
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, May 12, 2017

met at 10.15 a.m. on Friday, May 12, 2017.

PRESENT

His Honour MICHAEL A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B. (Speaker) Her Honour Mrs. M-J. MARA THOMPSON, M.Sc. (Ph.Ed.) B.A. (Deputy Speaker)

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

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

Hon. D. St. E. KELLMAN (Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development)

Miss CYNTHIA Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.

Hon. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. Ed.,

J.P., (Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation) Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S. (Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management)

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)

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, The Public Service and Urban Development)

Hon. JOHN D. E. BOYCE, B.C.H., MRAC, M.Sc., C. Eng.

(Minister of Transport and Works) (Leader of Government Business)

Hon. STEVEN D. BLACKETT

(Minister of the Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development)

Mr. JAMES D. PAUL, B.Sc.

(Chairman of Committees)

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

Dip. Theology

(Minister of Environment and Drainage)

Mr. ADRIEL D. BRATHWAITE, 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)

Mr. TREVOR PRESCOD, B.A.

Mr. KERRIE D. SYMMONDS, B. A., LL.B.

Mr. DWIGHT G. SUTHERLAND, M.Sc., M.B.A. (Dist.), B.Sc.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., LL.M.

Prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood.

MR. SPEAKER: This House is now in Session.

MINUTES Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I am not yet in receipt of The Minutes of Friday, May 05, 2017. I therefore ask for the usual Motion.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that these Minutes referred to be deferred.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: I am in receipt of the Auditor-General Report for the year 2016.

PAPERS

Mr. SPEAKER: The Right Honourable Prime Minister.

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

1. The Annual Reports for the National Petroleum Corporation for the years 2011, 2012, 2013.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Audited Financial Statements and Annual Reports on Activities of the Board of Management of the Ellerslie Secondary School for the periods 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008.
2. The Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Annual Report, 2015.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Department of Emergency Management Annual Report, January 1st to December, 31, 2015.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER VACATED THE CHAIR. Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER ASSUMED THE CHAIR.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 14

1. Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act,

Cap. 225, approve the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of the parcel of land, the property of

the Crown situate at Arch Hall, in the parish of Saint Thomas in this Island for residential purposes.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, we are here today to vest a parcel of land consisting of 1 038.2 square meters of Crown Land at Arch Hall in the parish of St. Thomas in the National Housing Corporation for residential purposes. This land forms part of two larger portions which are 2 088 and 6 219.2 square metres of land at the same said Arch Hall which was for road access and also residential purposes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this was also part of the Bennetts Plantation which would have been part of the Barbados Farms Limited and when Sandy Lane sought to purchase this plantation the Government agreed at the time to buy these parcels of land for purposes which were previously expressed. At that time when it was debated, Sandy Lane was not interested in the lands to the east of the highway and it was suggested by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy at the time that it would have been in Government's best interest to acquire the land to the east which would have been to the west of the landfill at the time. Madam Deputy Speaker, this was considered to be foolishness as usual, but the thinking behind it was that when one considered that the land at the top of the hill was owned by Government and that the Government had acquired the land next to the Arch Hall Village, it was felt that when you consider who would have been your neighbour, Sandy Lane, that it was in the best interest of the persons of Arch Hall, you would acquire additional lands increase the number of lots in the area, so that if by chance the developers or land owners, who were acquiring the land on the behalf Sandy Lane and who would have been buying land from Sandy Lane, felt that the Arch Hall Village was too close to their development, that you would have increased the amount of land in that area to make the price very high.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there was a lot of criticism at that time. I even remember a magistrate who had some apartments and so on in Bennetts Village telling me that I was talking foolishness.

10.40 p.m.

I did not worry about it because I understood quite well what I was thinking and what I knew would happen. When Government did not acquire that land and Sandy Lane eventually acquired all the land and left that one out, there was a mad rush by people to own the land in the Bennetts-Arch Hall area that would have been owned and used by the people in the area. I remember well there was even a charge that a certain gentleman was acting as agent

for the people who wanted to acquire the land from the residents in the Bennetts Tenantry and also in Arch Hall. The magistrate one night sent me an apology on my Facebook page because he suddenly recognised what I was saying. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not something that I have hatched. The records of this House will show, if you look at the debate when that acquisition occurred, that I had forewarned the House that these things would have occurred. You had a situation where we in Opposition recognised the possibilities, and we did everything to ensure that we protected the interests of those persons in Arch Hall so that the demand would not have been that small part which we would have known as Arch Hall, but at that time we the Opposition were quite prepared to expand the debate and carry it to another level.

On reflection last night, all of these things came back to me and it was very clear to me what we did at that time. I keep telling people that three o' clock hour is always the most important hour for anyone, especially when they have a major debate, because it is at that hour that things tend to flow and then you have a better understanding of what you have to deal with. What we have today is that the Democratic Labour Party, through its Member, would have recognised the importance of that whole area, and we saw that the area could easily have been turned into a commercial area, which Sandy Lane has been able to turn it into. We wanted to protect the interests of those persons in Arch Hall by expanding the offerings; not only the piece by the Fire Station, but we wanted to go on the other side. When you are going north, you would see there are two fields there that are always kept where people cut the grass and so on, and we felt that -- seeing that Government had already owned the lands on the hill -- it would have been in Government's best interest also to own that land and to protect the interests of those persons in Arch Hall. Today, what has happened is that Sandy Lane changed its mind when Government did not take the advice of the Opposition, and Sandy Lane has purchased that land to the east of the highway. It would therefore be very difficult for us now to even think of protecting those persons in Arch Hall, because the offerings and the advice given to the Barbados Labour Party at that time were not accepted.

Madam Deputy Speaker, fortunately for us, the foresight we offered in that debate can easily be seen by anyone now. When you drive that area you can easily appreciate that the area is going to be one where significant development will come, and that the Government, with its road projects and so on, will also play a significant role in the development of that area. It also lends to another aspect which we need not ignore, because as more development comes along that road, the confusion as it relates to traffic cannot be ignored. I think the time is right for us to look to see if the connection by the Lawrence Johnson Roundabout is not the right connection where we can look to see how we can divert the traffic on that highway instead of

allowing that traffic to come to the Arch Hall area and go onto the Warrens area to further create confusion. I know there is a belief that the more lanes -- you also find this in the debate -- you add, there is a possibility of reducing traffic, but studies have shown that the more lanes you add, the more traffic you attract and the more confusion you create. It is always better to have a road taking the traffic away from your major road and allowing it to go elsewhere so that you can allow those persons travelling on the diverted road to exit at the point they want on the particular highway, et cetera. These are things which we cannot ignore, and when one looks to see what the Government has been able to create in the Lancaster area, one must recognise that Lancaster is not far away from Arch Hall and that we must be cognisant of the possibility of traffic not only coming from the north, but you can have traffic coming from the West Coast, the south, as well as St. Philip, St. John, St. George and all of those areas once they make the connection, come along the East Coast Road, use the back roads, come up the hill and enter at the junction there by the roundabout.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are into a very interesting point in the development of that area and we must recognise that we are at a stage where what we are doing will significantly influence the development in that area. Government must ask itself whether it is prepared also to cash in on the benefits that will be derived from the development that is occurring when one considers the tremendous amount of expenditure, the foresight and the cost to Government that would have occurred. It would have been Government which would have built the Lawrence Johnson Highway, which used to be known as the Highway 2A, and it would have been Government which not only built housing but had the foresight to recognise that you could not have housing without other development in the area. As I said in a previous debate, without reflecting, in all major developments all over the world, housing is not seen as just a house but it is seen as part of those social services and commercial activities that make the people who live in the houses comfortable. You cannot have houses and not have the services that go with it. That is why as far back as the 1990s when one looks at what occurred in the Six Men's area under another Minister of Housing -- incidentally he was from St. Lucy also -- and in the Hope Road area, not only was there an allocation in those developments for commercial activity but there was also allocation for churches, et cetera. The concept of housing in totality was accepted, and one recognised that you could not just go into an area and just put down houses and not have anything to service them.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy at the time, Mr. Edward Evelyn Greaves, was the one who was able to do that at Six Men's. As I speak to you now, there are still a couple of commercial areas at Six Men's where there might be a dispute as to whether those lands belong to

Barbados Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC) or really belong to the National Housing Corporation (NHC). To the best of my knowledge, I think those lands were taken over by the NHC and previously they would have been lands belonging to BIDC when there was a suggestion that the area would have been a good one for manufacturing and so on.

10.47 a.m.

Insert s3 juliette

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Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: ..in place as we are now being asked to, then we would be wasting our time here today when we consider that what we are doing is also shoring up the contribution and the reaction to the public works that have occurred along that highway and the opportunities that can be gained because of what is happening along that highway. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am saying that we cannot ignore those open fields to the east of the highway and that we must make a connection between Lancaster, Royal Westmorland, Sugar Hills, Arch Hall, Bagatelle, Welches Terrace and Welches Development.

What is also interesting, and Government would be good to look at this also, is that in the Welches area you have Welches Terrace, old Welches, Welches Heights and Warrens Development and in the middle of all of them you have a commercial development and that is supposed to be a residential area which tells you that you cannot have a good housing area unless you have a residential and a commercial aspect of it also. Madam Deputy Speaker, because when I first went there there was nothing called Marshall Trading, there was no Chefette Restaurant or no drug store and right now there are just as many shops in Welches Development as can be found in the Warrens Complex so you must ask yourself if you can build houses and not service them or whether there is a relationship between the two. It is like building a church and then not having anybody to go into the church. There is a relationship between having people and then having the services, et cetera to service the people and also the people to service the business.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this morning we are here acquiring this 1 038.2 square metres of land which will allow that general area to also have a fire station, to have the ambulance to be stationed there and will also allow for some training to occur in that general area. It also will pull more traffic to the area and will also allow the Minister of Transport and Works to be able to study the area to see if the road structure can hold the increase traffic without creating more confusion in the area because everybody

knows that the confusion is not only at Warrens that it can be seen in the Redman Village area also.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we need now to go back to the drawing table to see whether it is not in the best interest of this Government to look to see whether we should not divert at the roundabout and push, as I said previously, a road somewhere through the Content area to Christ Church with the necessary arteries that will allow people to be able to branch off and not create the confusion as we were seeing on the thing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is why we were very critical of the flyovers that were landing from a highway to the same highway. We always felt that it would have been better to move the traffic using another road and taking that traffic away from the Warrens area and also allowing more development to occur.

We have to be very careful, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we do not end up spending a lot of money in a particular area and we do not attract the necessary private sector investments. I believe that whenever significant Government money is spent that there should be matching private sector investment to concur with the amount of money being spent by Government. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is why this Government would always be looking to develop these new areas to encourage the private sector to have a buy-in because you cannot only have the public sector spending the money and not having the private sector buy in because once you have this type of development as we can rightfully see especially in the Lancaster area it will attract the private sector to also get involved and help you with your development.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the things we cannot ignore just west of this property and the property that runs across the highway is that there is also the area called Hometown and Sunset Crest. Everybody knows the amount of capital, and this is not buildings now, this is in terms of money, that can be found in that particular area. We must do the development in such a way that these areas can attract some of those persons living and investing in those areas who need to expand their investment and to move them further up the hill when one considers that the distance between the two is not that great. It will allow the west to expand to the east and the east to expand to the west where we can create a working relationship as such that in the same way that we were able to combine Welches and Warrens and the West Coast to the development that is now going on on what used to be Highway 2 that is now the Lawrence Johnson Highway that it will not become one instead of having that separation when one considers that we had the foresight of building a secondary school in one of those connections so that when you move from the West Coast you pass the secondary school and you go on to the highway that was also built by this Government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have created the impetus and it is now for the private sector to do the rest. We have facilitated and have done everything possible to attract them and show them the potential that can occur when proper development is handed to them. As I said the Arch Hall Development is very significant in this because it is not far. Madam Deputy Speaker, I must say that this Arch Hall Development was started by the other Government, the only regret about it is that they did not take the lands to the east and they did not see the significant point but considered it to be foolishness at the time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what we have here today is this development in the middle of significant development to come to this place. One of the things that this Government has been trying to do and will continue to try to do is to work out a working relationship between what goes on on the hill and what goes on to the seaside. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is why when I hear people saying that certain things should not occur on the hill... What has happened on the hill shows that the Government has demonstrated to all future investors that they are serious about maintaining the environment and having the right environment in that particular area so much so that Government was the first to invest significant funds to ensure that it brought some type of surety to persons that they will continue to manage the environment in that particular area to the best of its ability.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if we are to continue to grow we are going to have to come up with more of these projects and we are going to have to ensure that we take the lead because after more than 50 years of independence Government should not now have to take the lead. This lead should have been taken by the private sector but Government has now to facilitate and also take the lead, but you would expect that when the world is in a crisis that a Government with the foresight of this one will be prepared to take the lead and also facilitate at the same time because when you find yourself in a situation where your banking system has over \$9 billion and the rate of return on that is \$.15 per cent the Government cannot sit idly by and ignore that it has to be the facilitator and the implementer at the same time.

