
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2018 – 2022

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House Assembly met at the Worthing Corporate Centre, Worthing, Christ Church at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 25, 2021.

PRESENT

His Honour A. E. HOLDER, B.Sc. (Hons), MSW, LL.B. (Hons), L.E.C. (Speaker)

His Honour N. G. H. ROWE, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P. (Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs)

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.), (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C. (Leader of Government Business) (Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training)

Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, J.P., B.A., B.Sc., PgD. (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAM, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs)

Hon. Ms. C. S. V. HUSBANDS, B.A., M.Sc. (Hons.) (Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Hon. A. R. FORDE, Rph. (Minister of Environment and National Beautification)

Hon. C. McD. GRIFFITH, B.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Water Resources)

Hon. P. R. PHILLIPS (Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security)

Hon. J. A. KING, B.S.S. (Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with Responsibility for Culture and the National Development Commission)

Dr. S. E. BROWNE, M.B.B.S. (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY B.Sc., M.Sc. M.P.A. (Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy)

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, B.Sc., M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Finance)

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Economic Affairs)

Ms. T. N. S.-A. MOORE, M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, May 4 and Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Honourable the House of Assembly of its meetings of Tuesday, May 4 and Tuesday, May 11 2021 have been circulated, be taken as read.

Hon. Miss. C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR

THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report to this Honourable House that I am in receipt from the Auditor General, the Report for the year 2020.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Pesticide Control (Amendment) Regulations, 2021.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Customs Bill, 2021 be read a first time.

Hon. Miss. C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the following Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of the day's Sitting.

Hon. Miss. C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE – IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CHAPTER 225, THE APPROVAL OF THE LEASE OF THE TWO PARCELS OF LAND – THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN SITUATE AT PINE IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN THIS ISLAND – TO TAB BUILDING LTD. FOR USE AS A CAR PARK

Dr. The Hon. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess I would have to refer to this as a new old matter. It is interesting to suggest that it is a new old matter but in truth and fact, it is. This is a lease that first started as far back as 1995. It is a lease agreement dated September 1, 1995 between the Crown, TAB Building Ltd and the then Life of Barbados Ltd which commenced on September 1, 1995 and ended on August 31, 2010. This is essentially a renewal of a lease that had been in place from then. At the time, it was first for one parcel of land but subsequent to that, the then TAB Building which is the car park behind the building on Collymore Rock which I think is PriceWaterHouse building, used as a car park the part behind which is crown land.

From the 1995 period when the lease started to 2010, they came and asked Government for an additional piece of land for a second car park. This lease came to an end and we now have to do a renewal for the two pieces together. This is a new lease that covers and old matter. Essentially, what we are asking to do is to grant the lease of two parcels of crown land together measuring 3 916 square metres. One parcel is 1 901 square metres and the other, 2 014.8 square

metres at Pine, St. Michael to TAB Building Ltd for the use of car park. The rental will be \$29 141. 80 per annum.

We expect this lease to run for 10 years with a rent review every three years and an option for further renewal for an additional 10 years. Obviously, the car park already exists so I would not have to go into all of the issues that relate to the Town and Country Development Planning process. The TAB Building Ltd went through that process quite significantly. In fact, the Survey Plan No. 4292016 was prepared by the Land Surveyor, Mr. Kelvin Belgrave, certified on April 25, 2016, recorded in Lands and Surveys Department on May 04, 2016 so all of the processes have been gone through, all of the areas have been confirmed, the Resolution has been examined by the Attorney General and certified to be in order.

The more important and pressing matter of this Resolution though is -- and I have to say is that sometimes The Crown, in order to keep track of all of its lands, all of its leases, and all of the various entities that it has entered into leases or sales or whatever over the years is quite difficult and quite time-consuming. Do we have enough ability and capability within the Ministry or within the entire Government to keep track of all of these leases, keep track of when leases come to an end, when leases must start, how do we change, how do we charge for things, has the person who we have granted the lease to complied with all of the things that we asked them to do, have they used it for something other than what Parliament has given permission to? It is a mammoth task. Indeed, as a simple landlord often has difficulty not only collecting rent, seeing that tenants comply, seeing that people are not trying to take up more of your land, and I will give you an example. In a certain constituency in Barbados, in fact, in a certain housing area, we have people who tried to expand, not the housing area people, but the surrounding the housing area, by moving their fences to take up land belonging to the National Housing Corporation (N.H.C.) or to Government hoping then that nobody notices, and then after a period of 10 years come and produce something saying that we want something called Adverse Possession because no one has come and told us about this. We have now taken up this piece of land, we have maintained it, we put some sort of hut or fence on it and now we can get it by Adverse Possession. This kind of thing is so important that we must, not only monitor our lands, recognise where we have lands, we must maintain our boundaries, maintain the payments, see that people are totally compliant with what they are supposed to do and manage these all over the country with all of The Crown lands, all of the lands owned not only by the National Housing Corporation (N.H.C.), but all of the land owned by Barbados Agricultural and Development Marketing Corporation (B.A.D.M.C.), Barbados Industrial and Development Corporation (B.I.D.C.), the schools and all of these other things because Government, whether we like it or not, is the biggest landowner and with the owning

of land not only comes the benefit of the land, but also comes a duty and a responsibility to maintain the lands that you own and this is important. It is something, I think, that we have fell down on from time to time and what we are doing in the Ministry is trying to strengthen that. Those people who feel that they are going to come and put up a fence to try to take on some of the National Housing Corporation land you got another thing coming because we are going to Court on that and he who I speak of I hope he is listening to hear what I am saying because I am not standing for people coming to take up what is not theirs and try to claim it. To who he I am speaking, move that fence and move it quick because otherwise we are going to Court.

Mr. Speaker, as you know I tend to be a very straight talking person, straightforward, do not mince my words, and I keep to my word every single time without exception. I first want the Honourable Members here in Parliament to support this measure. It is a 'new old' measure. It is something that we have been working on in the Ministry for quite a while and I am very happy to have had a chance to bring it here to Parliament so that we could get approval on it and to put this matter to rest. I know \$29 000 per year is not a big amount for the amount of land, but with \$29 000 a year I could build a house for somebody with that. If we could put that \$29 000 into the Consolidated Fund that is money that a senior citizen could benefit from maybe in your constituency, Mr. Speaker, maybe in mine, maybe in St. Michael West. With \$29 000 a year in two years that is two old people, people who would have given their all to this country to build this country to what it is, those people whose shoulders we now stand on to reach the heights that we have been able to reach.

Mr. Speaker, with those words I ask that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER NO. 2

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, TO APPROVE THE VESTING OF THE CROWN LAND SITUATE AT LOT A, WILDEY, IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN THIS ISLAND WITH THE BUILDINGS THEREON IN THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK A REGIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION ESTABLISHED BY AGREEMENT DATED THE 18TH DAY OF OCTOBER 1969 FOR USE AS IT HEADQUARTERS

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

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If the previous debate was a 'new old' matter I would have to say that this one is a 'new ancient' matter because this now goes back to 1969, 1970 and it has had certain iterations in between there from time to time. This essentially, Mr. Speaker, is an agreement between the Government of Barbados and the Caribbean Development Bank (C.D.B.) to be able to give them opportunities to be able to lease land for their headquarters and this is now coming to fruition because the Government from the time the Government of Barbados and C.D.B. took in from June 1970 the Government agreed and I quote:

"to keep the Bank's requirements for space under continuing review unless and until the bank assumes responsibility for such requirements and to make continuous or other appropriate premises available to the Bank as and when required."

The first part that was given to the Bank which they started was Conveyances in July 28, 1983 and then again in November 23, 2009 when the Government conveyed two adjoining vacant parcels of land to the Caribbean Development Bank (C.D.B.) free of charge. This is one part of 424 acres which were conveyed to The Crown way back in 1969. This land now is an additional portion that we are giving another 3.51 acres of Crown Lands to the Caribbean Development Bank (C.D.B.). I understand that that Caribbean Development Bank (C.D.B.) is going to expand their headquarters, not only providing, again, parking, but also improving the building and making it an even better building of which, not only the Caribbean can be proud, but us in Barbados of having them headquartered here can equally be proud. This is another important lease that we have been working on for quite some time and what we want to do is to get these matters recorded. The lands on which the headquarters stand were surveyed by Mr. Anderson R. Alleyne, Land Surveyor in January 2021 and recorded as Survey Plan number 8021. The land was found to contain a total of 14 193 square metres.

This is another simple matter, Mr. Speaker. I would not want to think that the Caribbean Development Bank would not keep to its commitments and be able to develop the land completely in keeping with what the expectations would be of a good Government and indeed a good financial institution and I have no doubt that they would be totally in compliant with all the Town and Country Development Planning Office regulations, all of the requirements of the lease and everything associated.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, the Caribbean Development Bank has been an excellent partner for Barbados for a long time. They assist us with many, many financial transactions

throughout all the Government and many ministries have been touched and we are privileged to have them here and we are privileged to be a partner with them to be able to build out not only Barbados but by extension to build out the Caribbean, so therefore I will ask, Mr. Speaker, that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. J. A. KING: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think it is unfortunate that the Parliament continues to send the signal to the Barbadian public that land policy is an issue of secondary importance in relation to other matters. It is unfortunate that Government and this Administration presently continues to signal that land policies are pursued in an ad hoc fashion.

We come here from time to time and we debate measures relative to land use and the impression can easily be received by the on-looking or listening public that this is a matter of insignificance, we do it incidentally. Land matters come here as stopgap fillings on the parliamentary agenda. We have come here today on the 25th day of May in the year of Our Lord 2021 to sit for ten minutes to consider two Resolutions relative to the use of Crown lands and we pass these Resolutions and we go another done deed, another parliamentary day.

Mr. Speaker, I will say it. I believe that this Administration needs to have a fuller deeper appreciation for the importance of land policy and for the use of Crown lands overtime in Barbados. There is tremendous value attaching to land. Private developers know that. Private interest benefits significantly from that in Barbados and have done so historically. It did not start three years ago on the 25th day of May, this has been going on traditionally historically in our context where private interest sometimes narrowed private interest, have significant benefits conveyed to them by how land is use and by how a land policy is formulated in this country and they understand the value that attaches to land. They understand the issue of ownership. I have been saying for quite some time, and my voice has not been alone in that, that the business of ownership must be a principal concern of any Government at any time. I have noticed in recent days, I think I saw it reported, that the Honourable Prime Minister was stressing the issue of ownership. That must be in Barbados where we have to bring as a moral responsibility and as a principal obligation of the Government the majority of people as many as possible into ownership in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, when you talk ownership I think to a large extent you are talking ownership of capital but you are talking ownership of land which constitutes a very important component of

capital assets. You cannot continue to see this an incidental matter.

We come here sometimes to have land transferred to this entity or that whether it is a regional institution or a private interest and we have done it in both respects. The point I am wanting to make here today is that land policy has to be viewed as a critical component of any policy platform of any serious Government and I do not know that this Government has yet signalled that. I have attempted more than once to say in my view we want to bring people into ownership, we want to develop housing programmes, we need to see a revolutionised role for the State-owned housing entity which we call the National Housing Corporation and we need to see more robust attempts to bring people into ownership of land and thereby facilitate them with housing.

Mr. Speaker, if I am to make reference to Government's recent awkward move of offering land to the public of Barbados, I think it was somewhere in St. James, and after people had expressed an interest and actually took action to come into ownership, then to change the policy is something else, that in itself suggests that we are not sufficiently seriously appreciating the value of land and the importance of bringing people into ownership as quickly as possible. There are some who would of course dispute that but I can only give you my view on the matter and so I believe any serious land policy has to be driven by an appreciation and an understanding of the value of land and the primacy of ownership especially ownership with ownership reference to land.

