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# THE SENATE DEBATES

## (UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

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PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

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### THE SENATE

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, July 29, 2009, at 11.10 a.m.

#### PRESENT

His Honour SENATOR Dr. B. M. Taitt, M.A., M.B.A., B.A.(Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B(Hons.) D.H.L.(Hons.) (President)

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, M.A., M.B.A., B.Sc.(Hons.), (Minister in the Prime Minister's Office), (Leader of the Senate)

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN, E.M.B.A. (Marketing), Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

SENATOR the Hon. A. B. WALTERS, DPSA(Oxford), M.A., (Minister of State, Labour and Immigration)

SENATOR the Hon. D.W. BOYCE, M.B.A.(Fin.), B.Sc., CMA, F.C.A.(Minister of State, Finance, Investment, Telecommunications and Energy)

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER, CIM, M.B.A., Dip. Mng.(Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

SENATOR D.M. ALLEYNE, M.A., B.A.

SENATOR P.W.B. GILKES

SENATOR Miss P.I. INNISS, B.Sc.(Hons.)

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN, K.A., M.A.

SENATOR the Hon. Mrs. V.E. NEWTON, S.C.M., M.A., B.A.(Spec. Hons.), LL.M.(Hons.)(U.W.I), F.L.A. (Gt. Brit.), L.E.C.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H.E. CRICHLow, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) Duenelm

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER, Ph.D, Bsc. (Hons.)

SENATOR J.A.C. HUTSON, B.C.H., M.R.A.C.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON, LL.B.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B.

*Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.*

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

#### MINUTES

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received Minutes of the Senate for July 22, 2009. I believe these Minutes have been circulated and I wish to draw to your attention that it has not been the practice, apparently, in the Senate to confirm Minutes. They have been confirmed by the Presiding Officer at the Presiding Officer's whims and fancies. I have great difficulty with that practice and, therefore, from today, I am going to be seeking to have Minutes confirmed, prior to my signing them, as having been confirmed.

Therefore, I take the Minutes which have been confirmed for the July 22, 2009, as having been read and unless I hear any voice to the contrary, those Minutes stand confirmed.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY Mr. PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I also wish to announce that I have received excuses for Madam Deputy President and I remind you, Honourable Members, that in the event that we have to go to Committee that you would wish to propose and elect someone to preside in Committee.

I also am in receipt of an excuse for Sir John Stanley Goddard, who is unavoidably absent.

*S/A20/11:30 Sequence 3*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

## PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents:

1. Value Added Tax (Amendment) (No.2), Order, 2009.
2. Reports of the Community Legal Services Commission for the years ending March 31, 2005, 2006 and 2007.

## MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move a motion to appoint Senator the Very Reverend H.E. Crichlow to act as Chairman of Committees for the day's Sitting.

*The question was put and agreed to.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Sir, I beg to give notice of the following:

1. Resolution to approve the borrowing under the Special Loans Act, Chapter 105, by the Government of \$165 million from the Barbados National Bank Inc. for the purpose of financing the Barbados Road Network Infrastructure Improvement Project.

## PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF PARCELS OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN IN THE PARISH OF SAINT PHILIP, FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, this Resolution to approve the vesting of land in two parishes, in the parish of St. Joseph, specifically, in the vicinity of Branchbury, and Woodbourne, St. Philip, for residential purposes are part of the Government's effort to make real the national housing policy of the current Administration.

It has been recognised by this Government that the matter of housing, particularly in the areas of lower middle income and middle income housing, those areas of housing provision or facilitation of the acquisition of housing, by persons who fall into those demographic categories, has been an area of major neglect.

Sir, for several years there has been a boast of housing starts, the construction of luxury homes in Barbados, et cetera, but as we look around, for example, when we took office and we looked at the number of applications ranging from the immediate past to several years, as much as 15 or more years, Barbadians in those categories, persons of lower income status, middle or lower income, our teachers, public servants, and blue colour workers, have continued to face challenges in relation to the acquisition of either land or land and houses. Therefore, as part of a policy of addressing a very critical need of every Barbadian, this Government has identified a very aggressive housing programme in keeping with our national policy of ensuring that Barbadians are able to be adequately housed.

If we speak to any Barbadian, of most generations, and I am sure if you speak to Barbadians who just entered the world of work, one of the traditions, and a very laudable tradition I must say, has been the desire and the searching and seeking after the goal of acquiring a home. That for most Barbadians is perhaps the single most investment that an individual or a family will make in their lifetimes. The policy of ensuring that Barbadians are able to realise their dream is very much the case.

In the context of the acquisitions at Branchbury and Woodbourne, these are part of a very attractive initiative for Barbadians of lower income. It is part of the HELP Programme, better explained, Housing Every Last Person initiative, which is seeking to ensure that first time homeowners are able to access land.

When we look at this policy, it is intended to provide land at \$5 per square foot, in a situation where on average land in Barbados runs from maybe \$15, \$20, and sometimes \$25 per square foot. If we look at that as a key component of the acquisition of a home, at going market rates, what we would recognise is that it puts the acquisition of a piece of property and, immediately following that a home, out of the reach of many Barbadians.

This Government recognises that it has a significant, critical and absolute role in social engineering as far as housing is concerned. In the absence of a lead taken, and a determined position taken by the Government to ensure that Barbadians are able to acquire land, we can envisage a situation if we continue on the path that we were going for several years, that we would find ourselves in a situation

where the average Barbadian, would have to forget that dream of owning a house.

Sir, I believe that this, therefore, in terms of the HELP Programme, the initial intention is to offer 500 housing lots to first time buyers. This situation would go a long way in meeting those needs.

As I indicated, in my early comments, this is part of a more comprehensive programme. If we look around Barbados at this point in time, we would find a situation where Government has begun its very challenging housing programme. I know that many naysayers would have indicated that it was next to impossible, but we have to work with aggressive targets if we are to realise those opportunities. If we do not focus on those opportunities, we therefore would have problems.

In looking at the housing arrangements, one of the areas that has been identified in terms of making available lots, or making available accommodation, is the utilisation of areas which form part, but were not actually occupied withing tenancies, et cetera.

*S A20 11.40 a.m. Sequence 4*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

*Senate A20, Sequence 05, 11.40 a.m.*

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Therefore, if you go into several communities, especially rural communities, you would find that there were certain small tenancies with pockets of open space, which lend themselves to building that small community and making more housing spots available.

Sir, in terms of that approach, this does not eat into the use of agricultural land because, if we listen to some of the suggestions at criticising, and we peel those things apart, we will recognise that they are probably not founded, but in looking at those things there is this notion that we are looking at utilising agricultural land.

Barbados is 166 square miles and, therefore, we have to develop land use policies, which address several things simultaneously. The policy has to address the demand for agricultural land and it has to address the demand for housing. I want to reiterate the point that the vesting of this land in the National Housing Corporation is part of a strategy, which recognises that there has to be balance found between the provision of land for agriculture and the utilisation of land for housing.

If we look at it therefore in terms of a broad housing policy, it must be recognised that the strategy of this Administration has been one which is multi-pronged. It is

addressing the utilisation of lands, as I described, in rural communities, where there might be tenancies. It has also sought to build within the urban corridors, housing which is multi-storied.

I would speak specifically of the quick action to resume construction at the corner of Passage Road, where for some years ago, an initiative was started there and stopped, which means that on completion of that project, a number of Barbadians will be in a position to find accommodation.

The strategy, as I said, is comprehensive. It moves beyond provision of lots, where the potential homeowner is in a position to construct the house that he or she desires, according to his or her specifications. There also has been the provision of housing solutions where the Government, through the National Housing Corporation, and partnering with the private sector, has been able to construct houses, which would then become available for sale.

Mr. President, the programme also recognises that as much as we would love to provide opportunities for Barbadians of all walks of life to buy homes, this in itself is not necessarily going to be ever a reality, if we use the traditional methods of providing homes; that is to construct and to offer for sale, to offer mortgages, and allow the individual to construct, or some kind of combination of those.

Therefore, Mr. President, this Administration has sought to pursue a rent-to-own arrangement where Barbadians who at this point in time and, perhaps in the short, medium or long terms, will not be able to immediately purchase the home in which that person or his or her family lives, but recognises that by paying rent, that rent will go towards the cost of that home, in an arrangement that will be negotiated and worked out with the supplier of the houses, and let us say, the National Housing Corporation as they are seeking to do. Mr. President, what that does is to allow Barbadians in that situation to acquire a house and work towards realising the ownership of that situation. Sir, it is important that people have those things in mind.

Mr. President, I recently passed the developments in the Farm area of Deacons Road, and as I was driving along, I noticed that a number of the units were recently repainted.

*Asides.*

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: It would be interested to speak to my colleague, the Representative for that area, to find out of those that I saw, how many were units that had been handed over to the persons living in those particular units. Sir, what it said to me is that having been told, and having participated in a

process that would allow those persons to own those units, they have taken a very different interest in those units.

It says something about people's willingness to do whatever they can, when they understand that this is theirs. They say this is my house, and this is my home, and therefore the whole attitude to it changes Mr. President, because as I said before, that is a critical dream for Barbadians.

Mr. President, I believe that as this Government explores its national housing policy, it has started to engage in some important partnerships. It has started to engage the private sector, as has been done before, but is seeking to facilitate those things, in a very aggressive manner. Sir, we will see over the life of this Government - a commitment realised.

Sir, that commitment is that in delivering services to Barbados, this Government has committed to ensuring that small businesses constitute parts of those entities that deliver those services. You can anticipate that as we continue on our housing programme, a very important element of that would be the engaging of small contractors and small business operators, who are capable of delivering the kind of quality finish product that is expected and demanded of households and, therefore, they would be involved in the process of providing these housing solutions.

I also believe, Mr. President, that in exploring the financing of our housing solutions and our housing offers to the public of Barbados, the Government has started also to explore some models, which have been used but have not necessarily been explored to the fullest. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to say to my colleague, the Minister of Housing, that he needs to further explore with an important financing segment of this society.

I am speaking specifically of the Credit Union Movement. I have discussed this with him and it is something I know he is considering. Therefore, I do not feel constrained in terms of speaking about it. Sir, for those persons who know of the activities in my life as a volunteer, they know that prior to January of last year, I spent a couple decades serving as a volunteer in the Credit Union Movement.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Decades? You are not supposed to tell lies in here.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Thank you. Mr. President, a couple decades is 20 years and it was more than 20 years, So that is very true.