House D11 Sequence 4

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to beg that this Resolution do now pass and to say we are supportive of what has happened in this area, and we support this measure of vesting this property in the National Housing Corporation and to ensure that we continue not only to do developments as we have been accused only in those areas that we represent, but this is sure demonstration that wherever we see the possibility of expanding this country Barbados, we are quite prepared to doing it.

I thank you Ma'am.

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

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to register my support for the vesting that is now before the House. Madam, I would want to raise a few concerns however, which I think are fundamental to not only the issue of clarity about what we are trying to do, but also the way forward especially as it impacts and concerns the residents of the area, most particularly the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts.

Madam, the matter before the House would be dealt with in a considerably more easy way and with far more clarity of purpose, if we came to understand the importance of making sure that once notice of these types of Resolutions are given, accompanying that notice should come a site plan. Something that would allow for those persons who have to debate the matter, to see exactly what is the piece of land that we are talking about. Now, Madam, the reality is, there was a time in previous administrations where site plans would have been ordinarily circulated, so as to bring clarity and purpose for matters of this nature. I heard the Honourable Minister, who just took his seat say, "No, no, no", but I know, Madam, that under the watch of the previous Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, while I sat in the Other Place, site plans would come to the Other Place once he was Minister. The reality is, in this particular case... and I consulted my friend who is sitting to my right, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, and let me say the history of the particular area, Arch Hall, was first and foremost part of the constituency of St. Thomas, subsequently then becoming part of the constituency of St. James Central. I see the piece of paper being sent before me now, but I cannot study the site plan while I am on my feet. It makes the point it should have been available to us long ago. Having consulting and because I am a lawyer I would not attempt to speak while studying the site plan because I am too good a lawyer to know that you do it that way. Madam Deputy Speaker, the reality is, I am glad one has been made available, but this is the concern.

Madam, there are in the area of Arch Hall three number ones. There is an Arch Hall New Development which is part of the newer or expanded Arch Hall area, right behind the Fire Station. The old Arch Hall would have had a number 1, one side of the road as you enter and on the other side of the road as well. So in the absence of some clarity as to where this particular piece of land that measures 1 138 square meters exists, then we have something of a challenge to speak with certainty about that particular piece of land.

I understand from what the Honourable Member said that this is for the vesting in the National Housing Corporation for the purpose of housing. Now let me say this, from as far back as the May 25, 2000, the Cabinet of Barbados agreed to acquire land for the purpose of housing in Arch Hall. Housing has already been constructed in Arch Hall pursuant to that decision, as I understand it. Now if this vesting is to give legal effect by the Parliament of Barbados to the process that is well underway, I believe there are at least 38 houses which have been built since that time, a part of the Barbados Labour Party, then, Madam, that is fine by me. I have no difficulty coming here to tidy up the work. There are however a few concerns, which I think we have as legislators to try to get right.

Madam, the first and foremost concern that I have outside of the way in which we do this thing, because I do not think it only applies to Arch Hall. I think we must accept that when we go into developments and we are going to talk about the expansion of developments, then legislators should have the site plan so you can reflect on the development that we are talking about, and the way in which that development can be more usefully or more effectively brought about in the interest of the residents who are there, and the people who have to do business there as well.

Madam, beyond that however, that point having been made, there is a Fire Station in Arch Hall, which as I understand it, I heard by rumour, because thus far I do not know. It might be like this piece of paper passed to me, there may be an invitation to the opening that is supposed to come to me, but I heard by rumour, as the Member of Parliament, that there is likely to be an opening of the Fire Station in my constituency sometime next week. I am not begging anybody for an invitation of any opening. I am simply saying, Madam, again I know that there has been a way of doing things in the past where the common courtesy was extended to the Member of Parliament that if you are opening a Government installation of that magnitude and significance, especially one which was the brainchild of the former Member of Parliament for St. Thomas, and then the life of it carried by the current Member of Parliament for St. Thomas and supported by your humble servant the Honourable Member for St. James Central, who now has responsibility as the constituency Representative for that area, at least somebody could have picked up the phone to say well you know, but I have heard this rumour, Madam, and I wish the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs well in the execution of the opening of this Fire Station.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the substantive issue is this. The learned Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs knows that right behind the Arch Hall Fire Station is one of those number ones in Arch Hall, Lot No. 1. I will not call the gentleman's name but I believe he has

been in contact with the Honourable Attorney General, with regard to some legitimate concerns he has with respect to his being the next door neighbour to the Fire Station, and effectively the challenge that he had was, when he was building his house, the said Ministry of Home Affairs reached out to him and they said to him, "Mr. So and So, if you set back your house a little bit off the road, further into the little space that you have as your allocated lot, you will make it easier for the Light and Power to run wires at an angle that will not make it difficult for large vehicles such as the fire truck itself to come down into there." If he was closer to the curb then the angle would be so acute that the wires would be so low as to make its entrances and egress by large vehicles, like a fire truck, would be very difficult to access.

So, therefore, Madam, like a good citizen and a wise constituent he contacted his MP and I urged him that I think the request makes sense and to cooperate with the State. No harm in that, but when he once sets his house back, he now has lost obviously the use of a certain percentage of his land. As fate would have, because it was not contemplated then, an extension now was done by the Fire Station and the Fire Station which runs about and around with his property, now has put down land marks and fencing which suggest -- I am glad the Minister of Housing is aware of the matter, because I think this is really a case where a human face could be extended by the Government, shown by the Government, to ordinary citizens who have been trying to cooperate with the State. Effectively all he has been asking for is an additional 5 or 6 feet so that he would be better able to enjoy the use of his property, a usage which quite frankly he has lost because he sought to accommodate the State when the State needed his cooperation.

Sequence 5

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Now this matter has been the source of much frustration to this particular gentleman. He has not only raised the matter with me. I know for a fact he has raised the matter with the learned Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs. I know for a fact he has raised the matter with those people who are in charge of the Fire Service on the site, and it would seem that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, who is the Minister of Housing is aware of it as well. The point is, Madam, I think that it is now too late for us to try to make an accommodation to give a man who has been cooperative with the State but who is inconvenienced by the State because of the fact that he wanted to be cooperative, and he is now lost about 6 feet of the use of his property. To set back the fence by 5 feet is not asking too much and the necessary legal work can be done to effect that without any net loss to anybody.

Aside

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: I would be happy to assist in any way that I could do it, but you are not the minister to make it happen. So while I know your heart is in the right place - Madam, the issue really is one that we must hear that the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs is in agreement and more importantly the Minister of Housing is prepared to show a human face and some element of compassion.

Madam, having entered that plea on behalf of that one individual, however, I want to speak more now to the broader community in Arch Hall. There was a time when that Fire Station had a hard court at the back of it. They were willing, I approached them -- you

Must understand this is a village, Arch Hall and Bennetts where you have...

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Well, in its own right a polling district. It is what we would call a box in its own right. You have a few hundred people living in that community. They obviously have young children who need a place to play. The way this district has developed, there is no playing facility. The only playing facility that was there was the hard court by the Fire Station. I approached those who are in charge of the Fire Station and they agreed that they make the hard court available for youngster to come and play a little basketball, a little netball, volleyball and so on, or what have you. Now, Madam, there is also another benefit because under the watchful eye of people, who have some authority in Barbados i.e. in this case the fire officers, you have youngster who are interacting with that level of the community playing their sports and so on, and I think it is a useful developmental relationship. It is a symbiotic relationship. They kind of benefit from each other. Madam, now when once the Fire Station went under repair that obviously came to an end. That access ceased and the question that I must now raise is, can the community once again benefit from access to the hard court at the Fire Station in Arch Hall?

Madam, there is a serious shortage of sporting facilities in the area. If you think about the geography, Arch Hall and Bennetts lie perhaps two miles away from the Bagatelle playing field, which will be going South. It is not a desirable thing to have little children 9 or 10 years old walking along a highway of that magnitude, for that distance in order to find a place to recreate themselves. I do not think that any parent feels comfortable with that prospect. Madam, the reality is, within Arch Hall/Bennetts today there is no other suitable facility. So therefore the fact of the existence of a hard court at the Fire Station is something I would want to urge for access by the

community to the installation. Now this is not asking for something that is new, because as I said there was under a different regime that level of access, and I know that the access exists in other parts of Barbados. The Defence Force for example has a base called Paragon and at Paragon Base people from the community go there and play cricket. I have seen it with my own eyes on weekends, and that is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, who will be able to bear me out on that. There are other areas as well in Barbados where this type of relationship can exist. I urge that in the interest of the wellbeing of the community in Arch Hall and Bennetts, and the youngsters who must have a satisfactory placed facility to recreate themselves, that some consideration be given to that.

Madam, I was distressed when I listened to the presentation of the Honourable Minister, because of the fact that at no time did the Minister mention the Evening Light Pentecostal Church. Now the Minister is very familiar with the Evening Light Pentecostal Church, because I know that he has sought to use its environs when once he needed, to rebut certain things that were being done in the interest of the people of Arch Hall of political nature, and he felt that the presence or the voice of the Democratic Labour Party needed to be heard, and the Minister then quite easily found the Evening Light Pentecostal Church and sought to make arrangements for his voice to be heard.

Madam, the Church and the Church's premises cannot only serve the purpose as far as the Minister seems to think of being the replacement for a Town Hall in the community. The Church has been there for a number of years. When I inherited that part of the constituency from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Evening Light Pentecostal Church was there and it had a significant congregation. Since that time the congregation has expanded. Right now, the fact of the matter is, the congregation spills outside of the premises of the Church, because there are just too many people for the space to accommodate. When this development was contemplated and as I said when Cabinet agreed to the acquisition as far back as May 2000, it was understood that the Church was supposed to benefit from what, if my memory serves me correctly, would have been 2 or 3 spots so as to accommodate the actual physical structure of the Church, and also parking and so on. This was discussed with the leadership of the Church, which is still the same leadership today as it was at that time, and it was discussed with people in the community so that a legitimate expectation was created in the hearts and minds of parishioners and residents alike that Government would enter into the community, would have this development of land and so on, but that the Church would not be left out because the Church obviously is an integral and instrumental part of the community's wellbeing.

Madam, as fate would have it, the voice of people is the voice of God and in one day in January 2007 the...

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: It is a fact. One day in January 2007 the administration changed and with it came a change of thinking. Now the reality is, Madam, I would have hoped to have heard from the Minister on this matter, because at the end of the day I am not in a position where I can resolve this issue without the assistance of the Minister. I believe the Minister somewhere deep inside has a fear of the Lord in his heart. I believe the Minister would understand the significance of accommodating the Church in Arch Hall as had been indicated was the intention of the State. I want to say that in these matters, Madam, sometimes it is useful for us to take the politics out of it because a commitment given by one administration, though I understand is not automatically binding upon another, a commitment which is useful and quite frankly is harmless in nature, because what you are really trying to do is to make sure that a useful community installation, in this case the Church, is better able to effect its business and to be the kind of guiding light and pillar of support in the community by virtue of having the structural and physical resources to do that which it wants to do. Ma'am, the church cannot replant itself in the new Arch Hall area without Government being instrumental in giving it access to that land and to this day, I believe I am correct in saying, since the change of Government there has been no further discussion with the church on this matter, that there has been no negotiations entered into with the church on this matter, and that the issue continues to hang in the balance.

Sequence 6

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is not to lay blame at the feet of this Minister or indeed his predecessor, it is really again, as I have had to do repeatedly from this Place in this Honourable House to ask us as legislators, to look at the system that we are following when once we speak on matters of housing, because I am very satisfied over the course of what is now approaching 15 years of Parliamentary life in this Place and the Other Place that we have to do a lot better in terms of how we manage the issue of housing issues in Barbados. Madam Deputy Speaker, the provision of shelter in and of itself is a fundamental right but tangential to that issue of providing issue there are some other ancillary matters that arise: the recreational spaces, the way in which we accommodate those institutions of society like the church, et cetera. Ma'am, I think that again we sell ourselves short if we do not recognise that to the extent that we replicate this problem in almost every community development project in Barbados, then we have failed the people of Barbados and that is where we have to get this right.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am inviting the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development to make some time. I am available to make myself available as a representative of the community. I am prepared to abide by any of the conditions that the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development may seek to lay down, but I think that we must engage the church to see how best we can accommodate them in the new development in Arch Hall because right now where it is located, the Evening Light Pentecostal Church is doing too much good work but it has insufficient and inadequate space in order to effect that which is necessary in the community.

