
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

Pursuant to the adjournment, the Honourable The House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, October 03, 2017.

PRESENT

His Honour MICHAEL A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LLB. (Speaker) Her Honour Mrs. M-J. MARA THOMPSON, M.Sc. (Ph.Ed.) B.A.(Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. OWEN S. ARTHUR M.Sc. (Econ.)
Mr. GEORGE W. PAYNE, Q. C.
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)
Hon. Miss MIA A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Leader of the Opposition)
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)
Mr. DALE D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C.
Hon. MICHAEL A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. RICHARD L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)
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. INNISS, Dip., B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development)
Hon. CHRISTOPHER P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Mr. TREVOR PRESCOD, B.A.
Mr. KERRIE D. SYMMONDS, B. A., LL.B.
Lt. Col. JEFFREY D. BOSTIC, M.V.O., B.A. (Hons.)
Dr. Mrs. MARIA M. AGARD, J.P., D.Ds., B.Sc. (Hons.)
Mr. DWIGHT G. SUTHERLAND, M.Sc., M.B.A. (Dist.), B.Sc.
Miss SANTIA J. O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.)
Mr. E. G. HINKSON, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., LL.M.
Prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood.

MR. SPEAKER: Good morning, Honourable Members, this House is now in Session.

MINUTES

MR. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, September 26, 2017.

Hon. J.D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Minutes were circulated, and subject

to any observations or corrections, I beg to move that these Minutes be confirmed.

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

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

PAPERS

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs the following Bills:

1. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) University of the West Indies, Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination (Order) 2017;
2. The Barbados Deposit Insurance Corporation Annual Report, 2016.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister of Tourism.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Needham's Point Development (Incorporated) Annual Report, 2015;
2. Needham's Point (Holdings Limited) Annual Report, 2015.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of the following Bill:

1. National Social Responsibility Levy (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

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

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

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.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 15

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF NOTIFICATION UNDER SECTION 9(1) OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228, DECLARING THE ABANDONMENT OF THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT WESTON IN the PARISH OF SAINT JAMES IN THIS ISLAND.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Transport and Works.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move this Resolution which speaks to the abandonment of the compulsory acquisition of a parcel of land situate at Weston in the parish of St. James in this Island. Mr. Speaker, of course, the Schedule is attached therein. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed under Section 9(1) of the Land Acquisition Act. We are now seeking to abandon the compulsory acquisition of that property. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, some time in 1995, years ago, there was some loss or damage to houses and other buildings at Weston, St. James. Mr. Speaker, as a result of that flooding on August 31, 1995, certain properties were recommended for acquisition. Indeed, this said property is one such properties.

Mr. Speaker, that compulsory acquisition moved from 1995 to 2003 where the Cabinet of Barbados agreed to the compulsory acquisition of the said parcel of land and that a Resolution be introduced into Parliament. Mr. Speaker, you would recognise that some time has elapsed and that, in fact, it also involved relocation of some houses. Indeed, an offer was sent to Mr. Griffith where, of course, you would know there was some back-and-forth in relation to compensation to the value of the land and thus negotiations broke down.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development subsequently wrote to the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage requesting that consideration be given to the abandonment of this land. The Drainage Division agreed and stated that in their opinion the houses are in no way impeding drainage divisions, access to or the flow within the water course and that as such, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development which is responsible for

compulsory acquisitions of land under the law, agreed to come to Parliament to abandon this acquisition of land.

H:No. D18 (1)

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to speak about the length of time but indeed a lot of time has elapsed between the proposed acquisition, the acquisition in Parliament and, indeed, the abandonment of the acquisition. As a Parliament, we sometimes speak to the difficulties surrounding the Land Acquisition Act and, of course, some of the pain and suffering which families endure as a result of the State not only acquiring the land but, indeed, after the abandonment and what they would have lost during that time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to state up front that the Government or the State has the power to acquire the land once the public purpose is satisfied. Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that the Cabinet of the day and indeed the Minister of Housing and Lands, acting in accordance with Section 6 of the Land Acquisition Land, believes that in his opinion the lands should be acquired for public purpose. This is in his opinion and, of course, Cabinet is agreeing to it. Mr. Speaker, Sir, as Minister of Housing during 2008 and 2009 I do recall that when we looked and researched about the properties that were acquired -- not only in relation to this Government but Governments of the past -- the cost to the Government at the time was \$150 million; that was in compensation for land that was acquired for a public purpose. I want to repeat: A public purpose.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do recall that the Ministry of Housing, acting in accordance with the law, serves a notice in the paper that you sometimes get calls from families, individuals and companies expressing shock and saying to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, "I had plans for this property. I had plans to pass it down -- to use the local language -- to my family so that some benefit can be derived for families. I want to use the title deeds as security to secure whatever financing to improve the lot or standing of the family." I received many of those letters and indeed pleadings with the Government not to abandon.

Mr. Speaker, I want later in this discussion to refer to a case and I know the learned Right Honourable Prime Minister would know of this case: the Parsons Pest Control case. That is one of the leading cases related to land acquisition in this country. In fact, it was a case where the citizen challenged the State on acquiring his property and challenged the public purpose of the property. I believe it was Justice Carlisle Payne who delivered the High Court decision in that matter. I think Parsons were represented by William Chandler and John Connell, who have since both moved on to the Bench.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that many of us in here as parliamentarians have received not only letters but pleadings from constituents and even clients about the acquisition of their lands which, as I said before, they would have had plans for. Yes, and my good friends from Christ Church East and Christ Church Central always speak to the burning case at Fairy Valley, in which these properties were acquired because of the airport relocation project. They wanted to acquire it for a public purpose and, indeed, that resulted in dislocation of many families. Yes, the State at the time had a relocation policy in relation to moving those persons, but again there was the time that had elapsed between moving the persons and the acquisition of the lands. Not only was there a human cost in relation to these actions but, Mr. Speaker, some of the families would have had businesses attached to their properties from which they derived an income to support and sustain their families, and again there was the emotional attachment to the land which was to be passed down. The Member for Christ Church East would know what I am speaking of, because sometimes he passionately speaks about the land acquisition process.

My view is that when we look at the Land Acquisition Act, one can argue that it is heavily -- I repeat heavily -- in favour of the State. One may also argue that once that property is not acquired or the process is not completed in three months, the citizen also has a right to claim that property. Once the process is not completed within three months, the acquisition is deemed to be abandoned. Again, Mr. Speaker, you know this goes to the education of the landowners in relation to their rights under the Land Acquisition Act. I always say that, and indeed if we look at Parsons Pest Control, I do not want to speak out of turn but I believe that person would have had the wherewithal to retain counsel to challenge the land acquisition process and the public purpose. The question is whether the poor families in the Christ Church area.... In fact, Mr. Speaker, I can call a number of areas in which properties were acquired, roads built, houses built and businesses completed, but when we speak to Section 15 of the Constitution and we speak about compensation, and we say that compensation must be given in a fair, reasonable manner and, of course, in reasonable time, if we look at the times in which landowners have been paid as a result of compensation, I cannot say six months. I cannot say seven months, and I cannot say eight months, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Only if the land is acquired in relation to a private treaty, but where there is an unwilling vendor, Sir, and Government now has to invoke its powers under the Land Acquisition Act, then that is where compensation comes about.

10.38 a.m.

Sir, I remember as Minister of Housing that one glaring I recognise from the Land Acquisition Act is that

the Act like the Act in Trinidad, when I compare, there is no definition of a public purpose within the Act. Sir, I am not saying that we should limit or close link a definition of public purpose within the Act because over time, there is case law that speaks to the fact that once the land the land used for economic development, once it is used to ensure employment, once it is for the community benefit that would constitute a public purpose. The argument is that we should not include a definition of it in the Act but that we should leave it to the administration, the Minister and the Cabinet once they believe it fits within their programme of social development.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say that the properties... I always say that I recall that land was acquired from a citizen of this country in St. Andrew.... Sir, I am trying to speak from memory but I believe my facts may be right, or it may be from St. Thomas but I recall that the land was acquired for a public purpose for a recreational facility in St. Andrew. Mr. Speaker, this was the only property of this person who worked overseas who spent all of their income working hard overseas in England and purchase land in the country wanting to become a property owner in the country. The State at the time comacq the land for a public purpose, that is, recreational purposes to build a pavilion down in St. Andrew or something like that, in St. James, Orange Hill. Sir, there were negotiations between the landowner and the Government of the day, the negotiations broke down over the acquiring of the property and as a result the remainder of the land was a contention in the Parkinson case because when we utilise the Land Acquisition Act and we acquire land and lands adjoining are not usable as a result of the acquisition that again is another issue that pops up and, of course, what happened to the citizen is that the other lands that remained to her became land that cannot be used to improve her lot, or improve the economic benefit of the same lady and her family. Sir, what happened? We had to get the social agencies after the property owner, a person of some wealth became dependant on the State as a result of her land being acquired by the State, I ndeed for public purpose. I am not saying the land was acquired with malice because of course the Minister of Housing at the time, once he acts under Section 3, and in his opinion believes it is for a public purpose and the Cabinet agrees then the public purpose is satisfied.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I have said before, what can the citizen do in the face of this power under the Act, and what reforms can we look at in terms of reforming the Land Acquisition Act because we have to balance the rights of the landowner against the rights of the State.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James Central is asking me what I am speaking about. I am speaking about the Land Acquisition Act. He was not here before. The land is being abandoned after years. I am

speaking about the fact that this land was acquired and indeed was in the possession of the State. It meant, Sir, at that time and during that time he was dispossessed and he could not have used the land. It was acquired for a public purpose and we are not questioning that. We are coming back here after this time to abandon the acquisition.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I have said even in the Ministry of Transport and Works, yess, we have to acquire land for the public purpose of building road infrastructure, building highways and whatsnot but there are some State agencies, and this is where we have some problem, there aer some State agencies that enter upon lands without notification of the Ministry of Housing, without notification of the relative agencies and what happens? The Ministry of Transport and Works overtime, sometimes it could be an oversight, sometimes it could a communication problem but, as I have said before, there many times where highways have been built and roads have been built and indeed the landowner is still awaiting compensation. I can recall, Sir, in my area very well, I believe in Supers, wehre the landowner pleaded and pleaded overtime with the Government for compensation, which is his just due and, of course, he did not get his just due, so he decided to take action into his own hands and many times the police had to be called in because he single-handedly blocked the road and because it is the only access road in that area for persons to go to St. Mark's Church and for persons to go Fortesque Development. Sir, that road was blocked on many occasions because he believed he had to exercise his right in this particular way because he was awaiting compensation from the State for property that was acquired.

Mr. Speaker, some commentators have stated that they believe that witin the legislation or that within some regimes, in fact, in some jurisdictions, they have a Land Compensation Act, separate and distinct apart from the law dealing with acquisition legislation. Sir, there is nothing especially stating in the Land Acquisition Act that a landowner after being dispossessed of the land, where the Minister of Housing utilizes his powers under the land, that he must be compensated with six, seven, eight or nine months. Sir, indeed, what we are saying is that we must not only in relation to the private treaty, there is a willing buyer. I have said that before.

Sequence 3

In relation to the private treaty, Mr. Speaker, there is a willing buyer. I said that before but it is incumbent on the State to ensure that landowner is compensated within a reasonable time but, of course, Government's will have financial constraints but the question is whether it will have to be compensation in a financial form or could it be an exchange of a property for the same value. Could it be some negotiations, Mr. Speaker, with the landowner and

the State? Then the question would be the issue of compensation because some landowners believe that if that property is utilised and, of course, the Town Planning permission is attached to it, it gives it a certain value that not only the landowner would be compensated for the value of the land at the time of the acquisition, but of course for the value added. Mr. Speaker, I want to give a glaring example of the matter that we spoke to earlier where the citizen challenged the Government in relation to an acquisition. This was a citizen that owned 17 acres of land and on that land was a dwelling house and a building that operated a business in the case of Parsons Pest Control versus the Attorney General. He sued the Attorney General, the Chief Town Planner and the Minister of Housing and Lands at the time. The Government of the day then acquired the land and published a Section 3 notice and, of course, it was a 1999 High Court case, Sir, and the decision was laid down in 2001. In fact, it is the leading case on a citizen opposing the State in an acquisition matter in the law courts of this island. I just wanted to utilise the case to see and to tell this Parliament how the citizen actually approached and challenged the State. He had acres of lands and he said to them, in fact, the Minister of Housing wanted to acquire the land for housing and he wanted only eight house lots but this man had a business on it as his livelihood, he lived on it and this is what he said in the matter. He said it would significantly interrupt the continuity of the landscape to the front of the property. It would cause the destruction of several mature fruit trees and he said that he would greatly destroy the amenity which the applicate had expended much time and care and money in creating. He also spoke to the substantial devaluation of it, he spoke to the interruption of his view from the resident towards the highway and he argued that he has an alternative site on the land that is suitable for housing developments. He said, I do not understand why the State is acquiring my land when I have an alternative site that can give you eight house lots. I can satisfy the public purpose of giving you my other land for eight house spots but no, they said we want this piece of land to interrupt this man's life and to interrupt the business of this person. I do not know who the Minister of Housing and Lands was at the time. I am not making a political speech but the Court was saying that there is an alternative site and that the Government should have been more careful in ...

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: That is it, Sir. That really is an alternative site to realise the public purpose that the State really should pursue that and that adversely affected his business prospects, improvement and development and so, Mr. Speaker, I raised that because indeed, when we look at the history surrounding this acquisition and the time that elapse they would have to be some suffering as a result of the landowner. There would have to be some dislocation.

As we said upon the outset that many times, once that Section 3 notice is published, be it from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, be it from the Ministry of Finance, be it from the Ministry of Environment or be it from the Ministry of Tourism for public purpose you will get calls from landowners, or from persons who are interested in the land asking you why are you taking up my land because my land is here for my family, my land is here to develop a business, I want to use the Title Deeds further down the road. He would argue compensation because we want to act in accordance to Section 16 of the Constitution, we want to act in accordance with that. We will provide the compensation but Mr. Speaker, Sir, I certainly believe and I recall when I was Minister of Housing we did a complete analysis of the Land Acquisition Act and we noticed, Sir, particularly in the Ministry of Housing and Lands the reason why the application process takes some time is because there is a shortage in this country of land surveyors and land surveyors play an important part in the acquisition process in acquiring the land and it takes time.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, if the parties believe, particularly in a private treaty negotiation, that the compensation being offered is unreasonable that too can cause some delay so I am not placing the burden of saying that the length of the lay for the process is not solely and simply on the State but sometimes, Sir, the parties, as in their right, they can challenge and they can also ask for compensation that they believe that is reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to give an outline. Of course, I believe that I would wrap up in the fullness of time but indeed, I just wanted to raise these matters and, of course, to look at instances, in fact, I even forgot to mention the land at Kendall. When I was Minister of Housing and Lands we came here and abandoned the acquisition because sometime in the 1990s that land was acquired from the property owner for an industrial estate and also for the Barbados Transport Board Headquarters. That was from 1990 or even before 1990, I believe. Of course, having believed that the public purpose was satisfied and indeed the landowner asserted his rights because he was saying, "How come my land has been acquired, I have seen no development from the State, because they said to me that this land was acquired from me for public purpose and to develop an industrial estate, to develop the headquarters of the Barbados Transport Board and also to create better facilities for the working conditions of persons working at the Barbados Transport Board. He asserted his rights. The State no longer wanted the property but, of course, for years, he was out of possession of his land and, of course, having development plans for his land in terms of developing it and of course making sure that he maximise the usage of the land to the best of his economic use, he was deprived of it, but indeed the State acted again under the theory that it was for a public purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move that this Resolution do now pass, that is, that the land at Weston in the parish of St. James be abandoned in accordance with Section 9 subsection 1 of the Land Acquisition Act.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I would wish to share a perspective on this matter having listened and with some agony endured the presentation of the Honourable Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I think the time has come in this House where Members of the Government's Frontbench in particular have to recognise that there is really no benefit in speaking as though there is a temporary and a femoral detachment from the reality of the office they hold, from the reality of the authority they carry in this country and from the reality of the fact that they are the principal policymakers. I heard this language used only last week, and I do not want to reflect on the Barrack debate, that the Executive must execute and the same issues then come back to haunt the Parliament today.

Mr. Speaker, I was not part of any Executive in 2002 or 2003 at the time when this took place but I have been around long enough to realise that... The Honourable Member for St. Philip North just entertained this House and in my view delayed this House by dancing around giving us a lecture, a tutorial if you will, Mr. Speaker, about the public purpose behind acquisitions, et cetera, but that is not the court issue because if it were then we would have had the solution in term of policy before the House, the Honourable Member would be moving a piece of legislation to deal with the mischief that he says exists. If you know the mischief exists but you have done nothing though you have been acting Attorney-General how many countless times over the years, though the whole purpose of his speech in terms of content and tone and indeed delivery was, as the Minister of Finance whispered across at me, a last ditch effort to catch the Prime Minister's ear in the hope of getting the Attorney-General's Office... Mr. Speaker, Sir, if this is your approach, then you are going no way fast because this Parliament means nothing if it is not going to be about solutions so that the discussion in my view, if it is to have had any merit in terms of the aspect of it about public purpose acquisition, and that is not to say that the Honourable Member is wrong when he speaks to the defect in the public purpose acquisition process and the cases he cited and so on, all of that is true but what is the solution? What has been the decision taken by Cabinet? When is the policy paper coming? When is the legislation

to correct the mischief coming? None of that has been collided with even remotely.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if that therefore is only old talk, then what is the subject here. The issue here has to be one of two things: Is the Minister complaining about the fact that an acquisition took place or an acquisition was commenced, because I am very unclear as to what he is saying, but that the persons who were supposed to have had their land compulsorily acquired were hard-done by? If that is the case, then the legislation provides at Section 3 for a person who has had land entered upon by the Crown, but the Crown has not completed the acquisition within a three-month period of time, to write to the Permanent Secretary, draw it to the attention of the Minister and if another month elapses and nothing have been done then the acquisition is deemed to be abandoned, so if that is the mischief he is complaining about then that mischief is already dealt with in the law.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: As I said, Mr. Speaker, I am unclear as to what the Honourable Member said. The only other conclusion one could come to is that the Honourable Member is lamenting the fact that in fact an acquisition did take place but that the acquisition having taken place nothing was done in terms of the public purpose to which he gave us this lengthy lecture that there must be public purposes behind the acquisition and that there was no follow through on the part of either the outgoing Barbados Labour Party Government and more importantly that there has been no follow through over the last nine years by this Democratic Labour Party Government. If that is what he is saying he could have said so in Cabinet. He did not condemn his colleagues, all of them, for nine years of squalid wasting of time and they have to come in here and go through this, if that is the import of what he is saying. If he wants to come down on the Attorney-General and say that he wasted time and blah, blah, blah and his colleague the Minister of Drainage wasted time...

Mr. Speaker, what are we dealing with in Barbados? I think that, as I said, the Parliament has to come to a point where Government Members now have to stop behaving as though they are temporarily detached from the constitutional offices that they hold. Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in Barbados where the country as a whole, not part, all, want to see serious steps taken towards rectifying some obvious wrongs. When The Mighty Carew went on his housetop in Weston and was washed out to sea and drowned all in Barbados learnt, if you did not know already, that that area was a flood plain and that as a matter of urgency you needed to put drainage mitigation measures in place to rectify the problems in that area, that is commonly understood across Barbados. I do not think you

had a household or indeed a school child that did not grasp for the point.

Mr. Speaker, I take no pride in saying that between the date of the acquisition and the demise of the Barbados Labour Party Government it would appear to me that there was nothing done, at least no visible steps taken, towards dealing with that issue nor can anybody in this House take any pride in the observation that for nine years thereafter equally nothing has been done nor any visible steps taken towards the mitigation of that issue, so therefore the conclusion that the country is being invited to draw is that we sit and spin top in mud, old talk across the aisle of this House, but that serious developmental - and this word must come now to stick in the craw of certain Honourable Members who I get the distinct impression come in here not understanding that there is a developmental mission and a developmental objective that they must service in this country but rather come in here with more narrow personal and in some instances partisan political ambitions and that is not what this is about...