Land has been used historically in this country - and nobody has to tell us whether we are black or white - to monetise labour in a context where that labour was free labour, in a context where that labour was slave labour, but over the years, land has been used to monetize labour in Barbados. That tells me, Mr. Speaker, that if you want as a serious Government to empower and enrich your people, your country, your nation, you have to change the nature of the relationship between labour and the land. Right now in the majority instance labour in Barbados is disenfranchised and dispossessed with respect to land and I would think that a principal obligation to any Government especially a Government that was awarded 30 seats in a general election would be to try to change the nature of the relationship between labour and land in Barbados. The equation as it has been historically remains pretty much the same, that the majority of those who constitute the working-class in Barbados, the majority of those who constitute labour in Barbados, are still dispossessed and not empowered when it comes to the business of ownership of land so we have to see it as an important component of our mandate and a response to the needs of the country that as a Government we be one of the principal instruments, if not the primary instrument, in changing the nature and

relationship between labour and the land. Land has been used, Mr. Speaker, Sir, (you know this well) to embellish capital in Barbados and to establish a platform of prosperity for those who become the beneficiary of ownership by whatever means in this country. We have embellished, we have facilitated the increase of the position of capital in this country by land policy, either by omission on the part of whatever Administration ruled the day, or by Acts, deliberately/intentionally done by respective Administrations, we have continued to help construct a platform of prosperity for those who are already in the land owning class. So we have built for them bigger platforms, stronger platforms. We have increased their means and embellished capital, while, to a large extent still, labour flounders. In fact, in embellishing capital, we have helped further what some people refer to as persistent poverty among the working-class people.

You have a background, I think, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in sociology. You would have addressed your mind to these issues. You are a working-class man. You represent working-class communities across St. Michael Central. You are familiar with this. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you know that part of the problem is that dispossession among working-class people, that is why you have this persistent problem at Belle View, or part of it, and it must be perceived by a Government with such numbers that we have to change that relationship to which I earlier referred, we have to realise that a lot of what we do facilitates the further platforming for prosperity of a class which is already significantly beneficiaries with respect to ownership of land, and we have been, perhaps incidentally, perhaps by our own omission or acts of commission, furthering the plight of the poor with respect to this position and institutionalizing further by our actions, or lack of actions, persistent poverty dynamic with respect to land ownership in Barbados. These things are true. We have land use in this country which facilitates the entrenchment/furtherance of a commercial or retail sector. A large component of the Barbadian economy is retail and commercial activity, and land in Barbados has been used, historically, and even a changed context is still being used to keep people tied to a plantation economy system. Now, that is the history - coming forward from the days of slavery you go through a period of indentureship, you come to the now, and the sugar cane fields are barren, bush has taken its place, and to a little extent, privileged construction has replaced the sugar cane, and our fields now lie largely idle, but the plantation economy system still remains; high component of it is commercial and retail activity, or import and sell activity, and land has been used to facilitate this type of economy, and a Government must be aware that if we are going to change the profile of our economy, if we are to change our economic profile, then we have to reflect very much upon how land is used in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you cannot come to Government and find things as they are with institutionalized systems and culture repressing the majority of our people, frustrating their aspirations for upward economic mobility, and leave the office of Government only having done the superficial things, the cosmetic things which in themselves have not revolutionarily changed the context of the lives of our people. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am simply saying that land has to be seen for what it is worth, in terms of its value and the use of policy with respect to land for its effective potential to change the plight of people and their relationship to the economy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, land has been used to help build the middleclass in Barbados, it is not all negative, and I am not here to say [that] no Government over time has [not] done anything of significance to address land policy in Barbados. That would be totally dishonest. I sat on the other side once and I know that things were done in a positive way to improve the lot of people, and I know that things have been done outside of that on the other side to improve the lot of people in Barbados. But the question has to be asked: Has sufficient been done, and intentionally done, to change the plight of people, to change the relationship of working-class labour to the economy, to address the institutionalized systems and culture around the plantation economy that keeps poor people poor and helps to facilitate always a privileged few in their efforts to build upon that platform which already has been constructed? So we have seen the development of a middleclass in Barbados and that is positive use of land policy, and there must be more of this, and in recent times, in the last couple of years, with the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the collapse of the tourism industry, and prior to that perhaps not the most prudent and economic policies under the previous Administration we have seen the erosion of a lot of the base and wellbeing that have propped up in middleclass in Barbados and there has been the experience, but land has been used and we have got to reckon with, in terms of rebuilding what is loss among middleclass elements in Barbados, and expanding the middleclass in Barbados, how we can make land policy work towards that at the end; land is a highly valuable commodity when it comes to being in a position to have collateral, either to get into business activities or to build above and beyond that which you have been able to do at the moment.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all I am saying is, [that] we have to be very positive in our view about the value of land. We cannot continue with the incidental, almost superficial, by-the-way, ad hoc, now and then, stop-gap, fill-in approach to land policy that reflects itself when we come to the Parliament of Barbados. Land has been used very positively to change the character of both rural and urban Barbados. The Tenantry Freehold Purchasing programme introduced by the Adams Administration in the 1980s, the Tenantry Programme also initiated under the Arthur

Administration during the 1990s and so forth have served really to improve the lot of a lot of people in [both] urban and rural Barbados, through both the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission; people were brought into the ownership of land and you had t

Tenantry land available to people in rural Barbados at ten cents per square foot and to the extent that Barbados had lots of plantations, historically in urban Barbados, people who lived in urban Barbados on what traditionally had been plantation land benefited from those very low prices and came into ownership, and on that they were able to raise families, build houses and the whole character and aesthetic appearance of many communities in both urban and rural Barbados have been changed. The message coming out of that is not only about the capacity to empower people but it has to do with the business of urbanisation, and Government serious about its business has to be concerned, especially in 2021, as to where it is going on a policy of urbanisation. I do not know that I have heard any clear, definitive statement on that. Urbanisation is a phenomenon that brings with it a lot of other very significant dynamics, some positive and some negative. Mr. Speaker, you are a lawyer and you know these things. I am saying that your land policy must in some way take cognisance of a policy on urbanisation, and I do not know that I have even heard a reference to such links in the mouthings of the Government. Land has also been used to make more attractive Barbados as a jurisdiction for investment, and there is nothing wrong with that, but I am still solidly of the view that when it comes to the business of foreign investment into Barbados that necessitates ownership of land, policy has to be prudent and cautious and well-guided and must take serious cognisance of the impact of that policy or its particular initiative and investment with reference to how it affects the Barbadian population. It is therefore all right to use it to make yourself more attractive as an investment area for specific projects, but you cannot do that without reference to how it impacts Barbadians and Barbadian communities.

Sir, I still wait to see what happens in the Bay Street/Nelson Street/Bridgetown area once we see the Hyatt development, if it ever takes place, and if other investment along that corridor comes I wait to see what will happen to those who have been residents of the surrounding areas. Of course, many of them have been living in not the best of social economic conditions and have been living the plight of the poor, but you are going to be creating a situation where affluence and all of the aesthetics that come along with that, and all of the other logistical considerations that will accompany development along that area, will clash and conflict with traditional dynamics of poverty existing side-by-side. I wait to see if the plight of the poor will be improved or if the poor will

be dislocated and disadvantaged in the interest of facilitating those who are better privileged.

Sir, I really do not want to be long because I think the Members on the Other Side are anxious to get out of here. I do not want to create any discomfort for the Honourable Minister of Housing either. There have been some complaints coming from certain quarters about the marginalisation and the exclusion of the National Housing Corporation with respect to the award of contracts which have to do with housing and land projects; one of two of which are in prominent focus at this time. Complaints have come from over there as to the role of the National Housing Corporation and the fact that it seems to have been marginalised in recent times. Complaints have come from over there, Mr. Speaker; over there on that matter. I have raised a question with respect to the Hope Project ongoing and the role of the National Housing Corporation, which I still think needs to be further and better clarified by the principal spokespersons on the other side on matters of housing and land development. It would seem as though the National Housing Corporation has resiled itself or has been dismissed as an entity of importance with respect to the business of overseeing and managing Government lands, award of contracts, et cetera.

The Honourable Minister in recent times caused me to be a little confused because I heard him, in trying to explain the circumstances around the award of contract for the Hope Project, suggest that Rule 239 was used because we had an urgent situation, we have high unemployment in the country as a result of the collapse of the tourism industry and we need to put people back to work urgently because you cannot hang about.

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID: On a Point of Elucidation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID: I am sorry to stop the Honourable Member in full flight but I made it clear that Rule 239 was not used. Not that it was used; it was not used.

Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Hence my confusion, Mr. Speaker, because I heard the Minister explain that you had to make recourse to Rule 239 in a situation where it was urgent and you had to get people back to work. I heard that, but then subsequently I heard the Minister say Rule 239 was not used.

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID: On a Point of Elucidation again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID: Clearly, the Honourable Member is relating to something that was on 'Down To Brass Tacks', so basically the moderator was suggesting that Rule 239 was used but the person obviously had made an error and probably this is what has added to the confusion of the Honourable Member. Rule 239 is used in certain circumstances. What comes to mind is the rejuvenation project, which we had to get moving very quickly and which this Honourable House would have approved monies for. With respect to the housing programme, however, it was not used.

Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, all I am saying is that I am confused because I heard the Honourable Minister who just spoke say Rule 239 is used in certain circumstances, one of which is a circumstance of emergency or urgency. These were, in effect, his words. Tell me: If you have got all of these people unemployed, what constitutes a situation of urgency more than that? I heard that, and then subsequently I heard him say that it was not used, so hence my confusion. All I am saying is that I am confused; that is all I am saying.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: That is quite easy to do but I suspect that there are a lot of other people who are equally confused and it is not so easy to confuse some of them, but when you stress if this does not constitute an urgent matter, then what does?

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I do not know that it has been clarified. I am even more confused now, and that is easy to do, as was stated, but since the Minister wants to be combative today let us stay for a while. I am not going to sit down so quickly again, Mr. Speaker. I will stay for a while. Therefore, a voice from over there I heard complain in this very Chamber about perceived marginalisation of the National Housing Corporation and its role, and I still think that is an issue and it needs to be better clarified by the Honourable Minister who always speaks with a very honest voice. That needs to be better clarified as to the role of the National Housing Corporation. I have a view that this Administration has embarked upon a policy -- which was applied to politics but is now being applied to Government -- of what I call parallelism. Mr. Speaker, in an effort to create a context for better control, in an effort to perhaps get around regulations a bit, and in an effort perhaps not to subject yourself to as full scrutiny as one would perhaps desire you create parallel entities because you want to achieve political ends as well as governmental public service ends. You have your National

Housing Corporation, but you create an entity called HOPE and HOPE does in the immediate instance what NHC perhaps will normally do if it were in a position so to do and the question has to be answered as to whether or not it is. Then the further question is, beyond HOPE, what next, will there be more HOPE, will there be greater HOPE, or will there be new HOPE? Hence, what is the future role for the NHC and are we creating a parallel entity which perhaps we can better control, better influence, better serve not only public service ends but serve political ends as well. If you make reference to the establishment of a public affairs bureau, the same conclusion is arrived at. We have a Government Information Service, but you have created a public affairs unit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please stick to the issue relative to land please.

Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I am very clearly sticking to the issue and the issue is, are we creating a parallel entity that relieves the NHC of its functions and are we creating an entity that we can better manage towards our own ends whether the public service oriented ends, people oriented ends or political oriented ends. That is what I am speaking to and I am illustrating that by reference to the establishment of a public affairs unit when in fact you have a Government Information Service. Hence, are we seeing an embarkation upon a path where we will have these parallel entities created in Barbados?

Mr. Speaker, it must be full disclosure when it comes to the business of transferring Crown lands to private interest. We have here before us today the CDB, which is a regional institution and I suppose there is no problem with that. There is also the transfer of property to private entity. I do not even believe there is an issue with that but I am speaking in the wider context of things. It has to be fuller disclosure when it comes to these matters. I heard a voice from that side also question the business of facilitation terms when it comes to transfer of Crown lands into the ownership or private interest. Mr. Speaker, if you again reference the Hyatt, we were told in this Chamber that Government was going to relieve the previous owners of the property on Bay Street, Tiny Tots, Merchandani, and Mrs. Ram. I am sorry for calling that name, but I am just trying to identify the property and not saying anything about her. We were told that the tourism sector, one of its entities was going to take over that property and then have it transferred to private interest. Now, nobody is saying necessarily that that is the illegal, criminal, immoral or wrong. What I am saying, is that when you are involved in matters like that, because if the State legally acquires it from the owner, whether under duress or otherwise, it

becomes State lands, but then you facilitate the transfer to private interest, then the people of Barbados should get to know what are the terms under which this transfer of title of ownership these things are facilitating. That is all I am saying. I do not know that it has happened fully with respect to the prospective Hyatt development. I do not know that it is happening fully with respect to the HOPE project, any aspect of it at this time.