Mr. President, I believe the Credit Union Movement is one in which approximately 100 000 Barbadians are

members of that Movement. They also fall into the category of persons who are in need of housing. The Credit Union Movement has also been a very successful story in that it has been able to mobilise, in a substantial way, the financial resources of a number of lower middle income and lower income earners. It is, indeed, a success story. Mr. President, its success to date is such that I believe the next phase of development is in meeting some of the other needs of their membership. Sir, in meeting the needs of the membership, one such need is housing.

*Senate A20, Sequence 05, 11:50:10*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I believe that the Government has available to it a ready partner. I believe that it is possible for the National Housing Corporation, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Ministry of Finance and the management and members of the Credit Union Movement to explore creative ways of funding the financing of houses.

Mr. President, the reason for that is very simple. The Credit Union Movement, as the only real indigenous financial institution on this island that is owned by the vast majority of working persons in this country, is in a position to do several things for the members. It is in a position to partner in housing through investment as an institution, or as a channel of investment of the individual members, and to finance the mortgages of persons seeking to buy housing. In doing those things successfully, it would make surpluses on the mortgages, I insist on using the language of the Movement, which would then be shared by all the members, and so it would keep the funds allocated to housing circulating in the family of the Credit Union Movement.

Mr. President, I believe that is appreciated by Government and it is a strategy which will be rolled out as we seek to address these issues of housing. Mr. President, it is clear that we have looked at this as part of the initiative to house Barbadians.

This Government has embarked on an extremely aggressive approach to offering solutions to meet the needs of housing the people of Barbados. It has done so in difficult economic times, not only locally but internationally, and that, of course, will have some implications for how this policy is rolled out. The targets are there and they will be approached in a very serious manner.

Mr. President, I say to Barbadians that unlike any previous periods, the initiatives undertaken speak to the needs of various categories. I have mentioned on more than one occasion the issue of low income housing. Mr.

President, I also want to say something about middle income housing. Maybe because this category sits in the middle as would be a middle child, perhaps they may seem to be forgotten because some people complain that we tend to see things happening at the lower and upper ends and somehow the people in the middle seem not to be remembered in as major a way as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to Barbadians in the middle income category that as part of this broad housing programme which translates the national housing policy into reality, there are several open spaces in the Wanstead and so on areas, which are part of the area in which I actually happen to live, that have been identified for large middle and low middle income developments so that those who are comfortable building their own homes can do so. Persons who live in those neighbourhoods, Wanstead, Oxnards, Husbands Heights and so on, can attest to the fact that they were able to buy those lands at reasonable prices and over time, even if they were not able...

Mr. President, I speak from personal experience because even though I was not immediately able to build a house having acquired the land, I was subsequently able to do so at a time when I was in a position to do so, and that kind of situation is going to be made available again.

Mr. President, as we look at this whole question of vesting, I want to reiterate that it is but one element in a comprehensive housing policy which recognises that as we seek to make Barbados available to those who have the wealth, the fame, the infamy or whatever that goes with it, to acquire homes in places in Barbados which are often not seen by the average Barbadian... Those people come to Barbados because they find Barbados attractive because of what it stands for and what it is.

Mr. President, a critical part of what we stand for and what we are, is that we are a society in which, up to this point in time, the average Barbadian has generally felt that he or she could own a house in this country. In the last couple of years, people started to complain that it looked as though that was a dream that was not only being deferred, but a dream that was being lost.

I am happy to say, Mr. President, that with these initiatives, Barbadians of all walks of life are now in a position to start thinking about owning their own homes again, whether it is going to be an apartment or a high-rise building. Mr. President, I trust that we can find some creative ways to do that without creating concrete jungles because, as a small country, I personally believe that we have to pay a lot of attention to the aesthetics of those kinds of, what I would call, non-traditional houses.

Mr. President, there are several options available to us so that we are able to provide that kind of housing for

persons who want a piece of land, and want to have the opportunity to design and have constructed, or have designed and constructed his or her dream home to his or her specifications.

Mr. President, middle income Barbadians drive through many of the traditional developments across the island and they see vacant lots which, whether or not they are owned by the Government, can be looked at and acquired, or arrangements entered into to ensure that the targets that we have set ourselves will indeed be met.

I believe, Mr. President, that these pieces of land to be acquired in St. Joseph and St. Philip will go some way to achieving these. They speak specifically to one segment of our housing programme, but it is a very important segment which will contribute to the achievement of our targets.

Mr. President, it is important, when we look at these, that we recognise that the ability to be housed in decent conditions is an important element of a person's total existence. We cannot talk about competitiveness, about productivity or about our children excelling at school if persons are not properly housed. I know that many of us would have grown up in situations where our housing accommodation was not ideal, but we fought against the odds to achieve a solid education, et cetera.

Mr. President, I believe that one of the important elements of our quality of life, is our housing situation, therefore we would want to ensure as we develop as a society, all persons are able to develop and that all persons believe that they have an important stake in this country. One of the indicators of that stake or one of the symbols of persons having a stake is housing.

*Senate A20 Sequence 6*

*12:00 noon*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, let us say, for example, when an individual leaves his or her home to go to work in the house of some very wealthy expatriate, can you imagine if he or she has to go back to his or her dilapidated conditions at the end of the day and how demoralising that can be? Can you imagine how difficult it would be for that person, day after day, to go work and to give of his or her best?

When an individual walks around Barbados looking to invest in this country and sees our housing stock stuck in poor condition, when an individual hears of or witnesses persons living in cramped conditions, that sends a very negative message. Therefore, as with any other aspect of

the economy, when we seek to develop Barbados as a society or as an economy, we have to focus on the well-being of our people.

Sir, part of that well-being is the provision of accommodation, whether rental accommodation with the option to purchase, whether it is a small low-cost house or whether it is a traditional middle income home as we have come to know it, it is a place where Barbadians can anticipate that they can live with dignity and can raise their children in comfort in a manner that is befitting the major contribution that each individual is making in terms of building this country. Sir, I believe that as we talk about the vesting of these Crown lands, this Resolution is a key input to the achievements of Government's goals.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I begin by reflecting a little bit on what we have just heard. There was a period of time in the history of this Honourable Chamber and, I believe, in the history of the Other Place as well, that an elementary exercise such as a vesting would have been introduced by the lead speaker and concluded perhaps in two minutes or so, as it is simply that, a vesting.

Sir, unless it indicated some new demarche along a philosophical line or philosophical plain upon which Government was about to embark, then it offers little that is fresh. It is really warmed-over soup, much of it we would have heard before. Sir, therefore, one wonders why we hear for the period of time that the very distinguished Leader of Government Business addressed us, what really appeared to be a tortured soul, a spirit in conflict, an Honourable Senator who seemed to be struggling to validate Government policy.

Mr. President, we heard some interesting characterisations about the aggressive nature of the attempt to solve the need for housing. Sir, no one on This Side takes issue with that. We heard an interesting characterisation about the boast of the housing start, so called, and one had to wonder whether it was a case of the Leader of Government Business trying to convince herself, her colleagues, perhaps convince the Chair, that the Government had actually achieved something during these last 18 months that it has held office with respect to this very vital sector.

Mr. President, I do not make that observation lightly because it is now one of the more unfortunate parts of public record. In fact, it has been described by someone this morning as a pop mark on public record that as recently as last night, no less an entity than the Prime Minister of Barbados himself, when invited by a journalist

to reflect on what he, the Prime Minister, would seek to laud his regime, his dispensation for, in the context of successes over the course of the last 18 months, the Prime Minister did not start with housing. Sir, all of this laborious - I almost said - monologue that the Leader of Government Business took us through today was not that which we heard falling from the lips of the Prime Minister only last night.

Mr. President, when asked to identify his successes in the social sector, the Prime Minister began with summer camps and moved speedily on to free bus fares for school children. Sir, the reality is that again we come back to the question that has to be asked.

When the Democratic Labour Party came to office, it did so with a tremendous amount of verbal gusto. We heard much of the same commitment to aggression, of resolving issues of critical importance, and boasts of a new start. Sir, the panacea to which the Leader of Government Business invited us to believe exists was talked about in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. President, I would have thought that the Leader of Government Business would have seized the opportunity, if the Honourable Senator did not want to address us on Branchbury and the merits of the same, if she did not want to address us on Woodbourne and the merits of the same, but wanted to take us all the way down to Passage Road, through Deacons Farm, Wanstead and everywhere else that she invited the Chamber to go with her across Barbados, in the hope of finding something of material benefit that could convince an eager listening ear that there was a modicum of value in the housing sector policy in this country over the last 18 months, and that something fundamentally had changed. Sir, if that were what we were supposed to be hearing, then we have failed, or we have been failed.

Mr. President, I am not going to make light of it - and I know you cannot hear the asides - because it is the people of Barbados who were invited to take the Government into their confidence. Sir, it is a heartrending thing when Government Senators, who sit there as a result of the very same confidence that they invited the public to demonstrate, Sir, with that confidence having been demonstrated, now in the full teeth of abject failure on the asides part, they now make light of this very critical matter.

Mr. President, the reality is that we have to ask - and the Leader of Government Business has invited us to ask her - to report progress. Sir, you cannot ask this Honourable Chamber to accept willy-nilly, without more, that you are addressing, and I quote her: "critical needs of Barbadians in the most aggressive way."

Mr. President, further, there is a situation in which the Manifesto speaks to the question of establishing a home ownership revolving fund, as a matter of urgency for public sector workers, providing interest-free loans to appointed public servants with five years' service, who are first-time homeowners.

Mr. President, one would have thought that if we are going to make more than the usual light weather of a simple vesting, that this would have been an opportunity to report progress, that the report card would have been held up to show this is what they said they would do and this is what they have achieved. Sir, it has not been done. Sir, one has to ask what is the situation with the commitment to provide 2 500 house spots for sale to low and middle income wage earners in the first term, how far has it gotten? What percentage of that commitment has been made?

Mr. President, I see the gesticulation that this Government has five years - and I hope you could get there - but I take the Honourable Members on the Other Side back to that which their distinguished Leader said only last night. Sir, when invited to comment on his successes as a Prime Minister and Government Leader, the Honourable Member got no further than the social sector, summer camps and bus fare.

12.10 p.m.

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, again I wonder, as a result of the same commitments in the same Manifesto, what is the status of the commitment to building 2 000 housing solutions per year in the first term of a Democratic Labour Party Government, including new rental units, terraced units and starter home.

Mr. President, one would have thought that if we are going to abandon that which is a very traditional approach to vesting, and take the Chamber through a very long process of coming to grips with policy, one would have imagined that the report card would have been pregnant with information.