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I said, I take no pride in being part of a process that has so miserably failed people in the constituency of St. James North and I do not think anybody on either side of this House can feel proud about it either if you are true to yourself, so therefore what steps are we taking, that is what I would have thought that the mover of the Resolution would have carried the House to because even if the acquisition is belatedly deemed to be abandoned, the fitness for purpose for human occupation in Weston and similar flood plains in Barbados needs to be addressed.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North should give thanks and praise to the fact that I am in a mood to be tolerant with him because when he continues to interrupt me this way, Mr. Speaker, Sir, he is begging me to draw to the point that right next door in Weston is a fire station which is supposed to be a home for first responders but if you have a flood taking place or Heaven forbid a 18-foot storm surge as islands in the Caribbean have recently experienced, then those first responders are rendered unable to operate because of the fact that they have to 'brek' for themselves, save ourselves first before you can save anybody else.

House D18 Sequence 5

Mr. Speaker, so too a little further up St. James, because the Honourable Member wants to provoke me to express my concerns about these matters, in Holetown, at Holetown Police Station that too is one for first responders and if we were to have a 15-foot storm surge in Holetown

the police station would be the first set of people to be flooded out and to have to...

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Yes, Holetown Police Station, on the beach, so that we have in Barbados a very serious developmental policy. I do not know why the Honourable Member chooses to lecture this Honourable House on the public purpose behind acquisitions alone, because the major issue touching and concerning families in Barbados living in low-lying flood plains is the fact that there is a grave danger that they face in the event... Mr. Speaker, I cannot say unlikely because we have seen it happening in Dominica, Anguilla, St. Marten, Tortola and across this Caribbean. Barbuda now is not fit for human habitation.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that in the event that you have that kind of difficulty in Barbados, your first responders: one of the issues coming out of this debate, the police in Holetown, the fire station in Weston, those are people who are immediately in the line of peril, yet their duty has to be to protect the wider society. How can they affectively do it?

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am just giving that as the example, I know that they are not going to move the fire station, I am just giving that as the historical example. Mr. Speaker, I am also saying that it does not end there because if you go across this country, if you come into St. Michael... Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that we sometimes forget that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is also on a flood plain, so these are some of the serious developmental issues that we have to deal with in Barbados as we confront these things.

Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Member chooses to go the route of speaking the way in which he did, lecturing us the way he did on the law, I ask the very serious policy question that must be asked of every Member of the Cabinet, because what this Honourable House needed to hear is why was the acquisition done in the first place. Now, I am presuming that the files would reflect what the purpose of the acquisition was. I will confess that I do not know, it has not been made clear to me, but whatever the purpose of the acquisition was, the next question is, what corrective steps should have been taken with respect to the flood mitigation in the area in order to make sure that that acquisition was fit for a purpose.

Mr. Speaker, if for whatever reason the withdrawal or abandonment of the acquisition did not come about, then, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we would still have the underlying

concern which I believe would have to be a real concern for the Honourable Member for Christ Church East who has responsibility for drainage in this country, the mitigating steps that would need to be taken in order to make sure that human life in Barbados is not compromised by whatever development that takes place not only in Weston but in other places that are similarly afflicted. Mr. Speaker, I think that is the real concrete human question that has to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, it does not only end there because the painful reality of the difficulty we are facing as a Parliament and as a people is that Government has not been timely. Mr. Speaker, I was a Member of the Barbados Labour Party in 2003 when the acquisition took place, so that I take no pride in saying that as an outgoing Barbados Labour Party I would not have had the corrective measures taken in Weston, as indeed I take no pride in being part of a Parliament that has seen this matter continued for 14 painful years but Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is an issue that Government must confront and only Government can deal with it, that is, it is the duty of the Government to intervene wheresoever possible to manage those things that are within its budget, that are within its resources.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, how do you think I feel as the Honourable Member for St. James Central to have to stand here before you to tell you that culverts in Bagatelle, drains that go across the width of the road in my constituency, Bagatelle, are broken down today making it impassable, so that people who live in the district cannot access their houses, who last night had to park their cars alongside the road and to walk to their homes, when this was drawn to the attention of the Honourable Minister by way of a Residents' Petition in March, 2016, so that a year and a half has passed with no repairs being done and the inevitable has come to pass, that is, the drains have collapsed and broken in, that people now cannot access or egret their places of residents, and that traffic coming through the district can no longer do so. Mr. Speaker, it is within the budget of Government, we are talking about simple drains going across the road, so that we are here getting bogged down in tutorials of law about the public purpose behind acquisitions. Mr. Speaker, which sounds goods but it does not impact on day-to-day lived reality of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the people whom I represent know that they signed the petitions, the people whom I represent know that I stood in this Parliament and indicated to Minister of Public Works and Transport that the petition was delivered to his office.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think...

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Yes, Sir. Mr. Speaker, you are going to say, Sir, I believe that I am being irrelevant, that I need to stay to the particular Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: That you are being irrelevant and that you need to stay with the particular Resolution.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am sorry, Sir, the agony of the moment and I may have swayed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, that is just a gentle reminder.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I believe, Sir, that I could ask for some latitude on the basis of the issue of drainage because the Minister did say that the Resolution was being abandoned for purposes of drainage and I am on a point of drainage. I am trying to connect that, Sir, by saying that it is within.... Mr. Speaker, this is a small matter in terms of Government's finances but it is a large matter in terms of the livelihood and well-being of the people. Mr. Speaker, what people would not know is that the Minister made sport at me and told me that he threw the Resolution into the bin. They would not know that. Mr. Speaker, the point is that I believe that we deserve better as a country and that a greater degree of sincerity and urgency needs to be placed on these matters because when you have flooding, whether in Weston or anywhere else, Sir, it raises other tangential but critical concerns.

Mr. Speaker, until water rushes into your house, and I was going to say at 2 or 3 in the morning but it does not matter what time. Mr. Speaker, we had heavy rains in November last year, people on that west coast in the area of Weston, in fact, as far up at Cin-Cin Restaurant and I believe you would have seen it on Whatsapp where you would have seen water pouring in. Mr. Speaker, until you experience the dislocation of walking into a house which is on the lower plains of Barbados, because as you know this country is made up of steps. If you are in the hills of St. Andrew that water washes down to the higher reaches of St. James, then down to the coastal parts of St. James. The same thing happens on the Christ Church side, coming down from St. George. Mr. Speaker, until when people understand the agony of walking into their homes on any evening, finding that their kitchen is flooded out, that their washing machine has now become useless, that their food has now become useless, that their furniture is all destroyed....

Mr. Speaker, they then go to an insurance company in Barbados, which is another part of this thing that we have to talk about, only to hear that you had home insurance but that that home insurance did not cover flood. Mr. Speaker, no effort is taken or brought to bear in any serious way from the Ministry of Commerce to hold insurance companies fully accountable in this flood prone part of the world. Mr. Speaker, this is not to hold the

Minister with responsibility for this because this has happened for all the years that we have had an Independent Barbados.

11.30 a.m.

These are things we have to change. These are the things we have to transform, Mr. Speaker, Sir, because the loss which an individual suffers is fundamental. In trying to restore yourself to your personal comforts in the aftermath of that in straitened financial circumstances -- because already you are living in a situation where the Minister of Finance does not leave two coppers in your pocket -- you find yourself having to begin from scratch all over again; to repair, replace and rebuild everything that was destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, those are the issues which we as a Parliament must deal with. Part of the discussion, obviously, Sir -- though this is not the time for it -- must also again touch on the most vulnerable, which would be the people from the working class parts of these constituencies in St. James, Sir. Coastal St. James is full of wooden houses. We do not yet have the benefit of seeing a building code come to this Parliament. We do not yet have the benefit of seeing a building code come to this Parliament and be legislated into law so as to ensure that life is made easier for the most vulnerable. It is as though we forget that there are people around Barbados who have no choice but to rest some board on top of stone. The board is resting on the stone, not strapped down or made fast by concrete, and you cannot rely any longer in this economy on the intervention of the Rural Development Commission (RDC) or, in my case, Sir, RDC and Urban Development Commission (UDC). Half of my constituency, the part that goes right up to the border with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, is urban, and then it goes all the way down past Holetown as rural. Of course, the interventions, which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is able to make without the benefit of UDC and RDC, cannot be done by your humble servant, Sir.

People are left naked and unprotected because they have not been given the shield of legislative intervention. That is what, I respectfully submit, Sir, this debate should be about. That is what the leader of this debate, who was once the conscience of the working class in the new-look Democratic Labour Party, was once capable of delivering in this House. Sir, this idea of coming here and this thing about public purpose acquisition....

Asides.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, the point is that the need to connect with this wide cross-section of consequential issues is something that we must do. It is all well and good to say that a policy of land acquisition is

being withdrawn at Weston. I made a note of it here: There was flooding in 1995, acquisition in 2003, and it was abandoned because of issues with drainage. Mr. Speaker, that sounds very general and vague, but the reality is that after you have abandoned because of issues with drainage, then what? The theme of this very brief intervention, Sir, is simply this: There is a duty on the part of Government and indeed on the part of Parliament as a whole to be able to make sure that the steps which have to be taken to mitigate drainage issues in Barbados are being adequately dealt with. I am submitting to the House, Sir, that the evidence we have before us, certainly with respect to Weston, suggests that we have fallen painfully short.

I really want to hear the Honourable Member for Christ Church East on this matter. I must call his name on this, Sir, because he is the person charged with the responsibility for matters relating to drainage in Barbados. I do not say that to cause personal discomfiture to the Minister. I reflect on the fact that this is his mission, and the truth of the matter is, Sir, that in St. James as a parish we continue to see far too much of the difficulties associated with drainage and the consequence of flooding, as I say, impacting very negatively and deleteriously on the homes of the people in the constituency which I represent and certainly the constituency next door in St. James North. I have no doubt the Honourable Member for St. James North will speak, and he will tell you that large tracts of his constituency are still flood plains in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I also say that there is another side, because I put the people of Barbados first. You know that there is another side to this as well, which is the financial side that is born out of the confusion and the agony which we then inflict on the visiting tourists to the island. Sir, that St. James coast, which is the lowest part of St. James, is the flood plain and that is also the so-called Gold Coast. Sir, that is the coast which brings in the high-paying tourists. Mr. Speaker, if you see the conditions which people have to walk through. I ask myself whether in 2017 we should really be contenting ourselves with this slipshod approach, because I know that better can be done and systematically better could have been done. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I say to you, I derive absolutely no pleasure from having to reflect on the fact that -- for reasons up to this point undisclosed by the Minister who led this matter -- between 2000 and whatever time and the departure of the Barbados Labour Party from Government, this matter had not been dealt with. I am sure that the file must disclose something. I have nothing to hide in the matter, so if he can bring light to bear, then do so. Equally, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I stand here as a Member not of Government but of the Parliament, and the Parliament, I suspect, with one voice -- if we are all people of good conscience -- will say that it is equally disgraceful that between 2008 and today the situation has not been dealt with either.

Sir, I am not one who is given to the partisan back-and-forth to spin top in mud while the developmental issues are being left unaddressed. The developmental issues, as I indicated to you, Mr. Speaker, touch and concern matters relating to commerce; how we can bring all of the insurance companies in Barbados to the table to understand that theirs is not just a profit-making role but that theirs is a developmental role in this society, and that working class people need to be given satisfactory insurance opportunities within the context of a building code which ensures that people who have not had the benefit at least of some straps to secure the base of their house or cement to make sure that the base of their house is secured, but are still resting on rocks as happened in 1850 and 1880, is rectified, Mr. Speaker. That has to be the mission, the goal of development. It has to be. I walked through the constituency of the Prime Minister the other day with a young, dynamic man called Mr. Kirk Humphrey, Sir -- I have not asked permission to call his name but it slipped out -- and I have no doubt he will soon be the Honourable Member. I have no doubt. Sir, if you see the failure on the part of UDC to intervene in that constituency, it would mortify you. What is even more mortifying is that it is under the watch of the Right Honourable Prime Minister himself. This is disgraceful, Sir. It is disgraceful.

The other issue that I raise to this House, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the fact that as part of the medium- to long-term trajectory, we have to make sure that whether it be in Oistins, Worthing, Holetown or Bridgetown, that those people who are charged with the responsibility for making sure they can intervene in cases of disaster in Barbados are in a position to do so. While I am on that point, Mr. Speaker, Sir, let us be also very clear that this is not just about Parliament legislating but that Parliament must now also make sure -- and Government must lead this -- that we bring all of Barbados together in this massive issue called preparation for disaster. Mr. Speaker, I am told that there is a national disaster management plan but do you know, Sir, that nobody has consulted with anybody any part of my constituency about what their role is in that plan.

11.27 a.m.

There has not been one town hall meeting convened in my constituency to share with people from Prospect, Sea View, Holetown, Arch Hall, Redman Village or Hoyte's Village to ask what is it that you are called upon to do in the event there is a major disaster in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member let me remind you of the rule of relevance. I will not give you a third warning.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Sir, I have strayed again and I apologise. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it will be said that is the role of

DEO but, Sir, as you know, all DEOs do not function the same way. Therefore, there is a need for the intervention to be made to bring people to an understanding. Mr. Speaker, I go on to say that if it is that the level of difficulties with drainage is such that there are some challenges which have endured for decades in spite of the intervention of Government and, Mr. Speaker, this is one of those cases where the country as part of its developmental mission must look to secure adequate financing from relevant institutions so as to overcome these drainage challenges. I am aware that in some parts of Barbados that 10 and 15 years of efforts have still not brought satisfactory resolution. I am also aware that is a source of deep frustration to technocrats. Sir, these problems must be resolved by way of suitable partnership being made between our country and the relevant developmental financial institutions so that you can have a targeted intervention and systematically do so in order to bring all the drainage challenges that we have to bear.

Mr. Speaker, part of the challenges we are dealing with including in Weston is the issue of the role of the Chief Town Planner in this exercise as well. I hope that as you follow the thought in this debate you realise that is a cross section of Government departments that must be involved and that is why there was such paucity in the delivery of the Honourable Member who led this debate. Sir, how can you stand and talk about the problem in Weston without treating to the weaknesses in the Town and Country Planning Department that has led to the flooding or contributed in major ways to the flooding downstream. The weaknesses upstream in the Town and Country Planning Department that has contributed to the pain and suffering of poor working class people downstream. The weaknesses upstream in the Town and Country Planning Department's ability that have contributed to the flooding in Holetown downstream, that is a story in itself that has to be told. Therefore, Sir, there is no one or two Government departments that have to be looked at. This has to be holistic approach.

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: I am not so concerned about the time of the debate and that is why I want you to talk because there are those who would want to say that this is only about politics but this is a developmental issue and at its core there is a real danger that we are beginning to fail because as I have said to you, in my own constituency last night, it was not a deluge of water, but the consequences of not maintaining a culvert were felt by 100 homes in the district because people cannot access their homes because the culvert broke in, a culvert that should be maintained systematically. Sir, the point that we are making is that you have to find a way of harnessing all of the Government departments that are brought to bear on this matter and to

bring them to undertaking about the urgency that country is being confronted with.

Mr. Speaker, it is a matter that does not only touch St. James North and quite frankly St. James Central but the road that I speak of through my constituency is used by people of the Honourable Member for St. James South as well as they go to Prior Park. This is a serious issue.

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: I am not surprised that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would ask me what my view is on flooding. I am not surprised that I would hear that from him.

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Why? Sir, for me to reply to him appropriately, it would be deemed unparliamentary. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to stay focus on this because, as I have said, this is a matter that must attract the attention of a wide cross section of Government departments and frankly, Sir, I believe that in Honourable Member for Christ Church East there is a demonstration of serious interest in bring resolution but what I do not believe that the Honourable Member has at his disposal is adequate resources. I have had on a number of occasion to interface with the Drainage Unit, good men all but as I interface with the Drainage Unit, I find that there is very often an inability to bring the kind of resolution that they agreed needs to be brought it may be lack of equipment, sometimes a lack of funding, sometimes a lack of personnel but more important than all of that, I go back to this point, there is also a need for us to bring the average Barbadian to the table for them to understand the role that they play in the mitigation of drainage difficulties so that if you go into a community especially in modern middle class Barbados, a fellow will cut his lovely piece of lawn which is right outside of his brick wall perimeter to the property. He has a lovely, not a fence, but a wall and next to it there is plot of grass. He trims the plot of grass and the trimmings from the grass go into the drain right next door. Sir, that is not necessarily that the Drainage Unit should be called in to repair or resolve. As you cut, you rake it up and dispose of it appropriately but if it just drops in the drain, nobody reports it to go in the drain and then when you have a deluge of water, the drain is blocked and the drain is useless.

Mr. Speaker, the thinking of the country therefore has to be radically reassessed because if that happens in 45 communities across Barbados, there are 45 communities prone to flooding that otherwise might not be minus some of the other issues that I have already spoken to. Sir, there is a developmental paradigm that Barbados can look to. Sir, if you go to Cuba, you will see that issues of this type are

matters that the whole society are involve in because we all have a stake in keeping our society clean, we have a stake in keeping our society safe, we all have a stake in keeping our society a place when rain fall we do not get wash away. Sir, equally, as I have just said, we all have a stake in understanding what our role is towards our fellow man in instances of disaster. Sir, do you know that we have in this Parliament a man who has led the Barbados Defence Force and who is perhaps the leading disaster management expert to be found in this part of the Caribbean and I am sure without having any prior consultation with him that this Government has never once sought to enjoin him in discussion on matter of this nature. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the point that we have to make is that this is a total and complete national issue that must be addressed by the widest possible cross section of people in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know that I have caused Honourable Members on the other side to reflect on some of their personal ministerial failings. I know that I have caused Honourable Members on the other side to reflect on the absence of vision and direction in their Government and I know that a holocaust of abuse will rain down. Sir, not that you would allow me to be abused but a holocaust of attempt to abuse will rain down on me.

Asides.

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Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Sir, my back is broad because I have spoken in this debate with a view to trying to get this Government first, this Parliament second, but, Sir, more importantly this country as a whole to understand the roll that we must all play in trying to ensure that the scandal that has taken place at Weston is never again repeated. It is the standard for the benefit of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who has chattered all through this speech but has not been able to grasp the substance of it, is that ye has had two parts of an Administration, one on its way out, the other came in and now it is on the eve of its departure and the drainage issue at Weston has not been corrected. That must never again be allowed to happen because just like Sanitation, if we do not get those basic nuts and bolts of the society right, those things that impact on wide cross-sections of people, then Mr. Speaker, we are doing no justice to the people who sent us here. That is the issue. One of the questions I asked of the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, Mr. Speaker, was that he told us, because the Honourable Member for St. Philip North who led this debate is the person who has the file. I have invited him, Sir, to share with this Honourable House when he wraps up: what was the requirements that should have been met that were not met? What steps that were to be taken that were not taken? He should know because he has the file. I presume that he read the file before he moved the Resolution. I am hearing, Sir, that the read the Resolution

with all the information in his head of recent discovery so therefore it maybe that he cannot help us, but the point is, Mr. Speaker, there is a duty that the people of Barbados expect to be discharged because it is just simply not good enough. We cannot have a situation where you spend money on an acquisition, you abandon the acquisition and the acquisition is abandoned because of serious issues relating to flooding. What has been done to mitigate? What should have been done to mitigate the problem? What was it not done? What period of time was reasonable for it to be done in? Why did that period of time get transcended the way it was? Mr. Speaker, if we do not hold, not just public servants, but ourselves, to account in these matters then we are woefully wasting the time of the people of the country and I cannot be a party to that.

Sir, with those few words and what I hop has been some provocation of thought and encouragement to act, I take my seat. I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The discussion that is occurring in this Honourable Place at this time is a very important discussion and the Honourable Member who just took his seat touch on a number of critical points that have to be on the table for consideration. Unfortunately, I do not have the luxury of time that the Honourable Member would have enjoyed because, of course, my time is restricted to an allotment as Mr. Speaker would have known.

There were two areas that I wanted to address, Mr. Speaker, but I will spend less time on this one although this one covers some parochial challenges in my constituency as it relates to expropriation, fair compensation and the time of compensation and the new accommodation for those persons who are affected by compulsory acquisitions as would be the people in Thyme Bottom and Wilcox that are being affected. I wanted to spend some time on that but the Honourable Member for St. James Central really got into the issue of drainage and I feel, as he has invited me to participate in the debate to discuss those issues, I feel that rightfully so, as the Minister responsible for the Drainage Division, that I should have some things to say about that.