These are some matters I wanted to raise. I do not want to talk anymore today about the HOPE project. I had about eight or nine questions there on that, but the Honourable Minister has signalled to me that he does not want to be hereto long today and so I am going to quit.

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

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter this debate and I welcome the opportunity to do so, because that which was said previously by the Leader of the Opposition presents a glorious and I think a necessary opportunity to put some context to that which is happening with regard to housing and the use of land in Barbados and the general policy of the Government. Mr. Speaker, it also helps for us to perhaps clear the air and remove the fog from the memories of fellow Barbadians, clearly one of whom sits in this Chamber, who perhaps have forgotten in the last three years, and I can understand, there is so much being done, you may become a little bit overwhelmed and begin to fall victim to a convenient form of amnesia where you forget that which transpired in this sector of housing and use of land in Barbados during the course of the period of the Administration of this country under the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, it is all too easy for people to expect that almost by the wave of a magic wand you can set all the wrongs right and make perfect that which was completely imperfect when once we came to office two years ago. Sir, I believe today is the anniversary of the first day that we would have been in Government.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there is a context to the concerns that are raised. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke, for example, to the need for there to be changes in the institutional structure and in that regard he spent some time talking about the ease of access to land and in general terms financing. Mr. Speaker, I could not agree with him more, but let us also face the reality of what had to happen and what was done, because there is a holistic view that has to be taken of any approach by any Government to policy.

Sir, when we came to office, one of the first things that we did, and I believe I am correct in saying it may have been on the first Sitting of the House, the Minister of Education would have sought to begin the process of making sure that Barbadians were once again able to return

to the University of the West Indies in circumstances where Government was going to cover their tuition cost. Mr. Speaker, what is the relevance of that to this? I stand in this House as a Barbadian who was able to take out a mortgage not because of any connection I had to a financial institution, but I was able to take out my first mortgage at age 26 by virtue of the fact that when I presented myself to the financial institution I held qualifications and the projection was, well if you are practicing law and you are a professional, then you are going to be in a category that you should be able to pay back the \$3 000 a month that that mortgage was at the time. It could not have happened were I not able to graduate with the certificates in my hand. What people fail to grasp very often, is that there was a fundamental improvement in terms of the opportunity presented to our young people, a generation that would otherwise left to the policy of the last Administration, and a generation that would have been bereft of that opportunity had the opportunity restored. Sir, hence I begin on that note on sharing that personal experience, because it is obviously not only near and dear to me, but it stands without contradiction as being the opportunity or the doorway to opportunity that is presented to several others in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member and I genuinely thank him for raising some of these matters because as I said, it allows us to have a serious engagement. We are not in any hurry to go anywhere. The reason why I got up to speak today is because I want to engage on this matter. Land policy, Mr. Speaker, again is one of the first things that this BLP Government committed itself to. I remember well within the first week or two of the life of this Administration that the Prime Minister of Barbados made it clear that we were going to change and, in fact, within six months did bring a new Town and Country Planning Act to the Parliament of Barbados.

It is that legislation which speaks directly to the issue of land use policy. What is it that is at the core of that which we are trying to do above and beyond facilitating business? How does it strike to the heart of the ordinary man, Sir? It strikes to the heart of the ordinary man because I at the time would have been in the Ministry of Tourism. I would have seen the investors come and be happy to breathe fresh air because of the fact that there were terrorized under the last Administration. Men were running for cover because to appear with a project meant that you might end up expending the equivalent of three projects. They came to a new Administration and want to speak the language of how you can make investments.

The thinking at the time was and has always been in Barbados that we are doing investments laterally as though we are going to find more and more land on an island of 166 square miles. This Administration recognized up front that there was a need to break the barrier and go where we

had been all reluctant to go before and raise the levels at which you could build. For example, instead of a hotel take up an extra acre or two, the hotel can go vertically. Instead of stopping at six storeys, people were making applications to the Town and Country Development Planning Department for 11 and 12 storeys, Sir.

I do not function in that Ministry, so I cannot tell you the status of all of those applications but I can tell you that prior to COVID-19, it was the language that was being spoken by tourism investors in Barbados. How does it help the ordinary man? It is a land use policy intervention that makes sure, therefore, that there is an opportunity to have maximum utilization of a small footprint for a hotel and at the same time have land available for other developmental purposes, for example, housing in the immediate vicinity of the hotel. I have said on the floor of this repeatedly, it is one of the characteristics that separate us, Sir, and distinguishes us in the Caribbean as a whole.

If you go to Jamaica, you will find that there are hotels and that they are segregated from the communities, especially in the north of Jamaica. Behind tall walls you will find the hotel and people reside far away. I have seen it with my own eyes, Sir, security guards and police officers armed with M16 automatic assault rifles. This is not the case in Barbados. If you go to the Dominican Republic you see it too because there is not an easy compatibility and natural flow between the society, the people of the country and the country's hotel product. In Barbados, people walk out of Sandals Resort across the road to Oistins on Friday nights. This has been our experience. The same thing occurs on the West Coast of Barbados.

Along the West Coast you will find ordinary Barbadians sitting in a rum shop. There is John Simpson's place in Fitts Village, Mr. Speaker. There is Wendy's Snack Bar. It is where all the Englishmen will go having left a luxury hotel and watch football on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The reality is that that easy flow is facilitated but the important point that the Leader of the Opposition raises but does not make contact with, is that it is an achievement made by this Government. Do not stand here now and say that you have not heard anything about land use policy when one of the first things we did was to create the Town and Country Development Planning legislation to facilitate the same land use policy.

I am not talking about a plan. I am talking about a piece of legislation that was passed in Parliament of Barbados within the first six months of the life of this Administration when the Leader of the Opposition sat where he now sits. He might be tone-deaf to that which we said. He may have convenient amnesia. Sir, he may be in a situation where one becomes punch-drunk if he had to sit down home and looked at the range of successes that were presented to this nation in our three-year report. If I was the

Leader of the Opposition, I would perhaps also be too punch-drunk to come in "hay" this morning. The body blows would have most men wobbling but that does not give an excuse to create your own facts.

The fact of the matter is that beyond that, this Administration is the first in the history of this country to bring to bear a requirement that investors do not just come and ask for concessions, but investors must also have some planning gains imposed upon them. Therefore, when you are coming here to do whatever it is that you propose to do, it is this Administration that is saying to you, "No. We will help you but at the same time you have to help those people who are mostly in need." It may well be that some of the land we are going to ask you now to assist us in purchasing is land to do development in a fish market setting or to do development in a sporting facility setting such as pavilions.

Equally, it may be that it is land so that we can develop housing for poor people in Barbados. This is part of what has been happening in this country for the last three years. I have sat in this Parliament and heard the Leader of Government Business speak to it. I have sat in this Parliament and heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central speak to it repeatedly, Mr. Speaker, in her capacity as the Minister responsible for Economic Affairs. Therefore, it cannot be new to the Leader of the Opposition.

It cannot be something that he is unfamiliar with that we have introduced this system of planning gains. Indeed, at the same Hyatt Hotel that he speaks to, there have been a number of planning gains attached to that development so as to enable poor people in the constituencies of the Honourable Members for the City and St. Michael South to be able to benefit from assistance that they would not easily otherwise in the financially difficult circumstances confronting this country. I do not speak about a plan. I am speaking about that which is a reality. It is a practice that has come about during the course of the last three years.

I look across at the Leader of the Opposition. I see him bow his head and his shoulders slumped under the weight of the reality that is now being brought to bear on him, but I do not feel any sympathy for he should have done research before he got up to speak. It is an elementary error that he has made, Sir, and I go further. Mr. Speaker, he talks about ownership. There has not been a Government that has brought an aggressive housing programme like that which the Honourable Member is now trying to pilot through Barbados. I hear the talk about the HOPE Programme and the Honourable Member will wrap up this debate. I will not speak about it for him but I will say this. Nobody came to my constituency before with a programme for housing like how the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has done.

In Lancaster, St. James that same piece of land was the source of an allegation of outrageous corruption under the last Administration where it was supposed to have been taken and then re-sold on instruction from a Minister. This is part of the records of the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Assembly of the Parliament of Barbados. It was to be sold at a price that was ridiculous on the instruction of a Minister, Mr. Speaker. This is what the evidence before the Public Accounts Committee is showing. The Report of the Committee of Public Accounts is a document of the Parliament of Barbados, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition must know that, so that I have to defend what is happening at Lancaster because that is 200 houses being brought to the constituency of St. James Central. I do not expect to get all 200, but I told the Honourable Member for Christ Church West that there has to be a satisfactory ratio.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, he did not stop there. The Honourable Minister has gone to Chancery Lane in Christ Church East where there will be over 260 houses. Where have we been hearing about that level of housing development before? Nobody expected that to come about in the context of the enduring of Covid-19. Nobody expected that to come about in the aftermath of the holocaust of the last decade of the Democratic Labour Party (D.L.P.). What we heard about and what we inherited and what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition campaigned against, but seems now to have conveniently turned his mind and forgotten about is the fact that the National Housing Corporation (N.H.C.) that this Government inherited three years ago was technically bankrupt with \$140-odd million, if not more, in debt and is still in that dire situation. Yet, still we are finding creative ways of making sure that we find housing for the people of Barbados, and I am going to sit down in here and stomach this thing about value being attached to land and Government not understanding and that there is need for a land policy. There is a land policy and the land policy is being unrolled and that private enterprise has partnered with Government may stick in the craw of some people of Barbados, but I go further. It is not just that private enterprise has partnered with Government, it is that Government has partnered with private enterprise in order to make sure that people who were otherwise shut out now have an opportunity. I am not going to be part of the historical revisionism in this country, Mr. Speaker, because I sat as part of the Committee of Public Accounts of Barbados and heard witness after witness come and explained how a Cabinet, not the National Housing Corporation Board, determined that certain contractors in Barbados were going to build high-rise houses. I heard the evidence and I saw the evidence, Sir. It is part of the records of this House. We do not have to call the names of the contractors we know all of them. I have nothing against

the white people who benefited, but I am going to say if you are going to come in here and talk about value attached to land then also talk about the fact that it was this Government and only this Government that made sure we created a co-operative to build together a set of artisans and contractors in Barbados for the first time in the history of this country and that after that was done it was this Government that no sooner than they were created handed them a job. I do believe the first job that they would have gotten was at the Springer Memorial School to do repairs on that. The record of this Government is not that you are taking everything and putting it into the hands of the 'too-few' but that you are trying to create a category of people who are then in a position to compete in a marketplace and get access to business.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is true to say that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West had then, with regard to who is building under the Home Ownership Providing Energy (HOPE) Project and other projects because the HOPE Project is not the only one, opened up an expression of interest to all. That same co-operative is part of the people who would have been earmarked to do work in this country, a complete transformation to what took place in the last 10 years when men sat in a Cabinet room and determined that they were going to hand to one or two people in Barbados all of the construction work in this country, Sir, and now all of a sudden I am hearing it getting muddled as though people have forgotten that which this Government has been doing and how we had to intervened and tried to set right the balance.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not an easy thing either because the worst thing you can do is to intervene in too heavy-handed a way and create instability in this society at this critical time when all of us have to be holding together because Barbados is under unimaginable and unprecedented amounts of pressure so you have to intervene and make sure that you right-size the ship and that you create fairness where no fairness existed before. Mr. Speaker, in pursuit of that equity, however, you cannot unfair people either.

Mr. Speaker, I want to hear from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition what his policy would be. Do not get up here and just point to every imaginable ill that he can find blowing in the wind. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition should tell us what he would have done differently, if anything.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you can go on and on. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about a land use policy. On Friday last, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security chaired a meeting, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was a part of that meeting, I was a part of that meeting and there were one or two other members of the Cabinet at the meeting where we

were looking at the same land use issue with regard to agriculture and its balance with the effort to renewable energy, and why? The Honourable Member wants to talk about policy, but he does so in a vacuum and in a rapid way. It is unfair to the country and unfortunate because he is sitting in an office which is constitutional and with that some come an element of responsibility and gravitas; seriousness, because, Sir, you cannot just raise an issue and not speak to the consequences or what you would see as the policy alternatives.