Ma'am, I want to go a little further and speak to the issue that the Minister raised about private sector buy-in and so on. Ma'am, I have no difficulty with the concept but I do believe that perhaps it is more adequately put if we talk about private sector benefits. Let us face the fact, the new development in Arch Hall most of the property owners... Ma'am, I want to say for the benefit of this Government that there is something to be learnt from the way in which my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and I were able to deal with the Arch Hall/Bennetts matter. Ma'am, an area of land was made available in Arch Hall in the last Administration and as a matter of policy we got Cabinet to agree that give the magnitude of what was being done, there were approximately 40-odd houses that were to go there, we said that the majority, and it may be as many as 35 houses, would have gone first and foremost to people from the adjoining community and we say why. Ma'am, the reason was that Arch Hall and Bennetts as we know is at the very foot of that which used to be called "Mount Stinkeroo". They were the people who had no choice than but to absorb the fallout from the nation's refuse. They are still the people who have no choice than but to absorb the fallout from the nation's refuse. Ma'am, the challenge that faced us then was how best do we make it right, do we try to set a serious inconvenience right for the people who are living in Arch Hall and Bennetts, to make things better for them and for that community from which they come? We thought that one of the ways in which we could do so was by recognising that these people, like anybody else in Barbados, have housing development needs too but that if we gave them first option or first refusal over a development in their community, after they have gone through such serious inconvenience for so long, then we would be putting them in a position where the State, in a real senses, would have extended a hand of courtesy to those people who had to be suffering for a long time.

Ma'am, that is how Arch Hall/Bennetts evolved in terms of the new addition, the expansion of Arch Hill and so virtually every house down there is now owned and every piece of land is owned by people who come from

that or from an adjoining/neighbouring communities such as Sea View, Rock Hall, et cetera.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am sorry that the Honourable Member has just left his seat but I have sat here and listened to the Minister of the Environment and Drainage speaking extensively on the way in which we can improve the environment in Barbados. I must tell you that all the Democratic Labour Party does is not necessarily bad and that there is some good thinking coming out of that Green Energy Policy that the Minister of the Environment brought to this Honourable House a few months ago, but I ask myself the question, are we prepared to go the full length. Ma'am, we have a landfill across the road from Arch Hall/Bennetts and I say to the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development that the Honourable Member is not on a wrong track when the Honourable Member talks about private sector buy-in. The problem with the Honourable Member's idea of private sector buy-in in the context of housing developments right now is that the average potential homeowner in Barbados, especially low income homeowners as those houses are catered for, they are as low-income people, the reality is that they have had to endure nine going on ten very difficult and painful years, in circumstances where a lot of people's savings have been depleted. Ma'am, I hear the Leader of the Opposition using a very technical and elegant term, "dissavings" in Barbados. Ma'am, those persons who are as not adept economically as the Honourable Member is may ask what that is. It simply means that your savings that you would normally be able to reach into your hip pocket or go into the bank account and get has been depleted and so you are using the savings that you do have in order to meet current expenses on a day-by-day basis. Ma'am, that is true across Barbados and therefore it is also true of that microcosm that we are looking at today forensically, Arch Hall/Bennetts. It is also true to say that across Barbados people who had bank accounts and could have put money onto those accounts and get about 3 per cent interest have been confronted with a situation 1½ year or so ago where this Government, in its deliberate choice of policy, decided that you are no longer going to get that level of interest rate, that restrictions on interest rates will be moved and that therefore the interest rates in banks have not just fallen but have plummeted like a stone. Ma'am, the reality is that today if you have a bank account the savings on it may be about .25 per cent of a percentage point annually which is not much money, therefore people are not seeing any returns from savings.

Ma'am, in that environment the challenge that I have is to understand how the Minister of Housing idea of private sector buy-in for investment in low-income housing can make sense, how is it feasible? Ma'am, the reality is that the people whom we are talking about, it sounds good for the Honourable Member to stand here in Parliament and say these things, that the people should invest in land now,

but the people whom we are talking about do not have the wherewithal to invest in the land now. How then do we accommodate them? Ma'am, I am saying to you that we have to find more creative means.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in Arch Hall and Bennetts where the constituencies of St. Thomas and St. James Central cross paths, we are satisfied that there is a landfill that is producing gases on a daily basis. We know that the Ministry of Energy is now exploring new technologies and new ways of delivering greener energy and so I ask the question, it is not time that the people who have suffered in Arch Hall and Bennetts for so long be able to be the beneficiaries of gases from that landfill being trapped and the necessary things being done to move them across the highway and pump them into the village of Arch Hall and Bennetts so that they can be the beneficiary of a cheaper form of fuel that will be able to fire their households, including cooking, et cetera.

11.53 a.m.

I ask the question: Is it not time that the people who have suffered in Arch Hall and Bennetts for so long be able to be the beneficiaries of gases from that landfill being trapped and the necessary things being done to move them across the highway and pump them into the village of Arch Hall, so that they can be the beneficiary of a cheaper form of fuel that would be able to fire their households, stoves, cooking, et cetera? Only last week, this Parliament was treated to a long debate about the need for us to increase the cost of natural gas. While I understand that those are things which Government may from time to time have to do, there are also things which Government can do to make access to cheaper commodities available to the people in this country. I say to you that research tells me that gases from landfills all around the world are harnessed, harvested and piped to neighbouring communities. Why can it not happen for the benefit of the people in Arch Hall? Why can it not happen for the benefit of the people a half-mile away in Rock Hall? Why can it not happen for the benefit of the people in Bennetts, the people in Sea View? These are the things that I ask. Ma'am, part of the new thinking has to be how we can shield consumers from the ravages of inflationary prices by offering them simply better services and new qualities of opportunity.

Ma'am, I say that there were a number of issues which were tangential to this apparently simple matter of vesting land in the National Housing Corporation. Again, it would be remiss of me not to reflect a little bit on the process of the allocation. Ma'am, we, as I said, did what we thought was a very transparent allocation process, but I know that that allocation process is not replicated all around Barbados. I also know that one of the issues facing homeowners or potential homeowners in Barbados -- the Minister spoke about Lancaster which is just down the road

from my constituency, and again I know whereof I speak, that a handful of houses, perhaps about 30 or so, were made available -- was allocation, because you had people from all around Barbados expressing an interest in one of the 30 houses in Lancaster. At one point when I checked, there were 30-odd houses and 900-plus applicants. Ma'am, I honestly feel that as part of the way forward -- I said this before and I will say it again and I will say it until it sticks in the craw, Ma'am -- we have to find a way of making the allocation process less political, and make it more transparent. It is a bad thing for people to feel that their only hope for getting a house is to do so by holding onto the apron string of a politician. Persons have been abused by believing that they are on a list and a politician gave them a promise, and then 15 years or 20 years.... I told this House the last time I spoke on this matter of an individual I came across who was on the list for 34 years. That cannot be a failure of the Barbados Labour Party or of the Democratic Labour Party. Ma'am, it reflects a failure of the system that we are using, and it has to be a system that is improved. We have to make it more transparent.

There will always be a greater demand than there is availability, but I know that in other parts of the world politicians have been shielded from involvement in that. Once you have a greater demand than you have availability, it opens a Pandora's Box for potential corruption or charges of corruption. It opens a Pandora's Box for charges of cronyism. "I will make sure you get a house because you are X, Y or Z to me, or you performed X, Y or Z role in my campaign, or played X, Y or Z role in my constituency." I am telling you it is something that we have to get past and I think a word to the wise on this matter is sufficient, Ma'am.

Ma'am, I believe I should express my gratitude before I take my seat to the Minister of Housing, who passed me the plot plan while I was speaking. Ma'am, I have been able to look at the plan and I want to say that although I see the piece of land now to which the Minister is referring, I want to say that the issues that are raised are even now all the more significant. As I look at this plan, it is acutely clear to me that the question of the access to the fire station, the question of the stack of adequate resources and the future of the church are issues that still remain unclear, Ma'am.

Asides.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, address the Chair please, and you have three minutes left.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Yes, Ma'am. The point is that the issues which have been raised, I think, simply put, are developmental issues. These are issues that really turn on making life and quality of life better for the people in

that community. Ma'am, as I said before, it is not something that is unique to those people in that particular district. In most parts of Barbados, if you go and do something of this nature, a housing development, it will be well received because people want the housing, but....

Asides.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Ma'am, but one day I am hoping that we will come to understand that the broader picture must be looked at as well; not just the question of vesting the land and let us go along back home, but the issues that are tangential to the vesting of the land in order to make life in the relevant community easier for the people affected. I am obliged to you for your patience, Ma'am.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I feel compelled to enter this debate, particularly based on the representations made by the Member for St. James Central. Let me begin by saying publicly that an invitation is on its way to him for the opening of Arch Hall on Friday afternoon, Madam Deputy Speaker. Indeed, it is to my knowledge that an invitation was sent to the Member for St. Thomas, who we obviously believed was the representative for the area. That will be rectified, my friend. There are a couple of other matters to which my name was attached by the Honourable Member. He is free for us to have a chat offline. They are not insignificant. In terms of the land for his constituent who indeed has contacted me, as you very well know, Government's landlord, the Ministry of Housing, has directed him accordingly, but we can work together because I agree with you that a human face is necessary in this instance. It is just regrettable that we have not got together to address it.

Ma'am, as I said, I feel compelled to just update Honourable Members in terms of the extension at Arch Hall. It has taken the last couple of years for us to reach this point, but coming down this morning in my vehicle I did hear that indeed there was confirmation that the Fire Service has started moving into the premises, and there will be an official opening next Friday at three o'clock in the afternoon once we are all alive. That extension primarily was meant to enhance the training capacity of the Fire Service. We would usually do the training at Probyn Street but it is recognised that with modern techniques and the necessity to have additional and wider space, Arch Hall was looked at. In the old days they used to take in about 35 individuals and train them, and when the opportunities arose, they would bring them into the service, but we are placing more emphasis on continuous training.

11.46 a.m.

Insert s9 juliette

Friday, May 12, 2017

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: We have had some challenges in terms of the shortage of staff. There were some issues in terms of promotions. Indeed, that matter was before the courts here for two or three years and it has now been settled and indeed the issue of promotions which is one of the things that the fire officers were so concerned about should soon be a thing of the past, the path is now clear so that we can have the issue of promotions addressed.

I would have alerted this Honourable House to the fact that we were training a cadre of auxiliary fire officers to address the shortage issue. During the crop season we have the challenge of officers working very long hours because of the shortage of officers to begin with, and even though it might sound attractive in terms of the level of overtime that some people will take home from time to time the fact is that working 12, 13 and 14 hours every day seven days a week is unhealthy and at some point in time you are going to burn out so we came up with the idea of having these auxiliary officers who would be called out as required. To my knowledge a few of them have already been absorbed fulltime into the system because vacancies have been identified as people left the service, et cetera, so we will continue to train this cadre of auxiliary fire officers so that at any point in time if we have an emergency that we can call them out.

I believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we should move to the stage where we have a common training platform for all officers, that is, for the police, the soldiers and the firemen, in terms of things like physical drills and learning basic law, et cetera and then you move on to whichever discipline you are going into. Some special areas of training will be required if you are going to be a police officer or a fire officer or a soldier but I think your initial programme should be the same and I would like us to move to that level as a country so that if you have a cadre of auxiliary fire officers and you need some assistance say in the area of law enforcement at a basic level that you may be able to call them in et cetera because they have the basic training, so I look forward to building that out as we discuss more of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Office of Attorney-General.

One of the challenges that we have had also that we have been able to resolve is that we had a cadre of fire officers who were not being paid their increments for a number of years and this was a bone of contention. You have a situation where officers were trained at the same time but some were receiving their increments and some were not and they were doing the same job so this of course was very untidy and led to many officers being very

unhappy. Madam Deputy Speaker, we have been able to address that. The point I am making here and the reason why I have mentioned it so publicly is the fact that as the Minister along with the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Fire Officer is that where possible once issues have been identified that need to be addressed to make the lives of fire officers more comfortable we have moved with alacrity to have them addressed. Not in every instance does the answer lie with the Ministry of Home Affairs itself. In that instance, for example, we had to rely on the Ministry of the Civil Service, et cetera but where it is within my power as Minister or where it is within the power of the Ministry we have been moving to address whatever issues have come to our attention.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I say it continuously, and it is my contention, that most of us spend more time at work than we do at home and therefore your working environment should be as peaceful and as conducive to work as possible and that is what we are trying to do with all of our fire officers. Where there are issues that are preventing them from being comfortable we are moving even in difficult economic circumstances to address them, so I look forward to the opening of Arch Hall on Friday and I look forward for the Minister to continue to make the lives of fire officers more comfortable and to enhance their lives generally.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy in his presentation addressed the whole issue of how do we develop that corridor. It is not very often but from time to time I have reason to take that road. In particular, I have been to two funerals that were at the St. Lucy Parish Church early one morning and on that road is almost impossible to pass anyone so I believe based on what I have seen over the last year or two that if we are thinking of the future we are actually going to have to expand that corridor significantly because as I said I see traffic on mornings going in both directions and actually creeping and even though I am normally on time I was almost late for a 9 o'clock engagement because as I said there are no opportunities to pass another vehicle on the road and the number of vehicles going north and going south makes it almost impossible to pass another vehicle, so I would think that in fact that if we are thinking of the future that at some point in time, and I agree with the Minister, we are either going to have find some new arteries or indeed to widen that highway significantly.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I suppose it has a lot to do with our overall traffic management plans because there seems to be no let-up in the number of vehicles on our roads. Some countries have done different things. When I was in China recently they had a system that you could not use your vehicle on certain days. They took a random system so if your car was marked PA, for example, you may not be able to use your vehicle on a Thursday because

of the large volume of vehicles. I believe that we are going to have to think out of the box going forward in terms of how we address the overall density of traffic in Barbados. I think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is right that in fact that corridor offers significant opportunities for development and that once the infrastructure is placed then it will be built out almost naturally. We see what is happening at Lancaster with the St. Thomas Parish Church already there and the fire station already there. That is almost a natural corridor to have that area develop. I am sure that with the new Physical Development Plan that is being addressed that those who have more knowledge of these things than myself are already probably on the ball in terms of how that corridor should look 10, 15 or 20 years from now.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central dealt with the issue of housing. Yes, we will always have more of a demand for housing than housing that is available. In that regard I noted some individuals dressed in red in St. Philip South last Saturday. I did not see the Honourable Member for St. James Central. He kept his word to me. He did say to me that he is not in that foolishness, that he is not coming into St. Philip, so I would like to thank him for keeping his word.