Sir, the status report has not been forthcoming and I invite the Leader of Government Business to share with us because, Sir, much was said about giving people title, but it is not an issue across the political divide. The Barbados Labour Party has never found fault with that but, inasmuch as you are inviting us to comment and reflect upon it, then perhaps we should be in a position here and now to advance the substance of this debate by hearing from the Government what is the position with respect to the transfer of title at the National Housing Corporation with the rental units.

Mr. President, unless we are being made to understand how many conveyances have been put in the hands of people, the Senate is all noise, sound, or perhaps, fury but signifying nothing.

Sir, I am happy to hear that the Leader of Government Business is speaking the language of the policy being aggressive. It hearkens me because, even as she said that, one does not any longer hear the Minister of Housing on these matters, so that perhaps this is a fillip and an exercise to boost confidence.

Mr. President, only last night the very distinguished Prime Minister made it clear that there are weak links in the chain and that, perhaps, this is the Leader of Government Business coming to the rescue, once again, to rectify what is obviously a weak link in a breaking chain. Mr. President, we have to go further. We have to ask again, what is the situation with respect to commitments made and with respect to the zoning of land. My recollection of the Manifesto takes me to page 43 of the same Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto. Sir, you and I would know that on coming to office, a number of commitments were made in the housing sector in the context of a broader land use policy.

I reflect on this because the Leader of Government Business spoke about it. Sir, I would not, if I were wearing her political shoes, or standing in her place, have wanted to wade into the waters of broad land use policy on a matter which was a simple vesting of land at Branchbury and Woodbourne because, as soon as you get into the broad land use policy, then you are going to open an issue of the introduction of legislation that makes it mandatory that any change of ownership of zoning of land be approved by Parliament. Sir, that was a Manifesto commitment of this Government as an issue of first instance and first priority as, indeed,

Mr. President, there was a further commitment, not only in the Throne Speech, but also in the Manifesto, that the Land Acquisition Act would be amended to require Government to pay compensation on the replacement value rather than the market value of the land.

Mr. President, in the first 100 days of this regime, we were supposed to have an Agricultural Protection Act so that you had to get a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament for change of land use and so on. Sir, nothing of the sort has come to light and yet we are hearing this triumphant campaign platform rhetoric about the aggression and the urgency and passion of the Government and its unswerving commitment, and not only to one sector, but to all - the lower, the middle class, the upper middle class - about this transformation that is taking place in Barbados, which is obviously alive and well in the mind

of the Leader of Government Business, but it is not there for the naked eye to see.

Mr. President, I am sure as well that the Leader of Government Business forgot, or perhaps it was not in her notes because having spent so much time lecturing us on the issue of rent in Barbados, and how the Government was introducing - as though it had not been taking place before - this process whereby if you were a tenant you can, through the intervention of the State, become an owner of the property you were renting, so that this was another panacea, thanks to the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, the reality is, not only was it happening before, but I do not understand how a senior Minister of the Crown could come to pilot a Resolution through the House, and have the temerity to speak on the issue of rent and report progress on what all Barbadians want to hear on this issue, that is, where is the rent restriction Act that the Minister of Housing touted as being his priority on the question of rent. What is the progress of that Act? We need to hear it and equally we want to hear about what the Government is proposing to do about the slum-lords, who pass as landlords in Barbados. What is the Government proposing to do?

Mr. President, it is not satisfactory for the Leader of Government Business, standing as it were, in the shoes of the Minister of Housing and saying to this Chamber that people are concerned about the absence of dignity in certain rental experiences because we all know that, and there is no Barbadian who is not concerned.

The Leader of Government Business went further and spoke to us at length about the question of a concerned citizen seeing overcrowding and that citizen's reaction to the overcrowding. We accept that is something that happens on a daily basis and needs to be corrected, but the commitment of the Government is what is now being questioned, not the rhetoric of the Government, because the Government has had the opportunity to deal with this matter.

Mr. President, what happened last night was the admission of failure. I do not think that we have seen as abject an admission of failure as we have seen, when we saw a Prime Minister of Barbados being invited to speak at length on the substantive policy of his Government, shrink from the glare of the public focus and spotlight on those matters of importance and say that his single achievement was summer camps.

Mr. President, I do not think we have ever seen our Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow; I do not think we have ever seen our Right Excellent Sir Grantley Herbert Adams; I do not think we have ever seen any of the illustrious predecessors of this Prime Minister in that vein. Sir, perhaps, in his case, as indeed, with the Leader of

Government Business, the lesson to be learnt is that less is more. Sir, had the Leader of Government Business today embraced that advice, she may have spoken less and, therefore, there would have been no need for us to probe as deeply on these matters of policy as we do now.

Mr. President, the reality is that I do not think there is any Barbadian who would take issue with the concern expressed by the Leader of Government Business about Barbadians going to work at the home of an expatriate and recognising that there is a quality of life that is not necessarily being translated into that Barbadian's experience. I do not think that there is any Barbadian living in the cramped conditions to which the Leader of Government Business alluded and not feel a sense of outrage but, Sir, there has to be a policy solution.

Mr. President, the Barbados Labour Party, when it was in office, was in an advanced stage of bringing to this country, a piece of legislation that would try to treat to the issue of the relationship that the landlord has with his or her tenant; the conditions that the tenant has to exist under; the reality that we experience in every Constituency of this island whereby there are people who are renting a house, but they have no running water, and they may have inadequate conditions to sleep in.

Mr. President, we are in a country now where it is a commonplace thing to rent a room.

*S/A20/12:20 Sequence 8*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: You go into a house and the house is chopped up into 14 or 15 different pieces, and you are renting what passes for a room. Sir, this is the stuck in the mud campaign rhetoric you will hear, and I, perhaps, will hear it in here today. I do not want to anticipate it.

*Asides.*

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am sure that the Honourable Senator is not going to broaden the debate to the point where the President has to intervene.

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, we will hear that this is something that existed when the Barbados Labour Party was in Government, and so on. I do not mind hearing that because that is all part of that which passes as the partisan politics, and there are some who cannot go beyond that. That is their limitation, and, indeed, there are others, regrettably, who are here precisely because that is their strength. I believe that the broader society, and perhaps, the more knowledgeable society, would be curious to know whether there is a policy framework, which is

being formulated by the Government to respond to this issue.

Sir, I do not believe that the man on the Oistin bus or the man on the Hometown or Speightstown bus, even as we speak, when he reflects on these matters, is as concerned about the fact that it may have begun 4, 14, or 24 years ago, as he is concerned about what we are doing to find a solution to the situation, in which a person in Barbados today may be renting out a house that has no running water, and demanding of a tenant punctual payment of the tenancy money.

What is the power of the tenant in the circumstances? Where is the legislation that empowers he who is ultimately a consumer in this regard? Where is the legislation that empowers and protects the consumer when he is caught up in a marketplace where there is a chronic shortage of adequate housing, and is therefore forced to accept what is available, and he goes into a contract to lease a property and then finds that he is being asked to pay unconscionable rates.

Is the satisfaction that he is to get, is that the protection to get in Barbados, is that the protection only to come in the form of hearing a Senator in the Democratic Labour Party say, well it was so 20 years ago? Is that all? Is there no balm in Gilead?

I would want to believe that there is balm in Gilead, and that the balm must be coming in the form of a policy intervention by the Government which would say, while we understand that this is the labour you exist under, we are going to find a way of correcting it, and in correcting it, you are going to place a restriction on the level of rent that you can charge for certain types of places. In correcting it, it means that you will be demanding of a landlord that he does certain types of things, in order to make the premises more habitable and fit for human habitation. Sir, that is what we are talking about.

It is regrettable that having come to a point where we are introducing into this Chamber a Resolution which, quite frankly, could have been dealt with in a very simple way, a simple straightforward vesting, but you want to make a broad policy statement about it, that the policy statement when tested, is exposed as being naked, nothingness. A naked policy statement.

There was nothing to it, because all of the issues of the moment, which should have been answered, the report card which should have been made to the public, or where this Government is, after a year-and-a-half, nothing has been forthcoming. What is it that Government proposes to resolve some of these pressing issues? Nothing forthcoming. It cannot be satisfactory.

I do not expect that the situation is going to be rectified overnight, because it is abundantly clear that the weak links to which the Prime Minister referred, last night, have to be dealt with, have to be given a chance, as he said, to settle down. I do not know after a year-and-a-half how much settling you are expected to give, but as he said, you have to give him a chance to settle down. One would hope that by the time we come back to this Chamber again with a further vesting, either the Leader of Government Business would be more shrewd, and, therefore, would just do the vesting, and take her seat quietly, or that she will give us the benefit of a full and frank report, which will give us some guidance as to the change that the Democratic Labour Party had said was coming, the change that the Democratic Labour Party asked to be given the opportunity to lead and bring about, and what is the substance, if any of that change? We have come to this point.

Sir, with those few words, I take my seat and I thank you, very kindly.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: Sir, I will like to congratulate the Government on their efforts to offer housing to an increased number of people, especially people of the lower income group, but I would like to see this progress reported on a regular basis, an official regular basis by the National Housing Corporation. I think I have spoken about that before, in this Honourable Chamber.

What we do see is the Minister responsible for Housing speaking from time to time, and then when we get to Election time there is a big quarrel about who has done what. I think that if we have a regular progress report coming out in the media showing which houses have been started, which are halfway, and which are being completed, will go along way in solving some of these problems and these arguments.

Sir, I am glad to see that construction at Country Road has been restarted, and it looks as if it is progressing well. There are too many half-constructed houses in Barbados left to go to ruin. To me it is a loss of resources, a waste of money.

I agree with Senator McClean that there should be a balance, and there has to be a balance between agriculture and housing, but I still maintain, as I have always maintained, that there is plenty of non arable land left in Barbados to use for housing, before we start on agricultural land.

Sir, I find that it is much too easy to achieve the change of use of agricultural land. I hope that all the initiatives that were mentioned in the Throne Speech will

be brought in force, to stop this wholesale change of use of agricultural land.

Sir, I do not know how many of the Honourable Senators have seen the construction going on at Staple Grove, Christ Church, and the difficulty they seem to be having in finding a foundation. It looks as if we might reach Australia before we reach the foundation.

*Asides.*

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: This proves that this land is good agricultural land. I think there is plenty so-called agricultural land and non arable land that could be used before we move into these good agricultural lands.