First of all, Barbados is a Small Island Developing State and a low lying State that inherent in its geography is flooding once an appreciable amount of rain falls so inevitably there will be -- I like to distinguish between flooding events and events where there is an unappreciable amount of water settlement on roadways, in communities and so on and so forth because what we know by example, is that if the rain falls and heavy rain falls, the drainage accommodation works but it works with a time lag. In other words, it takes about two hours for water to drain off

any system in Barbados and that is a fact, Mr. Speaker. When we begin to talk about drainage, drainage does not just reflect on the current activities of the Government or the activities of the last Government. Drainage speaks to the realities of our State in the context of what will happen, what it is able to do and what can be done through adaptation and mitigation to deal with matters that are continuing to be problems in Barbados.

I agree with the Honourable Member who just took his seat that if we do not become more aggressive in dealing with the escalating weather events that are far more erratic and far more devastating, Mr. Speaker, we are bound to have some challenges in the near future with the same issue of rainfall management, run off water, storm water issues and the whole plethora of challenges associated with that. Our approach to drainage has been an adaptive approach. It has been an approach where we have focussed more on adaptation that we have focussed on mitigation. Adaptation is where an event occurs, or an event is likely to occur to cause challenges and we respond to it with different ways both scientific and operational ways in trying to manage the impact of that situation. Mitigation, on the other hand, is where we pool our scientific knowledge, where we chart the occurrence of weather events, where we look at regional and global trends and come up with tactics to deal with weather events to come. I am saying that there have to be a healthy mix, a healthy coordination between adaptation measures and mitigation measures, Mr. Speaker, in order to be able to comfortably move forward at a pace where we can have a greater control over what happens when rain falls.

I realise, for example, that when we look at mitigation we have to draw upon forecasting, we have to draw upon engineering, we have to draw upon research and development, we have to draw upon planning and as the Honourable Member who just took his seat said, we have to also draw upon coordination and collaboration among agencies and he is right. The Honourable Member is correct. We have to have relevant agencies working together to come up with sustainable solutions that will allow us to be able to persistently and consistently address issues of drainage in Barbados.

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Coordination between ministries, for example, like Environment, Public Works, Town Planning, the DEM and the like, must come together in terms of sharing ideas, sharing information and of putting together a work plan that would allow us to avoid some of the pitfalls that we are currently dealing with. Drainage today is not simply addressing current rainfall. Drainage is addressing some fundamental flaws in the drainage structures across the island. Many of them are many, many years old and therefore they are not accommodating the rate at which rain

is falling, some of them are deteriorating and therefore they present their own challenge and some of them, though they are modern systems, in many cases are not adequate systems to accommodate the rate at which rains fall and the rate at which rains impact the areas.

The other thing is that what affects drainage today is a lot of the developments that have occurred in the last 30 years. Again, I must reflect on the accuracy of the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. James Central. A lot of work has been done especially in the higher elevations that have impacted what happens in the lower plains. Let us go to Weston. There is a new development in Weston called Turtleback Ridge in the general vicinity -- I am talking about an uphill development -- and all of Sion Hill gets impacted by that area and I am saying that when you look at how watercourses...

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph just is a waste of hearing and he has a hearing problem too.

When you look at how those constructions have been done, Mr. Speaker, you would realise that a lot of the watercourses have been disrupted. As a matter of fact, there are now people who are constructing on watercourses that is affecting how the water gets from the high elevations to the runoff point which is usually in the ocean. It is there. It is happening all over Barbados. Some people are constructing without the permission of the Town Planning Department. Some people are challenging the Town Planning Department saying that they cannot tell them where to develop so they started a development, then they put in for a retention and the retention holds the development and that creates its own problem, so we have that going on. When you deal with water coming down from as far as St. Thomas and the rate at which it comes down because there are not adequate check dam systems that would slow down the pace of the runoff water as it gets down to the lower elevations... I know for a fact that that is part and parcel of the problem with the Weston situation.

We have been trying but Weston is not a challenge created in the last ten years, it has to do with how the drainage structures have been developed and the fact now that with more water being asked to be bled off the area the systems are not adequate to deal with that. Yes, from time to time there are issues with clearing culverts and you cannot get away from that, there are issues with the build-up of silt in the culverts and so on and you cannot get away from that but what has to be understood is that what the Drainage Division is now faced with is correcting some of the engineering flaws of yesteryear and the fact that with new landscapes, new developments, you just cannot get it all together in ten years even in 15 years because the last

Administration tried to and they know that they had problems in trying to address that because the Drainage Division did not come about yesterday, the Drainage Division came about in 1988 and then in 1996 its mandate was refashioned to include other responsibilities so it is not that this Administration, as the Honourable Member honestly said, created a Drainage Division in order to be able to address and to obviate all of the problems that the country was having.

I remember as a boy growing up in St. Andrew that whenever the rain fell all of St. Andrew used to be flooded. They have a river that runs all the way from Sturges all the way down to Long Pond and that river would constantly overflow its bank. As a matter of fact, at one point, Mr. Speaker, it washed away the whole of Bruce Vale, washed out the bridges. All of Shorey Village got flooded out in the 1970s. All of these challenges exist and it is not only happening in Barbados, it is happening all over the region. Flooding is a challenge all over the region.

I agree with the Honourable Member that we have to look at our development agenda and we have to accept that there are certain places in Barbados where infrastructure development is not appropriate. For example, I only learnt yesterday or at least discussed yesterday that there are now a lot of concrete structures along the watercourse that are hindering the water from going down to the aquifers and therefore it runs over these structures and again run into situations that are disrupting the livelihoods of people. Mr. Speaker, that is a reality and that is what we have to face and that is why I am saying that development and planning is critical as we go forward in addressing issues of drainage and perhaps those agencies involved needs to become more vigilant. Road building, carriageways, and drainage systems associated with such, all of these things have to be contemplated in order for us to be able to move forward in terms of not just adapting but mitigating against future flooding events.

Mr. Speaker, there are other issues. What causes a flood is either a nature-based event like a hurricane or a storm that results in flood warnings and so on or there are human habits that contribute, and one of the human habits is illegal dumping. People blamed the Government for illegal dumping. No Government should be blamed for illegal dumping. Illegal dumping is a direct result of bad human habits in communities particularly those communities that are absolute low-lying.

The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown talks about challenges in his constituency. I remember when we came into office we started a project "Clean City" and we went through the whole city and tried to deal with a lot of the illegal dumping. I am not going to reflect on the social media video but it continues to be a challenge and

people seemingly just have no conscience when it comes to practising good habits that would avoid it.

The Honourable Member talked about green clippings. When you cut your lawn, I saw it up to a couple days ago, rather than using weights, they are using blowers and they are blowing the grass in the drains. Once upon time we used to rake it, gather it and put it in a place that is away from the waterway, now they are blowing it. Landscapers are using blowers to blow the lawns in the road and then blow the residue of the lawn clippings into the gutter. Now something should tell somebody that if that happens you are going to create problems once rain falls.

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Up to yesterday I spoke to my Drainage Division, telling them not to go out and weed the road or clear bush and leave that bush on the roadway because when it is not moved and rain comes, that weed or bush is washed into the drains, so that you are trying to avoid one problem and creating another, so that we will have such challenges as illegal dumping, landscaping, et cetera, that we have to face. Mr. Speaker, faulty infrastructure is another challenge that we have to face. There are people who are ill-advised in the construction of building and other structures that create problems for the movement of water.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you would know that I believe that the Town Planning Department with the other agencies that are involved, like the Drainage Division Unit, the Ministry of Transport and Works, the Environmental Protection Department, all try to do their best to advise people where they can and cannot construct, but let us face the fact there are people who are still constructing illegally that are causing major problems for drainage and other challenges in the system. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we have to ensure that what we do is in keeping with good practices and that we must learn from those countries that are now imperiled because of flooding situations.

Mr. Speaker, let me make this additional point, the Drainage Division Unit is not just about clearing wells and weeding roads, the Drainage Division Unit is about storm water management which is a major aspect of their work. Mr. Speaker, I am going to argue with the Honourable Member to say that they have adequate resources because they do not, the Drainage Division Unit could do with more resources but we are operating in a stringent economic time and therefore we have to take the resources that we have and make sure that we are proactive enough, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that we get ahead of the game. Mr. Speaker, that is why I am saying that both adaptation and mitigation become important.

Mr. Speaker, we need to benefit from more engineering skills. We need to benefit from more research.

We need to benefit from more science. Mr. Speaker, we are working on climate change issues and the Climate Change Centre has been working to help development the science so that we can forecast and that we could come up with systems that can be responsive to the impact of climate change issues, but climate change is here to stay and the challenges that any Government face are here to stay. Mr. Speaker, I recall the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter saying to me in the early stages of our Administration that one of the areas that any Government will have to focus on is that of the environment because of the challenges associated with such.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that I compliment the staff of the Drainage Division Unit for what they are able to do with the limitations that they have. I applaud the Government for its commitment to dealing with the issue of the environment and specifically to this discussion, the issue of drainage. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that as we go forward, that as we both borrow and lend ideas, that collaboratively we can address some of the issues to avoid the catastrophes that we see happening in other places. We cannot predict the veracity of a weather system. We cannot predict the occurrence of a weather system, but what we can do is to prepare ourselves so that we can be relatively ready to deal with those issues when they happen. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution in this debate which of course allows me to make an expression of opinions and statements on the national issues of compulsory acquisitions, abandonment, drainage, developmental aspects, but also clearly as Member of Parliament for the area in which the land which is the subject of this Resolution is situate, to speak towards parochial issues concerning my constituency and the particular area of Weston as well. Mr. Speaker, as was said by both the presenter on this debate and the lead presenter on my side, this land was acquired as a result of the 1995 flooding, better known as the Carew flood which seriously affected Weston. I believe at that time the Cabinet of Barbados led, of course, by with Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, with the Honourable Member Rawle Eastmond being the representative for St. James North at the time, who I believe at that time was Minister of Agriculture. At that time the Cabinet was meeting and Cabinet Members went down to the site. It caused the life of popular calypsonian "Carew". Mr. Speaker, up to today a lot of people are saying that that loss of life could have been avoided. Mr. Speaker, a lot of the roads were flooded, especially Doughlin's Road where this land is situate.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of that flood many residents were removed from that area and sited in Upper Bakers

where there are still issues because everybody there has not been given title to the land on which they were then transplanted by the National Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I have been intervening from the time I became the Honourable Member for St. James North, trying to get the National Housing Corporation to get the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development to process this situation after all of these years but to no avail. Mr. Speaker, that, of course, is a tremendous concern, some persons have been given titles to their properties, while others still have not, after being removed and rightly so by the Government of Barbados. Sir, that is a shame.

Mr. Speaker, arising from that flood the Cabinet of Barbados of the day would have taken the advice of the Chief Land Surveyor and would have compulsorily acquired this property, 980 square metres which is approximately 10 000 square feet because it was felt, certainly at the time, that it interrupted the free flow of the water coming from the top of the hill into the sea.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North who presented this Resolution did not go into the developmental aspects of the whole process and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, as a former Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development lost the opportunity to speak to this issue and to the Government's principle on it. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East sought to have rescued that Honourable Member by speaking a bit to its developmental, physical and infrastructural aspects. Instead, the Minister of Transport and Works, attorney-at-law as he is, went into legal opinions and court cases which quite frankly carried us nowhere here today, but that Honourable Member would prefer to be the Attorney-General of Barbados, a position for which the Honourable Member has been fighting for a long time but has not at all caught the eye of the Right Honourable Prime Minister on that issue and it does not seem that the Honourable Member would ever catch the eyes of the Right Honourable Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is preparing, hopefully with the will of the people of Barbados in a few in months' time, to return to his law practice and therefore the Honourable Member has taken the opportunity today to speak towards more to the legalistic aspects of the situation and to case laws on the aspect, so that the Honourable Member is preparing, it seems, as I said with the will of the people to go back into his law practice in a few months' time.

12.13 p.m.

Weston is a treasured situation. I mean, the whole of St. James North is. Weston is part of the Gold Coast of Barbados; a prime economic area, a community within itself, a community within communities, a fishing magnate place, and of course a place with famous shops. The John Moore Shop is world-renowned and was the subject of a

debate when the last Barbados Labour Party Administration was in office. I was in there up to last week having some drinks. You also have the Lucas shop. It is a community within itself, and it quite frankly is not given the prominence by this Government as it ought to be. That, of course, is typified by the closure of the fire station a few months before without even telling the people of Weston or consulting with them or informing them that it was going to be closed. Of course, that fire station was also part of the traditional culture of the Weston community. That was more than a fire station. It was part of the culture of the community. It stopped a plethora of drugs coming into the country because, of course, people were there in uniform and therefore someone attempting to bring drugs through there would think twice before they did it. It was a fire station where I could call on the firemen whenever there was difficulty in terms of drainage or flooding, whether in Weston or in Trents which is about one-and-a-half to two miles down the road. One could say, "Please go down there and drain out the area and pump out the water," but now that is gone, closed, abandoned. There was no debate on it. The contempt of this Government in the treatment of the people of Barbados, especially in the treatment of the people residing in constituencies held by Labour Party Members of Parliament was clear, and that is what that whole act typified. Quite frankly, I say shame on the Honourable Attorney General for that and on the Cabinet of Barbados on the whole.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the specific issue, this property would have been acquired. Notice of it would have been given for the acquisition, and then by Resolution brought to this Parliament of Barbados in 2003 on the recommendation of the Chief Town Planner to acquire this property, saying that the houses which are in there, owned by the Griffith family, are located within a water course which hinders the free access of water coming from on top of the hill. There is Turtleback Ridge, yes, as the Honourable Minister of Drainage correctly said, but it goes even further up, as was also said, from St. Andrew and St. Thomas coming down. Turtleback Ridge's development, as I understand it, might have caused some problems as well in terms of affecting a water course, and therefore Sion Hill is in obvious difficulty as well. Coming down Westmoreland Development there as well, it causes some problems, and by the time the water reaches down at the bottom in Weston, you have significant issues. Therefore, that would have informed the decision by the previous Barbados Labour Party Administration to compulsorily acquire this 10 000-odd square feet of land, but it was never used.

Compensation was never paid, and Mr. Griffith, who is a returned national from the United Kingdom, was an occasional caller on one of the more popular radio programmes, calling for compensation for himself for this property. Fourteen years now, no compensation has been

given. I remember on one occasion two years ago when he called in, I would have called in shortly afterwards on the radio programme saying, "Yes, I totally empathise with Mr. Griffith. Compensation ought to have been given." It should not have taken almost ten years by this Democratic Labour Party Administration to realise that it no longer required the property for the purposes for which it was acquired and to come to Parliament to say it is abandoning the purpose. Mr. Griffith spoke about how, I think, he had to change three lawyers. I suppose he blamed the lawyers but it was not really the lawyers. The lawyers were frustrated by Government in getting him compensation. He could not get anywhere. This is a fundamental problem in terms of our governance structure. It is the one issue that I can recall that the Right Honourable Prime Minister and I have agreed on in this Parliament, and I have said in this Parliament that we agree that there is a fundamental failure by the Government of Barbados and Governments with a capital "G", whether Barbados Labour Party or Democratic Labour Party Administration, in giving adequate, reasonable, fair and speedy compensation on the compulsory acquisition of properties by the Government for public purposes.

This is in breach not only of our local law but also of international law principles as well. Our Constitution, which is our highest law, in Section 16 says property is a right of an individual, a Constitutional right, and if you acquire property from people, and people in the wider sense in terms of individuals and companies or whatever, they should be compensated adequately and speedily. It should not be an issue of delay and we do not have the money to do it. If you do not have the money, you should not be acquiring the property in the first place. The Constitution says that compensation should be awarded and prescribed by principles and in the manner which is determined by law, and you have the right of appeal, of course, to the High Court of Barbados if you feel that the compensation is not fair or adequate. The citizen has that right. Therefore, we are not being fair to the people of Barbados whose properties we acquire.

Yes, the Honourable Minister of Transport said there are people who sometimes buy property with their whole life earnings and have plans for it; economic development plans for their children and grandchildren. Government acquires the property, and in most cases there is no value-added to it because you have to prove distinctly and fundamentally the economic value which the property may have over and above the valuation given by the Government authority for the land. It is true that interest is applicable after, I believe, the publication of the notice at the rate of six per cent per annum which, of course, today is much, much higher than the 0.05 per cent you are getting on money at the bank. Still, people would have acquired their land or a piece of land in exchange rather than this compensation which they are not getting in some cases

after 15 or more years, with interest being applied it when they might finally get it.

My fundamental issue is why does a Cabinet of Barbados, which brings the Estimates to Parliament each year, not place in an adequate amount of money for compulsory acquisition of the properties which have already been acquired by Government and which it plans to acquire within the next year? Clearly, that is not done, but we have to be fair to the citizens. Although, yes, there is a balance between the rights of the State or the privilege of the State to acquire property in its fundamental role as the guardians for the development of the country, still you have to balance against that the fundamental Constitutional rights of the citizens of Barbados to speedy, fair and reasonable compensation for any property acquired for public purposes.

H:No.D18 (12)

Clearly, therefore as the last two speakers, my colleague on this side, the Honourable Member for St. James Central and the Honourable Minister for Drainage on the other side have sought to bring to bear on the debate, clearly there is a strong developmental aspect which should come out in this debate. We have heard about Physical Development Plan and the revision to it and the updating of it and amendment it but where are we at with that, Mr. Speaker. We are now within five months of the dissolution of this Parliament, if it catches up on the Right Honourable Prime Minister before that Honourable Member ... but we have not heard anything recently about updated Physical Development Plan, which of course is tied into this whole aspect of...

Asides.

MR. E.D. HINKSON: The legislation of it. Does it have the force of law. Where are we at in updating our environmental legislation, which is so important in this day and age. The world has change and we have now fundamental issues of climate change, of sustainable development and we have not had any serious environmental debate in this Parliament since I have been in here now over four years and a half. Again, there are people who have done Masters in Environmental Law. In fact, the past Minister of the Environmental, Elizabeth Thompson, a former member of this House has a Masters in it. We have people who we can call on to assist in this issue. Sir, drainage is a fundamental problem in Weston. We cannot make it political. I certainly would agree with. The problem has been there before this Government's time but we have to find solutions to it.

Mr. Speaker, at the start of every hurricane or rainy season, I would call the Drainage Department personally and tell them that, "I am begging you to come and make

sure that Weston is in a position that whenever we have heavy rainfall as we will have over the next few month that it does not flood out the place and create economic havoc and possible loss of life and limb.” Mr. Speaker, it is the same thing with Trents. Sir, after ten minutes of heavy rainfall, Trents is a river. Sir, people should not have to live under those circumstances after ten minutes of heavy rainfall.

Mr. Speaker, up to this weekend I was in Trents after a heavy down pour. I have written the Chief Fire Officer after making a call and the Honourable Attorney-General, who has the ministerial mandate for the fire office and the Honourable Minister of the Environment would have received letter, I believe asking them, please, when we have these heavy rainfalls to send the fire truck right away from Arch Hall because they took it away from Weston but to send down the fire truck if possible to clear out the area. We have to have human compassion. Sir, whether these people who live in a constituency that vote for the Barbados Labour Party or not, they pay taxes like everyone else, they pay the 400 per cent on new taxes imposed by this Government of Barbados and including now they pay land taxes which have astronomical gone up because people are now receiving the land taxes and they are frighten to open up and see how much money they have to pay and when they open it up they are shocked on the revision of the land tax in a new valuation year, so we have to have compassion. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I agree that all hands have to be on deck with this. It cannot be just one Ministry alone or Government department, it has to be the Ministry of Housing, the Town and Country Planning Department, the Environment Department, the Drainage Unit, the Ministry of Public Works, the District Emergency Units, all working together to solve what is a fundamental problem. Sir, St. James North over half of it has drainage issues because it is water prone and flood prone. It is all on the coast and this is an area that bring tremendous economic benefits to Barbados and quite frankly deserves better than what has been meted out to it by this Government of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when Hurricane Erma passed Barbados, I was overseas on the Friday but I spent a few couple of hours calling back to Barbados, calling the Drainage Unit. Sir, the Drainage Unit has some good people working in it, I would say that. They are working under serious restraint. Yes, the Honourable Minister of Drainage has conceded that and I am happy that he has conceded that because this year when I called the Drainage Unit at the start of the season in May and told them I was making my usual call so that my constituency can withstand these floods that will come. I was promised that they would that but when I called back a few weeks later I was told: “Mr. Hinkson boy, we are trying our best but the trucks broke down and we do not have money to buy the parts.”