Sir, we are confronted with a country that on an annual basis, at a minimum, will spend \$450 million to \$500 million in foreign exchange to import petroleum products into Barbados and in a difficult year when there is conflict in the Middle East we would spend as much as \$800 million to import petroleum products into Barbados. There has to be a harness brought to that kind of runaway expenditure. The only solution is to have a movement towards renewable energy so that we can be in control of the cost, as much as humanly possible, of the energy that we produce and consume, but to do so you just do not wave a wand. The renewable energy effort has to be understood to be one that will require the use of the photovoltaics on people's roofs, et cetera, and equally there must be photovoltaics farms, and we are going to have that.

Sir, how does that coexist with agriculture? Sir, while the use of the sun for photovoltaics land is a land-thirsty exercise equally land-thirsty is agriculture and equally land-thirsty is housing. Mr. Speaker, Sir, Barbados is not getting any bigger so the serious people in policy do not just get up and say there is a problem, serious people in policy engage on the problem, find solutions and discuss options about the problem, but not so the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in Barbados, not so this Honourable Leader of the Opposition. He is a disappointment, Sir, some say, because that seat has been held by giants. The late Mr. J. M. G. M. "Tom" Adams held that seat, the late Right Honourable Professor Owen Arthur held that seat and the Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados now held that seat. For us to have an Honourable Leader of the Opposition sitting in that same seat, but offering nothing to the country saddens me. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that notwithstanding we have to have the discussions. If the Honourable Member wants to talk about land use policy then these are the things that the Government is engaging on not by itself, but with the wider society so that there is nobody in the agriculture sector in Barbados that does not now know that there is a serious effort afoot to find a way in which we can have efforts like raising sheep co-exist with renewable energy and the placement of photovoltaics farms. There is nobody in agriculture now who does not know that we are engaging with that sector in terms of how we can use wind energy and have it co-exist with sugarcane production.

There is nobody in Barbados now, Mr. Speaker, who does not know that with a view to making sure that housing and people who own houses are given a better opportunity in terms of the capacity to pay their mortgage that you are now having discussions with the financial community to use the roof of your house to locate the photovoltaics energy and then sell back into the grid putting you in a position where you have a little extra money to pay off your mortgage. There is no serious person in Barbados who is not aware of that.

Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the Honourable Member again what saddens me is the part when he called for change in institutional structures. It is almost as if he caught himself after saying what he said and made reference to the fact that it is this Government, not this Administration but certainly the party in Government, that created both a Rural Development Commission and Urban Development Commission.

The Honourable Member cannot come here now to preach to the converted. We do not need, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to be lectured by those who have run away from us on the fact that we did that which we have done. It is a fact that we created the Urban and Rural Development Commissions and it is a fact that the focus of those two enterprises has been institutional reform. What is it that they do, Mr. Speaker? In my constituency there are people in Fitts Village, St. James in particular who have been able to get title to houses title and to land. Erstwhile they were tenants and today they are title holders, land owners in their own right because of the intervention of the Barbados Labour Party. I did not make that up, that is a reality.

There are people in Barbados today who live in National Housing Corporation units that are holding title to the units because of the intervention of this particular Government and Administration, so what institutional reform are we being lectured about when we have gone where no other Government in the history of Barbados has been able to go before us. I do not understand it. It is the start of summer. I cannot call it midsummer's madness. I do not understand it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, then it is as though we forget that when we came to Government we found 109 squatters just east of the Grantley Adams International Airport, people who live in the most unfortunate of conditions. People were squatting in circumstances where there was limited or no running water, people who were borrowing electricity automatically in danger of massive fire hazards and people who should not be living in the circumstances they were living in 2018 far less living in those circumstances at all were living effectively in a dump and this Barbados Labour Party has intervened and lifted the plight of those squatters in the teeth of protest coming from certain opposition sources in this country. Mr. Speaker, in the teeth of the

harshness of the economic circumstances confronting Barbados we took out all 109 of those squatters, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and have then located now in places like Carpenter's Glade and Parish Land extension and so on around Barbados because they are human beings and they must be treated as human beings should be treated in a country.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Or the process of locating them is ongoing. Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty because I understand Opposition politics. I have been there and I have done that. I have led the Leader of Opposition business.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know the need to engage, but Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have always felt that you engage in a manner that is sensible and developmental. You do not just get up and engage for the sake of engaging without knowing what you are engaging about. There is no way, there is no shape, there is no form... What we were treated to today is the most unfortunate set of amorphous absurdity that has ever been vomited out on the Floor of this House.

Mr. Speaker, how can you be calling for recognition of the value of land when a Government stands up and in the teeth of all criticisms says: Look, we understand that we cannot send and we will never send a signal to people that you just come and squat and expect to get benefits. We said that clearly but equally we say that we have to correct inhumanity and subhuman conditions where they exist and that if we continue to allow that which was happening just east of the Airport to continue to happen you are asking for colossal disaster and there must be an intervention, and part of what Government is about is to make hard decisions and make difficult interventions because you are doing so in the greater good of the people. We took that position not for the only time because it was only a few weeks ago that that same kind of principle was applied when the Chief Fire Officer made it clear that he was closing down a certain recycling enterprise because it was compromising the safety of a couple hundred people or maybe by extension a couple thousand people. You had a whole district like Melrose and surrounding areas being threatened and the Chief Fire Officer said: Look, I have a duty, and Government has a duty equally to respond. These are difficult circumstances. Why difficult? Because a lot of that which was stockpiled had to be taken and put back into the metal dump in Bagatelle in my constituency so it is difficult for me. I did not have a say in the matter because it is a public health issue and an environmental health issue and the only assurance I have been given is that there will not be any hazards to the neighbourhood and that it will be compacted and buried as such as was intended from the time you had a metal dump down there.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I understand and I appreciate those Honourable Members who had to do that which they had to do and I think the people of the constituency understand and appreciate that is the purpose of a metal dump and it goes back to its original purpose. If they are not threatened by anything hazardous environmentally all can be well but we have a duty to responsible and in the use of land in a land-scarce country these are the very real and mature and serious considerations that have to be borne. These are the deliberations that the House should be engaged in not to come in here and make snide comments about how Honourable Members want to go along early. Every Honourable Member in here, Mr. Speaker, I am sure wants to engage on this matter because this matter is at the heart of what governance is about, not posturing, not coming across as though you have suddenly discovered that which all people who are familiar vaguely with the history of this country know that there has been a use of land policy to humbug working-class people but talk about what you now see in part of your current affairs. Part of your current affairs, most recently the last three years specifically, tells that there is an Administration that has brought light where darkness previously existed, that there is an Administration that intervened where people did not have the testicular fortitude or the intestinal fortitude to intervene, that there is an Administration that applied itself mentally to finding solutions and that part of those solutions lie in the things that I have outlined to this House just now so that when investors come here and say that they got pockets stretching down to their ankles we say to them fine you can be facilitated but you are going to be facilitated if you help to carry along some of the working-class in Barbados because they must not be left looking on, they must be part of the inclusion.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member should talk about the fact that he sits in a Parliament that renewed a Town and Country Planning Act that was older than the Honourable Prime Minister that was fit for a purpose when we were a colony. Those are the things we have to talk about, Mr. Speaker, not just to come here and make noise and hope that you would catch a headline and then go downstairs and 'fire' a liquor.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, it is time to wrap up, please.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I will wrap up on your command, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I am sorry I did not speak earlier because I really would have enjoyed another hour at this.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE: Sir, I think that today is a very special day for all of us in this Honourable Chamber. For me, the last few days -- certainly yesterday and today -- have felt quite sobering, have been an opportunity for me to pause and to be grateful to the people of St. Michael South Central, to be grateful to the people of Barbados. The people of St. Michael South Central are the reason that I am here. They are the people who caused me to be here through their overwhelming show of confidence at the polls, but they are also the reason I wanted to be here, Sir, because I have always said that I have never had any particular interest in -- for the record -- political activity or policymaking. Sir, I wanted to come to political life at a time when I felt I could be of use to the people of my community -- I am a child of St. Michael -- and to the people of my country.

Today, Sir, reflecting on the last three years for me is not about being boastful. It is not about patting ourselves on the back. We have a lot of work to do. It is about being able to look back and take stock and take a record of what this Barbados Labour Party Administration has so far been able to achieve. People talk about hitting the ground running; we hit the sky flying.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE: We had to. We had absolutely no choice. Do you know what? People see me on the street all the time and they have tried to commiserate and they say it must be so hard. I think it is a challenge. One does not get much sleep but I also say to them this is what I came here for. This is absolutely what I came here for, and I came at a time when I feel I have a little energy in me. This is the time to do what I am doing, Sir. Against that background, Sir, I thank the Honourable Member for St. James Central for beginning to introduce in his intervention the tremendous reforms that I have had the pleasure of leading, together with the Honourable Prime Minister, in the area of planning and development policy and in the area of land use policy. Therefore, I do appreciate the questions of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

We all have perceptions of the job we have to do. We all have perceptions of the role that we are meant to play. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West and Leader of the Opposition has such ideas what that role is, and I think that we have to understand that perspective; and so when he frames his questions or claims of questions, as he does, I think that one would understand that perhaps he is doing so with a view to generating public discourse. I am

happy to engage in the discourse. Therefore, having thanked the Honourable Member for St. James Central for starting to allude to some of the reforms, I want this morning to give some colour and some depth and some context and some texture to what the Honourable Member before me started to discuss, Sir.

It is absolutely true that any Government must have a particular approach to land use policy as perhaps one of the most important in an open, small-island economy. Yes, I was very happy to begin, in June 2018 along with the Honourable Prime Minister, discussing the changes to the Town and Country Planning Act; now called the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2020. It really laid out a whole new approach to the use of land and to planning, and there was one of the very important approaches, again, which the Honourable Member before me made reference to. I want to really explain carefully, because I think sometimes we use expressions and they can sometimes be a bit of a misunderstanding of what the mechanism is that we are talking about. This is a mechanism under planning law all over the world: the use of planning obligations in the regulatory procedure of getting planning approval.

Sir, what are planning obligations and why do they exist? The reason for planning obligations -- and I need to make myself very clear on this -- is to be able to manage the overall balance of development. What do I mean by that? You may have a development coming that is going to take a certain amount of land out of a certain kind of production. It may be agriculture, it may be residential, and it may be some kind of use that the land is already in that is going to have implications for the balance of the development. The balance of development is making sure that you are using your land to the best overall wellbeing, economic, social and otherwise, of the country. What we are doing through the Planning and Development Act and through the physical development plan which I will come to later, is making sure that we have a sound balance of development. What does that mean? It means that if you are having an environmental impact on the one side, you are accounting for that impact on the other side by giving some benefit to the people of the country.

On an island the size of ours with Barbados having been through what it has in its development as a post-colonial society and in many ways, some may argue, still a colonial society, but that is another conversation for another day. Barbados, having gone through the development trajectory that it has, you cannot benefit from the patrimony of the country. You cannot have, as you must, an impact through your development footprint on the country and not seek to balance that by some matching contribution to that country's development. That is what planning obligations are about. We were able to use planning obligations as a development mechanism to be

able to make land available for housing solutions. That is something that has not been done in this country before. That is something that in June 2018 we knew we had to do because we all know how large the country is, Sir.

We started the discussion on the building out of the island seeking to create some more space, but the fact is that in June 2018 we had the land that we had and we had to make use of planning obligations in order to be able to make land available for housing. We have used planning obligations, for example, in the case of the Hyatt development. I do not want to speak in too much detail to something that is still the subject of legal agreement, but I do not think it is any secret, that the whole point of having a discussion on how the Hyatt should develop is to be able to say that this development is a part of Government's overall plan for the development of the urban corridor in Barbados. It was not just or it is not just, should I put a hotel there, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows this because these conversations started when he or before he saw it more useful or beneficial, other words one might use, to go in another direction where he now finds himself. He was a part of those conversations, and so he knows that these conversations have been driven by and it was not by a developer coming in and saying I want a hotel, but these conversations have driven by this Government's mandate and absolute priority to see the development of the urban corridor in Barbados, and so any hotel development that finds itself apart of that must contribute to that urban development, that urban regeneration. When in April 2019 I was given the privilege of leading the Tourism Investment Forum. What we said to all of the developers who came at that time was listen, I hate to put it this way but your project is important but it is also incidental, it is a part of the urban regeneration for the people of Barbados, and so the Hyatt planning obligations include everything from making sure there is space for cultural entrepreneurs to making sure that we have certain agreements regarding how workers in those communities are going to be engaged. Let us not pretend that these questions have not been answered or that these question are not going to be answered. I have no objection once the project is going to anybody being a watchdog and making sure that these things are happening, I think those things are important. I think it is absolutely important to hold developers accountable to what they say they are going to do to develop the communities around them, go for it. I would submit that that is the role of an Opposition to actually base your remonstrations in fact rather than speculation about what might and might not be done.