Sir, I agree with moving schools and that type of thing out of congested areas into slightly rural areas, but I think that we should be using land that is not useful for agriculture.

I hear a lot of multi-storey houses but I do not think we need to go to these in the near future. We have enough land, and we have enough derelict buildings all over the country which really bring down the whole ambience of the country. We are told that there are legal implications with these derelict buildings, house spots and ownership. I know that Governments can overcome any of these hurdles if they really want to do it. They are not insurmountable.

*S A20 12.30 p.m. Sequence 9*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

*Senate A20, Sequence 10, 12.30 p.m.*

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I look forward to this reporting on the progress of housing and some better regulations, making it more difficult to change the use of agricultural land.

I thank you very much.

*Asides.*

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise because I believe that we have a very important debate before us today, and that we have come to the issue of looking at housing in Barbados, on several different occasions. I also rise because I have concerns listening to Senator Symmonds relate to the

Democratic Labour Party's housing policy, having participated in the previous Administration's policies of housing.

Sir, I looked specifically to the 2003 Manifesto because I have heard on several occasions in this Chamber, questions raised towards our policy of transferring titles for housing units to the people of Barbados. Sir, the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto 2003, Every Bajan a Winner, on page 24 says, and I quote: "We will sell rental units."

Apart from the obvious difference where our Party, the Democratic Labour Party has said:

"We are transferring units to people who have had them for 20 years, paid and been up-to-date on their rents."

To the Barbados Labour Party's policy of:

"We will sell rental units."

The fact is that in 2003, the Barbados Labour Party did go into office and subsequently, minimal action was taken on this promise because I would have liked to see the results of this programme. It is very difficult to see the promise of this programme anywhere represented in Barbados, but we have seen over the last year, a very concerted effort because I can remember it being made light of in here, when letters went out to the people who were in ownership of those housing units. Sir, we can see now that some of these people not only have the letters indicating that the conveyancing will start but conveyances, themselves, have been processed and passed on.

*Asides.*

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Therefore, when we look at this, there is a clear policy. I go beyond that because I do not intend to live in the past, as the Honourable Members of the Barbados Labour Party seem to do. We can look at the change in policy because when I look at the housing policy as a social component of life in Barbados, there are so many areas that we now have to understand are affected by it.

We can look to our neighbours in the Caribbean - I am sure I said this before - and see that the average age for leaving home is 16. When you get to the 30s in Barbados, you still need to live at home because you cannot afford to move out from home, but that has other implications.

Sir, whether we choose to admit it or not, we are now experiencing a huge brain drain on our country. Young people are choosing to leave Barbados, not because they want to, but because their options are limited to such an extent, where they say, you know what, if I take a job in Canada, I can build a life for myself there. If I take a job in

the United Kingdom, I have opportunities that I do not have in Barbados.

Mr. President, when we speak of a housing policy, we really need to understand that in our country, when young people and people in general, think about the quality of life that they are going to have, housing is one of the cornerstone areas that they are going to consider. Therefore, we cannot allow the debate to continue, where real changes in housing policy are made light of. We cannot continue to have it said that there is no difference in the two policies, when there is a world of difference.

I was fortunate enough before I arrived here this morning, to go through the area of Husbands Gardens and to actually look at the houses there, and remember the fact that a previous Democratic Labour Party Administration was able to allow the people of Barbados to have access to starter homes that were not the size of a coffin, but to homes in which they could build their lives, Sir, and we need to get back to these policies.

Sir, just before I spoke, Senator Francis Chandler spoke of the housing units on Country Road. They are going up very quickly because I see that a new phase has started, which is going up even faster than the traditional method of building. Sir, I believe that those housing units offer opportunities for young people.

Mr. President, I think that when we speak of owning our own piece of the rock that different generations have different concepts, Sir, for young people looking for somewhere where they can start and actually have a home and a family that a life begins. Sir, having not too long ago been living under my mother's roof, I can say you always have these discrepancies where, at the end of the conversation you are told, when you live under my roof, you have to abide by my rules. And so, young people who are looking to really step out there and start to experience life in the fullest, need access to an area where they can develop and need access to certain different things.

Mr. President, I will admit we have a lot of influence from the American culture. We see young Americans at the age of 19, 20 and 21, being able to go out and rent condos and different areas. This may not be the final place they will live but it gives them a start. It makes a very large difference, when you can go out there and start, for instance, collecting furnishings for your home and actually start investing in some sort of equity because, while an average 21-year-old might not be able to get a mortgage on a property that is worth \$500 000, if we had units and condos that could go for smaller amounts, like \$100 000 to \$125 000, instead of their having to go out and pay rent, if they could access a mortgage, and pay on that mortgage monthly, they then have equity.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, on a point of order, because I believe it may have transpired at a point when the young Senator was not yet fully cognizant of these things. Sir, the Barbados Labour Party in office, introduced for the first time in this country, a \$100 per cent mortgage programme for any person, as long as they were over the age of 21 and working. I just wanted to clarify that because the Senator seemed to be suggesting to us that this is something that was not accessible.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No point of order.

SENATOR D.K.A. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, let me clarify my thoughts to you. In this country, like I said, the process of building equity is far different to the access that is available because you could have a loan available and still not qualify for it. The average 21-year-old is not in a position to qualify for a loan for a house costing more than \$250 000.

You do not necessarily need to have a down payment, but you do need to have a certain level of income to qualify for that loan. What I am saying is that you can see from models used in other countries, where it is far more beneficial to have young people being able to build equity, so that when they do want to get a much larger property, they have a down payment of \$50 000, \$75 000 or even \$100 000 to start the process.

Therefore, Mr. President, having a theoretical concept of young people being able to access these 100 per cent mortgages and then we fall into the same trap that other countries fall into because I know the Members of the Opposition are apt to forget that we are in an economic crisis, started by the fact that we were giving houses to people who could not afford them.

*Senate A20, Sequence 10, 12:40:06*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR D. K. A. GRIFFITH: Therefore, we need to make sure that when we encourage young people to become owners of their own homes, we do it in a financially responsible way and not feed them a bunch of pipe dreams where we talk about housing options that do not apply to their own specific needs. I think this is what we continued to fail to really have a cohesive position on until now when we look at the position of this current Administration on housing.

Mr. President, when you build high-rise units and make them accessible to young people, you have the option of enhancing the quality of the life of that unit by having certain built-in amenities like high-speed internet access easily available throughout the property, gyms and

recreation areas, those sorts of things that would appeal to a younger audience.

Mr. President, in looking at our housing policy fully, you need to understand that this Democratic Labour Party Administration has put a focus on family, and housing comes back to being one of the cornerstones for people to have decent families in Barbados. We talk about the hardships that Barbadians face. Senator Symmonds spoke of legislation that was to come but never did. In the absence of this legislation, there were rental properties that were substantial on the market and still are. Mr. President, I find that in the past there has been a rush to creating legislation but a failure to enforce it.

Mr. President, we need to create a sector that is more vibrant. If we are going to be looking at the rental unit sector, we need to understand that there needs to be certain standards for properties, and I believe Government should be the one to set the way. When we set up our properties, they would be of the highest standard and therefore would challenge private sector entities that offer rental units to actually meet these standards, because there would be competition.

Mr. President, going back to the vesting of these two plots of land, I think it is timely that we now understand that to go through the process of creating new housing solutions, we need to identify land that is available and that is quickly able to be converted into whatever type of housing solution that is available.

Mr. President, the speed with which we need to do this cannot be emphasised because I believe that the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the National Housing Corporation over the last year have been working very diligently, but we are faced with the fact that there are some 18 000 people waiting for houses and some 14 000 waiting for the allocation of land at the National Housing Corporation. When we look at those figures, that is a tremendous amount of work to be done, and so we have to be conscientious in the process which I have been seeing from the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. President, I think the public needs to bear with the National Housing Corporation because every time they come up with 100 houses, they are swallowed up very quickly by the demand there is because of the many years where that demand was not being met.

Mr. President, we need to continue to focus on that. We can only carry out this process in the correct manner. We need to follow the law. We need to make sure that when we are allocating houses to people that every procedure that needs to be followed is followed, and that at the end of the day the Democratic Labour Party's housing

policy is one that benefits the people of Barbados as opposed to what pertained before.

Mr. President, I believe that for far too long people have had to deal with the indignity of having to beg for a decent housing solution in Barbados. This vesting is part of ensuring that we have the tools that are necessary to fulfil the promises that we have made.

I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, I just wish to spend a few minutes here in support of this Resolution to approve the vesting in accordance with section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land, the property of the Crown, situate at Branchbury in the parish of Saint Joseph, and Woodbourne in the parish of Saint Philip, for residential purposes.

Mr. President, I am very happy about this Resolution because, in the past, in this Honourable Senate, we talked about making lands available for residential purposes. Mr. President, everybody knows of the commitment that this Democratic Labour Party made in its Manifesto and in the Throne Speech as our answer to the housing solution in Barbados.

Mr. President, there are a number of plots of land around Barbados that are lying idle. I agree with Senator Chandler that there is enough marginal land available in this country that we would not have to touch any of the arable land that is allocated for agriculture to put into housing.

Mr. President, a few years ago when I was at the Barbados Agricultural Society, a gentleman named Mr. Laurie and I drove through the length and breadth of Barbados seeking to identify those areas of land. At one time, we were looking at idle land for idle hands because we were looking to have these lands into agriculture. As we drove around, we found many parcels of land that are owned by Barbadians living overseas.

Mr. President, we went into the Land Valuation Department and sought to confirm who the owners were, and we wrote letters seeking to find use for these pieces of land that were lying idle in this country. There is land in every parish. Mr. President, I want to speak to the lands in the countryside in particular. There is a lot of marginal land in St. Lucy. There is also a lot of marginal land lying in the outskirts of St. Peter.

Mr. President, that is why I am a little bit boggled because for the last number of years we had in St. Peter a representative for 24 years, 13 of which were as Prime Minister, and we still have residents in St. Peter who are

crying out for housing solutions. I do not want to refer to the 14 years that the Barbados Labour Party was in office because we cannot gain a lot from being critical about these years that lied idle as far as the housing solutions were concerned.

Mr. President, if I was the Prime Minister representing the Constituency of St. Peter, or any rural Constituency, I would have to make sure that those areas that have marginal lands, are utilised for the benefit of our people in this country.

Mr. President, you would want to remember as well that many years ago when the Honourable Member who represents the parish of St. Andrew was the Minister of Housing, they went about seeking to build land banks. A lot of deposits were perhaps made in the land bank but no withdrawals, except for those persons who were close to the Party and who could afford to...