Madam Deputy Speaker, here is the serious point, and I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East would agree with me, it is intellectually dishonest to be going into Rock Hall where people are squatting and giving them assurances that you are going to solve their problem overnight. Every five years they do this foolishness, they go in there and just play with the people's emotions. It is wrong. Now, we all know that the previous Administration in 2005 had an inter-ministerial committee looking at the issue of squatting. Between 2005 and 2007 they were discussing it, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was on that Committee, and if it was so easy one of us would have found the solution immediately so I really do not understand.

Asides.

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Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I can be accused of lot of things but I never mislead my constituents and so I would like the Honourable Member for St. James Central to encourage his colleagues. This is a very complex matter, we have decided as a Government that we are going to examine it to see how best we can find solutions but we will not be able to find solutions for everyone. I am not ringing the bell for myself as a Member of Parliament who has an issue because I understand how complex the issue is, the area for example, Rock Hall, St. Philip, is privately owned and it is not an easy thing for a Government to decide that it will

compulsorily acquire land and give to persons who are there when, in fact, there are also hundreds of persons who are still waiting for housing, et cetera. Ma'am, what message are you then sending to those persons? Ma'am, that is why I say it is a complex issue.

Asides.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Ma'am, when it suits the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, the Honourable Member goes into the Belle area and says to let us acquire the land for them, to let us do "X" "Y" "Z". The Honourable Member has been at it for 15 years but what I can promise the people of St. Michael East is that we have sent them help, that, in fact, whenever the time comes, the Honourable Member will be no more and that young Alleyne will solve those problems.

Madam Deputy Speaker, my point is that I do agree that the issue of housing is a very complex issue, I agree that we should have more transparency in terms of how we allocate those houses but as I said the whole issue of squatting is something that as a Government and as a people we have to address but it cannot be addressed dishonestly nor by appealing to people's emotions when you know that in reality what you are offering them cannot and will not be done. Ma'am, that is really my point, that it is intellectually dishonest and that as leaders we should not be doing it to people who are so vulnerable, et cetera.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that is all I wanted to contribute to this debate and I would want to end by lending my support to this Resolution. I am obliged to you, Ma'am.

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to join this debate and to start of course by recognising the contributions of those Honourable Members who have so far spoken, particularly the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who would have introduced the Resolution and the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs. Ma'am, in all fairness I would want to acknowledge the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. James Central who I think produced a very mature presentation on this occasion which spoke to some of the larger points as it relates not only to housing developments but overall development of our communities.

Ma'am, of course, the only point which I need to highlight from the Honourable Member's presentation, the contradiction which was so obvious to me, was when the Honourable Member said that between himself and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas they had made sure

that the Cabinet of the day had secured something like 34 out of the 38 house spots for their constituents. Madam Deputy Speaker, of course, a couple of weeks ago in here the Honourable Member was chastising none other than the Right Honourable Prime Minister for any approach which looked like that in respect of the allocation of houses at Valery or at the Grotto and so there needs to be a level of honesty and consistency, Madam Deputy Speaker, especially honesty if we are really going to be able to hold each other's hands and find these very important solutions in housing.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member knows that he is misleading this House and is misrepresenting that which I said. I said very clearly that in that particular instance, because of the hardship endured by people in Arch Hall and in Bennetts, we felt that it was necessary to give them some form of recompense, as it were, not just to willy-nilly give away largesse but in the circumstances of they having been the people who had to deal with the fallout of housing or accommodating the nation's garbage at their doorsteps, that was why that policy was enunciated, and nothing like that has happened in Valery.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Madam Deputy Speaker, all that the Honourable Member is now trying to say is that there is no hardship for the people in the constituency of St. Michael South and the Honourable Member knows better than that and I really would consider that as a non-defense, but I think the point has been made. Madam Deputy Speaker, the area of Arch Hall is dear to me, not because of the fact that I am a representative of that area because we all know that my area of representation and responsibility is far away in Christ Church South but as I have said in this Honourable Chamber so many times, I was born in the parish of St. Peter and would have traversed this Highway 2 as it was known then. As a matter of fact, when I was growing up as a young man it would have been known as the Country Road but subsequently graduated to be called a highway and nowadays I believe it is called Highway 2A, so that it stretches from Mile-and-a-quarter up to and including what is now known as the Warrens Roundabout.

Ma'am, Arch Hall was a landmark area and would have been part of, like almost every other rural district in Barbados, the then prevailing sugar cane industry and would have reflected this. The Old Bennetts Plantation, Arch Hall area and all the surrounding fields would have been replete with very aggressive agricultural development largely associated with the sugar industry of Barbados. This, of course, is now a thing of the past and indeed we have to search very hard as a people for that acreage which is still attributed to the development of sugar cane. There

are many good reasons for that movement, Madam Deputy Speaker, that change including and not least of all the demand for the product and the price that you can achieve on the international market, but that debate can be had and that is a different debate altogether.

Madam Deputy Speaker, therefore the very significant beauty of that area it is, in truth and fact, the eastern elevation of the Sandy Lane district and has constantly been part of the discussion in terms of the entire ownership and further development of this pristine Sandy Lane, especially Old Bennetts Plantation, been part of the discussion in terms of the entire ownership and further development of this pristine Sandy Lane area. Of course, the people of Arch Hall enjoy the opportunity for their part of this benefit and, as has been rightly said by the Member for St. James Central, as far back as 2000 when the initial acquisition was made, the need was identified for the now existing, improved fire station and for the location of something like 40 housing development spots in the area.

H:D11(11)

It has been and is a work in progress, and all the issues related to the responsibility of Governments in providing essential low-income housing or indeed opportunities for persons to develop their own housing solutions are always being made. Madam Deputy Speaker, again we have benefited from very significant contributions in this Honourable Chamber in respect to those solutions.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs and Attorney General who just spoke would have referred to the fact that on Friday next it is expected that the refurbished Fire Station at Arch Hall will be opened or reopened, depending on how we look at it. I am aware that there is already ongoing in the facility what we term a "soft opening". As a matter of fact, he did not belabour the point but the Emergency Ambulance Service, of course, is part of that reopening, having been part of the operation at Arch Hall for some time now. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is worthwhile to share in some of the history and reasoning behind the nexus, and, as referred to by one of my senior officers in the Ministry of Health at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital this morning, the marriage made in heaven, almost, between the work of the Barbados Fire Service and the Emergency Ambulance Service. The Honourable Attorney General made the point that they are all part of the programme of emergency response; an area which we have to constantly attend to. As a matter of fact, it is my distinct knowledge that the Emergency Ambulance Service, through its leadership of the consultant physician assigned to that Service, Dr. Byer, takes part in the training of our fire officers from time to time. We are immediately excited by the fact that this redevelopment at Arch Hall has included or has centred around, really, the provision of significant facilities for training, not only of fire officers.

Again I am happy to confirm that the Emergency Ambulance Service will take advantage of the facilities in respect to the training of their response persons and their emergency medical technicians who constantly have to be made familiar with new techniques and new equipment within their field of work. We immediately recognise the wisdom of this decision for cooperation, and again, as I said, the pilot project goes back to as long ago as 2005 but like everything else, it would have had its problems. Foremost among the problems of that time would have been the adequate provision of resources; either human resources or equipment by way of ambulances and other ancillary emergency equipment which need to be part of the ambulance rollout. As a matter of fact, I am familiar with the fact that when we entered Government in 2008, there was a hue and cry, or what some persons refer to as “a human cry”, for the new Administration to fulfil the basic need of the provision of ambulances and indeed the training of new staff, because we could not deal with the demand of a developing Barbados, given the conditions which the previous Administration would have left in respect of these resources.

I think it is now a fact that there are some 65 staff members associated directly with the operation of the Emergency Ambulance Service, and even as we contemplate this reality, we recognise the need to expand those numbers. The only constraint to taking action in that direction immediately would be that of having the financial resources to support such a move. We have certainly taken the decision and put in place the acquisition of new ambulances so that today we have a fleet of some eight operational ambulances at the disposal of the hospital. While I am on that, though, I want to make it very clear that I am not one of these persons who subscribe to the view that from the time a vehicle or a piece of equipment is eight or ten years old it must be replaced by something new. I think we may not want to go to the extent of the Cuban situation, where the renovation and rehabilitation of vehicles in that country has seen Model T Fords and vehicles of the 1940s still operating, completely retrofitted and probably unrecognisable by the original designers but operating as moving vehicles on four wheels and transporting passengers, especially tourists. As a matter, they are a feature of some of the touristic offerings. We need to get to grips with the fact as a management team, we have to put in place arrangements which will see not only the eight new ambulances continue to operate effectively, but that the almost matching eight ambulances which are just a little older than many of these so-called “new ambulances” are properly repaired and available for use in a decentralised ambulance service. There will be need for some of these older vehicles to be deployed even as we contemplate a decentralisation programme.

I certainly have urged the management of the QEH, under whose control the ambulance service is operated, that

as part of its plans going forward, we must have those ambulances which are not too old repaired, able, roadworthy and effective to help augment the availability of the vehicular fleet for this important service. Madam Deputy Speaker, in this regard, too, I have made it clear that we need to take advantage of local entrepreneurs who want to take part in this exercise. As a matter of fact, there have been opportunities in the past to take advantage of the offerings of these local entrepreneurs in making sure that they have an opportunity to quote and to provide properly and adequately outfitted ambulances in Barbados. I think they can do the work. I am convinced. I have seen some of it, and the relevance is very simple.

12.25 p.m.

Insert s13 juliette

Friday, May 12, 2017

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: ...construction going on and I see the associated names in terms of what is going to be offered and there will be more developments. I constantly get queries as to whether we can stop people turning into Kentucky in Oistins or for that matter why one and not the other. People stop in Oistins for many, many reasons and really while I understand fully the requests that are made I think there has to be a balance of community satisfaction. We have to satisfy the residents who want to move through but there is also the responsibility to make sure that the kind of activity contemplated is well supported. What we need to do as a people is to constantly make ourselves aware that we too have an individual responsibility to make sure that we minimise the unnecessary stoppages and blockages of traffic, that we pay attention when we are at the control of our vehicles and that we desist from the use of our cell phones and other distractive items which not only can cause accidents but in actual fact contribute to the kind of delays that we are having.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not one who is blind of the need to streamline our traffic flows so as to offer some smoothness of movement of vehicles and people especially through our developing areas and Arch Hall is no exception. As I tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was born in Mile-and-A-Quarter and today on mornings and evenings you experience a congestion of traffic on that same Highway 2A which I do not believe a lot of Honourable Members in this Chamber are necessarily familiar with and it would be worth their while to try to experience that fact so that they can speak even with more energy towards rolling out solutions. In that regard we obviously have to look at our highway development through this Arch Hall area but I dare say in a cursory glance at what has happened in Arch Hall that it clearly contemplates any road development and I am sure too that road widening could occur in Bennetts in that Arch Hall

area so long as the lands associated with the road widening are owned by the proper entity. We can see that smooth development and extension of the two-lane highway network in Barbados to a point which would allow for some easing of that congestion because getting back to the origins of my discussion traffic congestion will not help us in being able to roll out solutions associated with the response to either fires in the case of the Barbados Fire Service or to health events that threaten the lives of our individuals throughout the country, so we need to look, as I said, at the inter-ministerial responsibility of our decisions going forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to just conclude by saying that I am certainly one who supports this vesting this morning. It gives us an opportunity to speak broadly on the aspects of the development and improvement that has occurred at Arch Hall but in truth and in fact it is just the tidying up of a process which has been ongoing for some time as the Honourable Member for St. James Central and indeed the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development have made the point. Since 2000 this entire development would have been contemplated and the Members of Parliament for the day who represented these areas would have been loud in their requests to have these developments fulfil.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we wish the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development and more importantly the users, the Ministry of Home Affairs, all success as they move back to their station at Arch Hall. I certainly am confident that the team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will make sure that every advantage is taken of the opportunity to deploy our units in that area. I really think it points to a level of focus in respect to this Administration that we can come into this Chamber as we seek to tidy up the work that is ongoing to demonstrate that between the year 2014 and now we have been able to put in place a facility which really speaks to an urgent demand in respect to how we contemplate a developed Barbados.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.15 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken we were on Government Business and with that we shall continue.