Sir, there is another development that is contemplated and has received planning permission in the north of the island. As part of the planning obligations agreement with that development, it will see that hotel investing in the regeneration of community playing fields

and in making sure that we are able to maintain the drainage solutions in those areas. What we have said to developers is the following. We expect that we will have in the case of Bridgetown, a Bridgetown Urban Rehabilitation Fund, in the case of Hometown in the north, a similar fund to which developers can contribute to make sure that there is the ongoing maintenance of common services like drainage and so on that actually are very heavily impacted by major developments. This is how we have sought to use planning obligations, to make available, land of affordable housing solutions, to make sure that developers are contributing to the maintenance of common systems on which their development will be drawing and having an undue stress on the sanitation and water systems and so on. To make sure that these developers are investing in the employment opportunities, the cultural activities and the communities around them. There has actually been no resistance, because I think developers now in 2021 realise that it is more beneficial to integrate with your community than to seek to be apart from it. Sir, planning obligations as a part of the new planning and development legislation is a mechanism that demonstrates foresight, it demonstrates an approach to planning that we had not seen before.

However, I want to go further on this matter of land use policy. Now, the Honourable Member for St. James Central again made reference to a meeting that has been a part of a series of consultations on the physical development plan. The physical development plan of Barbados is where all of these issues of land use converge to be laid out in a very clear map, to be laid out together so that the people of Barbados can see this is the balance of development across agriculture, water, energy, housing, commercial development and any other activities in which the people of Barbados would want to place their productive efforts. It is in the physical development plan. The meeting that the Honourable Member referenced that took place last Friday and I want to thank the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South for honouring my request to advance that discussion, because as the Member who has responsibility for making sure we finalise the physical development plan, I do not mind saying to you that my mother used to use the word gibbeting. I do not know if the young people in here would know that word. However, I have been after colleagues to make sure that we have these strategic conversations and colleagues have thankfully obliged because they are having similar discussions in their Ministries in their sectors. Hence, the Ministry of Energy was able to share with the Ministry of Investment and the Town Planning office which is a part of that Ministry, what are their plans for reaching the targets in the energy policy and what will be the use of land that is required, what is the balance of ground mounted solar PV as against rooftop mounted solar PV. What is it that is required as an input that we have to make visible in the physical development plan.

Similarly, for agriculture, given the nutrition security targets of the country, given the use of technology that we anticipate as against the use of open farming or the mix of the two, what is it that we believe will be the needs of the agriculture sector when it comes to land use. Now, note I say given the use of technology, because I do not think that given the land that we have we can do all open farming all the time forever and ever and still meet the nutrition security targets of the country. Nevertheless, part of that conversation is given the competing interest of all the sectors that require land, what is the best balance that we can find and that does include seeing what the agricultural activities that can coexist alongside energy are? That is one of them, but we also have to bring in the plans or the work of the water and sanitation sector, climate resilience and environmental protection. These are all things that hang together and are considered together in the physical development plan. Now, we have a 2017 draft and if you go on the Town Planning website you will be able to see the drafted physical development plan of 2017. Sir, it is a very good document, but here is why it is being changed. It is being changed and updated with all of these policy considerations that we have been having consultations about, because this Barbados Labour Party Administration has come with so many transformational reforms in the last three years that they now have to be reflected in a revised physical development plan.

There have been so many updates between the urban regeneration and renewal of Bridgetown and the greater Carlisle Bay area, the changes to the agricultural and energy sectors and the ways in which we have been approaching housing. There have been so many transformations in policy that we are now producing a PDP 2021 that will be the subject of public consultations with the people of Barbados. The people of Barbados have seen the 2017 PDP. It is a good starting point to be able to discuss this transformation but it has to be updated to reflect all of the things that we are now doing, the new approaches to housing and the fact that we expect to see the greater use of technology in agriculture and agro-business.

It has to be updated to reflect the fact that we are now going to be seeing the use of all kind of different approaches to make sure we have people participating in their own climate resilience at the household level. Therefore, things such as how we are able to use water tanks and double reticulation systems to ensure that people can use water that is collected in their tanks, make investments in that kind of technology, give people the financial wherewithal through revolving funds to get access to the financing and be able to retrofit their homes in a way that is climate resilient will be the focus. The use of battery storage in the energy sector so that you are not just making use of the sun when it is at height and generating energy but that you can then store that energy to make use of it

later to make your household resilient in the event that there is a disaster will be the focus.

Sir, all of these things are such that would make a 2017 PDP outdated and irrelevant. We have started the work and expect over the next few weeks to update that PDP. It is the reason why we had all of those meetings. This is the reason we had all of these meetings with the energy, agriculture, water and housing Ministries. The other side of that is that it also has to reflect a balance of investment. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition talked and it was amazing to hear because he started in a place that he ended up. He started by asking about the connection between labour, land and ownership and then, answered his own question. It is amazing. I would love to be able to eventually answer all of my questions. I would not even have to leave home on a daily basis.

The point is, Sir, that we have also said with respect to ownership and the productive use of land that our renewable energy projects, medicinal cannabis projects and other similar activities must have 30 percent local ownership. We understand that you do not just say it and it happens. Therefore, we have said that even if we have to set up a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for Government to be able to facilitate that ownership so that regular Barbadians could take their money from getting less than 0.1 percent in the bank and put it into to the growth and development of the country, we as a Government are going to facilitate that SPV or whatever are the Government's mechanisms that are required to do that.

This is how we are connecting land use, financial resilience of people and their ownership in what happens in this country; their participation in growth in this country. I feel that sometimes we are stuck. I say "we" collectively. The general thinking of the public on certain issues is stuck in time where you thought that Government had to be everything to everyone. Governments do not grow. The private sector grows. Government's role is to facilitate that growth. The reason that we had such disastrous previous Administration and period of governance is that the last Government had no ideas.

There was not an iota of innovation to be found in the policies that they introduced to seek, suggest or pretend to generate growth in this country. They had a sectoral approach that Government would take out the money in its pocket, put it in there and had to drive growth. However, we all know that that does not work. Certainly, it does not work in economies like this where Governments like ours do not have the fiscal space to dump all of our money in trying to get private enterprise to get growth happening. Therefore, our role as we have done through the HOPE Project is to come up with the mechanisms to enable the private sector to do what it needs to do.

When I talk about the private sector, I am talking about foreign-direct investment, people in Barbados who have the financial resources and also about people in Barbados who may not currently have the financial resources, but who have the ideas, willingness and must have ownership in the growth and development of this country. Let us not pretend that that has not been the goal and mandate of this BLP Administration. Therefore, when we talk about creating a company or a special mechanism so that we can get housing solutions to Barbados today that is a part of the governance innovation that this BLP Government has brought to how we do things.

Gone are the days where you had to try and find the room, fiscal space or money in an existing enterprise. This is not what Central Government is there for and that is often not what even State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) are there for because they have to respond so broadly to the needs of every Barbadian that they cannot then focus on what are these specific interventions that are going to add value quickly to the lives of Barbadian. I am looking as I speak very much into the eyes of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East because she is wearing her mask. When I talk about housing solutions I cannot help but look at her.

She understands that we have concerns about overcrowding in certain areas. Let us be real. In a situation where you have a pandemic that distancing is one of the most important health interventions you can make, we saw even clearer in the last 15 months how we have to be able to ease the pressure in certain households and communities by providing housing solutions today. I am in the Ministry of Planning, so we are always doing planning work. Part of the work that we were doing this morning very early that the economic team met to speak about, we did a very simple exercise which is to say to everyone around the room if they were to say what were one of the main development concerns of Barbados today it would have to be housing.

Therefore, I am going to wait to get the NHC in shape to be able to deliver financially and otherwise? I do not know how long that is going to take. I am sorry but I am being straight. I cannot wait for that. This BLP Administration has the wherewithal, grey matter and innovation to say, "Okay. These are the tools at our disposal under law, the Public Financial Management Act and all the other things that govern us and this is what we are going to use." I go further. On this question of the relationship between labour and land, this is exactly reason why HOPE was created. It is exactly the point and has almost made me think that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was there. I mean I get confused sometimes remembering when he was there and when he was not there because there is so much planning that we did together at one time so sometimes I get the days confused. The HOPE

Direct Project was created for that reason because we knew that nurses, police officers, teachers and people earning less than \$4 000 a month would need HOPE Direct. We realised that if we did not intervene to give those people a fighting chance to own a home and to own land and to be able to have a little kitchen garden, perhaps, somewhere and that is where the Lears Land Lease Project and the other things that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is working on came into play. If we did not do that, let us be real, they would never have an opportunity to own a home.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central spoke about going to school and graduating and having some papers and earning in a way that he was so lucky to be able to earn, but not everybody is that blessed. The very important roles that these people play that, quite frankly, in our entire economic system is undervalued. They are not just in Barbados, but all over the world teachers, police officers and nurses, people who keep us alive, are undervalued. Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to say this in the company that I am in, but I feel that I would rather pay a teacher and a nurse, than a lawyer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member do not get into any trouble therefore.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE: The point I am making, Sir, is that in terms of a social good the work that these people do ... Sir, you made the intervention that you just made, but you wear another hat that fits in this category, which is that of being able to provide social work and social services to the people of a country. Mr. Speaker, those things are so critical, and if we cannot address it through wages, because of how much our economic system globally is skewed towards commodities and consumption of goods as opposed to the consumption of critical services to people's well-being, if we cannot address it through wages we have to address it through making sure that these people have a shot to own house and land in this country. Sir, as I was writing down the thing that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said I could not even believe the words that I was writing, but that was the reason why HOPE Direct was created. Sir, we realised too that there are different levels of income earners who are going to need different kinds of housing solutions, but our priority at the time was for these groups of people.

Sir, there is so much that can be said in terms of what our land use policy is and looks like - the Planning and Development Act and the Physical Development Plan, which would be the subject of consultations with all Barbadians - where you can see the way we use land for all of the things that we have prioritised.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE: It is not just that, the way that we use the marine environment for all of the things that we have prioritised because again we are not just talking about the terrestrial endowments of the country. We have a marine space that is 424 times the land space and so the Physical Development Plan also takes accounts of that space and what are the plans to make sure that we get the best value from those resources. Sir, I sought only in lending my voice to this debate to really just put some things in context. It gives me pleasure to do so because the responsibility that I have for this balance of development, for a land use policy, for planning as a way to facilitate investment, has been my absolute pleasure over the last three years to help contribute to the people of Barbados so I was compelled to stand and give some clarity to my friend, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, because 'cud dear' he is only asking questions. We must can answer.

With those few words, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member St. Philip West.

Hon. J. A. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support my colleague the Honourable Member for Christ Church West in his Resolutions, but it would have been remiss of me not to add my voice to this particular debate basically because many years ago, in 1998 to be exact, I raised my voice then in another capacity looking at how land was being used in Barbados in a song called "These Fields and Hills" and it has been one of those things that I have been very passionate about for a very long time in terms of how we do that.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of this Administration to say that this is the first time in a very long time that I have seen some sort of innovation come into play that gives people, and I am not going to use the term ordinary people because I have said on a number of occasions, we are all ordinary people. "Do not get tied up". We are all ordinary people, but this is one of the first times that I have really seen a concerted effort being made to empower those who found themselves probably at the lower echelons of the society. We have seen developments going on at Todds, St. George, we have seen work done at Parish Land, as mentioned. I was privileged to go over to Chancery Lane, Christ Church, to see what is going to be happening there and there are a number of other things that are going to be coming into play. What I would like to suggest though to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is that maybe he should take a trip with me one of these days because I go around the island every weekend just for the reason of being able to see what is happening across the island so that I have a better idea of where we are and

where we are going. Sir, sometimes you need to get out of your comfort zone and go and look for yourself. I say that not only for the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, but to others out there because sometimes when I listen to the call-in programmes and I listen to people speaking with a manner of authority about things that sometimes they absolutely have no clue about it is incumbent on me to try to correct some of these things when I get the opportunity so to do.