*Senate A20 Sequence 11*

12.50 p.m.

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

Senator Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. President, the Honourable Senator is misleading this Honourable Chamber by suggesting that the development of the land banks only benefitted a few people. Sir, the land banks were developed so that housing projects could be done and were, in fact, done all over Barbados.

Mr. President, this notion that only a few persons close to the Barbados Labour Party benefited from the housing banks is entirely false.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, your point has been made.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, the truth hurts sometimes but it sets you free. Sir, if these land banks that were being built up were well-used and houses were built, we would not have this backlog of thousands of people waiting for land, after they being in Government for 14 years. The land banks were indeed built up through deposits, but I am telling you not many withdrawals were made to the benefit of the masses of people in this country. Sir, that is a fact.

Mr. President, I heard Senator Symmonds speaking very fluently, and I do sit in this Honourable Chamber and enjoy the fluent way in which he puts his messages across. Senator Symmonds knows he has a good audience out there, as people do listen to these debates, they like to hear him presiding but Mr. President, the Honourable Senator

reminds me of a very good batsman who bats very elegantly, who bats with a lot of strokes but, at the end of the day, there are no runs on the scoreboard.

Mr. President, Senator Symmonds has forgotten that he was a Member of the Party that was in office for a number of years. Senator Symmonds was not there for the 14 years they were in office because, at some time, he was a Member of the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, the Barbados Labour Party had opportunities to do a lot of things.

Mr. President, each time Senator Symmonds speaks in this Honourable Chamber, he turns to page 42 of the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto and seeks to hold up this new Government to ridicule for not bringing that Act, the Agriculture Protection Act, as has been promised in the first 100 days.

Mr. President, at this time I am not going to seek to hold up any public servants to ridicule because on the three or four occasions we have done so in this Honourable Senate, from the time the Honourable Senator finishes his speech and we break for lunch, when I go back to my office, I would try to ensure that I put myself in a position to avoid the unnecessary and unwarranted attacks from the Honourable Senator.

Sir, whenever I do that, I always found that the file to which Senator Symmonds referred, has been languishing in somebody's office. Sir, sometimes you see numbers, sometimes you wonder why these files would have taken this long, why they were languishing in the corridors of...

Mr. President, the point I want to raise is that the time-frame given for this piece of legislation might have been a bit ambitious, perhaps. Sir, I am not going to usurp or pre-empt the authority of the Cabinet, but I would like to inform Senator Symmonds that the days for that piece of legislation to go to Cabinet is on the agenda.

That piece of legislation is going to be on the agenda very shortly because we have been able, through working closely with the Town Planning Department, to fulfil that Manifesto pledge. Sir, we have not been tardy in doing so. Senator Symmonds knows the length of time these things take, especially when you have officers who seem to want to move as slowly as the African snail move in these processes.

Mr. President, there are other pieces of legislation on the legislative agenda. I came to office and found 13 pieces on the legislative agenda, some dating back to the late 1990s, 2000 and 2002. Sir, on Monday, the Governance Subcommittee of Cabinet sat and discussed the Agriculture Sustainable Bill, which dates back as far as 2002.

Mr. President, Senator Symmonds was in the Other Place at the time and has never questioned the timetable in bringing these things to the fore, but I want to report that progress is about to happen. Sir, I am sure when the time comes that Senator Symmonds too would be a part of the discussion.

Mr. President, I want to talk about what Senator Chandler alluded to regarding that land at Staple Grove. Sir, whenever I pass Staple Grove, it hurts my heart to see that deep soil being cut up for the reason it is being done for, to be put in either commercial or residential use, or to build a church. I like building churches too. I suspect that one day I would be part of the church-building community, but I want to emphasise in this Honourable Chamber that subdivision was given under the Barbados Labour Party Government. Sir, I want to say that there are a lot of decisions that were given under the Barbados Labour Party Administration that we would see bearing fruit very shortly.

Mr. President, we in Barbados seem to have a fairly short memory, so that whenever we see a piece of land now being cut up, the impression given would be that the Democratic Labour Party has given approval for that subdivision of land. Sir, I want to let you know that, Sir, contrary to what Senator Chandler might think, Senator Chandler said, and I quote: “too easy to achieve change of use of agricultural land.” Mr. President, I want to let you know that over the past 18 months, I have dealt with a number of files that have come to my desk for change of use, from agriculture to other purposes.

Sir, it is not so easy. Sir, people come to your office, they meet in the banks and everywhere but I want to let you know that it is not as easy as it used to be under the previous regime. Sir, I want to say that matters are dealt with sensibly and professionally. We looked at what we needed to do to retain that minimum amount as identified in the Agriculture Protection Act, in the land use policy and the amount that is to be left for agriculture. Sir, we have respected that. We want to retain a minimum amount of acres that we can achieve our food security and food sovereignty programme.

Mr. President, I want to assure this Honourable Chamber and the public in general that it is not as easy as it used to be for someone to write a letter, to apply for a subdivision and to expect that it would be granted as simple as that.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. President, it has never been easy to get change of use for agricultural land in Barbados. There is a very detailed process that starts with the application for the change of use, which has to be processed by several departments within the Government, including the Town

Planning Department and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It then has to go to the Minister, ultimately, to say “yea” or “nay”. Sir, very often, relative to the number of applications for change of use that are made, the vast majority of people are told no. In fact, it was under the last Administration, in the passing of the Physical Development Plan, that 60 000 acres of land were retained by Law for agriculture in Barbados.

Sir, the notion that one could simply write a letter and permission would be granted is entirely false. The process is very long, very detailed and very arduous.

1.00 p.m.

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Of course, there is some sentimental attachment to agricultural land and every time a lot comes out of use, people will complain, but it does not mean that it has gone through any easy or quick process, or that the well-established legal process with several tiers of Civil Service review has been modified and compromised at all.

SENATOR the Hon. H.LaV. BENN: Mr. President, to correct the Senator, it is not 60 000 acres, it is 45 000 acres and she needs to read again. However, Sir, the next time that I have to deal with these tracks of land that have been taken out of agriculture; the next time, Mr. President, that I have to go into my Ministry to address these issues about these lands at Staple Grove and Other Places, I will seek to find where Senator Thompson would be at the time and let her have a word with my officer who told me that they advised against it.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, on a point of order. Sir, the fact that an officer in the Ministry could say to you that they advised against it does not mean that the Minister or a minister, in their discretion, did not make a decision to the contrary and there is nothing wrong with that. In fact, it is often that ministerial intervention or ministerial decision turns out to be the right thing.

The Ministry of Agriculture also advised that Sandy Lane estate should have remained in agricultural protection and that it should not have become a hotel. The officers advised against it and the Minister, in his discretion, at the time, a Democratic Labour Party Minister, made the decision that it should go into the hotel property.

Sir, it was the right decision, so the fact that a civil servant says to you that he advised against it does not mean that his advice was necessarily the right decision, the right advice, or the best economic advice or even the best social advice for Barbados at the time. Very often, the Ministry

does not take into consideration how the value of land has changed and what uses it needs to be put to, vis-a-vis food security as against other developments, and that is always the tradeoff you have to make in a country that is as small as Barbados. It does not mean that because a piece of land comes out of agriculture, that it is a wrong decision or that the country suffers socially or economically.

SENATOR the Hon. H.LaV. BENN: Mr. President, I suspect that, in the fullness of time, the Honourable Senator would get a chance to contribute to this particular debate and she will have her length of time to speak. Sir, going back to Sandy Lane, that is before she was even born but, Sir, never mind.

Mr. President, I would like to press on with the issue at hand. We recognise in this new Democratic Labour Party Government that there was a burning desire to provide not only houses, and we put it in the Manifesto that we are going to embark on a policy of creating those house lots at \$5 per square foot. It has been a bit long in coming, but there are times that you make promises, and you make pledges, and then often times you have to tweak the agenda a bit. Sir, all of us in this Chamber are aware that there are times when the process, as the Honourable Senator is agreeing, takes a little longer than anticipated.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, on a point of order. I am finding it very difficult to follow the debate. There is another meeting apparently going on in the Chamber and I am obliged to you if you would ask for some order.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No point of order.

SENATOR the Hon. H.LaV. BENN: Mr. President, I am not disturbed because I am accustomed to talking through these things. It is just a tactic that goes to waste.

Mr. President, I believe that this Democratic Labour Party is on its way to trying to answer its Manifesto pledges, but it will not do so at the call of the Barbados Labour Party. They had an opportunity to do it when they were in office. They neglected to answer the call to the satisfaction of the populace in Barbados and that is one of the many reasons they were asked to step aside for a new Administration to seek to answer the people in Barbados.

Mr. President, I am maintaining that we have enough marginal lands in this country for housing. I know that the Democratic Labour Party will achieve its objective by providing enough house spots in St. Lucy, in the Democratic Labour Party Government for people in St. Andrew, St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. Thomas, St. Philip, as we are doing today, and in St. Joseph, in particular, to ensure that those people do not have to leave the rural parishes and head to the urban and suburban places.

Mr. President, I am very happy to know that the Democratic Labour Party Government has been able to identify areas in Branchbury in the parish of St. Joseph and in Woodbourne in the parish of St. Philip for the residential purposes for our people. I want to encourage the Minister of Housing because he has been relentless in his pursuit to get things done, he himself coming out of a rural parish of this country.

Mr. President, I want to say to you that the slumlords, who have been identified and spoken of by Senator Symmonds, I want to assure him that all and sundry would be taken care of. It happened, perhaps, under the Barbados Labour Party's regime and I do not want you to mark us by your standards, but to give us an opportunity to show that we get our things done.

Mr. President, I want to support it. I want to call on the Minister of Housing to venture into Indian Ground, Rectory Hill in St. Peter and the uttermost parts of St. Peter and let us identify those areas of land that we once, many years ago, identified as gully hills, rock land and grass-pieces and have them identified and have them applied for the appropriate people, even if Government has to acquire them and we will find the solution for our people, while at the same time, in the Ministry of Agriculture, we seek to retain those areas of land that we consider to be fertile where Barbadians can grow food, adequately feed ourselves and our citizens.

Mr. President, before I close, I want to assure this Honourable Chamber that when you pass through Barbados, particularly Staple Grove, Senator Chandler, and you see land there being cut up, and I know you are hurting as badly as I am hurting, it is not the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, they are listening to our charge and I could identify a number of other pieces of land, because some of the information was there when I took up office.

