several points of order, and Mr. Speaker warned Mr. Symmonds about his asides and ordered a remark struck from the record. The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, supported the Resolution, recalling vesting Resolutions since he entered the House in 1994 and thanking the Corporation and the private sector. Mr. E. G. Hinkson then gave notice of questions on the possible closure of the Weston Fire Station, and the Sitting was suspended for lunch.

After lunch Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw set out the Barbados Labour Party's record on housing. Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, Member for St. James South, said the Opposition offered no sustainable solutions and spoke on care of the elderly; Mr. Symmonds's point of order was ruled not to be one. Miss C. Y. Forde, Member for St. Thomas, spoke of families still squatting with neighbours. Hon. S. D. Blackett, Member for St. Michael Central, said housing must be a priority and preferred terrace units to high-rise buildings. Hon. M. A. Lashley described the policy, conceived in 2003, of selling some 3 571 rental units. Mr. T. A. Prescod, Member for St. Michael East, referred to more than 30 000 housing applicants in 2001 and the Coverley estate. Mr. G. A. Clarke, Member for St. George North, said the site could give 16 to 18 house spots; the Prime Minister corrected him on a point of order.

After a suspension, Hon. R. D. Jones recalled growing up in rural Barbados and his 14 years in the House. Mr. Kellman replied to the debate, defending the work at Parish Land, discussing the Tenancies legislation of 1981, the history of squatting and the \$5 a square foot lots; his reply breaks off in the source.

The record then continues with the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, speaking on a Resolution to raise the limit for Treasury Bills and Tax Certificates. She said the deficit was to be closed by \$481 million in tax measures that would not yield as intended, and that the Central Bank, which held no Government

securities in 2008, now held \$1.895 billion, while the National Insurance Scheme held \$199 million in Treasury Bills. The Minister of Finance, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, replied that the Opposition could not be on all sides of an issue, defended the two per cent commission against applying 17.5 per cent VAT to financial services, and said the Government would not send home 8 000 to 10 000 public servants. He moved that the Resolution pass, and it was agreed to without division. Mr. Boyce noted the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association regional conference in St. Kitts from 16th to 27th June, and the House was adjourned until Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 10.00 a.m.