Barbadians should be very proud of themselves as to where they have come based on the history of this country. Oftentimes I come in here and I listen to people and I listen to the radio, I look on social media and I see people tearing themselves apart. Sir, I am not going to stand here and tell you that everything that any particular Government or Administration at any point in time has done has always been the best, but we are not perfect, this we all know. When we talk about people being able to have access to land and the value of it ... From a child my grandparents, my parents and I am sure most people in here parents and grandparents would be ringing in our ears morning, noon and night, the importance of owning, as they would say, 'a piece of the rock' and you can see across the length and breadth of the country strives that have been made over the years. I have to say this because sometimes I believe I sound like a stick record, but I am learning that repetition sometimes is necessary to drive home some points to people. I can only speak from 1970 when I landed here. What I have seen over those years in terms of people being able to change their conditions in terms of where they were living, starting off sometimes, as the old people would say, building on a little piece here, butting on another piece there, moving from chattel houses to wall houses to some huge monstrosities sometimes, which even in that when we talk about land usage people in general have to begin, it is not just Government policy, to think about how it is that we are actually going to use the land space... Are we going to continue to build these huge houses going wide or are we going to use the land in a completely different way and build more vertical? Then you have again the whole idea of the land usage not just for housing or not just for food.

The Honourable Member responsible for cleaning and greening this country continues to speak to us about using the land and planting trees and looking at the fauna and the flora and all of these different things in being able to provide cleaner air quality and being able to have a better experience in terms of the environment in looking at not just again those things but even further in looking at our beaches, how we treat to that space and these sort of things. All of those things are part and parcel of the policy of how we use the resources that God has so graciously given us in terms of the land so for any of us to put form over function, which unfortunately seems to be the way that too many people in Barbados operate, so you will hear people saying things like: Oh, what is the policy, I have not

seen a policy paper. I have come into this for the very first time and I have seen policy papers from 1970-something but if you do not implement anything out of the policy paper, it is what it is, just words on paper, and so what we have to deal with is not just the policy itself but implementation of these policies.

I have said back then that - and the Honourable Member for St. James Central made the point - Barbados is not going to get any bigger unless we get the islands that we are talking about done. That would give you a little bit more space but it is not going to get any bigger which means - it may have the capacity to get smaller but it is not going to get any bigger -- that we have to find ways to ensure that as many people are housed and as many people are fed.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I really would like Barbadians to begin to think about is this whole idea of land ownership in the way that we saw it in the past. Historically, when the slaves saw Master, the Master had land and transportation, two assets that slaves had nothing to do with, they could not do it, but it seems as if all we continue to do is to perpetuate the same thing from one generation to the next, get as huge a house as humanly possible, getting bigger and bigger every year and get as many cars as humanly possible in getting more and more, so you got one household with three people and 14 cars. These are some of things that we have to begin to think about because if you are talking about using land space and you got so many cars, you got so much emissions and stuff going out into the environment you are creating more problems for yourself, bad use of your land space in having all of these things around. I know I might go off track just a little bit just to make the point that we have got to look not just at the governmental level in terms of policies but that we have to look in the private sector with people who are building and who are doing all of these other things as to how do you use the land. If we are talking about using the land itself, one of things that we seriously have to look at and to engage with is the price of land. I know it is at a premium, we live in a small place, this is true but if you want housing for a large number of people the price of land cannot continue to go up and up as it has been doing over and over. There has to be some way of controlling that because what it does, like it or not, is that it makes it a lot more difficult for a large number of people to ever be able to say that they would actually own one. The good thing about what this Administration is doing at this particular point in time with the projects that are out there is that it is making it not only easier for people to own these things but it also put them in a position where they have something that they can pass on to another generation, and that has been where we have failed as a people oftentimes, the ability to pass on that which we have got onto a next generation that they themselves can either build on and further pass on to others.

The reality is that among us a lot of our people had land at some point in time. We do not like to have these conversations because it gets very testy but a lot of our people had lands and at some point in time they felt in some way that maybe they needed cash over land or other things so we have to seriously think about how we even have trained ourselves, when the Honourable Leader of the Opposition talked about the value of the land, how much we have done in terms of teaching our people about this land as an asset and the things you can use it for other than just living or planting food. These are the conversations that in my mind we need to begin because the same mistakes of the past, and for any of you who are in this Chamber or who are listening to me now or who have not heard the stories of people going to Panama and coming back and buying lands and even owning plantations and in two-twins they were back out of their hands and all of these things, these are problems that come with a lack of understanding as to the value of these types of assets.

Mr. Speaker, I digressed a little bit just to make that point that there are things that we as a people have to do for ourselves. No Government can set a policy in place to make that happen for you, you have to get out there and understand these things for yourself. Information goes out yes but if you do not pay attention to the information then you find yourself in the same position time after time after time after time. As I said came here in 1970 and I grew up in an era where land was there, my aunt house was there, my grandmother house was there, another aunt house was there and then what happens. We could go back and look at some real simple things. As soon as some set of people get a little bit more affluent they move out of the spaces and as they move out of the spaces from one generation to the next, people move out and people move out, land becomes available especially if you got children who moved on to higher and better things or live overseas or whatever else and they got to sell it. All of these things are part and parcel of some of the things that create some of the problems for us when we talk about ownership and these type of things. You cannot get away from it. One of the things which I always advise people to do is to not run away from the reality that faces you, because even if you turn your back on it and run away from it, it will be still there tomorrow morning when you awake. It is not going to go away unless there is a considered effort to re-educate people about how to deal with these types of things.

Sir, this Administration, as I said before, is making a monumental effort to ensure that as many people as is humanly possible have access to land and to housing. It is impossible to have 100 per cent. Nowhere in the world can anybody show me any administration or anybody at all who has the ability to ensure that everybody in his country, island, continent, whatever, has access to land. The reality is that some people will never have the ability financially to do it, which means that the policy in terms of being able to

create rental units is, again, vastly important. What is the most important thing? Is it to house people or for people to owe houses? You have to make the difference between the two. To own a house is good. You can beat your chest and say, "Yes, I own a house," but if you look at somewhere like Germany, for example, where very few people are into owning houses, this is what you would call one of the developed, highly advanced countries.

Asides.

Hon. J. A. KING: The other idea of owning a house, property and land is completely different, and in a small space like this -- 166 square miles -- sometimes when I hear people talking I wonder if this is the same Barbados where I wake up every morning. The way they speak you would think that this is the size of Russia, but it is 166 square miles and we have to be frank, we have to be realistic about what it is we can do within a small economy at the same time. Mr. Speaker, as I told you, I do not want to be long on this because a lot of the points that were already made I do not think I have to go over them. They have been well made and they have been well documented, but I think at some point in time when we are dealing with some of these things, we have to understand that politics is what it is and I do not think it will ever change. As the old people may say, I can talk until the cows come home, it will not change because some people believe that this is the way it should be all the time. There is nothing wrong with anybody opposing anything; you have a right to oppose and you should because it keeps everybody on their toes and not everybody knows everything, so sometimes opposition entities will see things which you may not see yourself and may point you in another direction or jog your memory to get you to think about doing things in a different way.

What I get upset about, Sir, is when we close our eyes purposely; when we close our eyes, our minds, our hearts purposely and are driven only by the need to oppose. That is when we begin to lose sight -- pardon the pun -- of the real purpose of opposition. This is not for the Leader of the Opposition, this is for the many leaders of the opposition entities which are outside of these Chambers. Mr. Speaker, again I want to say that time will tell. As these projects are rolled out one after the other, you will see the response already. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West can tell you: The response to Hope Direct and Hope Premium has been overwhelming, which means that there are persons out there appreciative of the effort that is being made to ensure that people have access to homes and, by extension, access to land. I think sometimes we lose the point that each time you buy the home, you are not buying the home by itself without the land. It is coming with the land.

Sir, when I hear people talking sometimes, to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, you would see that I keep

very quiet sometimes because I get very passionate about some of the things when people make these kinds of pronouncements in here and on the outside. When they say things like people not getting access to land. If you are buying the houses, you have access to land, and if the Government has made a provision for the private sector to have access to the land and which may have the wherewithal to produce housing projects that people can get to buy, again you are doing it on two fronts: You are putting the land there so that people can do it, and you are building the homes yourself in some areas where people have access to do so. It is beyond me that anyone can question that this is a good thing. Unless I personally am not seeing it, whatever it is, I cannot see how anyone cannot. Then again, as I said earlier, politics is what it is. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for indulging me for those few minutes and I am obliged to you, Thank you very much.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief because I sat here and I listened very carefully to a lot of what transpired this morning. I want to state clearly that my role in being in this noble institution is that I came deliberately to serve people and not to come to the Honourable Chamber and leave in half-hour or 45 minutes to return home or to go anywhere else. I have come to serve the people of Barbados, as I believe all Honourable Members here have done. Therefore, I want to make my comments in relation to housing; where we have come from and where our people as a nation can develop.

Sir, I believe that in my capacity here as a Member of Parliament for St. Thomas I would have had an even more direct experience in growing up in a humble environment with very limited resources or facilities at all, but with wonderful parents and guardians and neighbours and teachers and others who have brought us thus far. Our home environments were starkly poverty-stricken, and I support any exercise despite whichever Government it is that seeks to empower people through giving them better home environs in which to live and exist. I call a lot of what I am seeing -- not only in this Honourable Chamber but across the length and breadth of Barbados -- an element of snobbery that pains me deeply when it comes to stigmatisation of people because of where they have come from or where they went to school or where they currently live. I know better than anybody else in here and understand it, growing up in a neighbourhood where there was no ownership of the land that we were on. Therefore, my mother tried as best as she could -- my father was not as productive in that way -- to be able to buy a spot and to say, "This is for my children." Not everybody has that kind of intuitive thought or experience or opportunity to do it for

their children, and I support any Government -- I do not care which political persuasion it is -- that seeks to empower people by giving them better home environments in which to live.

Sir, I would have been saving some of my expressions today for another kind of debate and not just associating myself with correcting those challenges or those matters associated with rental by properties for expansion of car parks and other facilities therein. I think that we as a people are becoming very selfish with the slobbery that we have, when we know that among us they are thousands of poor people, workers, who require just that lease, that opportunity to be able to own a piece of the rock. In the light that my mother as an agricultural labourer I was able to muster and run a meeting turn to pay down on a little spot to help her children to have a better life, I believe that everybody's aim or goal is to do so. Everybody cannot do it at the same time. It takes time. I never thought as a young girl growing up that I would ever own a house or house spot furthermore a house, let me say it that way, but it is because of the opportunities that were opened up to us by successive Governments for people to be able to own a piece of this rock.

Sir, I remember as a young girl going to school in the City, hearing of a place down the Harbour Road that we called Rotten Town, where almost every house on that road was as rotten as anything. However, they had a Member of Parliament subsequent to that who is now deceased who sought to assist those people in upgrading their houses and I am sure that the Government sector would have been behind to be able to make that difference and give those people a better opportunity to live a better quality life and to empower themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to go to Rock Hall, St. Philip and I am still mesmerised at how those persons that were living on that what was a former dump are still living. I commend this Government for making an effort to improve the quality and life of those people where I went with three other Ministerial colleagues and some other person in the community to have a look and to see what can we do as a Government and report to the then Honourable Minister of Housing as to how these people can have a different way of living. The other important thing about it, is that they were so resourceful, if you see what they were doing to be able to maintain a better quality life. Some of them even had the solar panels on their house because there was no electricity, no proper road, no running water, they were buying water, but they had a kind of camaraderie. When they even invited me to come back by the moringa tree on a Saturday evening to place a game of dominoes with them. They had their own community spirit and village life coming together to show we are here, we are living on this dump, we are squatting, but we are human beings too, and so bringing back the reports and

working, this Government determined we are going to help those people, we are not going to help them alone, we are going to help those in the Belle, we are going to help all the other persons in Barbados incrementally to give them a better lease on life.