Sir, if you see the amount of land that was approved in the latter years of the Barbados Labour Party regime, you would cry rivers of tears. Sir, a lot of good land was taken out of agriculture and Staple Grove is one piece of it.

Mr. President, at some other opportune time, we will speak about it. Sir, each time Senator Symmonds speaks, I will put a piece on the table to let the public know all the subdivisions that were done.

*S/A20/13:10 Sequence 13*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR the Hon. H.LaV. BENN: I am not going to hold up public officers to ridicule. I do not think it is appropriate for me in this Senate to do so. Certainly, I want to say that we in the Democratic Labour Party Government

are doing our upmost to ensure that Barbadians are adequately housed, and I, therefore, want to support this Resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

#### SUSPENSION

SENATOR the Hon. M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m.

*The question that the Sitting be now suspended until 2.15 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.*

*S A20 13.10 p.m. Sequence 14*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

*Senate A20, Sequence 15, 2.22 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

Senator Hutson, you have the Floor.

SENATOR J. A. C. HUTSON: Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the Government on obtaining these two parcels of land. Unfortunately, the plans that we received, and I think I speak for everyone, were very faintly painted. I have not been able to find out exactly where these two parcels are located.

I presume that in due course, these two parcels will be sold at \$5 per square foot, but I would like to suggest, Sir, that the time has come where we should be elevating our houses. I agree with Senator Chandler. Today, she is not too keen on going up. The island is not getting any bigger but the population is getting bigger and, if we can put three or four families in one block, I think that would be a great help.

Sir, if you come to Ellerton in my area, east of the playing field, you will see many houses there accommodating three to five families, all under one roof. I think this is important because one roof, instead of six roofs and six houses, is better from the point of view of the heat it transfers, and stops the rain clouds from coming into this island. I think I had mentioned it before.

Sir, only yesterday, I was watching the pattern of rain clouds coming in, forming east of Penny Hole and splitting, going over the south of the island and coming down over Society, St. Thomas and out to sea. Mr. President, this is very important for the rainfall and water

of this island. Therefore, I will suggest that in these developments, I know everyone wants to have a bit of the rock but you can have condominiums.

Mr. President, these houses could be put into condominiums and for a young person, I think this is ideal. As a rule, they do not have any family to start with, and I would also like to suggest, as Senator Benn and Senator Chandler mentioned, there are masses of non arable land that these houses can be built on, and I think the Government should pay more attention to allowing non arable lands to be put into housing, instead of agricultural land.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Thompson.

Senator Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Sir, I just want to mention some observations in this debate and, if I may, I really want to start with two points, the first of which relates to the use of agricultural lands. When Barbados was primarily an agrarian type society and sugar was king, it was absolutely critically important to retain large swarms of land in agricultural production, because growing cane took large parcels of land, until they started then to do the genetic engineering and produced the high yield sugar canes.

Mr. President, in more recent times, however, the economic yield from sugar is not substantial, and therefore one has to determine what kinds of economic uses one could put to one's land. There is always the consideration in relation to land space and food security, against which you are going to balance the issue of using your agricultural lands. Therefore, that argument over housing and how much to allocate to housing and how much to allocate to agriculture, is always going to be a debate in a country as small as ours.

It was interesting to hear the Prime Minister last evening, alluding to the kinds of real estate investment that the Barbados economy needs. There is a kind of real estate investment that the Barbados economy needs.

*Senate A20, Sequence 15, 14.30.14*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: There are lands in places like the Lakes Development where large developments have gone on on what formerly was agricultural land, as those lands, in many instances, were lying fallow, or were not yielding significant revenues for

the owners, but that is a debate that I imagine would continue.

Indeed, successive Governments are going to have to face it, because every time you have to do a large housing development, it would require land. Even if you are going up, there is a footprint that the development requires, so you are going to have to give up some lands.

Mr. President, I heard discussion in here about marginal lands. Mr. President, the Town and Country Planning Development Office generally speaks about marginal lands, but there are a lot of agricultural lands that are not currently in agricultural production which the Town and Country Planning Development Office still classifies as agricultural lands and therefore not suited to housing.

Mr. President, a lot of the time when people discuss or talk about lands that are not arable and lands that are not planted, they are, in fact, identifying lands which are classified by the Town and Country Planning Development Office as agricultural, but which are not currently in agricultural production.

Mr. President, I do believe that within recent times there has been a lot of decisions that favour the release of marginal lands even though in some instances there has also been the use of larger pieces of lands, some of which were classified as agricultural, but lying fallow and some of which were not in production, or some of which were in low-end production. Mr. President, I can tell you that the pressure to take lands out of agriculture or to put lands into development which earn foreign exchange and revenues for the country is always very great.

Mr. President, as to the issue of the land bank, which is another issue, that has been raised, the Barbados Labour Party's policy was to acquire lands and put those lands into housing. We were able to move the home mortgage loans from \$24 million to in excess of \$1 billion because lands were being freed up to the Barbadian public for use for housing. Those who wish to deny that, they can if they wish, but the record is there.

What the Barbados Labour Party did or did not do is now a matter of historical record or fact. Mr. President, the Barbados Labour Party did so much that only the very creative propagandist on the part of the Other Side, none of whom are in here of course... One just heard a lot of repeats of things which are highly inaccurate.

Mr. President, on January 15, 2008, a judgment was passed on the last Government and a new Government was chosen. I am not going to dwell on the last Government's policy, which is historical record, I want to dwell on this Administration's lack of policy. The public relations campaign as to the Democratic Labour Party's housing

agenda is at work, so there is a lot of hype which does not connect with the reality.

In the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto, there was a promise of 2 500 house spots and 2 000 houses per year. In the last 18 months, this is only perhaps the second or third acquisition that has come to this Chamber, so it was not possible to produce the houses projected on what have come before us.

In fact, if one listened to the Honourable Prime Minister's Budget, which I sent for a copy, he himself concedes that in the year 2008-2009, 91 houses were built and 155 lots created, so this notion that you have a housing Minister that has been more active, more proactive, more aggressive, more productive and all of this colourful language, does not connect with the reality of what the Prime Minister tells us.

The Prime Minister said that in their first year, they built 91 houses and created 155 lots. Sir, that falls far below the 2 500 lots and the 2 000 houses per annum which were promised. Mr. President, on the basis of the acquisitions that have been done to date, the target cannot be achieved in the next year either. I will go on to say why.

Again, I turn to the Honourable Prime Minister who said that in the next year, 2009-2010, 224 houses would be built, again way below the targets and, in fact, way below what was being built by the Barbados Labour Party. This is an element that outside of the propaganda, the reality and the creativity do not align with one another. What is being projected and what is being alleged falls far below what the Democratic Labour Party committed itself to in its Manifesto, and in fact what it is trying to give the public the impression has happened.

The VAT on the \$400 000 in building material has not happened and would not, and we heard excuses for that in here. In addition to that, there has been no creative type policy such as the bringing to the market that 100 per cent mortgage facility which allows a large number of persons who would have been unable to save a 10 or 15 per cent deposit to get a house, or to get a property that facilitated them as long as they were working.

In addition to that, the Barbados Labour Party policy of making lands available at \$2.50 per square foot in the tenancies and in low income areas has been increased by the present Administration from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per square foot. That is a significant increase. It is significant in the context of all the other increases that we have been made to endure by the Democratic Labour Party.

In addition to that, the Barbados Labour Party, in order to make housing more affordable and give homeowners an ease, took land tax off properties valued up

to \$150 000, or if your property was worth more than that, you got the first \$150 000 free of land tax.

Since the Democratic Labour Party came to office, land taxes have been increased considerably. We heard the Prime Minister say that was as a result of a policy of the Barbados Labour Party, but the result is that people are feeling a hardship which the Government has a responsibility to intervene in. In fact, when the bands for land taxes are set, the Minister responsible for land tax has to intervene and say no, I am not taking that band, or I am not taking such a hike, it must be reduced or the band is not to go over X, Y and Z.

Mr. President, subsequent to the raising of land taxes, the Democratic Labour Party brought another budget this year and had an opportunity, if it felt land taxes were too high as it was saying, to change the land tax rates, or reduce the level of hardship on people who were attempting to own houses and people who, in fact, owned houses, but it did nothing to ease the public. It was part of the continuing cascade of increase upon increase and hardship upon hardship which is now characterising this Administration's form of Government, when it was in fact suggesting that life and the cost of living would become easier.

*Senate A20 Sequence 16*

2.40 p.m.

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, so that much which was put in place to make things easier for the public to reduce expenses and cost has been reversed. It has been changed to the detriment to the wider Barbadian public and is, in fact, causing people to suffer and not to be able to own property.

Sir, when you are going to buy a home, there must be significant consideration of all of your outgoings and expenses - what is your land tax going to be? What would your water rates be like? What are you going to have to pay for electricity? What are your mortgage rates going to be like? Are they going to be high or low? Sir, the most important consideration is, are you going to have a job.

Mr. President, part of the escalation in the demand for housing came directly from the fact that there were so many people in Barbados working, that the banks and mortgages houses were flushed with capital and were competing to lend at low rates to the public. Therefore, the demand for housing escalated beyond the level of projections by housing planners. There will now be a decline in housing because people are not working, employment has gone from around 6.7 per cent to more

than 10 per cent and climbing. Sir, people are losing their jobs.

In the context of the overall economic increases by the Democratic Labour Party Government, people are having less disposable income and therefore the opportunity or dream of owning housing is one that is receding into the darkness. It is not going to be possible for many who had that ambition, not in the present economic considerations and not with the increases being put on by the Government.

Mr. President, over the course of the last year, and the last few weeks in particular, one saw a number of things that were significant. Sir, there was a removal of a subsidy relative to diesel affecting the business sector. The subsidisation of electricity was removed. There was an increase in petroleum and gas prices in the country, even when the international prices did not go up, because we saw two weeks ago prices at the pump jumped by about 20 or 30 per cent, without the price on the international market being increased.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: On a point of order. Mr. President, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Senate when she speaks about the increase in oil prices occurring here and not in the outside world. Sir, contrary to what was not done by the former Administration, this Government took a decision to put in place a mechanism to adjust oil prices on the basis of the prices that we paid for oil.

The Honourable Senator would know, as she was responsible for the Ministry of Energy and the Environment, and was perhaps one of the persons who sat on the increases and did nothing about it and, therefore, this Government had to take certain action.