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of governance and accountability that this Democratic Labour Party has led us to. It can find money for other issues like summer camps, the David Thompson Football Tournament, which quite frankly, the Democratic Labour Party should go and find private sponsorship for rather than taking up taxpayers’ money in this day of need but cannot find money to buy parts to repair the truck from the Drainage Department that would go down in Weston to make the area a flood prone area. I have been telling the communities all around my constituency that they have to get together and we have to get together to clean up the problem. Therefore, in Weston as soon as I came back from overseas, I went down there and the fellows had cleaned up the area right to the bottom of the road, in other words, just below Griffiths Lands which is the subject of this Resolution. They have told me that this is what they had to do because the Government is not coming to do it. We are paying taxes but we do not know where the money gone, so we have cleared it up ourselves. I am telling all my constituents to do this because I do not know if any of the \$4.6 million that was voted for last week in terms of debushing would find its way to St. James North. I do not know, I have my serious doubts because this is now, as the Honourable Member for St. George South, my colleagues said last week, this is the silly season, and the Democratic Labour Party is looking to save some seats that are right now going away from them. I have my doubts as to whether any of this \$4.6 million ending up in St. James North but I could only urge the Government of Barbados to please spend some of that money in St. James North because it is under serious threat whenever there is a disaster. Sir, it cannot be that we wait a day or two before a hurricane or a tropical storm is set to come in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when I called the Drainage Department that Friday when Irma was passing I was told: “Mr. Hinkson, we went down there two days ago and did a little bit of what we could but we could not do much because we do not have the equipment but we have tried for you and right now we have priority”. Sir, as I understand very clearly in Gills Terrace and at the Whim because again, the Whim is in my constituency and the Honourable Minister of the Environment would know that I wrote to him about one year and a half ago on the Whim gully because the Whim Gully now affects Gills Terrace.

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

MR. E.D. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sir, the Whim gully because the Whim Gully now affects Gills Terrace Sir, for the third now has caused tremendous havoc. Yes, I know that some work was done in clearing some of trees in the Whim but this has to be a continuous effort.

I cannot be that we cleared it a year ago and we are not clearing it again. These issues have to be tremendous because they have tremendous repercussions in terms of the livelihood of the individuals who are involved. I know, Mr. Speaker, that we voted, if I remember, or it was approved about US\$6 million or US\$7 million from the IADB to go into climate change issues and some of that was to come down in St. James North in terms of Trents but I do not know that this was done. Again, just a lay out piece of work, the clearing of drains but I would like to know from the Honourable Minister of Transport when he wraps up, what is being done in terms of a holistic permanent solution on these issues. It cannot be piecemeal.

Yes, I agree as well with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East that we have to find a way to educate our citizens of this country that they have a responsible role in trying to alleviate these problems. I empathise and totally agree with the Right Honourable Prime Minister when, it was two years ago, he said that he saw someone throwing some garbage out of a bus or a car and he got his driver to put on the siren and pass out and made the person pick it up. I would love every day to have that privilege that I could do that too because up to today coming down here, a minibus was in front of me in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. James Central and somebody threw a plastic out through the window there in Hometown in the drainage part that, up to recently, used to be tremendous problems out there by Hometown just before Discovery Bay. That should be a serious penalty. Every Barbadian talk about patriotism, we are proud to be Bajan, we are nationalistic but then some of those same people are the first set of people who will throw garbage out car windows, minibus windows and ZR windows and do not feel any way about it. That is somebody else's problem to pick up and to deal with. This has to stop and we have to call on Barbadians and people who live here to stop this kind of foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the privilege to intervene in this debate. It is extremely unfortunately though that it has taken so long for this decision to be taken now to abandon this property. The Griffith family, Mr. Ralph Griffith, has not received any compensation for 14 years of the acquisition of his property by the Government of Barbados. Section 9 of the Land Acquisition Act gives and individual the right to compensation for actually damage or injury resulted to him by reason of the use and occupancy of such land by the Crown. I believe and again I would wish the Honourable Minister in his wrap up to give this assurance to Mr. Griffith that he would receive compensation for the 14 years that he has been deprived of his property by the Crown. Certainly, as he has said publicly, or as I said on call-in programmes. He has been through lawyers. I assume he has had to pay legal fees and certainly those legal fees should be reimbursed by the Crown of Barbados. It is only fair. We have to do good by

the people of Barbados if not this Parliament becomes irrelevant if you cannot do good by people. I cannot be a situation where we have had land of a citizen for 14 years and we just give it back to him with no compensation after he has been through tremendous "sufferation", deprivation of any compensation. Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have to look at the whole area and put our heads together, all of us, the policymakers, the bureaucracy to come up with solutions to the issues which confront flooding in St. James North and in the wider Barbados is not going to go away. Climate change is not going to go away. As we heard in this debate, financial resources are limited but these are the lives of people and the livelihood of our citizens that we are talking about and therefore I can only urge the Government of Barbados as the executive and the chief policymaking body in this country to not only look at this Resolution within the narrow context of it but look at it in the wider context of the development of Barbados, the town planning aspects of Barbados and where we site houses trying development out of the water courses, out of areas where there are water systems and water courses to look at the development and updating of our environmental legislation and to look to make the law and not just only a lot of talk and rhetoric but look to make law and to enforce issues relating to the physical infrastructural development of this country.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2 o'clock this evening.

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

The question that the House do now suspend until 2:00 o'clock 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 Order No. 15 and to that we shall return. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

ORDER No. 15 (RESUMED)

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like, Sir, to add my contribution to the debate here and to indicate that most of the other Honourable Members would have mentioned some of the challenges that we experience in Barbados, and a lot of it is happening in central Barbados where in many of the parishes in the high level areas the water is deposited down into the parishes nearest to the sea and therefore we see some of the challenges with the intense flooding at times. Sometimes it is not too heavy a rainfall in St. James or St. Peter or St. Andrew but we know that we can hear the water rushing out of St. Thomas coming down to Holetown and the other communities and a lot of that is to do with the challenges that we experience in St. Thomas where the land is not holding the water in the way it did in the past and of course because of the expansion of housing and the lack thereof of use of the lands where in the past we know with the sugar cane industry we had lots of drains and wells and gutters and so that would have channelled off the water and thus eliminate what is happening downwind.

Mr. Speaker, I smiled when I heard this debate come to the fore this morning because I will not cease saying that we were told that when the Drainage Unit would have been taken away from the Ministry of Transport and Works flooding would be a thing of the past. I am not so sure now but flooding is really a reality and it is at a worse case now than ever before. It is not only a criticism of what is happening in that ministry, we know a lot of it is to do what lack of human and other resources that would be required to clear off a lot of the clogged wells and the gutters and so on.

I know, Sir, that within recent times we have had some serious flooding. When I saw the footage of what was taking place in St. Lucy and St. Peter just over a month ago and some of the other parishes and districts as well it brought us straight back into reality that we still is a very flood prone area and more measures must be put in place to ensure that the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency does a little more in communities to sensitise residents about their roles. I can speak clearly, Sir, of the times when we know there were booklets and we knew who the shelter wardens were and so on and schools would be open and whatever the regiment is for people to be able to give of their services to the various communities in which they live but now there are so many challenges that I believe that what has happened within the last couple of weeks in the Caribbean and beyond should be learning lessons for all of us so that we know how we should look after our country.

Sir, other Honourable Members would have referred to the Weston fiasco in 1994 where we lost a strong calypsonian in the name of The Mighty Carew who had some very interesting songs during his time. We know that there was mass destruction in August of that year and there

was even that loss of life of The Mighty Carew, but I know of individuals there, since I had an extended family member who lived in the area, who suffered injury and so on and even loss of property and I really would not like to see that happen again because those families were in a really bad shape and I was happy that measures were taken to be able to relocate many of those persons down to Bakers and in other communities where persons could live a little more comfortable life. I thought that was a bold idea.

Indeed, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East would have spoken of October 1970 when we had the floods in St. Andrew and many houses were destroyed, massive trees had fallen and of course some of the roads and bridges were in a state of disrepair, and then another relocation had to happen at that time so that people went over to Bagatelle in St. Thomas and some people were relocated to Welchman Hall and other communities where it would have been safer but it is a pity now that when we go through that same general area leading from Cane Garden we are seeing many more scores of houses going up, and I believe that it is Government's responsibility, as it is the case in White Hill and in sections of the Scotland District, to have massive signs erected where no other property should be put there because of the slippage or the possibility of slippage in those areas. I had the privilege of walking from where I live down there that day and it was massive destruction. Thank God on that occasion there was no loss of lives.

We know of floods as well, Mr. Speaker, in the area of Queen's Park/Halls Road and we know of persons who drowned as a result of that kind of flooding, and I really would not like for that to happen to anyone because to lose your property is bad enough but when there is loss of life that makes it even more difficult, so I make my contribution particularly in the area of flooding and the illegal construction that is happening that is having that spiralling impact on what happens downstream from where the construction is happening.

As you know, Sir, I always speak of the illegal dumping and the construction of structures in watercourses. Sometimes people even do it in gullies and it is not the ordinary small man doing it all the time, there are big time business people, Mr. Speaker, who are now in the parish and they are doing construction that hurts my heart because some of them are filling in ponds, and we know ponds are collection areas... As a child there were ponds at Sturges and Bloomsbury where we saw all of the lilies and the fish and the frogs and it was a nature experience for most children and others in the area. The ambiance of that area really was therapeutic for our development. Sir, that illegal dumping and that enclosing or enclosures of the wells, the gullies what we call the sucks, the gutters and so on is now expanding in a way that frightens me and I think that more

needs to be done where the policing of such construction and illegal construction at that needs to be examined and that the perpetrators be brought to the court.

It hurts because the Town Planning Department does its best. I could attest to that because I have constant communication but I believe, Sir, that the staff is too limited and therefore once they hear of a case one place and they try to see how they could address it and it goes through the court system then it becomes clogged in the system and hardly anything is done and all of sudden some Barbadians seem to think that they could do what they like despite whatever the court or what other agreement there is with the court or what kind of measures are instituted by the court to say build there no more. I could refer Mr. Speaker, clearly to an area on Shop Hill going to Vacluse that was more than 40 feet deep at that time and a member of the community sought to fill it in with more than a 100 truckloads of debris, a lot of it construction material, and then when it was reported officially in 2005/06 it was a court matter and that business person moved every boulder that the Town Planning Department had put to stop them from entering and depositing whatever the debris was that was filling in it. When it went to court what hurts my heart, and this is the first time I am revealing it in the public's domain, was that on Errol Barrow Day 2006 the trucks were moving in and out and up and down until that area was capped at the level of the bridge in Shop Hill where one of my former students got killed on the road one morning, and what is it going for? A playpark we were told. Do you know what happened eventually, Mr. Speaker? The Magistrate's Court called that case a couple days later through the instigation of the Town Planning Department and believe you me the fine for it was only \$500 but the instruction was to move every single truckload of debris that would have been put in there and that was done. If you see now how the area is organised and the residents who have moved there since then are using it for garden beds and so on,, it is a wonderful thing, but had that not been cleared, Mr. Speaker, all of Melrose, Arthur Seat, Lower Shop Hill and so would have been flooded whenever we get heavy rains because it was a good drainage location.

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Mr. Speaker, it is a wonderful thing but had that not been cleared, Melrose, Arthur Seat, Lower Shop Hill and other areas would have been flooded whenever we got heavy rains because it was a good drainage location. Mr. Speaker, nowadays it seems as those when the cases go into the department, they are not readily treated to because of what is happening in the system and therefore there are numerous challenges there.

Mr. Speaker, I can speak of Vacluse Road where the wells there are clogged, so that that water now bypasses

those wells and settles on the road. Sir, for the last six months Vacluse has been impassable, it is now left for the Ministry of Transport and Works, the Ministry that the taxpayers would have to pay for, to go to do remedial work on those wells so that they can capture the water. Mr. Speaker, these are wells that are more than 100 years old, where the Vacluse Plantation would have been using not only for capturing the water but using that water for other purposes in those times. Mr. Speaker, it really hurts because the locals have the knowledge but nobody wants to hear them, because some people now have degrees and that is the area in which they were trained.

Mr. Speaker, I was ashamed with the case at the District "D" Magistrate's Court where the consultants for that private firm was a senior public officer who stood on the side the private person's business, while the Town Planning Department stood on the other side, where that person wanted to make an argument for the private firm though the Magistrate had made his or her ruling. I think that something has to happen, we cannot have public servants working with private people and giving advice that is contrary to the work that the Town Planning Department, the Environmental Protection Department or whatever department is trying to do to keep Barbados safe, so that I do support what is happening here today in relation to that project.

Mr. Speaker, I have another concern. I am saying all of this because the water is not now staying in the wells, the other areas or filling in the aquifers in St. Thomas, a lot of it is now runoff water that is impacting on people downhill. Sir, this has never before happened, so that when you go to the back of Vacluse Tenantry there is a massive wall of more than 25 to 30 feet has been erected and a lot of the land that is watercourse has been claimed and houses have been erected on them, so that the water instead would come onto the pavilion by Bridgefield, onto the main road and clogging off every area, so that with every five minutes of rain that water rises by a few inches, sometimes making that road impassable. Mr. Speaker, I have never seen it in my long life and that is the only major road that I have ever used to get to and from where I live, therefore, I think that also has to be dealt with. Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the Town Planning Department tries, but it must have that additional staff in order to be able to do its work, as well as to have the court system opened up to facilitate the quick expedition of those matters that are now affecting it.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about bridges because in Deane's Village... Mr. Speaker, these are projects which I would have written the Town Planning Department about and they would have done what they had to do. Mr. Speaker, according to my checks, nothing has happened. This is a bridge in Deane's Village where somebody wants to put an orchard and build a new and spanking-looking house but Mr. Speaker, boulders were

put blocking that massive channel of the road so that no water can exit from where the watercourse is, that is, running from the back on Hangman's Hill, to pass under the bridge, through Deane's Village, then to make its way into Bridgetown or wherever it has to go.

Mr. Speaker, despite all these efforts, we now have bridges in St. Thomas that are flooding because the water stays on the road by those bridges and because of the little outlets which are also clogged with debris and so the water is not flowing through. I really would not like to see anything happening to be able to create too much havoc in our society.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the Government giving back that property to the owner and so I would want to make a case for the folks in Allen View, most of whom are landowners. Mr. Speaker, because of the Environmental Protection Zone many of them cannot use their land. Sir, that is a story that we all know, so that I am not going to go any further on that, except to say that in 2005/2006 when lands were acquired from the landowners with the Harrison's Cave Redevelopment Project, a lot of those lands were compulsorily acquired by the Government to do the expansion, which is an excellent project. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, those folks have not got their compensations either and they are ordinary poor people who are still waiting, some of whom have undergone tremendous stress over the years as a result of that Harrison's Cave Redevelopment Project which has now added more pressure on them and in these harsh economic times they really require getting their money. They are eagerly waiting, some of them have already died while waiting, yet they have not been compensated.

Mr. Speaker, I am a firm believer that had they been given two opportunities, (1), for the redevelopment of the area, referring the Housing Neighbourhood Upgrade Programme where this Government did not have the vision as to how to spend BD\$60 million, where \$47 million was repatriated to the Inter-American Development Bank. I felt that the residents of Allen View would have been appeased a bit but they are extremely still angry because they have not got the compensation, nor did they get the benefits of the land that they had owned as a result of that acquisition.

Mr. Speaker, 47 lots were acquired by this Government between 2009/2010, and the Honourable Member for St. Philip North must be congratulate when we had dialogue, when I wrote the Honourable Member officially to say to please acquire the land because I knew that we needed for lands within the scope of what persons in the community could purchase, that being the \$5 or \$8 per square foot land. I knew that there were hundreds of residents who wanted to get some help.

Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, I learned from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, that some of the people from Allen View who have the land and cannot use it or some whose houses were on spots that needed to be cleared away because of the expansion of Harrison's Cave would have been given that opportunity to go to Forty Acre, Mr. Speaker, to my amazement in June the 47 lots, according to my information, were distributed to Barbadians.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with that, because there are persons who get evicted, persons who get all kinds of things happening with their properties, so that they could have some of these spots, but as far as my knowledge is concern nobody from St. Thomas who has made a request for a house spot at Forty Acre has been allocated that house spot. Instead, we are seeing people driving in, people doing different things like measuring up, et cetera, while the folks of Allen View....

Mr. Speaker, even if 10 households of Allen View were to be accommodated there it would have blessed my heart because that was my vision. I thank the Honourable Member for helping me to see that vision came to a reality but unfortunately my thoughts were dashed because nobody in St. Thomas has got a spot. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that people in Allen View now want to expand as their families are growing and that this would have helped them a lot, it would have eased their plight after all these years. Unfortunately not one of those 47 lots has they been issued.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind Honourable Members on the other side that I was of the belief that the Manifesto of 2008 and indeed that of 2013 would have been living up to the moral content of a lot of what was said in those Manifestos, their mantra, I would say,

in relation to how they will manage the affairs of this country, while ensuring that equity, transparency, empathy, accountability and good governance would prevail in this island, Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I am not feeling it because I take days before my garbage is picked up, sometimes for a whole months; I get problems in St. Thomas with the clogging up of the roads, even Ashford Road floods; I get confusion with so many other things.

I believe, Sir, that this Resolution for this land is, I cannot say timely, but that it deserves us giving some thought to it because after 22 years of compulsorily acquiring someone's land and they got no compensation over those years, then that is a matter for us to be concerned about spoke. I know that the Honourable Member spoke earlier about what happened at Orange Hill where the pavilion is situated, where that lady's land was

acquired, but the Honourable Member should have told us about Rice's as well, where those spots were allocated to Barbadians and that land, I was told, was taken and given to a person whom the Government owed millions of dollars, with the people land that they were paying for included in it.

2.35 p.m.

I stand to be corrected because unless I get the truth coming from the Honourable Members on that side, I would still have to continue to say that many of those houses would have been in a part of what was being given to the businessperson in exchange for some of the millions that were owed to him or her, and as a result persons who were paying for their lands were overlooked. One man did fight it in court and he was successful in his bid. I know that at Lancaster there were spots there for poor people. That was also given to a businessperson in exchange for monies owed to that person. I have no problem with the Government doing it, but poor people want to get the spot and they are waiting eagerly for this Government to assist them in many ways, but that is not forthcoming. That land was sold to another person, and now a massive commercial entity is there. I am not complaining about the commercial entity. If the Government gave the land away and the person sold it, it is within their right, but I am talking about the equity and the transparency and keeping people informed with what is happening. I hope that this Government would find it within its heart to provide the landowner with his compensation if he has not received any yet. Of course, for 22 years of loss of use, where he might have been able to use his land or rent it to someone or do something else with it, I believe that compensation is long overdue. Twenty-two years of dormancy is too much for that person.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to know from the Honourable Minister who did the presentation what plans the Government has for increasing the staff at the Town and Country Planning Department. It is sad when there are only a few workers there and they are unable to police what is happening in Barbados because of the massive amount of work which they now have to do on the job. The other thing that I take a dislike to is sometimes, yes, we have the free education and we have been able to support hundreds of thousands of Barbadians at the higher level or tertiary education, but it hurts me when many of them return as engineers, land surveyors and all kinds of things -- lawyers as well -- and then when as a local person living in your community for 50 to 60 years and you want to talk with them about what it was like before and how you were able to prevent that heavy deluge of water from going down to St. James, down to St. Andrew, down to St. Lucy, down to St. Peter and down to St. Michael, unfortunately nobody wants to hear local people.

Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I that when you get local knowledge of matters, it is from old men and women who can give you chapter and verse as to why you should not build on a particular swampy area, why you should not interfere with a particular location, even if it had been a gravesite. The local people know, but they are scoffed upon by some professionals, and they feel "nobody wants to hear me, let me shut my big mouth and let them go and do it"; but then years down the line we see the repercussions as to what would have been done that created the challenge. I believe that because they know of the topography of this country, an ear should be given to them; so I want to encourage Government -- any Government hereafter -- to be able to take what locals say seriously and give some a chance for them to express themselves, whether you are doing it via a community meeting, on the spot when Members are on the road doing what they have to do, whatever. Give them a chance to explain why certain structures should not be put up in a particular place, or what would be a good location, or whatever, to avoid building in any location that cannot have the structure and the foundation.

Mr. Speaker, when you come to the Scotland District, it has some things about it. Up to last week, the Honourable Minister was able to come and see some of the things that we in here talk about -- the Member for St. Andrew, the Member for St. Joseph and myself -- and the kind of slippage that could take place and that could be catastrophic if it is not attended to urgently. I therefore recommend that there be some community meetings across the country with locals, so that their knowledge and input would be paid attention to and valued, and that action would be taken on reported illegal actions. I passed through Dukes on Sunday evening quite by chance because of the breast cancer race. Mr. Speaker, there are about four truckloads of garbage on the bridge blocking half of the road; all kinds of garbage, because it is a secluded area. At night, few vehicles would pass there, and it creates quite a lot of confusion. The same thing has been happening on lands in there, and they are blocking off the water courses, and that is a direct downhill road that would lead to the St. James area and so on where all of these challenges are.

It is not about who likes a Minister or who likes to fight for a Minister or whatever. It is about all of us being Barbadians, making sure that we look after our environment, take cognisance of the climate change in this country and in the world, and therefore let us see if we can point our residents to it.

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

Miss C.Y. FORDE: I will wrap up, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of persons who observe. Some take the time out to call. It is when they cannot get through to the

governmental agencies or the agencies responsible that sometimes they would go on the radio. You know that the call-in programmes will limit what they want to say. I believe that it is about time that there be a hotline set up by the Town Planning Division, one by the Environmental Protection Department as well as the Drainage Unit and other agencies, so that persons can call in without identifying themselves as to illegal construction that is going on. One evening, somebody decided to do something in Jack-in-the-box Gully and built a house right in the walkway. That is one of the most beautiful tracks you could ever want to go through to get up to Guy's Road and so on. Somebody was building a house there, and luckily somebody whispered and that was nipped in the bud. I am saying that if persons had a hotline through which they could call to say, "I am seeing my neighbour doing something illegal here and I know it is going to have repercussions down the road. Please will you come and visit?" and if they gave the details without giving their names, that would help the Government and any other agencies to be able to track down and be proactive. Once people know "if I call they are going to know my voice" or "if I say who I am, they are going to tell my neighbour or my family" -- because some families do some silly things too -- that creates a lot of confusion within neighbourhoods.

Therefore, I am encouraging and I am also asking Honourable Ministers in your Ministries that when you change the phone numbers for the agencies, let the public know. The Government Information Service's information alone is not good enough. The Ministry of Education changed its number. I called for the Ministry responsible for sanitation from 9 a.m. until midday. I have not got through yet. I called up the Environmental Protection Department at the Eunice Gibson Polyclinic and I did speak with a health inspector to inform of the situation. Once we give that consistent information in the public domain, persons would wish to have their voices heard and, of course, they would wish that whatever efforts they make to help save Barbados from the illegal dumping, from the flooding, from the illegal construction and so on, I am sure that cohesive effort would make a difference. I would not want to call any agency and then my name is somewhere that I called and complained for somebody, and the next minute my house gets burnt or somebody throws a rock at me. Nowadays there are other things which they can throw at you. I am saying unless the agencies get to that point where locals can feed in information anonymously, it is not going to work for us.

I want for the gentleman in the northern area, in Weston, to be able to get his compensation, as I do for all others whom Government owes. Sometimes it is not a great amount of money, but they are waiting and they are going to wait patiently because some of them do not have the wherewithal to get a lawyer to give them the kind of

representation. I hope that the Honourable Minister, when he has to treat to it, will give some consideration to the small people as well whose properties they would have acquired for recreational purposes, for housing development or for whatever; whatever purpose the acquisition is for, even if it is to make sure that a corner is cleared because I know that kind of acquisition takes place.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, I know some people who offer up a ten-foot of their land for a lay-by, for a bus shelter, to make sure that a corner is clear so that you can put up a retaining wall and that kind of thing; but unless we have that kind of direct communication with them to let them know your contribution is welcomed whether small or large, we are not going to be able to do much. There is too much illegal dumping, too much illegal construction, too much of what is happening in our communities through which we do not have the avenues to see, and as a result, if it continues, Barbados will become an entire flood-prone environment. I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

H:No.D18 (17)

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

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to make a short contribution to this debate and to indicate my support for the Resolution. I think also too that with respect to the objectives that we are trying to achieve in terms of the better management of drainage in the country and the fact that the recommendation was made by the experts within the Drainage Department that the area was no longer required for such purposes is significant but it also speaks to the fact that we should be cognizant that there is a need to have a holistic approach in terms of the whole management of drainage in the country and that each and every householder has a significant role to play in terms of assisting Government in the management of the issue of drainage because sometimes when we hear persons comment on it, it seems to suggest that maybe we need to have a vigorous educational programme supported by strong action on the part of those agencies that are responsible for the management of drainage in the country. Sir, very often, the issues related to drainage that we see really sometimes do not arise in the locality that the drainage is present, sometimes it is an issue that has arisen in areas even outside of the immediate area but what we are seeing in other areas as has happened in the case of the particular area that we are speaking of impacts on that area but we have to look at it from the point of view that all of us have to play a role in terms of ensuring that we abide by certain codes. Of course, we have to have the relevant Ministries enforcing it and that is why in a sense we also need a very aggressive public education programme that

sensitizes those persons who are especially engaged in the construction industry that they need to abide by these things. I think really sometimes in our zest to encourage development in some areas we forget the importance of public education and not only that, the information that we actually share with persons would help to make them even more vigilant in terms of ensuring that there are the policemen out there, the people who are supposed to watch, see what is happening and what is going on.

Mr. Speaker, we have for instance, in the area of St. Michael West Central, especially when we move along Fairfield Road every time we have heavy rains in that particular area we have a situation where that road is actually flooded because what has happened is that road has now literally become a river in which the drainage that comes down from higher areas actually impacts on the residents who live below the terrace. I believe that in many cases it has been due to the fact that we have had housing construction in other areas even outside of the constituency which because of the manner of the construction it has impacted therefore on residents within St. Michael West Central. I really believe we need to pay attention to these particular issues because again, the extent to which persons within the Town and Country Planning Department are vigilant. I guess there are officers there who are attached to particular areas and zones and sometimes we have to ask the extent to which they are vigilant enough in terms of scrutinizing construction activities that might have a negative impact on drainage in the area because sometimes we do not appreciate that the little things we do and what impact it has on other. Sir, as a matter of fact, in other jurisdictions there is a requirement that you need to maintain around your house a certain amount of greenery but in Barbados we have an infatuation with having concrete all around the house. You have in some areas there is construction going on and instead of allowing for the fact that you need to have an area around the house in which water can be absorbed on the earth, you have a situation where you have runoff and therefore it is sometimes amazing when people sometimes complain and say that all of a sudden the area is flooding but the reason why it is flooding is because of the fact is because you have had construction in another area which basically has prevented the water from going where it is occasioned to going and therefore the runoff goes into other areas. Sir, these are issues we need to manage and this is where we need to have a strong public educational effort to sensitise people as to what are their responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, we have the habit of basically placing responsibilities on Government to say they are responsible but I think that we cannot escape the fact that we must have individual responsibility even in the area of quarry management. We have around Barbados in many places areas for instance, that were old disused quarries. I do not think that sometimes we appreciate that an area that has an

old disused quarry actually represents a very effective way of addressing the issue of drainage in some area because if we have a situation where the water is going into the quarry at least it does not have to run over and that in itself can, of course, keep water off the roads.

Mr. Speaker, those persons who are responsible for the physical planning of Barbados need to appreciate that holistic approach where we need to identify areas of Barbados which could fall receptacles for water that would prevent it from going on the road as we are having right now because we are not paying sufficient attention to the impact of new development. Sir, for instance, in St. Michael West Central, we have about two or three quarries inside the area but again, we leave it up to private persons in the particular constituency to actually manage those quarries and I wonder sometimes if we are paying enough attention to what is happening in the quarries, the extent to which quarries are being filled in may have an impact on drainage within the immediate area. These are issues that the the Drainage Department need to address, that we need to ensure that we monitor constantly that we do not sit in our offices and think everything is going well. We need to go out and examine what are the issues impacting persons in these communities.

Mr. Speaker, also, I have a particular area in Clevedale Development where the road has been destroyed as a result of runoff that comes off the terrace off Grazettes Road and that road is really in a bad way. Well, this is a different Ministry, the Ministry of Transport and Works but even when we do that road we have to look at the issues of how do we control the significant amount of water that comes onto the road. Again, maybe we need to employ the physical planner to address and see what do we do with the water, how can we manage it, how can we collect it in a manner that for instance, we do not have a situation where every time we put down physical infrastructure it is destroyed by the next heavy rain. S in relation, these are fundamental issues that I believe have been going on for some time in Barbados. We know it is going to occur every season and as yet we have not developed a holistic approach to managing it. We talk constantly and we know that along most of the plantations there were wells that actually formed receptacles for rain water into the earth, in other words, it guided it into aquifers but what have we done?

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What have we done? In our natural construction of roads in many instances we have not paid attention to the extent to which we need to utilise these wells as a means of ensuring that we can actually guide the water into those wells and again that in itself will mitigate the impact of water going into the lower areas as in my case in Grazettes

and Fairfield Road. These are areas that get heavily flooded during periods of rain and make it almost impassable.

I can understand the difficulty which MTW has when it comes to the repairing of the roads because every time that you think you have a problem solves, what happens, you get another downpour and that road is actually destroyed. I want to make a special appeal -- I know, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a matter relating to the Ministry of Transport and Works but certainly that road along Fairfield is really in a bad way and also the Clevedale Development, Oxley Road, Murray Road and I am appealing to you to see if you can use your good offices to address those issues urgently for the residents in those areas. I think it is important that we do not forget the impact. We need a good overall management of those roads too at the same time. We do not even have to talk about the whole area of Wavell but you see I have the Opposition telling me do not plead for these things. I do not know why they would not want, for instance, me to ensure that the urban areas receive good treatment. I am appealing to them not to just focus on their own constituencies. Shame on you, shame on you, shame on you.

The other point I want to make, Sir, is this. Again one of the suggestions that I made about the fact that we need a public education programme, many of the persons who engage in this type of illegal construction at the same time, we can solve that, again, if we have that public education being conducted in various levels and I would want to suggest that maybe we engage in a process of town hall meetings in the various areas to help persons to understand the impacts. I think that, in that regard, we need to be very proactive because very often we have a situation where we do not take these issues very seriously because they know the Members of the Opposition can laugh at this because very often they do not appreciate the importance of the public education process. I know they do not appreciate that but I really think that we have to ensure that we educate our public as to the impact of the actions and I am really again calling upon the Ministry of Drainage to ensure that they actually engage in that public education process so that we can have more persons buying in to the concept that we should not have illegal construction in areas that basically it would have an impact not only in your own area but there are other areas outside of the constituency in itself that it would have an impact on.

I see the Honourable Member for St. James Central nodding his head in agreement and I know he has come apart from them on that issue and I really applaud you for the fact that you would agree with me on that particular issue. I know we can join hands in the effort to ensure that we have a more responsible approach to the construction of physical facilities in this country that does not, in itself, have a negative impact on the environment.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for allowing me to make the contribution.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would want to say a few brief words on this particular acquisition.

I remember in 1995 when that flood took place. In those day, Mr. Speaker, we were thinking that the flood that was really important to Barbados was in 1970 and in those days the engineers at the time were talking about a one and 20 flood, one in every 20 years and the flood took place in which Members talked about Carew was washed away and several homes were destroyed at the time. I remember I was the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and we went to the area and it was decided then that we should relocate a number of houses which we did, Mr. Speaker. A number of houses were relocated to Baker's Woods at the request of the Drainage Unit then, the Chief Town Planner and the Chief Environmental Officer. Today, 20 years on we saw what happened in the Caribbean that many persons who have gone back to low lying areas, what has happened.

In the case of Dominica, the present Prime Minister has said that there are many people who were relocated but they found themselves back on lands that their parents were born on so that, Government has to be very careful in looking at when we abandon an acquisition especially for drainage issues and I hope that the Drainage Unit is clear on this and I hope the Town Planner and all those persons who are involved in this matter have looked carefully at what can happen in the future but the Government has brought the Paper and we trust that the Government has looked at all angles of this particular Resolution.

I want to say that we have looked and this Government have abandoned and either an acquisition or an act, or an amendment of an Act which has caused tremendous hardship. I am going to speak on one act that the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), not abandoned by an act in which they have caused severe hardship across the island and I am talking about the Plantations Tenancies Act of 1981 which made sure that any two persons on a Tenantry then form a tenant and the original Act spoke about two persons and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) amended it in 1990 to read ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are going to tell us shortly how this is related to the matter under which this House is debating.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am talking about the abandonment of a Resolution or an Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: That does not make it relevant but you go ahead let me see where you are going.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am speaking, Mr. Speaker, saying that in 1990 an Act was brought to this Parliament and it was amended. The Plantations Tenancies Act of 1990 to read that five persons now formed a tenantry and that disadvantaged a number of persons at the time. Many persons, Mr. Speaker, had to find house spots. In fact, the Honourable Member, who introduced this Resolution mentioned Parsons land and I want to cite that case in which by 1990, Mr. Parson who came to Barbados and found four or five persons on that land is right above Carters Bakery and proceeded to use the Act to the disadvantage of the remaining persons who were still living on the Act. We sought to acquire the land to help those remaining tenants but the Court in its wisdom agreed with Mr. Parson and the Government at the time never appealed the case, but I believe that when we abandon or amend a Resolution or an Act we have to be very careful how many people that we have disadvantaged.

It is very important that we look at this because we have cases in Barbados where parcels of land were taken up to relocate persons especially the Central Bank of Barbados area. I remember the Central Bank of Barbados case in Church Village when the entire village was relocated to Lower Burney not only to help the Central Bank of Barbados but to make sure that those persons who were living there had their own land as well as to put them in a better position.

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Secondly, many persons wanted to be relocated because there are a number of persons who always wanted to remain in The City and the Government of the day felt that if we did not use it properly then, allowed the Central Bank of Barbados to beautify that place and do something with it, many people would want to be relocated back to The City. It happens all of the time so that in this particular abandonment many of the persons who were relocated to Bakers might want to go back down to Weston to resettle. As I understand it several homes were relocated but there are still a few houses remaining on this parcel of land and we have to be very careful if persons do not want to go into the drainage portion of the land, so the Town Planner has to be very careful on the application of those persons who might want to go to the Weston area, so that the Town Planning Act in itself Act needs to be strengthened.

I heard Honourable Members spoke today that the Town Planner may have a wide area but he does not have the power to police and to sensitise people. In many cases, Mr. Speaker, you could go to court, as we have seen many people have done, and tie up these cases in court for a very long time while they do their own business and then the

Town Planner has very little power after four years have passed so we have to be careful about these things. I believe that the Minister with responsibility for town planning and drainage needs to be very careful. I have heard Honourable Members talked about another site in the St. Thomas/St. Andrew area, which I am not going to speak about today, where persons have been relocated and are either attempting to go back to or will do so in the future.

Mr. Speaker, while I support in essence the Land Acquisition Act and of course the abandonment I know that many Honourable Members have said that they were going to come here and abandon the Act when in Opposition because the Act is not working well. The Land Acquisition Act is very clear. The issue of compensation is where we have fallen down where it has taken Government a number of years to pay people for their land. Twenty-two years is a long time. Of course, sometimes it is difficult for a Government to find the finances we know but there must be a system now where Government could find the finances to help the landowner. It is a difficult task in these hard economic times where the Minister of Finance has to juggle the financing of projects and come up with the ones that are suitable for today because the Land Acquisition Act of ten years ago may not be very relevant today.

We acquired parcels of land several years ago that may not be too relevant today, so that the ones that are relevant may very well be the ones that are paid for. I could think in terms of the ABC Highway. Mr. Speaker, in 1981/82 when the Barbados Labour Party acquired all of those parcels of land along the highway, several thousands of parcels were acquired, several persons' properties were split into two and there was a time after the highway was built when some owners felt that they wanted back part of the land that was called superfluous land and the Government had to say look you cannot get back this because when we expand the ABC Highway in the future we would definitely want this, so Government has to be conscious of the fact that we are living not only today for today but for tomorrow and what would happen for tomorrow in terms of acquisitions that you believe you may not want.

In the case of drainage, my final point, Mr. Speaker, is that the Government has to govern not only for today but for the future and therefore the Drainage Unit must be cognisant of the fact that we have one and 20 years storms that could be very detrimental not only to the citizens in that area but for citizens way up. As one Honourable Member said today, you have to look at issues not only at the point

of the flood but at those things that have caused the flood right up. I believe that the Drainage Unit must employ professional people all around. I mean they are doing a good job but there must employ the right people to

give them the right advice so that the right advice will be given to the Government all along.

In today's society, Mr. Speaker, we have sought to bridge the gap because even though we recognise that the Democratic Labour Party had made a mistake in the 1990 Act, we sought to correct it. We sought to correct the 1990 Act which spoke about five tenants and that landlords would have been disadvantaged by saying that a landlord will not be disadvantaged but he would be paid the full market value of the land. That was important because we recognise that there was an issue between many lawyers in Bridgetown speaking about how we were going to disadvantage landlords and so on, and we said no. The tenancies programme gives the landlord 10 cents. We did not do that. We said the landlord would be compensated to the full value but that the tenants would only paid \$2.50 per square foot and the Government will then pay the balance. That was an Act which we did. That is a case in which we tried to understand where the Democratic Labour Party Government was going at the time and how it should be in a modern Barbados by 1996.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I am hopeful that this Government has looked at all of these issues especially the drainage issues on this matter and that the landlord is not disadvantaged because to abandon an acquisition after ten years will cause severe hardship to the landlords and of course you would have some ... disturbances so the Government has to bear these things in mind.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Government has not paid Hamblin for the land.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am talking about the Hamblin land and I hope that they do not abandon that because I will not remain in a Parliament that would abandon a housing acquisition that is helpful to a constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to wrap up the debate on this Resolution and I want to thank all Honourable Members for contributing to the debate. Indeed, the last speaker did mention some issues that we have to look at. The Honourable Member made mention of Dr. Hamblin's land. I recall coming across the file as the Minister of Housing and Lands at the time and recognise at the time that the Minister of Housing and Lands was the Honourable Member for St. George North who exercised his powers under the Land Acquisition Act to acquire the

said land and was objected to by his fellow Cabinet colleague who was responsible for town planning, the former Honourable Member for St. James South at the time.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I do not know what existed between the two of them but of course it was improper planning because the Minister of Housing and Lands decided that he recognised land for the public purpose of housing development but then a Minister in the same Cabinet decides he was objecting to it because it was not suitable for housing and did not fit into the Government's policy of the day. SeqD18 Sequence 20

Mr. Speaker, I believe that that land should now be released. I also recall the landowner also threatening to take action against the Ministry of Housing. I visited that land and recognised that that land is really land that could have been used for housing but of course there was a very serious objection to it, really and truly, to the disappointment of the Honourable Member for St. George North. In fact, it is also in the Honourable Member's constituency and the Honourable Member was also Ministry of Housing at the time, so that it was really a slap in the fact for the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. Speaker, I want again to thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church East for setting out the importance of the Drainage Unit. In fact, in this matter before this Honourable House, the Drainage Unit, in accordance with its experts, spoke to the matter that the land is no longer a threat, or that it was in its that the two chattel houses owned by Mr. Griffith that are near the watercourse at Weston, St. James, may be spared from acquisition. The houses are in no way impeding Drainage Division's access to or the flow within the watercourse. Mr. Speaker, they acted upon expert advice and that is where we are today, based on the abandonment of that acquisition.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, when we look at the acquisition of lands for the public purpose, be it roads, housing or any other public purpose, the issue was raised when we are developing a project and the Government is seeking to acquire land, whether we should have the cost of that acquisition upfront or included in that project so that when Government fully acquires those lands the money would be accounted for in terms of compensation agreed to between the parties. Mr. Speaker, that is something that we can look at so that we do not have to wait for after the acquisition process and after the project, whether that project is housing, road or any other project that fits within the public purpose, that we have to wait until that is either started or completed, for example, after 22 years as in the case of this

matter, for compensation to be then given to the landowner. Mr. Speaker, what is happening here too is that of course the Government is also liable to pay some money because of the fact that a Section 3 Notice was placed on the landowners where they could not do any further development. This, of course, stopped any further development of such lands or land attached thereto. Of course, under the Land Acquisition Act damages would have to be paid by the Crown.