Mr. Speaker, without the input of a then Administration under the Barbados Labour Party, when in 1981 we saw the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, that poor people who worked on plantations like my mother who could not get a spot and had to live in a chattel house and had to pick it down when you went somewhere else to work without the permission of the plantation owner. We have change that whole culture through the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act empowering people in rural Barbados to be able to own a piece of the rock and today when you travel the length and breadth of this country from the north to the south, from the east to the west, you are seeing villages where people now have what we used to call as children bungalows. They are living a better quality of life, they have water, electricity and just about everything. What also hurts is that many of those persons still look down on the very poor. Mr. Speaker, my emphases here today are connected with those persons that I see and all of us see every day, but because of those projects we are doing in the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, where persons that are in the human strengthening project which is an IDB project, where we have now identified 250 families in that project who are at the lowest of low when it comes to the quality life that they are living under particularly with housing. Many of them do not have employment, or many of them get their children and rather they move away from their mother's property or house, they add on a little shanty. They are also people and they have children and then another child comes along and say well I have my own children and then they add on another piece. Hence, we have some households with 15 and 20 people in them. Therefore, they need the space. We have the housing units and since the 1950s and 1960s those houses were built for a father and a mother and perhaps a child, and now some of them have seven and eight children. Those in the Pine and some other communities are overcrowded. We need to create spaces for our people and I want the Honourable Minister to pay close attention to have open spaces in these projects so people can come out and recreate the green space, the playing parks and so on will help them.

I want to say Mr. Speaker that the projects that we are looking towards expanding are to empower Barbadians that they can get a better quality life to go forward. Earning a piece of rock is hard for those persons who are cooks, some in the hotels and other areas, shop assistants, and I want to commend the Honourable Minister of Labour for the minimum wage effort that has been legislated within recent times for the \$8.50 per hour. It has been long overdue. Who is it going to benefit? The same poor people.

Who are going to be the ones to get some of those houses when they apply that are working for under \$2 000 per month? They are Barbadians. The ones in the Rock Hall, St. Philip are Barbadian children when we took the notes, many of them were going to Barbadian schools, they were born here, it is just that some of their parents may have been non-nationals, but all Barbadian males and females are cohabiting with them and they are producing children that are Barbadians. Hence, for me, the stigmatisation has to go. We as a people must look forward, embrace, and uphold for when we leave people living in those sad condition where they are living 15 in a household, cannot turn around, you will get all kinds of negatives like fighting, incest and you are going to get all kinds of negative things happening on the poor quality lives they are living in and it will impact on our health system that we are now trying with the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown and others to uplift and make sure that quality environs are available, people are keeping around them clean, the National Conservation Commission is making efforts to beautify and clean up our villages to make a difference in the quality life we have.

I want to salute this Government for taking that bold step of making sure that different categories of people get opportunities for them to purchase the houses or land and to enhance themselves and the quality of lives they live because we are a Government that believes that we are going to work with our people to move them from dependence to independence and the only way we can do it is when we help them with jobs. Otherwise, some of those communities with the large number of persons who are not as well educated or they might be or they do not have as skill and because of COVID it is even making the situation worse, where the same the guys and gals that will be on the streets are going around and shopping around now have to be at home with no proper employment or nutrition and they are really at the mercy of others to survive. Any effort that the Government pushes to make sure that people get gainful employment, to ensure that they have a shelter over their heads, to ensure their quality of life is uplifted, that the training happens for them to be able to develop skills to be better educated that they can serve their families will be supported by me. I have constituents who are needy and I am here to speak for them as well for us to get housing and the Honourable Minister will tell you that I would have sent him a note in the early hours of this morning in connection with a visit where I know that persons will be able to get a house spot in the parish of St. Thomas once that agreement is made. People sometimes have the money, but they cannot get that opportunity because the housing costs are so highly pitched that they cannot afford it. We need to embrace everyone and ensure that whatever we do in Barbados we include people and their; particularly health and social needs to bring them to that level.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy for the opportunity and the visionary concept by the Honourable Minister of Housing where he has come up with different scales or tiers of persons who can benefit by the projects that have been identified because there is absolutely no point in us trying to reach a stage of development but we are leaving people behind. Our mantra still is, "A better life for our people." We are leaving absolutely no one behind where possible to be able to make that happy mix that we can live together in this society knowing, respecting, caring and loving each other despite whatever level we are perceived to be at.

There is that element of stigmatization and snobbery in this place. I am not taking about this Honourable Chamber, Sir. I mean across the island where it is dividing and ruling, and changing the entire culture of what we knew where everyone respected each other despite their status, religion, political persuasion, employment or whatever the situation is. I am glad to be a part of this institution where we can work together to make that tremendous difference and not behave in a way as persons who are supposed to be role models or in the eyes of Barbadians people see Members of Parliament as the persons to look up to be the guide. The smallest question they ask is, "Can you tell me we will get the vaccine?" It is broadcasted in the medium but believe that if they call their Member of Parliament and he or she tells me, then that is correct.

This is alright but I want for us not as a people because we may have reached these high levels in society wherever we are working, whatever institutions we represent or even in this Honourable Chamber for any moment ever seek to indicate to the rest of Barbados that that whole system we looked at and experienced that before you can get up the ladder and kick it down must remain. It has to stop. I believe that we are here to serve. Yes, we are going to have our political differences and challenges, but at the end of the day we have come to serve people. Politics is not only about the people but it is for the people. Therefore, any effort that this Government makes to help to secure housing and put people in a better position socially, economically or any other form of development, I am happy to support.

I know that once those young men and women get that opportunity to move away from certain environs that are so crowded, some of the lawlessness will be minimised.

They will see themselves in better conditions rather than people partitioning them. They are told, "Don't go down that road, dem fellas down there. Dem down there poor." They are all kind of madness that our educational system now has to change if we are let people know we value you as a human being despite wherever you have come from.

Mr. Speaker, if I were seen as a person who lived in a village up in a Vault Road as Ermine and Joeford “lil pissy” daughter because that is what some people said or daughters because they were seven of us and one brother....

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, be careful with the language.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sorry, Sir. It was only the “Bajan” parlance I used. I meant that we were so poor that we did not even have a proper bed. They asked, “Oh, she could be a M.P.? That man who use to drive the bus daughter and that woman who was the hawker?” This is the mentality. If we say that we are educating, then Minister of Education we have to change that culture, attitude and kind of behaviour that is causing so many people who have potential to stay away because they feel that they will never be able to get there because they have no house and land. They are renting.

Mr. Speaker, I close by saying that I am happy for this because we have had women in particular who have been working for many years and saving their money, but because they could not own a piece of the rock they are now shut out of their houses. We have women on the road with children. Lancaster Home is full. All of the facilities are a full because there is no room and they lost their work. If it was not for this Government putting \$600 through the Adopt-a-Family Programme and the Household Mitigation Unit, we would not be able to save so many of these lives. I want to highly commend the Honourable Minister and all others who are working in the vanguard to change the culture of this country socially, economically and otherwise.

Therefore, I lend my strong support to whatever is happening here with the housing projects. I know that I will get another opportunity when the full discussion takes place to put in my five cents’ worth because at the end of the day I close by saying that each individual is important not only in our eyes, but in the sight of God. We must as a people continue to serve and serve well, especially when we reach this level knowing that perhaps when we were small you will never get there. However, it is God’s divine intervention that has brought all of us here. We must continue to work together as a people to change this whole culture of the stigmatization and help to house our people who need it now more than ever.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ms. C. S. V. HUSBANDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to speak for a few minutes on the land Resolution because the land policy and the programme for housing being put forward by this Government is going to mean a great deal to ordinary Barbadians across this country; all of us. I look forward very much to the housing

that will first of all provide units that are within the reach of many of our citizens and young people who may be have jobs that are looking forward to having their own homes, but because of the economic circumstances and challenges that this country has been dragged through for the past 10 years under the DLP, many of them are unable to leave home to start their own families.

They have not been able to secure a home that they could get that start they had wished for. Therefore, the project that is being put on the table by this Government to provide housing for people between \$2 000 and \$4 000 of income per month is going to mean a lot to many young people. Since they suffered greatly during the COVID-19 period, when the pandemic hit us and were home, many could not work and pay for their apartment. Many of them left their homes and went to rent apartments in the residential areas feeling confident that this was their start to move up. They hoped they would have been able to start saving towards getting a mortgage. Those hopes were dashed during the period of the DLP Government and then, COVID-19 also resulted in a slowdown.

Many of them found themselves having to return home. Hence, this programme that is being put on the table by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is something that will make a great deal of difference to those young people who are looking forward to moving up in life and prospering. It is also a great importance, Sir, to the people who are earning under \$2 000 per month. In my constituency, there are many young people who find themselves having to put up a shack in the yard. There are people who their homes have become overcrowded. Sometimes just to get some breathing space and remove themselves from the setting where they may be getting on each other and need a breather, many of them go outside and sit down in their cars if they have one.

It is the only place that they can cool their heads for a moment or catch their breath before they re-engage. Every day the call is made to the constituency office for housing. “Is there anything that you can do. My circumstances are difficult,” are things the callers would say. Many of them have found themselves in a situation where sometimes discord in the home may result in them having to leave the home but very often with nowhere to go. Sir, a programme such as what the Ministry of Housing is putting in place to assist us to do something very positive for the people of this country, this is going to make a tremendous difference.

There is another category that I wish to highlight that I believe that as a Government need to see what we can do. Indeed, I have to agree with the view that being able to have a piece of the rock, being able to own a home in this land, is an asset that Barbadians strive for, and it is an important one, but, Sir, many persons have run aground in

striving to get that asset. Sometimes difficulties might make it difficult for them to complete a house that they have started building and not having any options as to how they could rearrange themselves to be able to complete it ... Some of them may have bought some land and circumstances have made it difficult for them to even start to build the house and then the land becomes overgrown, it becomes a nuisance to people in the area, and very often they find it difficult to find a way to move forward with this piece of land that is supposed to be an asset. As a matter of fact, Sir, as a result of not being able to manage it very often the pressure of Land Tax and keeping it cleared presents a liability to them and some end up having to sell it and so the dream dies. Sir, one of the things I think that in our projection for the future that we want to be able to look at is what can be done, how can we assist, how can we train, how can we guide and how can we advise people in the acquisition of the assets of land and how to use that land in such a way that it is able to generate income for them rather than becoming a liability around their necks.

Sir, we also have families that have been very diligent. I have heard this story many, many times across Barbados where people put aside money and acquired an acre, two acres or five acres of land and the hope of the generation that bought the land was that it would be used effectively by the generation behind them to use it in such a way as to make a way for their children and their grandchildren, and sometimes, Sir, families fall into disputes that then tied up that land, it cannot be settled, or sometimes they have the land and they would like to be a part of the group that gets the opportunity to be a part of a building programme where they too can make some money off of selling their land and being able to do a housing development and to be able to give their families a big start. Sir, this is where my recommendation would be that where you have private land owners, people with a one-acre, a two-acre or a five-acre who want to get involved in a housing project, but their circumstances may not allowed them to have the money for example to put infrastructure in place or yes they have the land, but the stress of managing a housing project or that they might feel is beyond their ability to manage it, I believe, Sir, that people are good candidates for a joint partnership with Government to look at providing housing for other Barbadians and empowering citizens with the opportunity to be involved in a building project that would help to put money in their families and give them another boost to take their families forward.

Sir, I am satisfied that this Government is seeking in every possible way to come up with innovative programmes that would help our people with home ownership, that would provide jobs for thousands of Barbadians and that would give ordinary Barbadians the opportunity to participate in construction projects that will allow them to be able to earn and move on up. It is with my

fullest support that support the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and give my support to the Resolution.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

As I rise to wrap up this Resolution of a lease of land to the Caribbean Development Bank (C.D.C.), obviously, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition decided to go wide on this debate and Honourable Members followed him and went equally wide, I want to thank all Honourable Members who spoke. Indeed, when I listened to the Honourable Members who spoke it somehow made me think of something that my mother always used to say which is that 'cockroach has no place at fowl cock fight'. Sir, clearly the Honourable Members who spoke who defended this lease and the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance so appropriately and so adequately, it was clear that I was surrounded with my colleagues as fowl cocks and the one single voice of a cockroach was trampled in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, first, let me expressly thank the Honourable Member for St. James Central, who as a consummate advocate clearly advocated very strongly and appropriately the policies and programmes of the Ministry, for his contribution. I also want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who set the programme and the place as it relates to the policies of the Government and how the housing policy has already been set out in legislation. I want also to thank the Honourable Member for St. Thomas who clearly set the aspect as it relates to the average person and how the average person would be able to benefit from the housing policies. I also want to thank the Honourable Member for St. James South who brought in the concepts of the stakeholders, be it the contractors; be it the people in her constituency and all others. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have set the ground and defended the policy very, very well and trampled that simple intervention by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, let me build on what they spoke on. First, let me talk about a symposium that we are putting together not only to talk about how we take housing policy further in terms of declaring the whole of Barbados as a registration district, but also to further flesh out a housing policy in Barbados. We are having that symposium very shortly through the Ministry. I have asked the officials to make sure they send a very special invitation to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to make sure that he

joins us and to make any intervention that he may suggest in the question time.