Mr. President, as the former Minister would know, if there is a situation where there is a lag between the prices and when we purchased, in other words, if today we purchased oil at "X" dollars and that comes into our situation and tomorrow the prices fall, we cannot adjust the prices on the basis of the falling price, we would have to adjust on the basis of what was paid for it. Therefore, when people seek to mislead, it is really unfortunate, particularly when persons who would have been pivotal to the pricing of oil and energy products should know better. Sir, I cannot allow that to go uncorrected.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Your point has been made, Senator.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, when prices go up on the international market, based on the pricing mechanism, you would have to buy it at the higher price. Therefore, the public should be getting the increase

at that time. But when the international price does not increase, then the Leader of Government Business needs to explain to me why was it increased in Barbados.

*Asides.*

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I am not going to shout across the room and I will certainly, at all times, try to observe proper protocol in this place. Sir, I need to rise on a point of order, just to ensure that the public understands and perhaps the Honourable Senator on the Other Side understands.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, please help me to understand also to which point of order you are referring.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on the point of order that the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Senator, as the Honourable Senator seeks to explain how oil prices are set in Barbados. Mr. President, I want to reiterate that while the prices on the international market today may go up or down, they may not influence the price tomorrow because our prices are set on what is already paid.

If we ordered oil at \$10 today and it comes in but the prices drop to \$7 tomorrow, we cannot adjust our prices in relation to that \$7 because of the fact our stock of oil would have been purchased at \$10 and not at \$7. Therefore, there may be a lag between our price change. Sir, that change does not follow smoothly with the prevailing point in time. It reflects what we paid for the supply that is being distributed.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, your point has been made.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, under the pricing mechanism, the supply of oil is about 8 to 12 weeks supply, which means that if there is an increase today, August 28, and you have a stock at the moment of 6 or 12 weeks' supply, then your increase has to come 6 to 12 weeks later because the price that you paid today as the import would be felt in the marketplace later. The point I am making is that there were no international increases, yet local prices went up. Sir, I am not going to spend more time on that because the public understands.

Mr. President, I was making the point that we also saw an increase in water rates which impacts on housing. Sir, finally, last night we were able to understand why. Sir, the country has been delivered into an International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. The journalist asked a lot of baby questions of the Prime Minister last night.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: On a point of order. Mr. President, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, the country has not been delivered into an International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. Members of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have the right to draw down on their reserves. A programme, as understood by economists, laypersons and hopefully Members of this Honourable Chamber, speaks to something very differently from accessing reserves.

Sir, to use a kind of analogy which is very basic is to suggest that if I have money in the bank, I can draw down on my savings. The programme in this case would be my going to the bank and saying, let me show you my financial situation. I want to borrow some money.

Mr. President, what we have entered into, as has been the case for St. Vincent and other Members of CARICOM, is not a programme as inferred from that. When we talk about entering into a programme, that says something very specific in the context of the way countries relate to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Sir, we know that it is easy to mislead the public, as is being done in this case, that is why I rose on a point of order. We send a message to the public about the programme and about the bogeyman coming out. It is not a programme of that sort, therefore, we should ensure that we do not use that term.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Your point has been made, Senator.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, I would wish to thank the Honourable Senator for using an excellent analogy with the bank. If one goes to the bank for money, there is money in the bank but one does not have an automatic entitlement, nor does one get a loan for nothing. The bank may demand a mortgage on one's property. It is the same with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Mr. President, last night the Prime Minister said that all of the financial institutions have conditionalities when you access money. He did not tell us what were those conditionalities, but we know what the International Monetary Fund (IMF) tends to do.

2.50 p.m.

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SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: You reduce subsidies or get rid of subsidies; you ensure that there is no support to certain sectors; you raise water rates and all the goods and service being given by Government. Sir, those are typical IMF conditions and that is why we are seeing

those increases. What are the conditionalities that the IMF have imposed on us for \$85 million? Sir, the country deserves to know.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. Sir, I am standing as the Senator is screaming across the room...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am sorry. I have to draw to your attention that no Senator in here is allowed to scream.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Sir, I withdraw that comment but I rise on a point of order. Again, the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. In seeking to explain, she has exposed exactly what I was trying to suggest, that there is an essential difference between accessing reserves and entering into a programme of the type she described.

Sir, the Government of Barbados has not entered any such arrangement. I will use the analogy I have used again because in trying to agree with my analogy, she misrepresented my illustration. The illustration is of a savings account. If I go to my credit union or commercial bank in which I have savings and I request to withdraw those, they are not going to ask me for a mortgage on my savings, they will give me my cash. If I go to borrow, they will ask for collateral and, Sir, that is the essential difference. Sir, if the Senator wants to use my argument, she should use it correctly and please do not misrepresent me. Sir, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Thompson, you may continue.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Sir, the IMF is not in the business of giving away money for nothing. A price has to be paid for it and, Sir, what is the price? I am suggesting that the measures we have been seeing over the course of the last 18 months, that the Government has been putting itself in a position that when it goes to the IMF for this \$85 million, to which it is entitled, that the IMF would not then impose harsher conditions because we would already be dancing to their tune.

Mr. President, the point I am making, therefore, is that the Government is not in any financial position at this time to finance any significant housing programme, nor is the average purchaser, the average individual, in a position to be able to afford any significant housing programme.

Sir, let me also make the point that the low end of the market that the Democratic Labour Party is catering to with its housing programme is house and land starting at \$140 000. They do not have a product below that price range. In order to assess a mortgage to be able to afford a

house of \$140 000, the joint income of the household has to be \$4 000.

*Asides.*

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Go to the bank and find out yourselves or people can make phone calls. Therefore, there is no product on the market that the Democratic Labour Party is offering to the poor or to those who they classify as low income. Sir, that is another failure of the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, apart from not meeting their projections, failure to honour their Manifesto commitments, building less than 2 per cent of what they were committed to doing, in addition to which they have increased everything else that impacts on home and property ownership, they do not have programmes for the poor.

Mr. President, it was the Deputy Manager of the National Housing Corporation, appointed by this Administration that said that 60 per cent of the people of their list they have no product for. Sir, I heard the Deputy Manager of the National Housing Corporation saying that on the radio, so they cannot satisfy that demand but I am saying that in the present situation, a lot of those people are going to fall off the waiting list because some of them will lose their jobs, others will lose their disposable income, some will be afraid and they are not going to be able to afford to buy housing.

Further, Mr. President, another one of the ruses being used to persuade the public that there is something exciting, new, refreshing and innovative happening in the housing market, relates to the whole point of National Housing Corporation units. Sir, letters went out but, in fact, very few individuals have gotten mortgages. Sir, none of the people who have come to me have received anything beyond a letter and you cannot own a house in Barbados. The property Act requires that you have title deeds and the National Housing Corporation is not giving title deeds.

Furthermore, the offer of National Housing Corporation units was a limited time offer proposal. It was like saying that you could fly free, or buy one ticket and get a second free, but you do not see the fine writing. The fine writing was that it was a limited offer for a short time only, so people who are not thinking that they are going to qualify for free housing are not going to.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. Again, Sir, I am saying in her anxiety, the Honourable Member is suggesting that persons are being given letters and not receiving mortgages. Therefore, I believe there is confusion. Mr. President, under the current Administration's housing policy, there are persons who would have rented houses in estates and they would have been allowed to acquire those.

Sir, that does not speak to a mortgage, but the houses under construction would speak to mortgages. We do not know that in relation to houses under construction that the National Housing Corporation is in the business of providing mortgages. Therefore, in making the statement as it was made, there was a connection which misrepresents the situation and it would be useful if the Honourable Senator could be crystal clear in her deliberations, so that we all understand to what she refers.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Point made.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, the Honourable Members of the Other Side may not understand, but I can tell you that every single person who got a letter and anticipated that they would soon have title deeds, a conveyance in their hands, in relation to National Housing Corporation units, they understand perfectly that no conveyance is being given to them. They do not know when they are going to get them. Sir, and that is the point I was making, so if I said they were not getting a mortgage, that is an error.

What I meant is that they are not getting a conveyance because, clearly, on a free house you do not need a mortgage. Sir, the Honourable Senator could try to make a lot of it but you know that on a free house there would be no mortgage but on a free house there has to be a conveyance and people are not getting conveyances and, Sir, that is the fundamental point I am making.

Mr. President, if, in fact, the Members of the Government want to suggest that in my saying that people are not getting mortgages, that they got these letters but they have no legal effect, then I would ask any Member of the Government to tell me with some degree of accuracy, what letters were issued and how many conveyances have been transferred to persons relative to the letters issued because the conveyance in the only test.

You cannot go anywhere with a letter and tell somebody that you own a house and show them that letter. If you wanted to get financing to send your child overseas, or to help a grandson build a property, you cannot go into the bank with a letter, Sir, because you have to have title deeds.

Mr. President, several persons have come to me from one than more housing areas in Barbados, not to do the mortgages but to assist them with the conveyancing part of it and, Sir, in the year and a half, I have not received a single conveyance from the National Housing Corporation.

*S/A20/15:00 Sequence 18*

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SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: I am saying this is just another thing in which the creativity of the programme does not match the reality of the programme. It really does not, unless it is, perhaps, now being contended, that only the Democratic Labour Party lawyers are being allowed to do work. Unless that is the contention.

Mr. President, if I comment at all at any time anybody is speaking, everybody calls for order, but there is continuous chatter whenever I speak. If I am talking nonsense, they could ignore me. They do not have to be talking. I do not get any calls for order.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish to interrupt the Honourable Senator who had five minutes, which I signalled to her. I do not like the comment that everybody does something when you speak. It is a reflection on the Chair, and I know that you are sufficiently experienced not to make that error again. You may continue, please.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: I would like to know how many conveyances relative to offer letters. That is the certain figure that would be able to guide not only me, but the public, if I am, in fact, misleading people as is being alleged.

Finally, it is now purported that at Sam Lord's there is to be a housing project. I will not trespass over the five minutes which you have given me. Suffice it is to say, that the rating agencies have indicated that if there is to be a major financial bailout of CLICO, that will cause a further down rating of the Barbados economy. So this notion of going up to Sam Lord's to do housing is only an effort to put money in CLICO's pocket.

In every other country in the world, let us use the United States as an example, CEOs and persons in authority in these financial institutions who have caused the kinds of challenges that we have here, have had to face all kinds of strictures. This is the only place where Government is picking up more and more money and giving to them, without any demand for any serious accountability.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Sir, again, I rise on a point of order. I think it is unfortunate that the Honourable Senator again is misleading the Chamber with reference to picking up money again and again, and strictures, et cetera, in relation to CEOs. I believe, and I do not need to go into details as to the kinds of decisions that have been taken in relation to CL Financial and its various subsidiaries and other entities.