ORDER NO. 14 (RESUMED)

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to intervene on this debate on the vesting in the property of the National Housing Corporation of lands at Arch Hall for the purpose of residential housing. Mr. Speaker, I would first want to agree with my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. James North, when the Honourable Member said that the subject of this debate which is as of right and as of rule that survey plans should be attached to any Land Resolution that is brought before this Parliament in terms of housing. Mr. Speaker, it is only proper to do that if we are talking about something and if we are professional and would want to be regarded as a serious Parliament this should be done for the benefit of all, not only Cabinet Members who participate in this debate but also Members of the Opposition, some of whom are, as in this case, Members of Parliament of the area.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you just saying that in passing? You are not repeating the speech of the Honourable Member?

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Speaker, I am only reiterating. Mr. Speaker, this debate, of course, gives the opportunity for Parliament to analyse the housing policy of the Democratic Labour Party since it came to office 9½ years ago. That housing policy, Mr. Speaker, has been a miserable failure in terms of accessibility, availability and affordability of the ordinary Barbadian to be able to achieve a piece of the rock with the help of the State. Mr. Speaker, it is ironic because in the first term of office the Democratic Labour Party Government portrayed housing as its star, it was said to be the best policy and project that it had made, where the then Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, was the star boy in the Cabinet of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, that Honourable Member was then transferred to another Ministry, that of the Ministry of Transport and Works which by all objective criteria the Honourable Member has been struggling, and instead installed has clearly been the worst of all the Ministers of Government with responsibility for housing that this Government has seen since the advent of Cabinet Government. Mr. Speaker, really and truly, it justifies the position of the late Right

Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados not to put the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in a Cabinet. That Right Honourable Prime Minister has been completely justified in his position. May the Lord rest his soul. Mr. Speaker, the 2008 Democratic Labour Party Manifesto promised the people of Barbados that it would provide

2 500 housing spots for sale to low-income and middle-income wage earners in the first term of a Democratic Labour Party Government, that Manifesto by virtue of which one would have thought that the Democratic Labour Party would have pledged its soul to the people of Barbados who elected them and would have sought to fulfil its promises, rather than to treat it as that party has always done, that it, not as a social contract with the people, that 2008 Manifesto sought to say that it would provide 500 lots in five months, at \$5 per square foot for first-time homeowners. These lots are still unidentified even now 9½ years later.

Mr. Speaker, the 2008 Manifesto was also to increase the tax deduction for mortgages to \$20 000 per year. Mr. Speaker, you would recall that the Barbados Labour Party has brought in the concept and correctly so giving a

\$10 000 tax free incentive for mortgage deduction from the income tax of persons. Mr. Speaker, that was subsequently combined with home improvements, for example, solar heater or adding a room onto one's house. Mr. Speaker, all of that would have been tied up in the \$10 000 and people used this to reduce their income tax liability to the Government and also to provide employment to the small and medium-sized contractors, painters, workmen, maintenance or whomever that they would have employed to do work around the house every year, thus lowering the unemployment rate in this country. Mr. Speaker, instead, what did the Democratic Labour Party do? Mr. Speaker, within two years in a budget they have completely removed the \$10 000 tax-free incentive which was given to the people, after promising in 2008 that they would have increased it to \$20 000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, is this not fraud on the people of Barbados? This is part of the housing programme of the Democratic Labour Party, led by that Minister who declares about enemies of the State, which was one of the most obnoxious statements made in this Parliament in its history, because someone seeks to oppose a Government policy and challenged it as they are entitled to under the rule of Barbados which the Democratic Labour Party speaks to in its 2013 Manifesto, that its mantra is good governance and that that good governance includes principles of the rules of law. Mr. Speaker, so that any the citizens of Barbados who has challenged a Government as they have a right to do under any system that operates by

the rule of law, those citizens are called enemies of the State.

Mr. Speaker, that kind of language is one that would be used in Stalinist Russia or Hitler's Germany, we are not accustomed to that in a 2017 Barbados and it should have no place coming from the mouth of a Cabinet Minister. Mr. Speaker, all the Members on the Front Bench are condemned because not one of them rose to condemn that particular Minister of Housing and therefore they are all tied in by acquiescence to that statement. Mr. Speaker, rather than providing these 2 500 house spots and 2 000 housing solutions each year in the first term of a Democratic Labour Party Government we have, Mr. Speaker, the facts of the Democratic Labour Party, let us deal with the facts and I love the Democratic Labour Party facts. Their own facts, Mr. Speaker, show that the Democratic Labour Party under its H.E.L.P. programme of 2008 has provided 845 housing solutions and land solutions in 9½ years. Mr. Speaker, between the "star" Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and the complete failure of a Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, when added 845 housing solutions. Mr. Speaker, that is one fact that I am in complete agreement with, it is an absolute and national disgrace when about 30 000 people have applied for housing solutions at the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, public-private-partnerships in housing is at a complete or virtual standstill in this country and even the Honourable Member for St. James South must agree, because the Honourable Member has been talking about the 72 housing lots in his constituency of Durants from the time the Honourable Member became Member of Parliament and is up to this year the Honourable Member is still talking about it, but that solution has not been provided for, it is the figment of the imagination of the Cabinet of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the transfer of land title programme which was so magnanimously started by the last Barbados Labour Party Administration, transferring thousands of property titles to people in urban Barbados whereby they only paid \$2.50 per square foot, this has been brought to an ignominious standstill by this Democratic Labour Party Administration, thereby depriving people in Barbados, especially in urban Barbados, of title to land which they have occupied for a number of years.

2.44 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency for five or six years now I cannot get the Government to transfer money for tenancies in the Garden for example, or in Douglin Road. In fact, in Douglin Road the Government of Barbados through its Land Registry is holding my constituents and clients' share of the money, and is failing to provide the

subsidy. I have written to the Honourable Minister of Housing on many occasions drawing this to his attention, and not being given the courtesy of any response whatsoever. A State department is holding the people's money now for seven years and the Government is failing to provide their portion of the purchase price where by law they should do it. Nowhere has the failure of this Democratic Labour Party Government been more typified than in its housing programme, when both parties have agreed that every Barbadian has a right to own a piece of the rock and not only those who are members of the Democratic Labour Party's fatted calf.

The Grotto and Valery stand as a national scandal in this country. No matter how much it could be defended by Ministers on that side, those two projects stand as a national disgrace. As my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. James Central, has said many times both in and outside of this Parliament, the Grotto, starting at \$18 million, rose inexplicably, costing the taxpayers of this country \$28 million. Valery, starting at \$10 million, without any explanation or accountability, rose to \$18 million. Sir, for the purpose of this debate, I passed the Grotto last night after leaving tennis just up the road, and one light was on in the whole of the Grotto; all five buildings. One light was on at seven o' clock. One light, and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has not yet answered to this Parliament as to how many people are living in the Grotto. Twenty-eight million dollars gone down the drain. How many people are living in the Grotto? This is the kind of mismanagement that has typified this Government.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, Members, just keep it down please.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: The Government is only dealing with big contractors after promising 40 per cent of all Government contracts to small and midsize businesspeople in Barbados. All that the Government is doing is dealing with three wealthy contractors who are getting all the work. Small and midsize contractors cannot get any meaningful Government work in this country at all, and we still are without procurement legislation which has been promised by this Cabinet of Barbados many times since I came into this Parliament. The Honourable Attorney General and the Honourable Minister of Finance, for instance, on many occasions have promised that procurement legislation would be brought to Parliament that would, presumably and on the face of it, stop only three people, as is now the case, getting all the big Government work at a big set of over-pricing of money to the detriment of the taxpayers of Barbados. We cannot even see the draft legislation on this procurement legislation up to now. This is part of the lack of

transparency and accountability of this Government, which they feel smart and proud about. "Good governance," as was said in their Manifesto. They defined good governance in the 2013 Manifesto as being characterised by the principles of participation. We will talk about that before I sit down, Mr. Speaker; consensus accountability, transparency, rule of law, all these fine words of rhetoric but not applicable to present day Barbados under the administration of this Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, the key to this issue is the implication for campaign financing; a topic that no less a person than the Right Honourable Prime Minister spoke about on Election Night, saying that he knew as a fact that money was passed on that Election Day to buy votes for people, undermining our system of democracy. When you can purchase a vote, where does that leave us as an independent country after 51 years? This Democratic Labour Party, as one of its last acts of Parliament in the last Session in December 2007, brought and passed through this Parliament a Prevention of Corruption Act that speaks toward criminalising campaign financing, but yet, as I say all the time, refuse to take it to the Head of State for assent so that it becomes part of the Law. Yet, officials such as the Right Honourable Prime Minister and the Attorney General are making laughing sport and giving all kinds of excuses of no validity and no grounding as to why that Act has not been taken to the Governor General to be brought into law. The people of Barbados know why. The Democratic Labour Party think the people of Barbados are foolish, but they know why. Like I said, one of the reasons why is the implication for campaign financing tied into the fact that only two or three people are getting all of the big Government work; not only in housing but in every aspect of Government. "We do not want to bring in the Prevention of Corruption Act which criminalises campaign financing. Yes, because we think that could buy votes again on Election Day." Do not think the people of Barbados are as foolish as you think they are, Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, we do not have proper accountability or transparency in housing; or is it really and truly any aspect of Government in this Democratic Labour Party? We have a situation where we have 1 700 to 1 800 vacant lots or derelict structures in urban Barbados, and the Honourable Minister of Housing spoke about it up to last month. When I sit down and I listen to Cabinet Ministers, I really sometimes get confused as a student both of politics and law, Mr. Speaker. As I understood it from the time I did Political Science at university, the Cabinet of Barbados is the executive and has the right to make decisions but yet every now and then, almost every Session of Parliament, we hear Cabinet Ministers saying, "I think that this should be done," when they have the power to do it.

2.43 p.m.

Insert s17 juliette

Friday, May 12, 2017

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: The people of the area ought to have been informed as to what is happening even if you do not inform me, as I believe that I ought to have been officially informed, as the Member of Parliament of the area, and this is the kind of governance and lack thereof that this Democratic Labour Party feels should be the order of the day in the 51st year of our independence. This is not the way how the world goes, so we have a fire station being closed and therefore leaving five northern parishes, St. James, St. Peter, St. Lucy - and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has not...

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I am saying that the Chief Fire Officer and the people who know about firefighting have assured me and the public of Barbados that the people of the north will not be at risk because Arch Hall is open and functioning.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, no point of order found. You have said that but the Honourable Member obviously has a different view. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Attorney-General has now repeated himself three times. I have not completed what I was saying.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: I hope Sir, that the Honourable Member would let me make my point. I was saying that five northern parishes, St. James, St. Peter, St. Lucy -and I have not heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy stand in defence - St. Andrew and St. Joseph are now without a fire station. I am not talking about whether provision has been made to service them. They are without a fire station and that is a fact. We are dealing with facts and that is a fact.

Sir, it is alright to say that the firemen have said that they will service the communities and all of that but I do not buy that because 10 minutes or 5 minutes can mean a loss of five or more precious lives. This is people's lives we are dealing with. We are talking about quick response to a disaster which can cause a total destruction not only of property because property can be replaced but of life.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will give you one minute to conclude your speech, please.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Speaker, what arrangements have been made for the proper servicing of these parishes, districts and communities in emergencies and in fires? Sir, when you do not communicate with people mischief prevails and we the people of St. James North certainly and wider Barbados want to know if this fire station is being closed and when you plan to repair it because I do not know that money is in the Estimates to repair this fire station. When are the repairs supposed to start? When are they due to be completed? If no repairs are to be carried out to the Weston Fire Station, is it true that the property will be sold to one of the Democratic Labour Party ... whose initial stands the same as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think you have crossed the line there because the only body who can sell it would be a Government functionary and to suggest that it will be sold to one of the Democratic Labour Party... is to basically suggest that the Government functionary would be guilty of some kind of malfeasance, so you have to withdraw that. Please withdraw the statement. Your time has expired Honourable Member.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: I withdraw it, Sir, but I disagree with your implications...