Mr. Speaker, in my previous life as an oral surgeon, we worked very hard to teach people how to take care of their teeth: Avoid sweets, brush your teeth three times a day, visit the dentist regularly; we worked hard to put ourselves out of business. Mr. Speaker, that was our job because we saw that as our duty and our responsibility as professional people to give the best advice possible to reduce the amount of disease out there to literally put yourselves out of business and now I found myself in a new job trying to provide as many houses as possible to put myself out of my other private business which of course is to provide housing for rental for many, many people, but nonetheless that is what we are striving to do.

We recognise that there are many categories and there are people with many income levels, \$4 000 to \$8 000, and we said okay we will do a programme for those people in that category. We also recognised that the National Housing Corporation's experience in doing housing projects has not been stellar and has not been the best and again it brings me to this concept of 'cockroach has not place at fowl cock fight' because the last programme that really and truly the National Housing Corporation (N.H.C.) did was the one at Parish Land when they did I think 150 to 200 houses and brought in contractors and for years those houses remained unoccupied and started to deteriorate. Indeed, up to this day we are still having to go and fix problems that contractors brought on by the National Housing Corporation (N.H.C.) did. In fact, the funniest thing about it is that the then person

who was Minister of Housing, who brought on those contractors to build those houses many of which were built inappropriately sometimes in the wrong position and have had problems, then went to try to defend those same people when he was the Minister that did it in the first place, but I digress.

Mr. Speaker, if the National Housing Corporation cannot really handle or had difficulties handling a project of that size, they would have difficulties handling this project where we are looking to do 2 500 houses. The capacity of the National Housing Corporation to handle that large a project was not there, so what did we had to do. We had to look at what Government can do.

There is something called the frill of Government and I ask all of the time what is the frill of Government. Governments can facilitate, regulate, innovate and legislate and we brought all of those things together when we started to bring the HOPE Programme, the Home Ownership Providing Energy Programme, together so the HOPE Premium Programme is a joint-venture programme where

Government have not put in one cent. We have the land so we are facilitating a private entity to come and build to put in the infrastructure. You know what it is. People say: Oh when are you going to build houses. You got to understand. You just do not wake up one morning and build a house, Mr. Speaker, you will know this. You may have acres of land but you got to put in the road and in order to put in the road you got to design the development, you got to design the development in terms of green spaces, in terms of water and how the water would be distributed, in terms of the electricity and how the electricity would be distributed, in terms of the curves and slippers, in terms of what is in the road, in terms of the drainage and in terms of the wells. You got to design that first. Then after you design it you got to pass it through the Town and Country Development Planning Office, the Environmental Protection Department and Ministry of Transport, Works and Water Resources and all of those things and when that is finished, you have not built a house yet, then you got to get the town planning aspect to the houses and design the houses separate from designing the roads and then when you get that you got to then get the financing and after you do the roads you got to get the financing then to build the houses and then financing in itself... Anybody who has gone through one mortgage or one loan knows all of the application forms, all of the processes, the Board whatever send back for more information, the legal aspect to it you have to go through. All of that has to be done and Government and the National Housing Corporation was not... I will give you an example, and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition talked about how we had changed a direction with land as opposed to house and land and let me explain a little something.

When I first came to the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance I recognise that they had land at a place called Deane's Town Heights. The National Housing Corporation had it for sale I think at \$28 a square foot and I said no, obviously it was not selling, let us bring it down to \$18 a square foot and let us have a land fair and get these going. Hundreds of people came and signed up. In fact, all had been signed up for before I even got there to speak and I was happy and I was glad because I said good we are going to get some money, we are going to get some working capital on which we could do other projects because it that working capital was able to go and then start Todds and we are about to start Rices and Applewhaites, small developments, 15, 20 houses whatever it is, infilling for the National Housing Corporation because I recognise that the National Housing Corporation can do those small things well and does very well and I want to salute all of the people that work at the National Housing Corporation. They are a tremendous team and I enjoy working with them every single day.

Mr. Speaker, let me say of those people who signed up one by one they start to drop out and they start to drop out for several reasons. They start to drop out because they

lost their job because of COVID-19, they are on three-days because the hotel closed down, they had an approval from the mortgage company but then they then realised that they had another car loan or another loan and the credit card and so on so those that may have qualified at first then no longer qualify when deeper investigations is done into their finances or their situation changes so what we found is that yes selling land is important and there and some people who would only want land and we get it and we are going to have those programmes but we also have to recognise and we also had to come up with an innovative way to reduce the cost of the land because a lot of people were finding it difficult to pay for the cost of the land and that is why we got the photovoltaics involved and it is because the feeding tariff for photovoltaics systems in Barbados is so competitive and at such a good rate that we are able to finance the cost of the infrastructure, the cost of the land, the cost of putting in the services through the signing over of the income for the photovoltaics system. This is the innovative part of the programme so we are facilitating, we are innovating, we have the regulations and we are legislating because we are driving the cost of land down by keeping the prices of the land down by giving concessions in terms of duties and taxes to be able to keep the prices of the houses down so all of these things bringing together to put our people to work, which is the number one thing. Number one thing is jobs for our people. Apart from putting our people to work we then have to house our people which is number two, jobs housing, and number 3 the revolutionary part of it is bringing back land prices, getting land prices back under control.

Mr. Speaker, for too long land prices were going up, up, up, \$15, \$18, \$20, \$25 and \$30 a square foot. Mr. Speaker, there is good and bad. The National Housing Corporation is in the process of selling some land now for upwards, well maybe I should not say, but a big set of money but it is commercial land. Mr. Speaker, commercial land has a lot to do with location, location, location and if I have commercial land and the National Housing Corporation is selling or buying commercial land then we are going to go for the best price we can get but when it comes to residential land, when it comes to putting in the services, we are using the Ministry of Transport, Works and Water Resources to help us put in the services to keep the prices down, this is what we are trying to do.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise that there is a lot of work to be done in housing. We have talked about HOPE Premium, the Home Ownership Providing Energy Premium, and HOPE Direct and there is another programme that we are working on called HOPE Basic. HOPE Premium and HOPE Direct are the first two for persons making \$2 000 to \$4 000 and \$4 000 to \$8 000. The next programme -- I hear my colleagues talking about it before I talk about it but I really do not want to give too much about it because we are still in the planning process,

we are still putting it together for Cabinet - is essentially for people who are making up to \$2 000 so every income strata, everybody, is going to get a chance. Will we be able to meet the need? There is no country that can. Even in Germany, as the Honourable Member St. Philip West talked about, I have been to Munich Germany to the festivals, they have difficulties meeting the social needs of housing for people and that is a first world country, so are we going to meet the demand. Probably not. Are we going to make a dent in the demand? Definitely, we are going to make a dent in the demand. We are working on density reduction when it comes to the housing areas. We are working on rentals because we know that some people would have to have rentals and we are attacking that. We are working on land so those of you who still want to buy land we got 15 spots still up there at Deane's Town at \$18 a square foot and I encourage anybody who want to buy to call the National Housing Corporation because other people have dropped out and it is now your chance to get in and let us get things going so lots of fronts.

Mr. Speaker, on top of it, the National Housing Corporation still has 1 400 units it has to maintain and then on top of that we are giving back the refunds to those who would have paid in and a lot of people have started to get back their deposits because we are going to enfranchise them and get their conveyances, give them back their deposits and give them a chance as well. Mr. Speaker, we in the Ministry have lots of different fronts, we are working on a lot of activities bringing a lot of imagination building on the good work from the former Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew as he passed the baton to me, to continue the work at the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words I am obliged and beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

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

PAPERS (RECOMMITTAL)

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Central Bank of Barbados Annual Report for 2020.

RECOMMITTAL OF GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Grantley Adams International Airport

Transfer of Management and Vesting of Assets (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

RECOMMITTALL OF FIRST READING OF BILLS

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Grantley Adams International Airport Transfer of Management and Vesting of Assets (Amendment) Bill, 2021, be read for the first time.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I beg to second that.

The question that the aforementioned Bill be read for the first time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that we have come to the end of today's Sitting. I beg to move the Adjournment of the House until June 8, 2021, at 10 a.m.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at 10 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and His Honour THE SPEAKER adjourned the Sitting.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ATHERLEY, Bishop the Hon. J. J. S.
BRADSHAW, Hon. Miss S. J. O.
CADDLE, Hon. Miss M. K-A.
DUGUID, Dr. the Hon. W. F.
FORDE, Hon. Miss. C. Y.
HUSBANDS, Hon. Ms. C. S. V.
KING, Hon. J. A.
SYMMONDS, Hon. K. D.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Opening. The convening sentence reads ‘the House Assembly met at the Worthing Corporate Centre’, omitting ‘of’. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Order No. 1. The order number is printed ‘ORDER No. 1-’ in the source, and the heading of the Resolution is broken over six lines. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 2, title. The title of the Resolution repeats ‘TO APPROVE’ (‘RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 ... TO APPROVE THE VESTING’) and ends ‘FOR USE AS IT HEADQUARTERS’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 2, reply. In his reply the Minister refers to ‘a lease of land to the Caribbean Development Bank (C.D.C.)’, although the Resolution provides for vesting and the Bank is elsewhere ‘C.D.B.’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Recommittal headings. The headings ‘PAPERS (RECOMMITTAL)’ and ‘PAPERS’ appear together, one heading is spelt ‘RECOMMITTALL OF FIRST READING OF BILLS’, and a ‘GOVERNMENT BUSINESS’ heading near the end has no business under it. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at the Worthing Corporate Centre, Worthing, Christ Church, on Tuesday, 25th May, 2021 at 10.00 a.m., with Mr. Speaker, His Honour A. E. Holder, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood. The Minutes of Tuesday, 4th May and Tuesday, 11th May were confirmed, and the Speaker reported receipt of the Auditor General’s Report for 2020. The Leader of Government Business, Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, laid the Pesticide Control (Amendment) Regulations, 2021, the Customs Bill, 2021 was read a first time, and Standing Orders were suspended.

Under Order No. 1, Dr. the Hon. W. F. Duguid, Member for Christ Church West, moved the Resolution under section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, approving the lease of two parcels of Crown land at Pine, St. Michael, to TAB Building Ltd. for use as a car park. He called it ‘a new old matter’: it renewed a lease that ran from 1995 to 2010, for 3 916 square metres in all, for ten years at \$29 141.80 a year with rent reviews every three years. The Resolution was agreed to without debate.

Under Order No. 2, Dr. Duguid moved the Resolution vesting Crown land at Lot A, Wildey, with its buildings, in the Caribbean Development Bank for its headquarters, ‘a new ancient’ matter going back to 1969; a further 3.51 acres was being given for the Bank to expand.

The Leader of the Opposition, Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. Atherley, said land policy was being treated as a matter of secondary importance and pursued in an ad hoc way, recalled the historical use of land in Barbados to monetise labour, and called for full disclosure when Crown land went to private interests. He questioned whether Rule 239 had been used in the award of the contract for the Hope Project and whether a parallel entity was being created to relieve the National Housing Corporation of its functions; on two points of elucidation Dr. Duguid said Rule 239 had not been used, and the Speaker asked Bishop Atherley to keep to the issue of land.

Hon. K. D. Symmonds, Member for St. James Central, replied on the Government’s housing programme, citing over 260 houses at Chancery Lane, Christ Church East. Hon. Miss M. K-A. Caddle, Member for St. Michael South Central, reflected on the Administration’s three years and on the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2020. Hon. J. A. King, Member for St. Philip West, Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde, Member for St. Thomas, and Hon. Ms. C. S. V. Husbands, who spoke of housing for people earning \$2 000 to \$4 000 a month, also supported the Resolution.

Replying, Dr. Duguid announced a symposium on housing policy and spoke of a programme for those earning \$4 000 to \$8 000 and of the National Housing Corporation’s 1 400 units. The Resolution was agreed to. Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw then laid the Central Bank of Barbados Annual Report for 2020, and the Grantley Adams International Airport Transfer of Management and Vesting of Assets (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was given notice and read a first time. The House was adjourned until Tuesday, 8th June, 2021 at 10.00 a.m.