Mr. Speaker, in responding to this Resolution, the Honourable Member for St. James Central sought to jump up and down and was all over the place in relation to this Resolution but at no time did the Honourable Member spoke to or mentioned that the Honourable Member was concerned about the rights of these landowners who were being dispossessed for 22 years, that the Honourable Member has a conscience, and that these people should be compensated. Mr. Speaker, I did not at all hear the passion coming from the Honourable Member.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, of course, the Honourable Member makes passionate pleas for persons of other classes, not the poor people, but here we have poor people who are being dispossessed by a Land Acquisition Act and the Honourable Member did not even collide with Section 16 of the Constitution, that is, that we should give them fair compensation in relation to that act by Government. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member was all over the place. Mr. Speaker, in fact, when the Honourable Member for St. Thomas mentioned the Carew flood, the Honourable Member was speaking about a song sung by Carew. I know that the Honourable Member wanted to mention that popular song “snakes in the grass” but I believe that after looking across, then to the left, then to the right, the Honourable Member decided not to mention the song but to look for another song.

Mr. Speaker, be that as it may, the Honourable Member also raised the question about a building code. Mr. Speaker, we can search every Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party where for 14 years they had promised to have a building code, and they had the power to have had a building code. Mr. Speaker, the Town Planning Department also made sure that applications adhered to some principles of what they call in construction “proper building standards and techniques”. Mr. Speaker, I do remember sometimes in 2009 the Honourable Member for Christ Church South came with a Building Standards Authority Bill where discussions were had on that Bill. I believe that Bill went to Cabinet and that it is also before the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel. Mr. Speaker, that Bill will place certain standards on constructions and buildings.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North again entered this debate and spoke to this matter. Mr. Speaker, in fact, the Honourable Member too failed to collide with the Land Acquisition Act, as I did not hear any passion coming from that Honourable Member. In fact, I do not know if there is any passion in him but I did not hear any passion coming from the Honourable Member in terms of fighting for the rights of the landowners who were affected by the Act. Mr. Speaker, in fact, when the Honourable Member was speaking, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown was smiling at me. I know that when that Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown smiles, that was an indication to say to the Honourable Member for St. James North to sit, that the Honourable Member was really not connecting to the Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I did not hear anything from the Honourable Member for St. James North. In fact, it is interesting, I thought that the Honourable Member had carriage of this matter, I thought the Honourable Member was counsel in this matter. Mr. Speaker, strange enough, I thought the landowner was represented by the Honourable Member for St. James North but of course that landowner was represented by three different attorneys-at-law and did not ask his Member of Parliament to engage in the carriage of the matter so that he can be fairly compensated under the Land Acquisition Act.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all of the issues in relation to fairness, timely manners, et cetera, pertaining to acquisitions were raised by Honourable Members. Indeed, we too as a Parliament would like at some day there would be some reform with respect to the Land Acquisition Act in terms of timely compensation, whether there would be some period of time, either four, six or twelve months, and that there would be a proper scheduling of land acquisitions, in consultation with the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and other Ministries, so that there would be some money or a fund there for persons who are affected by the Land Acquisition Act.

H:D18(21)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the circumstances I ask that this Resolution do now pass. Thank you.

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

ORDER NO. 19

The Second Reading of the Latin American Development Bank (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Minister.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The matter before the House is a relatively simple one. The Latin American Development Bank, or CAF (Corporacion Andina de Fomento) as we call it and as it is popularly known, we joined as a member a couple of years ago, at which time this House was asked to express its favour in passing a Bill to permit for us to become members of the CAF or the Latin American Development Bank as it is so designated in the Latin American Development Bank Act, 2015. On that occasion, the House would have been advised that in doing so Barbados would have purchased capital stock in the CAF amounting to 3 522 common shares, or "C" shares as they call them, to become a "C" category member of the Bank. Each of those shares was assigned a value of US\$14 200 for a grand total value of US\$50 012 400.

As is the case with most if not all of the international financial institutions, members are assigned or assessed shares relative to the value of the total stock of the organisation; in this case the bank. At periodic times, you are invited by way of resolution of the Board of these institutions to take up additional shares in the organisation to improve your standing. It is done on a democratic basis and on a formula basis relative to what you would have contributed to the institution, and of course the residual value of that for the country is that you are allowed to borrow against the value of your shares. In the case of the CAF, Barbados has \$50 million-odd of value shares, common "C" category shares, for which, as they designated in the articles of agreement of the organisation, you are allowed to borrow for domestic projects or what they call local projects upwards of four times the amount of those shares. In this case, it would be the US\$50 million by four which would be US\$200 million or BDS\$400 million. It is also for what they call regional integration projects, which mean any project that assists the country in its trade with other countries. If you do something at the Bridgetown Port, at the Grantley Adams International Airport, something relative to tourism -- for example if you want to construct a hotel -- that would be considered to be an integration project, because it allows you to integrate not just with the region but also with the world. You are allowed to borrow as much as eight times the value of the cumulative share value which you have as a member of the organisation, so in Barbados' case we would be allowed to borrow upwards of US\$400 million to do whatever projects we might want to do in that particular regard.

In the new replenishment of the capital stock of the Latin American Development Bank, the members of the Board agreed to new issuance of shares which were divided up according to the value of your status within the organisation. As you know, there are the "A" Class shares which are for those members who have bought in at the highest level, the "B" Class shares, and of course the "C" Class shares for the minor members of the organisation,

which Barbados, as a new entrant, would have come in as. Having by resolution Number 2132/2015 dated November 27, 2015, CAF's Board agreed to offer to Barbados an additional 1 080 "C" shares totalling a value of US\$15 336 000, and of course for that amount to be paid in annual consecutive instalments from 2017 to 2019. For those who have greater capacity and financial resources, you can pay all at one time if you want, but you can utilise the option, as in the case of Barbados, to pay in small amounts each year over the period 2017-2019 until you have fully subscribed, and that is at the end of September for each year.

The shares were offered to Barbados and we agreed to take up the offer of those shares, as I said, with each share having a net value of \$14 200. Of course, that would bring our value to \$15.336 million. If you add that to the existing cumulative share value of \$50 million which we had at entry into the organisation, we would end up with roughly around US\$65.378 million of share value. That means, of course, as I said before, that you can do projects like housing, roads and whatever the case may be in multiples of four for local projects, and multiples of eight for integration projects which we might want to utilise.

So far, Barbados has borrowed \$30 million for the Berth 5 expansion at the Port. We have a US\$15 million loan from CAF that the Board agreed to only two weeks ago relative to buying new scanning equipment for the Bridgetown Port and a fully computerised software package for the Barbados Revenue Authority for the encapsulation of all of their tax functions such as Value-Added Tax (VAT), Excise Tax, import duties and so forth on one platform to allow for the single taxpayer system to be effective. I understand that the CAF Board has approved those. We have received the money through a bridging loan through the First Citizens Bank. The CAF loan will take out that bridging loan. The tenders have already been issued for the single taxpayer automated system which has been selected.

H:No.D18 (22)

It is my understanding that the advertisements for the standards are now in the public domain for tenders to come in for that. Our expectation is that by the end of the year those cameras should be procured and ready for instalment. Of course, that helps with our national security and so forth. There are one or two other projects that we have in the pipe line. I do not want to speak about those too much because there are still in the early phases. I forgot that we got the BDS\$25 million for the loan for the roads CAF Road Project which the Ministry of Transport and Works has advised me as recent as Monday that the first Phase of the CAF Loan have all been tendered and allocated and those should begin in another few weeks to be done. The ones for the second phase which is the Mill and Pave Road

should be with the Ministry of Finance next week and so that too will get going.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as you would recall, those loan funds came in since last year but we had some initial challenges with the tendering process but they have now been completely tendered and those will be done.

Mr. Speaker, our membership in CAF is helping. It is working. Of course, this is very low cost financing. This is the type of financing that you want to attract and we have been very strategic in what we have used it for. We have basically used them for capital expansion at the Port, roads domestically and of course the scanners. Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: Yes, they are very efficient operation. They do not have a lot of bureaucracy that the other institutions have like IDB and CDB and the EU. They have a very simplified system and they allow the country to use its own tendering process for execution of projects which is unlike other institutions who have their own tendering process, they own rules and regulations and a fully developed procurement system that you have to go through right through to the end of the project. CAF allows the country to use its national system and they then do the monitoring for the implementation of the project, which works far more efficiently than perhaps in some of the other instances even though we have become pretty knowledgeable now about how they others work as well. Mr. Speaker, it is with good cheer that I commend the amendment currently before us which basically seeks to give the country the authority with the approval of Parliament to accept these new shares. Sir, as you would know, the original Act, would have then based on the share value that was assigned to Barbados to be a member of CAFF and the Solicitor-General after looking at the relevant legislation has advised that in order for these new shares to be accepted, you would have to amend the Act to permit for that increased value to be done but equally she has advised that since it is likely going forward that this situation would occur again, that the Act should be amended in a way to give the Minister the authority to do so waste in this House the approval of Parliament without having to amend the legislation each time it happens. I believe that a similar amendment is going to come for the IDB and for CDB as well because we run into that particular issue from time to time where those organs are concerned. I am sure this is not the last time you would see this kind of amendment coming here. It is the last time for CAFF but we expect it would be back again for the other two given that we are now in the era of replenisment. In fact, I did the one for the World Bank some time this year and I believe that the IDB and CDB's own will come soon enough because they are approaching the period for capital stock revaluation and new share values to be given. Mr. Speaker, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for bringing some clarity with respect to Government's purpose on this matter. Certainly, when one peruses the matter before the House prior to the Minister's intervention, the automatic concern was what was the purpose of this initiative. Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is a good thing to take the opportunity while I am on my feet to make the point that Government perhaps needs to do a little bit more with this. Sir, many Barbadians would not have understood or appreciated the way in which the Latin American Development Bank, so called CAFF works and the relationship between shares that we hold and those shares translating themselves into borrowing rights or privileges and what type of borrowing was being contemplated by Government, what in fact was Government's development trajectory or path, how was Government attempting to prioritise certain types of things so to the extent that this has now been clarified, it is quite useful. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that it is perhaps useful to remind the House that when the Minister first came here with respect to the Barbados' joining as a new member the Barbados Labour Party stood shoulder to shoulder with him in the endeavour and that is largely because we understood that there was again a need for us to be associated with a fresh voice in this region that was clearly aimed at promoting development financing and opportunities for development financing. Sir, that was the first reason. I think that the second reason that we would have supported the Government is that we are philosophically committed to the question of depending cooperation between countries and institutions so as to better facilitate the whole goal of development financing. Mr. Speaker, today is October 3rd and it perhaps bears repetition that it would be 43 years ago to the day that a former Minister of Finance in the Democratic Labour Party, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow would have addressed the World Bank Group in Washington on a matter about which the Minister of Finance just collided in a very glancing manner and that is the conditionalities and the terms associated with development loans as they confront countries such as ours. (8:23) Sequence 23 NOT FINISHED

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House D 18 Seq 24 3.36 p.m.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: ... traditionally found itself in a situation where -- and I am going to use the 1974 analogy -- the Right Excellent Honourable Member as he then was, would have been making the point that Barbados and we in the Caribbean are not producers of any goods. We are really importers but yet still when we seek to use statutory corporations and other mechanisms to shield our

people from the ravages of inflation which are triggered by global developments that we have little or nothing to do with, then we are told that is not proper Government operations and we are told that to get developmental loans you must not practice that type of political economy. The reality is as he made the point that if you do not do that, then you get yourself caught up in what is really the antithesis of development whereby you would be continually exposing your people to the ravages of global inflation which you yourself have little or nothing to do with but which your people would be paying a heavy developmental price for. That is very true and of course, the situation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) group, that got worst because they then started to trespass on social policy and that is when they got into capital punishment and abortion and other social issues. Those things, Mr. Speaker, then became policy conditionalities for your developmental opportunity and really and truly is therefore a good thing and we felt it was a good thing when Government took the step to associate itself with this particular development mechanism.

Mr. Speaker, the only other issue that really remains is the extent to which Government can benefit. I have heard the Honourable Member on the question of roads and perhaps what he may wish to do is to share with us a little bit more deeply what the areas of Government's priority are as we go forward. I hear him to say that there are one or two areas that Government is looking at about which he is not too keen to speak at this stage but we have our own perspective in Opposition and we do believe that there is a necessity - let me put it that way -- for us to look seriously at questions relating to healthcare in Barbados. We also feel and this has certainly been echoed repeated that part of the environmental issue in the country and I heard it as well today from the Honourable Member who has responsibility for the Ministry relating to the environment that it is really at the core of our developmental trajectory so therefore that is also an area where we feel that some emphasis has to be placed. I think, Mr. Speaker, that these are areas where, quite frankly they open themselves up for the embrace of the nation, having a conversation between ourselves, not just politically but between ourselves as a people to see where we feel we can best benefit from financial development opportunities such as these which come at concessionary rates. Again that was another point that was made in 1974 by the Honourable Member for St. John as he then was because, I think it was in that speech that the issue of a third window with the World Bank group was first canvassed or mooted and that is concessionary financing for Small Island Developing States which are, quite frankly, by virtue of their very nature the most vulnerable of the states in the world.

Mr. Speaker, there is no quarrel from the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) on this matter. I am happy that the

Honourable Member has been able to bring some clarity and I wish that we can proceed in this vein as we go forward especially, Sir, given the context of more recent developments and bad news as we enter the month of October. It is important, Sir, that our people do not only feel that all is woe and that there is some hope on the horizon above and beyond, of course, the promise of better days by virtue of an electoral relief.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much and I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. James Central for his brief and enlighten contribution to this Bill. I am happy to see that he has started to at least read some good literature. I once knew him to be a person who did but he had fallen by the wayside a little bit but I am not quite sure why he has taken it back up in this case, from his presentations in the House today he seems to be preparing himself again for something but at least we are all happy that we can benefit from his wisdom. He is indeed right. The CAF offers an additional financing window but it is one that we want to use strategically and to be -- for want of a better word -- smart about how we utilise these resources. One may say that US\$400 million or US\$200 million is a lot of money but in the context of large infrastructural projects they are really not a huge amount of money and can be utilised very, very quickly. We want to be strategic in the things that we put these resources that we may borrow from CAF at very, very concessional rates to. Infrastructure development is, of course, a key area that CAF likes to focus on because it helps the country build capacity, it is visible, you can see it, it create job opportunities temporarily, sometimes permanently depending on the type of project and it could spur economic activity so infrastructure investment is always good for a country. The lower the cost the better because you do not want to be paying high interest rates for major infrastructural installations particularly on loans that run 15 and 20 years and so forth, you want to keep the rates small, you want to keep the area strategic so we are going to be looking at areas of public transport and as I said in tourism, port facilities and sanitation is one of the areas that we are looking at because we know that we have issues with the south coast sanitation system, Bridgetown and we also have to look very quickly at the west coast so there are a number of areas that we have to focus on in relation to that and the water resources project that we are doing.

CAF has also partnered with the European Development Fund which is now come on as a funding stream for us as well consequential on the interventions of the Right Honourable Prime Minister in meeting the president of the Bank I believe sometime earlier this year

or maybe last year it was and impressing on the Fund, the European Development Bank that it needed to pay some attention to the Caribbean region and to Barbados in particular where its funding opportunities have been very, very limited over the years and been predominately more towards private sector collaboration with Government's approval and support predominately for the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited as it is known to us locally.

House D 18 Seq 24 3.46 p.m.

The European Development Bank people have come on board and they are partnering with a number of institutions, they are partnering with the Inter-American Development Bank, they are looking to do partnerships with the Caribbean Development Bank and they have done a partnership with the CAF, that would make some resources available to the Barbados Water Authority to help with their upgrade of the water system, so that is the kind of think that we want to encourage and that again opens another window for us for low-cost financing, so I think that all in all given the challenges that we have had in our economy and so forth that there are still people who are keen and interested and willing to assist Barbados and have demonstrated their confidence in the country.

Again, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think this is something over which we need not contend and I want to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Hon. D. O'N INNISS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. D. O'N INNISS, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. J. D. PAUL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clause 1 -- 4 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. D. O'N INNISS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. D. O'N INNISS, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as The Latin American Development Bank (Amendment) Act, 2017.

ORDER No. 20

NATIONAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY LEVY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as you would recall, in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals of this year the Government had indicated as part of its efforts to contain the fiscal deficit and to address the issue of rising debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio in the country that we would introduce a number of adjustment measures aimed at achieving certain economic results. One of those measures is the National Social Responsibility Levy, which of course was in existence from the previous year, and we indicated that we would raise the rate from 2 per cent to 10 per cent and to have that effective from July 01, 2017, and it did in fact became effective from July 01, 2017.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we also took the decision in between the period when the Budget was delivered and of course when the tax became effective on July 01 following meetings with the Social Partners and others to make some adjustments to ensure that the impact of the levy would not be felt in certain critical areas. Three of those areas related to items of basic use which we designate now as the VAT basket, items amounting in number to over 400 basic food and other commodity items as carried in the VAT basket for which we designated should be exempted from the imposition of the National Social Responsibility Levy; we also agreed that kerosene oil, which is a fuel now use predominately for aviation purposes, as per our commitment with the international airline organisations for exemption of duties and taxes on fuel used for aircraft that fly in and out of Barbados be exempted from the National Social Responsibility Levy, and we also exempted from the levy the heavy fuel, Bunker C, falling under tariff heading number 2710.19.60, which of course is predominately used by the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited for the production of electricity so as to limit the impact or ensure that such fuel would not be impacted as to be passed through to ordinary Barbadians either as households or as businesses in relation to their electricity cost.

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

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: We also then equally agreed that we would exempt drugs imported into Barbados and purchased out of bonded warehouses or purchased locally or issued through the Barbados Drug Service to ensure that those very important medicines that persons require by virtue of prescription from approved medical practitioners either in private practice or in public practice and

sanctioned through the Barbados Drug Service Formulary would be exempted from the payment of the National Social Responsibility Levy and therefore ensuring that no additional cost would have been added to those critical medicines that are required by those of us in the community who rely on them.

Mr. Speaker, in that particular regard we therefore asked the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel to prepare the necessary amendments to the existing Act governing the National Social Responsibility Levy to have it prepared and brought before the House of Assembly to finalise that particular budgetary measure. I would indicate that I am unable unfortunately at this stage to give the House any firm and final figures for the first quarter results since we are still waiting on those to come. Mr. Speaker, my understanding, though, however, is that the tax is in fact performing pretty close to what we would have projected, net of these concessions or exemptions. I believe the figure so far is just short of BD\$50 million which if you were to multiply it by the four quarters would give you just around BD\$200 million. Mr. Speaker, that is only on the National Social Responsibility Levy component. Of course, you know that there is a VAT component to the National Social Responsibility Levy that is how it is calculated, because the National Social Responsibility Levy goes on the import or customs value, after which the VAT is then applied, so there is an additional amount that is to be added to that. Mr. Speaker, that is what the staff are now receiving, the final filings from the Customs Department on the values on the import component of the VAT to parse out or separate what would have been the increase in that VAT for the periods July, August and September, to then pull that out, then add it to the National Social Responsibility Levy properly and then we get a full figure, but on the National Social Responsibility Levy component strict, the figures that I have seen both provisional and preliminary so far, is that the tax is in fact performing accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, as expected, the Central Bank of Barbados, of course, will issue its third quarter report in a couple of weeks for the calendar year and that is expected to have included more definitive figures because the agencies would of course have had a time to audit and clean up those figures. Mr. Speaker, so far we seem to be reasonably well on track and my hope is that we should be able to have those figures within another week or two, once the Central Bank does its statement on the performance to the Barbados economy for the third quarter for the calendar year. Mr. Speaker, as far as that is concerned, I feel reasonably confident that we will be able to report that the tax is achieving its objectives, as difficult as it is. My hope is that will continue for the rest of the current financial year 2017-2018.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with those few words, I now beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second that, Sir.