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not care. Your time has expired, please.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: You are not letting me wind up, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: I gave you two extra minutes already.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: I thank you, Sir, but these are the issues that we in St. James North and wider Barbados need answered.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to join this discourse. After listening to the pre-lunch presentations I thought that we were really making fantastic progress in bringing into full scope the relevant issues regarding this particular Resolution. I particularly was encouraged beyond the presentations on this side by the presentation by the Honourable Member for St. James Central who I thought made a very enlightening presentation, as a matter of fact a presentation that reminded me that there comes a time when you really have to stop being a politician in Parliament and being a purveyor of ideas and enlightenment that caused those persons who ordinarily listen to these proceedings to recognise that there are those of us in here who are ceased

with the kind of not cutting edge any longer but leading edge ideas that help to enlighten people's understanding of where not just partisan politicians but policymakers are trying to drive this country in that direction.

This is a very simple Resolution that obviously has become insurmountable for certain simple minds. You cannot put yourself in a position where you respond to a piece of business of Parliament and not understand that that piece of business really touches the heart of individuals particularly the individuals in Arch Hall and Bennetts who would have struggled for many years on some very important issues.

The Resolution really is about, some people say, making available a slider of land but it is really more than a slider because it is a piece of land that gives rise to the expansion of development in that area both in purpose and by implications. Once that piece of land has been so designated, what happens really is that it opens up a corridor of possibilities in terms of development so that we could move forward and give the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts the kind of relief that they were promised way back in the 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, I hear an Honourable Member made reference of Mangrove Pond Landfill and we are going to get to that, but let me say that any sustainable development in that corridor touches on three fundamental issues, and then you could do the add-ons. Those three fundamental issues in my view would have to do firstly with the protection of the air quality of that area because that air quality has been impacted negatively by the situation of the landfill; secondly by the protection and the continued protection of our water resources since of course that is a very pristine water table area that we have some responsibility and ultra-responsibility, I would say, of ensuring that it continues to be protected; and thirdly the protection of our land. That land in that area is generally within the precincts of that land designated by the Physical Development Plan that has been corridor off for the development of sanitary landfill services, so that whatever the Government decides to do we have to do it with those views in mind so that the ultimate outcome within the context of sustainable development and the protection of air, water and land would have a positive forward looking perspective for the residents who have suffered the most.

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Mr. Speaker, let me put it in the record that the residents of Bennetts and Arch Hall have endured many years of uncertainty and in some cases many years of suffering and that it has been this Government's purpose from the very onset of this Administration's terms to ensure that we put in place a sustainable policy that would allow for the obviation of some of the problems that have

existed, problems which were promised to be resolved, but have not been resolved and that we are working feverishly to ensure that our path of development, Mr. Speaker, Sir, would include the resolution of those issue that impact not only on the residents of Bennetts and Arch Hall but would also give easement to developers like Sandy Lane so that they would be able to move forward with the development of their land and the build-out of their projects. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is the intention of Government. I do not know why this debate should have attracted that onslaught of stuff that would have given rise to the raising of eyebrows that we would have allowed ourselves to be chartered off to that journey somewhere in the sky, touching on everything except for those things that are most important to those persons who are within the precincts of this development.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development for bringing this Resolution. I certainly give great applause to the Minister of Home Affairs for seeking to build out the potential of the Arch Hall Fire Station which I have longed believed is well-placed to service not only the north but that it has some impact on the west and moving back into central Barbados. Mr. Speaker, that is the way fire service units work, they work to be able to respond and the response of those units has little to do with their location and everything to do with their capacity. I am saying that the capacity of that Fire Station is of such where it will be able to do beyond what we expect it to do because not only where it is situated but more importantly for what it brings into the service, for example, the training, the development, the placement of an ambulance service, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me touch on that for a minute because I heard the Minister of Health talked about the decentralisation of the ambulance service. I happen to think that that is important, I happen to think that in any country that is moving through its development stages, any country that is striving for First World development status, whatever that may be, it is important that a country like Barbados continues to create fluid access to patients around the island by decentralising its ambulance service and creating greater access points for persons who need the service.

Mr. Speaker, I lived in the United States of America for some 15-odd years and I know how those precincts are set up, I know where the ambulances are located and I know how they work. Any time that there is an ambulance call in a particular location, ambulances from all over that precinct and other precincts that are in close vicinity will come to the rescue of those persons in need of help. Mr. Speaker, that is the vision of the Government and certainly the vision of the Minister of Home Affairs, to ensure that an ambulance would not have to leave its new location base in St. Michael and travel all the way to St. Andrew to

respond to an emergency, then to collect that patient, to do minimal stabilisation and then try to get them back to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and hope that they would survive the journey.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we are talking about, that is what I refer to as a state of ideas, what the country is looking for, persons who are seized not just with some political argument but with ideas that move the development of the state forward, that allow the entities of the State that are touched by the actions of the Ministries involved to be able to say that that particular thing can assist them. Mr. Speaker, what good does it offer for an Honourable Member to get up and to selectively criticise the Government or the process, while not addressing the shortfalls of his party when it was the Administration, but who selectively criticizes the Government because what the Government has decided to do is to take development a step forward and to move in at Arch Hall and try to build out the Arch Hall Fire Station, including ambulance services and addressing issues regarding the residents in the area.

Mr. Speaker, let me move on because my time is limited, so that is the decentralisation of the national ambulance service is important and the implications of this approach would be easing or creating easier access to patients who have emergencies along that corridor, and creating an additional opportunity because once you begin to decentralise this service you create new medical outlets around the island, you enhance what exists at the various polyclinics, for example, Branford Taitt Polyclinic, The David Thompson Medical Centre, et cetera, and you continue to allow your vision to build out the opportunity for the State to continue to create these important outlets. Mr. Speaker, as a society gets older, as there are more children, as there are more schools around the country, as there is more traffic on the roads, we need to have that opportunity to address those needs. Mr. Speaker, that is what this debate is about, it is about the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development giving the Ministry of Home Affairs the opportunity to put in place a system that will impact the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage and other Ministries as they continue to build out these services.

Mr. Speaker, that is important but there is a second part of this that I would want to raise. The Honourable Member for St. James Central did raise a point that I thought was very important when the Honourable Member talked about the whole Mangrove scenario. Mr. Speaker, let me make this point. We came to office and inherited a Mangrove that was then commonly called “Mount Stinkeroo” and a Greenland that was supposed to supplant Mangrove. Mr. Speaker, a transfer station was established that was intended to receive waste from the extremities of the island in the east, west and central and then transport

that waste, once sorted, to Greenland. We came to office and took a position that because of the observations of scientists and residents it was not the best idea to continue to pursue the Greenland option and accepted, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that it would have been absolutely necessary to put in place what we then call and still believe in, an integrated solid waste management programme that would give rise to a green energy pursuit.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are talking about Arch Hall, Bennetts and Sandy Lane, we are talking about residents who would have suffered for many years, we are talking about individuals who have cried out for relief and we are talking about a Government who came to office and wanted to be responsive to those cries.

3.14 p.m.

I really understand the burden of the Member for St. James North. Unfortunately, it is a burden that we cannot relieve. I understand the enlightenment for the Member for St. James Central, and the demonstration of his enlightenment is in fact a phenomenon that we can embrace because nothing emanating from the lips of the Honourable Member for St. James Central suggested to me that he is not seized of the realities and is not willing to put ideas in play so that we can have a collective vision of where we are going, Mr. Speaker. I am of the opinion that with the approach of this Government, the first thing we decided was to address the landfill cell, 3B, and we understood then that it was coming to the end of its life and we understood that it was having a negative impact on the residents downwind, Mr. Speaker. The Government therefore decided to spend approximately \$26 million to build a new landfill cell, but in the construction of that cell we also agreed that we were going to pursue an integrated solid waste management process that would see the phasing out of open landfilling at Mangrove and the introduction of waste-to-energy.

I want to say to the country today that the Government has not abandoned its waste-to-energy option. The Government has not abandoned its programme on waste-to-energy. As a matter of fact, the Government intends, with all of the regulatory direction and all of the inputs of those stakeholders affected and not affected, to in fact put a waste-to-energy option in place. The reason why we stand firm on that conviction is because we have run out of physical space at Mangrove, and even if there were a space there, we would not choose to continue to build open landfills because it would serve our programme no benefit. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the direction of the world, both in developed and developing countries, is that there is a phasing out of landfills, particularly within the context of the conditionalities that are driving the direction of the response of the globe to climate change. Landfills are known, perhaps second only to public transportation and

electricity, to produce the highest volume of greenhouse gases on the earth.

POINT OF ORDER

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: In relation to your Ruling to me in terms of relevance to the Town and Country Planning Department, I rise on a Point of Order. The Honourable Member is speaking irrelevance towards this Resolution. This Resolution has nothing to do with landfills.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. I do not agree that it is totally irrelevant, though, because he is talking about the area and development of the area. Honourable Member, please continue.

Aside.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The corridor affected by this slither of land includes the Mangrove area, the Bennetts area, the Arch Hall area, et cetera, Mr. Speaker. The point that I am making, the nexus that I am trying to establish, is that once this work is done, it gives us the opportunity to start in earnest with the whole execution of our waste-to-energy programme. The Honourable Member for St. James Central made a point, and he noted that the Mangrove area is saturated with gases. Of course, once you have established a landfill and a landfill has functioned for several years, there are a number of gases trapped beneath the surface and there are many methods and options for the utilisation of that gas. When we came into office, we saw in the Record that the Barbados Labour Party had looked at the possibility of establishing a landfill gas-to-energy programme. What is a landfill gas-to-energy programme? A landfill gas-to-energy programme is where technical scientists who have the technological wherewithal go in, assess the amount of gases beneath the surface of the landfill and then establish the technical systems to extract, to store, to treat and then to market that gas. It is not gas where you can extract the raw gases and then put them into use in a community and so forth.

In a post-lunch discussion with the Honourable Member for St. James Central, we did discuss that and we did agree that there would have to be some treatment of that gas once it is extracted. A Canadian company by the name of Biothermica was involved in the discussions. We picked up the discussions once we became the Government, and we looked at the possibilities of going forward after other entities like the Barbados Light & Power had established an interest in the same programme. We are still looking at it, because one of the things I would like to announce to the residents of Bennetts and Arch Hall

and to the Sandy Lane people is that there is a three-phase programme already agreed to where we are going to go in now and completely clean up that area, giving rise to the emergence of waste-to-energy and also giving rise to the emergence of the extraction of the gases in that precinct. Then what we also decided we are going to do is a beautification programme where we will beautify the entire landfill site and landscape it, and the only thing you will see out of those old landfill sites will be the extraction pipes for the landfill gas which we will extract. It will have to be an agreement between Government and a private sector entity, whatever that entity might be, whether or not we are going to build a treatment plant for the gas there or whether the gas will be collected, stored and shipped to a site designated for its treatment. This is all in the works.

This is part of our green energy programme to which the Member for St. James Central referred and was asking himself aloud whether or not the Government is going to continue to pursue that programme. My learned friend, the answer is yes, the Government intends to do so and I believe it will benefit the residents of Arch Hall, Bennetts and in fact the Sandy Lane people. Downwind of the landfill there is a large tract of land ready for development and owned by businesspersons in that area, Sandy Lane included, and the only thing that is stopping the go-ahead on that development, apart from the technical approvals, of course, would be the fact that the landfill challenge on the hill, on the top-wind side, has to be sorted out. Therefore, I rose then and I stand now to say that, with the landfill gas project, with the waste-to-energy project, with the beautification of that programme and with the landfill gas-to-energy programme, I believe that once the resources are available to the country and we continue to make progress in the recovery of the economy and the establishment of a sustainable growth path, this Government is committed to ensuring that all of those commitments are pursued.

3.22 p.m.

Insert s21 juliette

Friday, May 12, 2017

Hon. R. D. JONES: ...maybe a piece of land passed down from your family line and you apply \$2.80 per square foot, that is \$280 000 for a 1 000 square foot house which is not a large house, and invariably with two, three or four persons in there you start to feel crowded already unless there are little children pitter-pattering all over the place, so let us understand what we are talking about.

We have tried high-rise solutions but they are costly because we are using stone, grit, steel, rebars and all of that to make sure that those places do not topple when persons occupy them. I remember that in 2001 in the bi-election I went into Arch Hall and I was pleased to see some of the

houses there. There was a person from Fairy Valley whom I had missed for a number of years and when I found him I found him in Arch Hall. A good supporter of the Democratic Labour Party I found in Arch Hall, strong and powerful. In fact, following investigations and local knowledge there were many supporters of the Democratic Labour Party in Arch Hall. The Honourable Member for St. James Central is acting surprise but he would know/would not know, he passed them like some crowded place so he would know/would not know.

The point is that we have Barbadians who have been trying to enhance their own accommodation. Persons who work for \$3 000, \$4 000, \$2 500 or \$1 800 a month you would find that based on particularly salaries below \$3 000 that the home you can build cannot be more than \$130 000 to \$135 000 and that does not include the land, so this is where the Government has to intercede and has to subsidise. Persons who are able to build and were able to get loans from either the banks, the credit unions and the other lending institutions have to be sympathetic to the plight of those we characterised as low-income workers in this country. We have to be able to be generous in our minds and in our actions so that they too would be able to find comfort and shelter in their own homes.

The blame game that sometimes comes from the new Honourable Member for St. James North who I believe has convinced himself that he knows everything about every topic and about every solution...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I will not say what that is about, that is a psychological issue so I will not get into that, Sir, you would not allow it. I would believe that as we journey from this place out there in the wider constituency that we can engage the citizens of Barbados in meaningful debate and discussion unhindered by the kind of invectives that can sometimes arise as a result of the nature of our politics which has in fact retarded the genuine and full development of Barbados particularly in its social engagement with our people. We have had successes. Had it not been for the work of the National Housing Corporation and other private sector businesses who either on their own or in joint partnerships with the National Housing Corporation we would have been worse off, the stock of housing in Barbados would not be as it is now. Mr. Speaker, even within that stock of housing there is significant work that must be done and has to be done and we all have to give it our fullest attention not in these fly-by-night promises that sometimes you see in the Manifestoes of the Barbados Labour Party. When you go through them, they are fly-by-night promises as though the people of Barbados can be attracted by heavy sounding words that contain nothing. Our intelligent electorate look past these kinds of things.

Mr. Speaker, as we work to make sure the people of Arch Hall are satisfied that the fire station is able to be mobilised adequately to provide as much coverage as it can we want to make sure as well that the one at Six Roads see the light of day and I know that with the return of the Democratic Labour Party to governance that it will see the light of day. I would have hoped that we would have been able to do it in the 2013 to 2018 term but we know that they were very heavy demands on the scarce resources of the State including the police stations in that Health and Security Programme of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Sir, they are moving ahead with the one at Cane Garden and the one at Hastings. We cannot do everything as we would like to do all at one time. We are doing what we can do with the resources that we have just as we are doing in education with the resources that we have.

Sir, it concerns me that in order to score cheap political points that we look at the social agenda in Barbados, at education, housing, health and social welfare, and pull them down. The Honourable Member for St. James North is well-known to pull them down. Recently the Honourable Member and myself was at a function for the retiring Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, a nice outlay at the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination, and the only body I saw walking around in that place was the Honourable Member and he went to my Permanent Secretary so I enquired of my Permanent Secretary why she was allowing him to walk around like that whispering in her ear and she said Minister he was saying to me that he hopes that I would not run her into any trouble with any foolishness that I do. My Permanent Secretary does not lie. I mean it was so awful that even at a function you get these kinds of behaviours but because he is burdened in trying to convince the people of St. James North that he is possibly the best representative and that based on the difficulties of the Barbados Labour Party at this moment that he will run through and become the next leader of the Opposition in the Barbados Labour Party, but Opposition politics even governmental politics must have something to do with the people and not the satisfaction of self.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I thought that if the Honourable Member wanted to speak about our interaction at that function where I merely went around, as I always do at every function, that he would have commented that his speech was filled with pure foolishness and was by far the worst speech of the night and that no one understood a word he said. I thought that is what he rose to say if he was going to speak about that function.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much. Jealousy is a beast. There is another colourful word used for it but I cannot use it in this Chamber, but jealousy is a beast.

I want to see the National Housing Corporation and all of the lands which are still under its domain being actively mobilised to take care of some of the housing needs of our people. We have done pretty well in the last nine years. We could have possibly done a bit better but it has been better than the Barbados Labour Party in their previous 15 years, that is the point that should be noted, but I do not want to get into these comparisons they become odious, that is the point I wish to make.

Sir, I just wish to commend this vesting to you and give it my 100 per cent support.

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

House D11 Sequence 22

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Resolution and also to say that during the discussion it seems as though we again cannot avoid trying to place emphasis on certain things which I think we need to move away from. Sir, I really would want to encourage the Minister to pursue it not only from the point of view of the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts themselves but in general sometimes we forget that it is not a parochial issue but that it is really one which transcends the narrow interest of the political representative and one actually that has importance in terms of the national image and how that is done. Mr. Speaker, very often when we hear Opposition Members speaking about their own narrow political interest in particular constituencies, what you have is a situation where they are appealing to a very narrow interest.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that within St. Michael West Central we do have constituents who I am sure will benefit from any initiatives in which the Government engages, in order to acquire land that will of course benefit the population in general. What I would want to say is that we will want to see where at least persons who come from other areas can also be given the opportunity. Mr. Speaker, in some cases where houses are built, I would want to see that those constituents from other constituencies are able to benefit because it seems what we are hearing is that only those persons living in the immediate vicinity have an interest in that particular location.

I also want to encourage the Minister of the Environment and Drainage where the Honourable Member spoke to solving some of the issues occurring in that particular area. Mr. Speaker, from what I can see, these issues have, by and large, been solved because we have not

really heard any reports recently of any issues arising. I think generally-speaking that we need to recognise that we have to give the Government credit because prior to 2008 there were those incessant complaints about the bad management of Mangrove. Now I am sure when you look and see the current circumstances you would see that we have had very few incidents occurring around that landfill that causes any real concerns to residents living in those surrounding areas. I think that is something we should applaud and therefore we need to give Government credit as far as that is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I would want also to make a serious point in terms of housing. We have a lot of constituents who have indicated that they do want an opportunity to be afforded accommodation. I want to impress still that because of the fact that we need also to pay attention to the urban areas, we need to pay attention to the fact that we still have areas in the urban corridor which need attention. For instance, in the Grazettes Housing Area, one of the areas for which I have responsibility, we have issues there because of the fact that this is an aged infrastructure and it needs attention, so maybe we need to see how we could at least partner with those residents to see how we could at least achieve that objective of improving that infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, that is the approach I believe we need to take into consideration, because the fact of the matter is that the resources available to Government at this time are relatively limited, and that despite whatever the Opposition says, whichever Government is there, they will have a challenge in terms of resources.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes you hear coming from the Opposition the feeling that there are resources there to solve all of the housing problems that are there that could take care of all of these matters. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that it is not true. We also need to be honest in terms of saying to the people of Barbados that Government is challenged in terms of coming up with the resources to solve these problems. Mr. Speaker, it did not come from this Administration alone, but because of the reckless manner in which the Opposition managed the economy in the past, where they borrowed money to the hilt, which has actually dried up the resources that should otherwise have been available to this Government in order to solve the problems that we now have in this country today, that reckless behaviour of the previous Administration in terms of...

Asides.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat, that is not a matter on which I can rule.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, because of the reckless manner in which the Barbados Labour Party Administration managed the resources of this country, we now find ourselves constrained to find a way to help those people who live in these urban districts. What we now have is a situation where a lot of the infrastructure in the urban districts has become worn. Not only that, the Government in itself has been extremely creative because for instance in Grazettes Housing Area, especially along Beacons Road, there are residents who have been complaining of, for instance, electricity upgrades. In some cases too the walls themselves have undergone degradation and there is money needed in order to do this. Mr. Speaker, the point has to be made that over the period of that particular housing estate the previous Government has made very little, if any, attempt at all to solve the problems that these people were experiencing. They did very little.

Mr. Speaker, the other point I wish to make is that maybe we can have a creative attempt in order to address these issues, because one of the difficulties I think that we face is that we need to change the approach towards solving these problems. I really think that maybe if we were to have a flexible approach in terms of trying to solve the issues that the residents in these areas face, I believe it would help and that it would actually ease the pressure off Government in terms of having to provide accommodation in other areas. Mr. Speaker, one of the things I want to suggest is that in some cases the residents can come up with some of the resources that are required in order to address the issues that they might be facing in a particular housing unit, whether there is an electrical problem, the roof might be leaking or there may be some other kind of repairs that are needed to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I really think that maybe we should have a flexible approach where Government can partner in a very creative way with the residents in those individual housing units in terms of solving these existing problems. I think that maybe that is something that we can do to see if we can try to address some of the issues that they are facing because the fact of the matter is that a lot of those residents are becoming impatient. In some cases too, even in terms of the transfer of titles that is supposed to be happening, we need to come up with some kind of creative way of doing it. I think we need to applaud the Government for the fact that instead of doing like the previous Administration where for instance they were not prepared to give, first of all, the persons living in those units free, we instead have given them. The problem is of course how do we effect that transfer of title that needs to happen. Again, I think that maybe we need to have some measure of creativity and so let us agree that basically we have done a much better job and have better faith with the residents in terms of trying to address the central points in which they are actually interested.

3.55 p.m.

The other point I wish to make, and I want to emphasise it, is going back to the whole issue of how we dispense with housing applications for land or housing. I heard the Member for St. James Central, and it is unfortunate that he adopted that parochial approach because, again, we seem to think that when Government takes resources to develop a particular area that the taxpayers in general in this country do not contribute to it. Every taxpayer, whether or not he lives in St. James Central or St. Michael West Central or wherever, also has a right to be considered and his interests have to be taken into consideration. On the other hand, we have this seeming appetite on the part of the Opposition to make you feel as if this is not the case, and once you do not come from the immediate area you have no rights there and Government should not consider your application. I think we need to stop this type of politics, because that is why we are seeing the types of issues and problems we are having today. This is so even in terms of the selection of tenants. It means therefore that sometimes we do not even select the best tenants.

I have complaints coming even from within my constituency where they say, "We are able to pay the rent of whatever is requested," but what they see sometimes or what they saw happening in the past was that once a person knew a particular person or a Minister from the Barbados Labour Party Government, that person was given the preference over them. This is what was happening in the past, and there were active complaints like that coming from constituents who said they could cite instances where, in the past, people who were supposed to be card-carriers of the Barbados Labour Party were given the preference over others. These are the types of things we need to avoid, and I really want to encourage the Minister to at least not descend, in terms of allocating persons to any housing units that we might be able to get, to allocating them in such a fashion. Allocate them on merit rather than in the old way in which it was done under the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

It was surprising to me that the Member for St. James North claimed that he passed by the Grotto. I do not work too far from there. He only saw one light in the whole compound. He had to pass some time around four o' clock in the morning, and at that time he must have been in such a state that he did not recognise the time he passed. That is probably what happened, because I can tell you that I pass there every day and I can tell you that I know that there are at least ten persons living inside there. I can tell you that. Okay?

Aside.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: There are much more than that, so I do not know at what time the Member for St. James North passed there. I really do not understand that, so he must have been misleading the House in terms of the time, Sir. It had to be four o' clock in the morning.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Mr. Speaker, the Member is misleading the House. I said in my seat and I repeat again, I passed at seven o' clock when people would be expected to be up, and saw one light.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, Honourable Member, we heard you but he said you must have passed. He is speculating.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Even if they have ten people, ten out of 80, for a building that cost \$28 million including \$10 million in cost overruns....

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, sit down please.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Continue please.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Yes, Sir, as I was saying. I talked to residents from time to time and they tell me how happy they are that they have been able to get some form of accommodation. I am really surprised at the statement, and I really think he should make sure he passes there at a time when he can really check on this. What is more important, Sir, is that we still, despite what is happening, have to applaud the Government's housing programme. The thing is, really, despite the resources available, we are able to come up with programmes to help to finance it. On the issue of financing, I think we cannot fool ourselves that the Government has to be much more creative in the way in which it finances its housing programmes, largely because of the fact, again, that we have limited resources. While that is the case, when we talk about the approach to maintenance, maybe we need to adopt a partnership approach in terms of how we finance the maintenance of these places and how maybe we need to leverage on the resources that tenants of the houses might have. We might also need to look into our society and see how maybe we can leverage others in the society who have financial resources and who might be prepared to partner with Government in terms of providing housing for Barbadians. I do not think that should be an unreasonable state today, because what happened in the past was that we took full advantage -- and this is true -- of the grants and the loans that were available then, but those are not as readily available as they were in the past. We are living in a different age, and it is not because are not trying, but the

truth is that we are living in a different era. The Opposition is still struck firmly in the past, but we know we have moved forward and we recognise the relationship between us and the lending institutions; they are saying they are not giving any more of these types of resources. In some cases, we have graduated, so a lot of the resources that would previously have been accessible to us are now going to other countries. Barbados now has graduated, and they tell us that were now are nearing First World status so we have to take more responsibility for these things. That is why we have to look now at more creative ways of financing housing for Barbadians, and that is where the Government has therefore to get partnerships with financial institutions within the country in order to address the issue of how to provide the type of housing which Barbadians need.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Minister of Housing on his efforts to provide housing to Barbadians, and I also want to say to him that in considering tenants for the housing, we do not allocate them in a manner as was suggested by the Member for St. James Central. I think that what we need to do is to recognise that Barbadian taxpayers' money is going into this, and therefore we should try to ensure that persons from all parts of Barbados be considered and treated fairly in deciding on those persons who would be given any units that might be built in that particular area. With that, I thank you very much, Sir.