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

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

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to detain this Honourable Chamber for too long, but I am grateful to the Honourable Member for bringing this Honourable Chamber up to date in relation to the figures that the Honourable Member does not have, in relation to the performance of the National Social Responsibility Levy. Mr. Speaker, obviously, it is perhaps one of the first times in recent times that the Honourable Member has brought legislation in such a short space of time after a budgetary measure has been introduced in this Honourable Chamber. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure, I do not want to assume that it is being brought at this point in time and being announced but the Honourable Member is unable to provide this Honourable House and certainly the country with a clear indication as to how this particular tax measure is performing. I would hope that in the fullness of time that the Honourable Member would be able to provide such information to the country.

Mr. Speaker, I say so, Sir, because while this is a matter of housekeeping, I think it also provides the Honourable Member with an opportunity to speak to the country not only about the impact of this particular levy but also to address some of the relevant concerns of both consumers and also businesses across the country in relation to the impact that this particular levy has had on households and on businesses. Mr. Speaker, the National Social Responsibility Levy when introduced in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, was met with concern across Barbados because it was felt that not only would it increased the cost of living across communities but indeed that it was another tax burden which was being placed on the entire country. If that was not sufficient, Mr. Speaker, by the following year the tax which was imposed at 2 per cent was then increased to 10 per cent and that was to take effect from July 1.

Mr. Speaker, now if the Honourable Member is to be believed, and again I would hope that in his wrap-up the Honourable Member would address this as well, because if the Honourable Member is not able to tell us how much the levy has been able to attain, I would hope that the Honourable Member would be in a position to speak to the fact as to whether the moneys that have already been collected have been directed to the purposes for which

when the Honourable Member introduced this particular measure, the Honourable Member indicated that the moneys would be collected.

Mr. Speaker, I start there because back in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, when the Honourable Member indicated that this measure was intended to raise \$142.1 million, that these moneys were to be placed towards public healthcare, particularly but not limited to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and we all know the concerns in relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital so that there were no difficulties, I think, across Barbados in relation to this additional imposition which would be intended for the benefit of perhaps the most vulnerable in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it was also indicated that part proceeds would go towards servicing the loan of the Sanitation Service Authority to purchase a fleet of new trucks and much needed parts. The Sanitation Service Authority was to be assisted in getting the fleet back up to 35 trucks by August 2017 which would have been this year and Sir, I like many other Barbadians still await the purchase of these trucks, but certainly a proper update from the relevant ministry in relation to where we are in relation to our garbage collection in this country, so that I like most Barbadians would have to assume that the moneys that have already been collected which the Minister would want us to believe that this measure has been working, those moneys have not been directed appropriately to the Sanitation Service Authority.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance also indicated at the time that a portion of the resources was to bring relief to the capital needs of the Sanitation Service Authority. At that time and as you know we would have been approaching the 50th Anniversary of this country's Independence, \$5 million was to go towards a national cleanup and debushing programme over the ensuing five months. Now, we were here last week, Mr. Speaker, in relation to a \$4.6 million in relation to a debushing programme for private property in this country and again nothing was said in relation to the applications of funds from the National Social Responsibility Levy in relation to how and whether those moneys have been applied, because now we have seen an additional increase in the moneys that have been applied in relation to cleaning up Barbados. Again, yet and I think that most Barbadians will ask the question, are these policies working and have these moneys actually been directed to the programme to which the Minister has spoken about.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that these issues be addressed because many Barbadians would have certainly bought into idea that these measures were necessary at the time and that the moneys that would have been derived from this levy would indeed be applied to

these specific areas of public health and certainly in relation to cleaning the Barbadian environment, but of course the reality of most of us across this country is that we are still not seeing garbage being collected at the rate at which we would like and certainly there are still cries, I know from persons within my constituency for sure, in relation to the efficiency of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, with the limited resources that they have available to them.

Mr. Speaker, so that while the amounts for this particular quarter may not be available to the Minister, I think that the Honourable Member owes it to this Honourable Chamber and to the country to address the pressing needs for Barbadians to be assured that the moneys have been indeed applied to that which the Honourable Member said that these moneys were for, but also if they have not been applied to the items that were listed, that an update be given as to what they have been indeed applied to.

4.14 p.m.

Sir, I say that -- against a background where we have recently heard about the downgrade by Moody's as well, the concerns that have been expressed in relation to Barbados' financial stability, and the fact that these monies, almost half-a-billion dollars, was raised or is to be raised in taxes by this Administration -- there is concern as to whether or not Barbados is on the correct economic path. There is concern as to whether this particular homegrown programme is indeed working for this country at this particular juncture. If it is that this measure is to be more effective than the collection of VAT, and if it is that the public of Barbados was led to believe that these measures are indeed to stop the clear and gaping hole that has been developing over the course of the past few years in relation to the management of this economy, I believe it is important for the Minister to address this in his wrap-up as a matter of urgency.

The impact which the NSRL (National Social Responsibility Levy) has had on businesses and consumers has been felt across this entire country, Mr. Speaker. It actually resulted in over 25 000 Barbadians protesting against the impact of this levy. It resulted in the unions attempting to have meetings with the Government of Barbados in an effort to introduce a coping subsidy for public servants in this island. I will not deviate to speak to the way in which this matter was dealt with by this Administration. Suffice it to say that the impact of this particular levy has been felt by almost every Barbadian in this country. While I appreciate that the Minister of Finance has indicated that there are exemptions in the Amendment to the legislation, and obviously those have been necessary exemptions, the Minister must be aware that at the implementation of this particular levy there were several businesses certainly across the country that

imposed not only the two per cent but the additional ten per cent and carried that increase onto the consumers. As a result, it has made the cost of living increase. These are not the words of the Barbados Labour Party. These are the words of every person who has observed, from the business community to every single household in this country, the impact of the National Social Responsibility Levy. If Members on the other side were in contact with their constituents and businesses in their constituencies, they would appreciate, rather than mumble across the Floor, that these are the realities of the impact of this particular levy.

None of us on either side of the divide has a difficulty with tax collection. We understand that you need to raise taxes in order to pay for important social services and to allow this country to run, but where there is a difficulty is where there are questions being asked in relation to the efficient management of the economy by this particular Administration. Again, these are not just observers of the Barbados Labour Party. These are the observations of international credit agencies. These are the observations of persons in high-ranking banking positions across the region. These things are not to be brushed aside by Members of this Administration, because the reality -- and I believe the Minister of Finance alluded to it over the past few days in response to the Moody's downgrade -- is that while he may not apply his mind too much to it, he accepts and he concedes that the investors overseas obviously would pay attention to what the international credit rating agencies will say about this country and its future financial outlook. I therefore do believe that where we are at this point requires the Honourable Minister of Finance, as he proposes to pass this particular Amendment, to speak to the country about where we are and where we are going and whether in fact this particular measure has taken us any further from the financial hole in which this country has found itself. Short of that, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister owes it to the country to address these particular matters. It is not good enough to come with this quick Amendment today which, as I said, is the first in a long time in tidying up these matters. I do appreciate that but I do feel that it is an Amendment which has created a lot of confusion and a lot of hardship, and therefore if we are going to take our people through these difficult times, then the Honourable Minister owes it to the country to certainly speak in a way which gives the assurance to a number of these businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that particularly entrepreneurs in this country have been directly impacted by this particular levy. While the Minister of Finance and Members on the other side may believe that we have been able to keep foreign exchange in the country, the reality for a number of businesses which are trying to compete, not only on the local market but on the regional market, is that a number of their imports actually come from overseas, and if they are to be competitive, then they need to be able to

import a number of the items which have now come under the subject of this levy. If Government is not in a position to stimulate the entrepreneurship market and to provide the necessary funds through Fund Access which would allow for a buffer for a number of the entrepreneurs in this country, then it needs to explain to the country how it intends to allow young entrepreneurs in this country to survive. I know the Minister for Industry would appreciate these concerns, because I have a number of people applying to Fund Access who still find it very difficult to be able to access the necessary financing; but this particular National Social Responsibility Levy has increased the burden of them doing business in this country.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I do not intend to detain the Chamber. It is a welcome approach by this Administration to bring this within a short time-frame, but I do feel that the explanation must be given by the Minister in relation to the impact and certainly where we are going in relation to the financial outlook for the country at this particular juncture. With that, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

Aside.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a contribution but as I sat down and listened to the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, I began to understand why there is an element of confusion and misunderstanding that pervades and is being promoted in this country. When I heard the statement coming from the Honourable Member that imports probably come from overseas, I wonder.

Asides.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: I wonder really what the Honourable Member is thinking. Sir, imports must come from overseas.

Asides.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: I could not believe I was hearing that type of language from a sitting representative in the House of Parliament of Barbados. I could not believe it, and a lawyer to boot, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Not only that. It really explains the folly that we are hearing in Barbados today. Not only that, Mr. Speaker. What amazed me was that the Member for St. Michael South East literally tied the Barbados Labour Party

with the interest of international institutions, in that we can hear that somehow their interests or their views on the economic situation in Barbados basically seem to be consistent with the views of these international credit rating agencies.

H:No.D18 (27)

Mr. Speaker, when you hear the comments coming generally, we forget who we are and why we operate our economic policies in the country. I want to remind the Opposition that we do not operate our policies on behalf of Standard & Poor's or these international credit rating institutions. We operate it on behalf of the people of Barbados first and foremost and when you also make the statement that the cost of doing business in Barbados is high also says that the member is completely unaware of the challenges of doing business in Barbados because it is an acknowledge fact that the cost of doing business in Barbados is high. We are a high cost destination. I know that Honourable Member for St. James Central could have easily whispered to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East that in the context of world trade and competitiveness when it comes to the whole question of product that Barbados in itself because of the fact that one, it does not have the necessary economies of scales to compete with other countries in the way in which it has because the way in which we source our materials is high cost by nature.

Mr. Speaker, it makes me go to another point which I wish to make. I think that we need to have this discussion in Barbados. It is that historically what has happened is that the Government at the time proceeded with enthusiasm to sign certain trade agreement for this country. I understand why the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would make the statements she has made here because the Honourable Member does not understand the nature of the trade agreements that were signed by the Government then and the impact that those trade agreements and what has been signed is having on the people of Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point of order, Honourable Member.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. I have not said a word through you in this debate and what the Honourable Member is castigating me for, or insulting or trying to criticise me for.

Mr. SPEAKER: He did not say where you said it. No point of order found. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I understand those comments coming from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas because again, I am not to the manor born. I am

not affiliated to the people to the manor born and I do not intended to be affiliated with this. I want you to understand that I represent working class people unlike the Honourable Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please address the Chair.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Thank you very much, Sir. I apologise for that. Mr. Speaker, as I have said before the Honourable Member does not understand that the trade agreements that were signed by the Barbados Labour Party Government at the time is one of the principle reasons why this country finds itself in the mess it is in today. They would not understand it because they have proceeded to cause a drain on this country foreign reserves in a manner that was not contemplated because the enthusiasm with which we join the WTO and the fact that we have historically now committed this country to engage in trade at a disadvantage is one of the maintain reason why our businesses find it difficult to compete in the current trading environment that we have today and that is something we need to address in a very serious.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that we need therefore to stop fooling ourselves and our people that the playing field is level. The playing field is not level, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, when we hear for instance the reference to the whole question of foreign exchange and the whole reference to the question that our businesses need foreign exchange one of the things that maybe we need to start to look at in Barbados is to start to think differently and how do we promote businesses in the country that would start to earn foreign exchange in a real way.

Mr. Speaker, we need to understand what we are trying to achieve in terms of national social responsibility levy because it is in truth and in fact appropriately titled because in a sense we do not understand that every Barbadian in the country has a responsibility to earn foreign exchange. Sir, right now, it seems that we want to get foreign exchange but we want to borrow it. Let us listen to the comments made by the Prime Minister of Trinidad only recently when he referred to the question of whether or not Trinidad should go to the IMF and he is of the same view as this Government when he said that he does not think it would be in the interest of the Trinidad and Tobago Government to the IMB despite the circumstances that are being faced. Sir, according to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, do not dwell in matters that you do not completely comprehend, do not dwell in those matter because in the first place, those of us who really understand trade matters and who really understand that this Caribbean region has been placed at a severe disadvantage would really understand the genesis of the issues that we are facing today and to try to put it at the feet of this

Government represents -- I do not want to say intellectual dishonesty because that might be unparliamentary but it trying to distort the facts in a way to gain political advantage and, Sir, that is unnecessary at this particular point in time because the only way we can actually get Barbados out of the situation we are facing is to help Barbadians to face the reality that we are facing today and help Barbadians form an appreciation of what is required to take this country out of the economic problems we have and not to convince Barbadians that the only way to do it is to engage in another round of borrowing by going to the IMF.

Mr. Speaker, interesting enough, I saw a comment made by a Jamaican who somehow is facing the fact that Jamaica went to the IMF. Sir, if you talk to the ordinary Jamaican.... Sir, I do not interfere with other countries' politics but Barbados has established a principle where we look after our people and our economic policies are based on the fact that we seek to bring along everyone, that is what we do and if we compare the standard of living for the ordinary Barbadian and compare that to the ordinary Jamaican, it is much better, much better and is that what you want for Barbados? These are the kinds of policies that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is promoting in this country in a hidden way to get buy in because people are unsuspecting of the consequences of the approach to the IMF.

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All we are doing is that we are asking the country to engage in another round of borrowing and what we are doing is we are asking that the current services that we provide to Barbadians, free education, free healthcare, a comprehensive welfare service, they are asking Barbadians to buy into that. That is what the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is asking Barbadians to buy into and they are doing it in a very subtle way and hiding it and we need to stop this because at the end of the day the people who would suffer most as is shown in Jamaica - and let us take Jamaicans as an example -- are the poorest because the poor in Jamaica have become even poorer but they do not mind because the numbers are looking correct. They do not mind that because the numbers are looking right and the IMF feels that they are doing a good job but IMF policies do nothing for underdeveloped countries and we need to stop fooling ourselves that it does that. Mr. Speaker, I want to say and I apologise if I am sounding a bit emotional on this issue but I represent a constituency in which, to a large extent, we have, what I would call, people who are challenges in terms of resources and who are most likely to feel the impact of any type of policies that we want to pursue. I do not think that the Minister of Finance has been reckless in terms of the whole question of the introduction of the NSRL and what has happened is that also too, if it is one thing that we can get from this is that we can slow

down demand from imported goods and services it would do something because one of the things we also need to see is greater production of local goods and services. Do you know why? Because of the fact that we would be able to see more employment being generated for Barbadians and that is one of the things that the NSRL has been designed to achieve. We want to see more local goods being purchased that would help local Barbadians and keep more foreign exchange at home. We want to see businesses being encourage and it is not just agriculture.

Asides.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Again the Honourable Member for St. Thomas just do not understand the big or total picture. We want businesses in this country which produce more goods and services and it is an admitted fact that the impact on the economy is more when we produce more goods and services than when we import it. More people become employed and there is a greater multiplier effect on the economy as a result of that. That is what we want to see at this particular point and time so that we can get further expansion in the economy.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to make that brief interjection and again I support the measure as indicated by the Minister of Finance. Thank you very much, Sir.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In wrapping this debate up, of course, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East indicated, it is a perfunctory matter relative to putting in place the permanent legal arrangements for the increase in the Levy and therefore we are happy that it has been able to come to the House as quickly as it has.

The Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel (CPC) is under quite a bit of stress and strain because of the number of pieces of legislation that have to go before that office and the technical nature of some of the work which goes. Whilst there are very competent draftsmen in that office the volume and the complexity of the Bills which go up there for finalisation or the briefs that go up there for finalisation to be brought down to the Parliament as Bills can be a bit daunting sometimes and, of course, forces the office to rely on the technical expertise of people outside of that office. As much as we would like to hustle every budgetary measure before the House of Assembly and have it put in permanent law within the four months that are given in the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act, it is not always possible to do so simply because you are waiting on technical information sometimes, particularly as it relates to tariffs and taxes, taxes predominantly relating to duties,

levies and other such impositions that may have to wait on external advice as well as to the technical nature of it to get it correct so I want to place on record the Ministry's appreciation to the CPC for getting this and I believe that there are a number of others which will come down very shortly and getting those completed in short order.

Relative to the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, I recognise and respect the contribution. I did not think that there was anything particularly earth shattering for me to respond to. There were a series of questions which basically answered themselves.

The first one is that if we are aware that the increase in the Levy has been causing an increase in the cost of living? We said so in the Budget and we conceded that if you increase the Levy from 2 per cent to 10 per cent, it will have an inflationary impact on those items on which the Levy is applied so it is not an unexpected development. People make this point in Barbados as though we said it would not have an impact on prices and that now, look what has happened. That is not so, we said that it would have an inflationary impact, we expected that it would have it, but we did it for very specific reasons 1) to raise additional revenue for the Government to assist in helping to close the fiscal gap, 2) to also assist with the containment of the expenditure of foreign exchange particularly on imports -- and I am suitable advised that all of our imports do, in fact, come from overseas -- and to ensure that we have resources that are made available to the Government through the Consolidated Fund to do certain things.

When we introduced the Levy back a year or so ago, we did indicate at that time that there were some specific purposes to which some of those resources would go, not all but some of the resources, predominantly financing the public health establishment of Barbados through the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), the general Ministry of Health and also in the area of public health/sanitation services.

I keep hearing this point because I heard it last week in a different debate about trucks that were supposed to be made available to the Sanitation Service Authority. The first thing I wanted to point out is that even, notwithstanding what would have done in the NSRL in relation to what I would have announced in the Budget, if Members of the opposition were paying close enough attention they would have seen that we made provision for the loan for the capital resources for the purchase of new trucks to finance the loan in the Estimates so approved in this Parliament were amongst in the general Budget of the Ministry -- I believe it was \$4 million if my memory serves me correctly. Three million dollars the Minister is tell me.

What we decided to do with the National Social Responsibility Levy is to finance that by ensuring that that money was available and that when the order for the trucks was made and the resources were necessary to be transmitted to the people who would have been providing these trucks that that cash would be available, so we put a back stop not just to say in the Estimates we approved \$3 million and then when the time comes the cash is not available because of cash flow constraints but that the Accountant General would have the cash available through the additional collection of revenue from the National Social Responsibility Levy.

In relation to those trucks, I can say that the tendering process was done and that the bidder was selected and in relation to the buses a similar exercise was conducted and all that we are now waiting on is the issuance of the certificate, which I understand has been done, by the Solicitor General's Office so that the loan terms that we have agreed with First Citizens Bank in relation to the loan for the buses and the trucks can be agreed and disbursed. That is all we are waiting on.

The Sanitation Services Authority, as I understand it, has made some additional enquiries as to the request for specific pieces of equipment that would assist because it is not only compactor trucks that they are interested in, there are skip trucks and skid stairs, I am not familiar with all of the technical language, but that is what it is. We have said that within that basket of resources they can get those pieces of equipment made available to them so long as they submit the information in relation to who has won the tender to supply it and so forth. My understanding, and the Minister can correct me, is that that tender was issued on Sunday in the newspaper and it will run for another week and once the bids are in and the Sanitation Services Authority has selected the successful bidder the information will be there. Of course, by that time the loan would be hopefully disbursed and they would be able to get the resources to go on and procure the equipment that they require, so that answers the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East's question relative to that.

In relation to the hospital, I believe that no less a person than the Director of the Hospital, the CEO Mr. James, in his quarterly report on hospital financing indicated that the hospital continues to meet its obligations on a cash basis and is doing reasonably well in meeting those obligations. They have been able to pay down significant amounts of arrears relative to private suppliers and those resources which have been flowing through in terms of actual cash resources had been made available and possible because of the National Social Responsibility Levy as we know it, so that answers that particular question.