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

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to close this debate and to say that I was appreciative of the speech made by the Member for St. James Central as he also asked a couple of questions. I can accept that the church plays a significant role in that constituency and it goes to the point that I would have made earlier in the debate when I said that the Government at the time should have acquired the land to the east of the highway. Had the Government done that, now we would have land which we would be able to allocate to the church. The land in that particular area, as he rightly said, was allocated by them and there would have been no space left to allocate to the church; but if we had acquired the land to the east where now there is grass and so on and which Sandy Lane was not interested in at the time when I suggested the acquisition, we would not have a problem now of dealing with a situation where a church is well-used and needs more space but there is no space. I will also look at the possibility of whether my previous idea can be looked at again and see whether we can acquire that land to the east and make provision for the church and also create some recreational facilities.

4.01 p.m.

Insert s25 juliette

Friday, May 12, 2017

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to hear that the Honourable Member for St. James Central has admitted that he goes on the call-in programme and disguises his voice. Sir, everybody in Barbados knows that when I go on the call-in programme I do not even ask anybody to ask me to identify myself because I always identify myself, so I am glad to hear that when the Honourable Member for St. James Central goes he disguises his voice and is now expecting me to do likewise.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we will look into the concerns that have been raised by the Opposition. We accept that it was a lack of foresight on their part and the things they did not do we are quite prepared to do them for them, so I will speak to the officials and see where...

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the issue as it relates to the gentleman at Arch Hall, it is quite clear that the gentleman made an error and suddenly realised how close he had built to the line mark when the Government or the person who went to put up the fence for the fire station put it to the line mark.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: As I said, I told him where to check and if there is any way that he can be helped I am quite open to help him but if there is a situation that he cannot be helped there is nothing I can do for the simple reason that we have to recognise that we cannot come in here and accuse Government of doing something that is wrong when Government has not done anything that is wrong. As I said I am the person who in this speech introduced the matter about the boundary because everybody knows that you put up a fence boundary to boundary, so if the Government has put up the fence to its boundary the Government cannot be disenfranchising its neighbour. There are very few of us who will build and leave out space to service our foundation, so I am saying that we have to recognise that this is a situation that we would have to look into but the Government as it stands has not done anything wrong, all the Government has done is fenced its property like any other person in this room would have done because all of us live in developments and all of us know that when you come to put a fence you

put up a fence to the boundary. Mr. Speaker, we are quite prepared as I said to look into the matter and see what can be done at this late hour because what is interesting is that it was only after the poles were planted and the Government was putting up the fence that the concern was raised.

Mr. Speaker, we have done what we had to do. We have recognised the potential of this area and we have clearly demonstrated that this Government is a Government of foresight and this Government has seen the potential of the area and we are quite prepared to exploit the potential of the area and as I said before we are quite prepared to tell the private sector that they too should recognise the potential that has been offered to them and that we have done the facilitation and it is for them now to exploit the facilitation.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Clerk of Parliament.

ORDER No. 20

RESOLUTION THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVED
ITSELF
INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER
THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE
SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, the House resolved itself in Committee of Supply, Mr. J. D. PAUL in the Chair.

(a) Resolution to grant the sum of \$3 466 072 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2017-2018 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 1, 2017-2018 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

HEAD 78 MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND
YOUTH

\$3 466 072

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have pleasure in introducing this Resolution which is a

supplementary provision requesting the sum of \$3 466 072 which is required to supplement the approved Estimates for the financial year 2017-2018 in respect of Subprogramme 0297: Special Projects. Mr. Chairman, these sums will be used as follows:

The financing of Queen's Park House Project in the amount of \$3 254 755 085; and secondly the reimbursement to the Treasury of \$211 316 015. That reimbursement would have been in relation to an advance in relation to the project.

As Honourable Members would know the Queen's Park buildings constitute an historic part of our heritage. They are listed buildings within the World Heritage Property which go back as far as 1780 when in fact the first permanent British Garrison was established in Barbados when the house was first rented for the Commander-in-Chief. Over the years we are aware of the use to which those buildings have been put. The Daphne Joseph Hackett Theatre was part of the key features of the buildings in Queen's Park and of course served for many years as the home for many artistic performances. The Queen's Park House itself is a two-storey classic 1781/84 Caribbean Georgian mansion. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, over the years due to a number of various occurrences, in the first instance, I believe, there was the impact on the buildings by a hurricane and in more recent times we have the impact in relation to simply the absence of funding to ensure the proper maintenance of these buildings and in a nutshell the buildings were left in a state of disrepair over a period of time and it is now left to the Government to ensure that a very prized part of our national heritage is restored.

House D11 Sequence 26

Mr. Chairman, a Condition Inspection was done in June, 2015, by the engineers/architects. We found that the original structure remained intact and of course that there was also considerable scope for improvement without significantly impacting the original structure. The major areas of concern identified were the roof which suffered from major extensive degeneration, there was termite infestation, the timber floors were also impacted, the stage, the terraced seating for the theatre, all were compromised because of the deterioration of the building and of course there were several structural cracks in the building. Overall, of course, the major renovations would have been needed to bring the Queen's Park Buildings back into operation.

The Scope of Works for renovation and extensions would have been then based on that Condition Inspection report and that Scope of Works would have involved the replacement of all electrical lighting and air-conditioning systems primarily due to age, and unacceptable conditions of the electrical panel in the wiring and air-conditioning systems. The Scope also included the upgrading and

development of the courtyard, which would have been used as a release space for patrons attending the theatre and of course the importance of making sure that all elements of the buildings were safe.

Mr. Chairman, it was as a result of the historic nature of this building and most importantly the fact that this space needed to be preserved for the benefit of our artistes, our cultural development in Barbados, the Government would have made a decision to ensure that we could move ahead with this project. Indeed, at one stage the Queen's Park Buildings were in danger of certainly being utilised in a way that would not have safeguarded the building because at one stage vagrants had actually literally taken over that building. It was closed at that stage and the visual arts community in particular and of course the performing arts community would have been affected significantly.

Mr. Chairman, the buildings were earmarked as being needed for the hosting of CARIFESTA 13, which as you know is being held in Barbados from August 17-27 and while of course several schools have been identified for hosting of various aspects of CARIFESTA, several specialty areas in terms of artistic performances and visual arts exhibition cannot be held at the schools and we would still need to have a facility such as the Queen's Park Gallery to be used for these major events, including the signalled visual arts events featuring Caribbean masters which will be part and parcel of CARIFESTA. The innovations, of course, would have included the need for making provision for changing facilities for actors and that will be part of the new structure, in addition of course to extensive repairs to the performing hall, as well as the gallery downstairs at Queen's Park. The other thing of course which we should note is that there is also the move by the National Conservation Commission to pay attention to the overall look and feel of Queen's Park and this particular project would certainly enhance and complement that particular work.

The cost of the project which would have been based on awarded contracts, the renovation/extension of Queen's Park House is projected to cost the sum of \$ 5 313 840.33. This total, Mr. Chairman, represents the adjusted main contract value of \$4 511 490.33, plus the proposed direct contracts valued at \$802 350, inclusive of contingency. Several small contractors, in addition to the main contractors, would have benefited from the allocation of work under this project and I believe that the direct employment generated from this project would have been in the vicinity of just over 50 jobs to artisans who would be working on the various levels. Mr. Chairman, the improvements would see attention being paid to the audio system, stage lighting, stage engineering system, the stage wood-spring floor system, the art-hanging system, furniture, signage and landscaping.

Mr. Chairman, the Supplementary which is being sought in this particular Resolution is required to ensure that we can press ahead with the work on the Queen's Park Buildings. The Schedule has been provided by the contractors and of course because of the nature of the work and the need to have these buildings ready for CARIFESTA, much of the work would have been done under an accelerated basis to ensure that we can complete that work in time for CARIFESTA. Mr. Chairman, the project is approximately 75 per cent completed and the contractors are committed to seeing it through and of course there is the need to ensure that they can do that by making the funds available to them.

Mr. Chairman, with those remarks justifying, of course, the need for these Supplementary funds, I now beg to move that Head 78 stands part.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees, reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply and His Honour the SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

4.37 p.m.

Friday, MAY 12, 2017

Seq. 28

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: ... Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Resolution be read for the first time.

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

The question that the Resolution be read for the first time was put to the House and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Resolution be read for the second time.

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

The question that the Resolution be read for the second time was put to the House and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Resolution be agreed to.

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

The question that the Resolution be agreed to was put to the Honourable the House, and the Resolution was passed.

RECOMMITAL

MINUTES

MR. SPEAKER: I now have with me the Minutes of our Meeting held on Friday, May 5, 2017.

On the motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, the Minutes referred to were taken as read, and MR. SPEAKER let the Minutes stand confirmed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, we have come to the end of Government Business for the day and I beg to move that the Sitting of the House be adjourned until Tuesday, May 30, at four o' clock in the evening when the Minister of Finance will present the Annual Budget to the Chamber.

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

The question that the Sitting do now adjourn until May 30, 2017, at 4 p.m. was put to the House and resolved in the affirmative without division, and MR. SPEAKER adjourned the Sitting accordingly.

4.35 p.m.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOYCE, Hon. J.D.E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
HINKSON, Mr. E. G. (St. James North)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
LOWE, Dr. the Hon. D. S. (Christ Church East)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
STUART, Rt. Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
SYMMONDS, Mr. K. (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. Opening. The convening sentence reads only ‘met at 10.15 a.m. on Friday, May 12, 2017.’, without ‘Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly’. Printed as in the source.

Q3. PRESENT list, first item. The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker (‘His Honour MICHAEL A. CARRINGTON ... (Speaker) Her Honour Mrs. M-J. MARA THOMPSON ... (Deputy Speaker)’) are run together as one entry. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Minutes. The heading and the Speaker’s words are run together in the source as ‘MINUTESMr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I am not yet in receipt of The Minutes ...’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 14, Mr. E. G. Hinkson’s speech. Mr. E. G. Hinkson, the Member for St. James North, opens by agreeing with ‘my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. James North’; the colleague meant appears to be the Member for St. James Central. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 14, take-slip H:No.D11 (20) 3.22 p.m.. A note ‘Insert s21 juliette’ stands in the text, and Hon. R. D. Jones’s speech then begins mid-sentence (‘...maybe a piece of land passed down ...’) with no call from the Chair, so the end of Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe’s speech and the start of Mr. Jones’s appear to be missing (Sequence 21). Printed as in the source.

Q7. Committee of Supply, Head 78. Hon. S. A. Lashley gives the parts of the \$3 466 072 as ‘\$3 254 755 085’ for the Queen’s Park House Project and ‘\$211 316 015’ for reimbursement to the Treasury; these figures do not match the total as printed. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Friday, 12th May, 2017 at 10.15 a.m., with Mr. Speaker in the Chair; prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood. The Minutes of Friday, 5th May were deferred, and the Speaker announced receipt of the Auditor-General’s Report for 2016. Papers

laid included the Annual Reports of the National Petroleum Corporation for 2011 to 2013 (by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart), the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Annual Report, 2015 (by Hon. J. D. E. Boyce) and the Department of Emergency Management Annual Report for 2015 (by the Attorney-General, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite). Standing Orders were suspended and Madam Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Order No. 14 was the Resolution under section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, to vest in the National Housing Corporation a parcel of Crown land at Arch Hall, St. Thomas, for residential purposes. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, Member for St. Lucy, said the parcel of 1 038.2 square metres had been part of Bennetts Plantation, and argued that the Government of the time should have acquired the land east of the highway. Mr. K. D. Symmonds, Member for St. James Central, supported the vesting but asked that site plans accompany such notices and pressed the concerns of residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts. The Attorney-General said the Fire Service was moving into the Arch Hall extension and spoke of staff shortages and promotions. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Member for Christ Church South, recalled the area’s sugar history and spoke on traffic on Highway 2A; Mr. Symmonds rose on a point of order that he was being misrepresented.

After the lunch suspension Mr. E. G. Hinkson, Member for St. James North, called the Government’s housing policy over nine and a half years ‘a miserable failure’ and said small contractors could not get Government work; the Speaker found no point of order when the Attorney-General objected, ordered certain remarks expunged and required Mr. Hinkson to withdraw a statement implying malfeasance. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe, Member for Christ Church East, linked the area to the landfill and the waste-to-energy programme, the Speaker ruling against Mr. Hinkson’s point of order on relevance. Hon. R. D. Jones spoke on the cost of building homes for persons earning under \$3 000 a month, and Mr. J. D. Paul, Member for St. Michael West Central, complimented the Minister of Housing. Mr. Kellman replied and the Resolution passed without division.

Under Order No. 20 the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. D. Paul in the Chair, on the Resolution to grant \$3 466 072 under Supplementary Estimates No. 1, 2017-2018. Hon. S. A. Lashley, Member for Christ Church West Central, explained that Head 78, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, would finance the renovation of Queen’s Park House, a listed building within the World Heritage Property, projected to cost \$5 313 840.33, so that it would be ready for CARIFESTA 13 from 17th to 27th August.

The Head passed, and the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

On recommittal the Minutes of 5th May, 2017 were confirmed. The House was adjourned until Tuesday, 30th May, 2017 at 4.00 p.m., when the Minister of Finance would present the Budget.