In relation to the issue of the response to the National Social Responsibility Levy, these things happened. I made the point to some school children recently, and I can repeat it here, that none of us enjoys paying taxes. I know of no period in history in no country in the world where anybody relishes or enjoys paying taxes. It is not something that comes naturally because if you earn \$100, as I said, you would like to keep all \$100 to yourself. I mean that is normal and you would expect that. However, in a society with a complex social development system such as ours that we like on the one hand to brag about to everybody that we have free education, we have free healthcare, we have social welfare, we provide this, we provide that, we have subsidised public transport, we have subsidised water and we have subsidised everything even though we fret about them... Somebody made the point recently that the people of Dominica, Barbuda, Puerto Rico and some parts of the United States of America have to go through the very sorrying inconvenience of not having electricity or power supply for some considerable period of time and they try to make do with the discomforts, but if our electricity goes off for more than 15 minutes we go on facebook and social media and call at the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited and cuss and carry on people as though life has come to an end. That is the society that we have developed and it is very unfortunate because the things that we like to enjoy and boast about are only provided because of the tax revenues and other revenues which the Government collects. When I drop my children off to school and they go into the various secondary schools in Barbados and so forth and so on, at the end of the week or at the end of the month or at the end of the quarter nobody meets me at the gate when I collect them and say look this is the bill for your children's education in here. If I get a stumped toe and I run to the polyclinic or I go into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital once I am a citizen of Barbados nobody meets me at the gate and says in order to get in you need to make a deposit of X and in order to get back out you need to make a payment of Y or leave some part of you here. Nobody does that. We enjoy the privilege of having those services, complaining to the tilt about them of course, but when you have to ask for a little bit everybody complains that it is too much. Well, perhaps it is too much. I do not think so but perhaps in their view it is too much.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I note with much interest last week President Donald Trump of the United States of America delivered a speech which was supposed to be outlining his Administration's great tax reform policy as he presented with lots of coverage. Do you know what was one of the underlying major reforms which President Trump was presenting as earthshattering to the public of the United States of America? That they were going to raise the basic tax threshold claim from \$12 000 to \$25 000 per taxpayer. This is 2017 you know. Are you aware, Mr. Speaker, that since the early part of this Century Barbados has gone to a

threshold of \$25 000 and in 1986 we had a threshold of \$15 000? The United States of America now get there you know. The first \$25 000 of every salary in Barbados is tax-free. Anybody below there does not pay tax. You only pay tax on your first dollar after \$25 000, \$25 0001, and we live in a country that provides free education, free tax, free healthcare, subsidised public transport, social welfare systems, community development and sports. All of it is unpaid for by the people in Barbados at a basic level in terms of point of delivery, then on top of that we give you \$25 000 tax-free and then we allow you through the tax process to claim tax refunds, which everybody quite rightly and justifiably complain that they cannot get back, that cost the Government of Barbados no less than \$75 million on average per year in tax refunds.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, some years it could go as high as BD\$90 million in tax refunds. Mr. Speaker, I always make the point that tax refunds are not paid out of some separate expenditure category approved by Parliament, tax refunds are paid out of the taxes that are paid in, so that if the revenue is not coming in then the revenue cannot be paid back out, because if for any year, for example, 2014, where the Assessed Refunds were over \$90 million, that is 1 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in tax refunds alone. Mr. Speaker, that is only income tax refunds, that has nothing to do with corporation tax or with VAT refunds, so that you are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars in tax refunds, so that when people say they have not got their tax refunds...Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Revenue Authority prepares it, the Accountant-General pays on the basis of if the cash is there, but when the Accountant-General is making that calculation he has to think about debt, about salaries and wages, about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the police, the children at school. He has to think of all of those things and deal with before or as well when you look at tax refunds.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that people are unreasonable because if you are owed a tax refund you should be paid that refund and if you have not paid it it should accrue interest, as those ones that are unpaid are accruing interest, because if you owe the Government the same thing applies, that is the law, but we have to understand the situation with which we are dealing, so that when you are asked to pay a little more of this or that tax...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have them reduced too, but the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados in the presentation of the Social

Partnership meeting which was carried live on television indicated that the Government has out \$900 million and I believe that that is a conservative estimate because it is way over BD\$900 million.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I heard the General Secretary of the National Union of Public Workers, in a moment of clarity, indicate that we have to concentrate on tax collection, that the Government has to try and collect these taxes, so that we sought to and established a Barbados Revenue Authority to collect taxes and every single day the Barbados Revenue Authority is being abused for doing the job for which it was established to do, that is, to collect taxes, with lawyers running around with papers threatening to file suits against the Honourable Attorney-General and against the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, against this and that body. Those persons saying that this is unconstitutional, that they cannot pay this or pay that.

Mr. Speaker, the unions fought the integration of Customs into the Barbados Revenue Authority and then turned around and said that we needed to have a more efficient Barbados Revenue Authority in order to collect those taxes. Mr. Speaker, all of this we have to do, then when we do not get in the tax collections, when people do not pay in their taxes or revenues and would want all of the social services provided, and we provide them, and there is big gap between revenue and expenditure and the rating agencies downgrade us, then everybody walks around saying, O Lord, Barbados got downgraded for the 20th time because we have a big deficit and increasing debt, yet people are out striking or marching to be able to get more in salaries.

Mr. Speaker, the question is, when will it all come to an end. When are people going to wake up and smell the coffee, that if we want to continue what the Honourable Member for St. James Central so eloquently spoke about in the last Bill, about this great developmental enterprise that the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, Grantley Adams, "Tom" Adams, Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, the Right Honourable Owen Arthur and everybody has spoken about so eloquently down through the years. If we want to continue that, are we prepared to stand up as Barbadians and make the sacrifices that we have to make to ensure that we can continue some core things in the country that have made us what we are 50 years on from Independence and what we must be greater 50 years going forward.

Mr. Speaker, this is not Chris Sinckler, they can say anything they want to say about me, they could put out all kinds of rubbish, they could wish for my demise and all of that, as they do on Facebook and all these places, that is not going to solve any problem in Barbados because the

problems are still going to face whomever who still has to deal with this. Mr. Speaker, if you doubt me, you can take a look at what the Minister of Finance in Trinidad and Tobago had to do yesterday and you would see.

Mr. Speaker, we have added a little excise tax on diesel and gasoline and people hollered for murder, but go check and see what the Minister of Finance in Trinidad and Tobago had to do and all of what the Minister did, he still ended up with a deficit of 3.5 per cent or something of that nature, which could be higher if the oil prices on which he is relying does not pan out at \$52 a barrel.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at what the Prime Minister in Trinidad and Tobago has said relative to foreign exchange. We have had and still have foreign exchange problems, another point raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East but in Trinidad and Tobago the Prime Minister said that the Government is going to start rationing foreign exchange. The banks there are already rationing foreign exchange, the Government is now saying that they are going to ration foreign exchange, and that companies that are into exporting that earns foreign exchange will be at the front of the line but if other companies are just coming for money to buy consumer stuff to consume, like I saw the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago said they imported US\$500 million worth of cars, which is a shocking number...

Mr. Speaker, it is not so shocking, because the car dealers who spoke to the nation who said that because of National Social Responsibility Levy sales were down in August, but did not tell them that there was a 30 per cent increase in the import of cars in Barbados, both used and new, from the beginning of the year, and that in the previous year there was a 36 per cent increase in the volume of cars, amounting to 300 cars per month.

Mr. Speaker, they did not tell you that, in one month they had a dip in sales, the month before they had an escalation because in anticipation of the National Social Responsibility Levy everybody went and bought cars, so that when you compare month against month it went down because that month was a high and so it went back to normal and so they said O Lord, the National Social Responsibility Levy is what caused the....

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, you see that kind of talk, not me, not me, I am not in that.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think we here could really wake up and smell the coffee. The Prime

Minister of Trinidad and Tobago said that if the Trinidadian people were coming for luxury stuff in normal consumables, they were going to the back of the line but if they were coming for something that would help to earn foreign exchange and export good then they would be dealt with. Mr. Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago said they imported US\$500 million worth of cars and we in Barbados are talking or chit-chatting as though, O Dear, it is all over, the country is done.

Mr. Speaker, I saw an article in the newspapers on the poor National Social Responsibility Levy where it is said that the National Social Responsibility Levy has caused Anchor Cheese to go up in price, when the National Social Responsibility Levy is not even on cheese.

Asides.

4.57 p.m.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: ... The newspaper in this case was the Nation newspaper, and the writer, having got lost in his attempt to prove his case that the NSRL was causing an increase in the cost of living so soon, then said, "We are comparing NSRL prices with prices in 2007." I said, "How you could compare prices? So many things happened between 2007 and now. There was a big recession, an increase in oil prices, increase in commodity prices, increase in shipping costs, all of that happened between 2007 and now, and everything that is happening in terms of a price increase in the supermarket is because of the NSRL?" It got me to thinking, that even though we have had discussions with the Social Partnership, both off-camera and on-camera, in all of this, all of this pressure on Government -- Government must do this, Government must do that, Government must do the third and the fourth, unions say Government must increase salaries, private sector says Government must ransack the whole Government and reduce it to nothing and put it on a diet -- and in all of that discussion, do you know nobody has talked about prices? You have not heard anybody in the private sector say, "If the Government takes these measures to help, as they put it, set the economy straight, we are prepared to contain all mark-ups on prices on items as our contribution to this exercise." I did not hear it in the live televised debate, and I have not heard it in any strident way. When the Social Partnership was in contemplation preceding that, there was a Prices and Income Protocol; and their view was that "we would hold income if prices are held because we understand that the two have some correlation between them". That discourse has not taken place at all.

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: The Prices and Income Protocol. Everybody is increasing their prices, so you can

go into supermarkets and see even items that are not subject to the NSRL having 20 and 30 per cent increases in prices, some of which were done before the NSRL became effective on July 1. Nobody is giving up any quarter, but the Government must savage the people of Barbados; and because we have not done it or done it at the speed -- not that we would do it -- to the satisfaction of some people, and you get a little downgrade, everybody running around saying "Oh dear, the sky is falling."

Do you know that when I spoke to the Press yesterday, they did not even know because some of them did not even read the thing? They did not read the thing, you know. They did not read the ratings opinion. They are relying on somebody else to do their thinking for them, so you go to some economist here who expresses a view, you go to some head of some organisation who expresses a view, and you collect all of them and you put them in a news story, and that is it. Do you know that none of the people who have spoken has made the point that Standard & Poor's affirmed the foreign debt rating of Barbados? Do you know that is the first line: S&P affirms, not downgrades, the foreign debt rating of Barbados but lowers the domestic thing one notch? They did not tell you anything that it affirmed. You would think that it was only a downgrade and that no affirmation occurred. They did not say anything about it. I asked one reporter, a good friend of mine, "Have you read the thing?" He said, "No. Man, give me a comment, man. I have not read it." I said, "Go and read it first, and then come back and ask me so we can have an intelligent conversation." He said, "Man, you sending me to do a lot of hard work now." He is a bright fellow, though, so he went and read it. He came back and said, "I see the point you are making."

You know that people only really like bad news. They just want to hear "bad". Every six months, the ratings agency says something and it is off to the races. We are told now that Barbados is No. 128, as though we are to be ashamed of being 128 of anything. We are now with Mozambique and Venezuela, and that is how Barbados is.

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I am repeating it to show the folly of it. We are down with Mozambique, and I say to all the people who might feel ashamed to be Barbadian -- I am not, I am very proud to be a Barbadian -- all of these people I tell them, "Listen, I would offer you a free ticket. I would try to raise the money to let you go to Venezuela and let you go to Mozambique and let you go to wherever you want to go and live." If Barbados is worse than them or on that level, and you feel that things in Barbados are so bad and you want to go, I will invite you to go. I know that the vast majority -- vast -- of Barbadians do not take on any of that foolishness, because they know in spite of whatever challenges and problems we have, Barbados is the best

small developing country in the world to live in and they will remain here, because they are committed as Barbadians. Whether they like B, like D, like E, like G, like S, hate S, or whatever, they know no place in the world is like Barbados.

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I know a lot of people who go down to the United States on vacation to shop. It is amazing, though, how people in small countries, we, take vacation and go and tire out ourselves shopping, running up and down, in shops all over the place.

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: No sight-seeing, no relaxation, nothing. We take vacation to go and work hard, and then come back the day before you have to go to work and complain about how tired you are.

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: That is our way of doing things as West Indians, but you talk to any of them who go down for two, three or four or five weeks, and when they get into that plane and they are coming in and they get sight of Barbados, whether it is night or day, it is the happiest feeling that you could ever have to know that you are coming back to a country that is an outstanding country in terms of what we provide for our citizens in Barbados. That is a fact. There are very few people who can tell you that they have ever been anywhere for any length of time outside of Barbados and that when they are coming back and they see that plane take sight of this country that they are not elated in the pit of their stomachs that they are going home. They are going to a place where they know that above all, ups and downs, peaks and troughs, they will be taken care of in this society.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: the Member for St. Andrew is here. Some time in December, once all the paperwork is finalised, we are going to start paying out the claims for CLICO, because the court has approved, the paperwork is being done, the transfers are being done to the new company, the resources are there, and they have published the names of all the people who hold policies and so forth. Those whose names were not published I hope they were able to go in and carry in the information. I believe that a few have so far.

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: It is going to happen. Do you know what? Do you know that similar exercises or similar

circumstances have befallen people in very rich countries -- in the United Kingdom, in Spain, in Portugal and in the United States of America -- and do you know nobody ever bails out the policyholders or the depositors? Very few people get locked up. Who got locked up for the 2007 collapse of the world economy?

5.04 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, who got locked for the 2007 collapse of the world economy, not Jamie Diamond that work at Barclays. The people at Bay Stearn, nobody got locked up for that, the people at Goldman Sacks, nobody did not get lock up for that.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: No, I am not defending anybody. Nobody got locked up for Barrack.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: I am not the Director of Public Prosecution. I am not in the lock up business.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay Honourable Members, let us have some order please.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: There is another one too because the Nigerian fellow they bring here to clean up the land up at Needhams Point, Dr. Goldoz, God knows what he was doing. The man that they bring here on a \$7 million contract that has drawn about \$20 million so far and nothing has not got clean up yet and an oil company was allowed to Barbados without following international best practise to clean up a site that they have polluted because of their operations. I am now told by the officers in the Division of Energy that to clean up that site is going to cost the taxpayers of Barbados \$100 million Barbados. Well, nobody has not got locked up for that. Sir, if they want to lock up people, let us start locking up.

Mr. Speaker, could you imagine overseas, depositors, people who invest in 401K and so forth and so on, a lot of them lost the value of their investment, a lot of them lost deposits...

Mr. SPEAKER: I am just wondering about the relevance, Honourable Member, frankly, so please, let us come back home.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the guidance. The point I am making that in a small country with fiscal challenges, with economic challenges, we take care of people even where in other countries those persons are left to swim or sink on their own but we in

Barbados certainly in the Democratic Labour Party seek to take care of those persons and that is what we have done.

Mr. Speaker, when we speak about deficit, debt and all of these little frightening things that we have to do where, this is where the taxpayers' moneys are going, to finance health care, education, social welfare, community development, pay debt, pay salaries and wages and sometimes help bail out and take care of persons who may have fallen on hard times relevant to the investments which they take.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East drew me out on some of these points. She asked for an explanation and I have tried my best to explain what the situation is with this particular measure. Sir, as you have said, I want to come home and, therefore, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. C.P. SINKLER, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the House resolved into Committee Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committee, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is in Committee.

Clause 1 -- 7, inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of Hon. C.P. SINKLER, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. C.P. SINKLER, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the National Social Responsibility (Amendment) Levy Act, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Speaker, Sir, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for today and I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, October 17, 2017, at 10:00 o'clock in the morning.

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

The question that the House be adjourned until October 17, 2017, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker adjourned the House accordingly.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Order No. 15, Mr. K. D. Symmonds's speech, take-slip House D18 Sequence 5. Either side of the take-slip the source gives two versions of the same passage about the fire station at Weston and an 18-foot storm surge; the second refers to 'the Honourable Member for St. Philip West' where the first has St. Philip North. The first version is printed and the second (about 100 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q3. Order No. 19, Mr. K. D. Symmonds's speech, take-slips Sequences 23-24, about 3.36 p.m.. Mr. Symmonds's speech breaks off at the reporter's note '(8:23) Sequence 23 NOT FINISHED' and resumes after the take-slip 'House D 18 Seq 24 3.36 p.m.' mid-sentence ('... traditionally found itself in a situation where'), so part of his speech appears to be missing. Printed as in the source. Please confirm.

Q4. Order No. 20, third reading. The Bill is titled 'National Social Responsibility Levy (Amendment) Bill, 2017' but is cited at third reading as the 'National Social Responsibility (Amendment) Levy Act, 2017'. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 20, second reading. After Mr. Speaker vacated the Chair and Madam Deputy Speaker took it, the seconder addresses 'Mr. Speaker' and the next call is made by 'Mr. SPEAKER', with no record of the Speaker resuming the Chair. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 20, end of second reading. The motion that the Bill be read a second time is moved by Hon. C. P. Sinckler and the next speech, 'I beg to second that, Sir.', is also labelled 'Hon. C.P. SINKLER'; the Committee motions name Hon. J. D. E. Boyce as seconder. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Speech labels. Hon. C. P. Sinckler's name is spelt 'SINKLER' on many headings, and Mr. E. G. Hinkson appears as 'MR. E.D. HINKSON' on two. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 3rd October, 2017 at 10.15 a.m., with Mr. Speaker in the Chair; prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood. The Minutes of 26th September were confirmed. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce laid, for the Minister of Finance, an exemption Order for the University of the West Indies Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination and the Barbados Deposit Insurance Corporation Annual Report, 2016, and the Minister of Tourism, Hon. R. L. Sealy, laid the 2015 annual reports of the Needham's Point companies. The National Social Responsibility Levy (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was read a first time and Standing Orders were suspended.

Order No. 15 was the Resolution to approve the publication of a notification under section 9(1) of the Land Acquisition Act declaring the abandonment of the compulsory acquisition of a parcel of land at Weston, St. James. Hon. M. A. Lashley explained that the land had been recommended for acquisition after the flood of 31st August, 1995, that Cabinet had agreed to the acquisition in 2003, and that the Drainage Division now considered the houses no obstacle to the water course; he noted the hardship the delay had caused the landowner.

Mr. K. D. Symmonds said he took no pride in a process that had failed the people of St. James North and pressed the danger to people in flood plains, citing the fire station at Weston; the Speaker twice reminded him of the rule of relevance. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe followed, and Mr. E. G. Hinkson, as Member for the area, said residents moved to Upper Bakers after the flood were still without titles and raised the Whim Gully. After lunch Miss C. Y. Forde spoke on drainage in central Barbados and house spots at Forty Acre, Mr. J. D. Paul supported the Resolution, and Mr. G. A. Clarke, questioned on relevance, spoke of the Plantations Tenancies Act of 1990 and land at Hamblin for which he said Government had not paid. Mr. Lashley replied and the Resolution passed.

Order No. 19 was the second reading of the Latin American Development Bank (Amendment) Bill, 2017. The Minister of Finance, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, said Barbados had agreed to take up additional shares in CAF at \$14 200 each, bringing its value to \$15.336 million on top of \$50 million at entry, and listed CAF loans, including \$30 million for the Berth 5 expansion at the Port. After a contribution from Mr. Symmonds, the Bill passed all stages, Clauses 1 to 4 being passed in Committee with Mr. J. D. Paul in the Chair.

Order No. 20 was the National Social Responsibility Levy (Amendment) Bill, 2017. Mr. Sinckler said the levy had been raised from 2 per cent to 10 per cent from 1st

July, 2017, with exemptions for over 400 items in the VAT basket, aviation fuel and prescription drugs, but that he could not yet give firm revenue figures. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw asked how much the levy had raised and whether it had been applied to its stated purposes; Mr. Paul replied, and a point of order by Miss Forde was ruled out. Mr.

Sinckler wound up, the Speaker calling him back to relevance, and the Bill passed all stages.

On the motion of Mr. Boyce, the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 17th October, 2017 at 10.00 a.m.