To suggest that the Government of Barbados is picking up money again and again, I believe that if I make reference to what has been referred to by the Honourable Senator, and that his comments of the Prime Minister in his

Press Conference, last night, he made the point that the Central Bank of Barbados made one deposit to that institution.

He also made the point that actions of the Government are done to assist not only the policyholders, but the approximately 1 600 plus employees, and not any individual. I think it is, therefore, erroneous and indeed, I would also say on another occasion irresponsible, to make those kinds of accusations.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Point made.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Sir, the reality is, if one really looks beyond the creativity of the PR programme to the reality of the Democratic Labour Party's housing programme, to date it has been woefully below what they committed to, what they promised. In fact, it has been the poorest housing programme that this country has ever seen. It really is very bad. The poorest housing programme that the country has ever seen.

If one looks beyond all of the creativity of the public relations programme, people are getting nothing relative to this housing programme.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Much obliged to you.

Sir, the public is judging us. The public knows that what I am saying is a fact.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Alleyne.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, I would start by making the general point it is really unfortunate that we have to enter into a debate, and you are told from the outset by the lead speaker there is no need for us to get political, and that there is no need to be partisan. Then it goes down a line for vesting.

*Asides.*

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: The Leader of the Opposition's spokesman in his opening remarks. Well get up on a point of order and say it.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Senator Thompson, as she spoke, made a reference that prices were going up left, right and centre. Then she said that there was a cascading of prices, and I got confused, and as long as Senator Dean Crichlow is here, I run through my dictionary, because to cascade comes from *cascare*, to fall. So I got confused because I have a couple of mentors when it comes to language. Senator Dean Crichlow is one, and I am very

keen on him, because he is a Latin Scholar, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, from the Other Place. So when I hear these lovely speakers fall into...

Mr. PRESIDENT: He is not going to hear her for you. Who turned this off? You may continue Senator Alleyne.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, I am going to behave myself this evening because I know you have a mission.

Sir, I am not going to come to the Senate and be lectured about running any Ministry by the most travelled Minister in the history of Barbados. The travelling of the Minister has nothing to do with special skills or performance that was good. Then to accuse a Government, after 16 months, of the worst housing records is really to look at the truth and duck. Sir, it is amazing.

Sir, when the Honourable Senator Thompson, with a record from 1994 to 2007, was responsible for the construction of 10 houses and six roads, how can a person with that record come before honourable people and accuse a record that started with 79. On the one hand she said that the 79 had to do with the fact that they had a land bank, so we did not have to come and vest any land, a record of 10 houses, "Bumble Bee", "Cockroach", and all kinds of fancy names, a programme that never got started.

I was very heartened by the comments made that the housing project, and I am going to refer to it every time I come in here, because I drive that way to go home, at the corner of Country Road and Bank Hall. It is progressing. That is housing for people at the bottom. None were constructed except when there was a need to relocate, and the Ministry of Transport and Works had the responsibility to relocate people - A little one in Bank Hall, four little units here, and four little four units there. That is the total of the project under the Barbados Labour Party for low end housing.

Every time they come to this House, rather than be a dutiful Opposition and entertain a discussion on the Government's programme, there is a defense of a record that the only body could defend are the Honourable Members on Thiat Side. Not another soul in Barbados is going to offer defense for a housing project that never started. I am coming to my real beef here.

Sir, I sat here and listened very carefully. I am not a housing expert. I claim expertise in one thing, the ability to survive. I claim no expertise in legal matters. I claim no expertise in land use or agrarian reform. I claim no expertise in those things. There are people on the Other Side who are experts in everything.

S A20 15.10 p.m. Sequence 19

Wednesday, July 29, 2009

Senate A20, Sequence 20, 3.10 p.m.

Senator D. McD. ALLEYNE: The Minister of Health is an expert; the Minister of Housing is an expert; the Minister of Energy is an expert; the Minister of International Business is an expert.

*Asides.*

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Sir, we are in a serious financial and economic environment and there needs to be a level of responsibility that must be brought to debates. Sir, talk about IMF programmes will send signals that this country is falling downhill. The Governor of the Central Bank said there was a recession, but there is no crisis, but every time That Side starts, they talk about a stabilisation programme and an IMF programme.

Sir, their intention is to create panic in this environment for political gains but still, the Honourable Senator Symmonds said that we do not have to be partisan or bias. We have to be gentlemen and do well for the country. Sir, every time they speak, their language connotes falling down, breaking up, crisis and so on.

Sir, the most galling revelation to me was the question of Change of Use. Out of one part of the Senator's mouth - Senator Thompson, and that is figuratively speaking - she said it was easy to transfer, and then out of the Other Side of her mouth, she said it is a process. One time it was easy, because she said so and so, and then she said it cannot be passed by a letter, it is a process. I accepted that you can do some quickly, and some can take time.

Mr. President, the Barbados Labour Party's land use change policy begs some discussion. I want to start with Staple Grove. Again, I claim no expertise but it seems to me, Sir, that there is confusion in the Barbados Labour Party when it is in Opposition, and more confusing when it is in Government. Sir, it is clear to me that they are better at running things when they are in Opposition, because they know everything about what should be done, but listen to Staple Grove.

Sir, I was not present at the naming of Staple Grove but, I believe, that if I saw land called, Sandy Ground, I would believe that land has a history of sand. Sir, I know if you go into the St. Lawrence area, you would see that there is a community called "Sandy Ground", and if you walk there, you will find crabs, so you are not going to plant - I am not a farmer - carrots and beets there, unless you bring

in mould. Sir, if you see Rock Land, you would see a quarry so you are going to try to put some houses there.

Mr. President, I believe when the Barbados Labour Party was in Government and they saw a Staple Grove, there was some connection with paper and stapling it together. Sir, my understanding is that Staple meant staple crops. I was not there, I was just thinking because it said, grove. Therefore, to take land in Staple Grove and dig it up to put houses, to find that the foundations have to be 50 feet deep now, seems a misunderstanding of the naming of land. Sir, the same goes for the naming of roads, and the naming of communities, but it gets worse.

Mr. President, I was not present at the naming of any land in Barbados and I am saying that some of the lands were named 300 years ago, and there had to be some basis for calling them. Nowadays, as soon as a politician does something in a community, they name it after the politician, but I am saying those wise farmers, those wise agriculturists named the land relating to the terrain, and what it could be used for, so you have River Land, because it is close to a river.

*Asides.*

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: The former Minister of Housing gave permission for Staple Grove to be cut up but, Sir, that is not the most dangerous one.

Mr. President, when we got to Holder's Hill, this is where the policy got confused because they felt that "Holder's" meant the person holding it. This is the Barbados Labour Party's thinking, so they had a gentleman for about 10 years trying to get some land subdivided. I do not want to call the gentleman's name in this Senate because I was not given permission, but I am going to look straight at Senator Symmonds through you, so I have to ease my back, back. Sir, they said, this gentleman was trying to get his land subdivided. He made application after application. He made lamentation after lamentation.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, on a point of order. Sir, I am confused and I am hoping that when the Honourable Senator said that he is looking at me, and at the same time suggesting that someone got permission to get land cut up, he is not implying that I had anything to do with cutting up or dividing of land anywhere in Holder's.

Mr. President, I would want to make that abundantly clear. I do not want, by inference, that I would be dragged into that and, I think, it is a most unfortunate choice of words. I happen to believe that the Honourable Senator could not feasibly or conceivably be alluding to me, but I want him to make it abundantly clear that he is not.

*Asides.*

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Yes, pellucid; that too.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No point of order.

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, I am not going to be sidetracked because that land at Holder's, the man made about 20 applications and pleading and begging to have that land changed, and to have it distributed.

*Asides.*

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Change of use. When he applied, they said it was Zone 1 and Zone 2 in some places and it cannot be changed, after 10 years of trying. His estate was in debt. He was forced to sell it for a few hundred thousand dollars and the purchasers of it, Sir, with the stroke of a pen, were able to get a profit on it of more than \$9 million, and that was a conservative amount. Sir, they walk in here quarrelling about Change of Use.

Mr. President, we in the Democratic Labour Party do not support stupid change of use. Change of use should be given serious thought, and when I hear Honourable Senators that were Ministers in a Government who presided over that kind of callous disregard for agriculture and for people's rights, they cannot come in here and lecture to me about any policy of this Government, which makes sure that each person gets what is fair.

Mr. President, they want to come in here and pretend as if they are holier than Moses, and it gets worse, if it is possible.

Mr. President, there is a place called Friendship and I heard Senators winding up their speeches talking about the Democratic Labour Party and their friends, and then ran out through the door. Sir, Friendship Plantation was transferred to the Government for the Botanical Gardens - talking about friendship, listen about friendship - and the Barbados Labour Party, in its concoction of the naming of plantations, thought it was done for friends, allowed the gentleman that owned it to subdivide 129 acres. They gave the Botanical Gardens a little piece and subdivided the remainder; not a word.

*Asides.*

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Do not come in the Senate, playing holy.

Sir, I am getting from bad to worse to worst.

*Asides.*

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, then there was Greenland. The name connotes greening, flowing, protection of the environment, the cows passing in the meadow, sheep mellowing, bridge, thoughts of Shakespeare, the daffodils, I remember that poem, Sir, I do not want to recite it. I remember "Compose on Westminster Bridge," I can also recite those.

Therefore, when I hear Greenland, Sir, those thoughts come to my head, and the Opposition comes in here talking about Change of Use. Sir, all of the local knowledge said to leave that land alone. Do not change the use. There are underwater springs. It will mash up the ecology. It will destroy the scenery.

*Senate A20, Sequence 20, 15:20:15*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR D. McD. ALLEYNE: It will shape Farley Hill Park into Farley Hill dark. Mr. President, all of a sudden now that they are in Opposition, they can preach a policy about land use, and they took Greenland Park and tried to put a dump in it. The Honourable Minister at the time sat in the Cabinet as Minister of Health and voted for the change of use, from an agricultural environmentally-friendly landscape into a dump. Mr. President, what hurts is that her co-Senator who sat next to me at that time when we went to our meetings at our Headquarters opposed it.

I tip my hat off to him. I do not think he has changed his position, so the Honourable Senator Symmonds cannot join with any other Senator and come in here and lecture to this Government Side about land use and putting the country first and putting the history, the foundation and the tradition of this country before all else.

Mr. President, the last point the Senator who runs away said is that it should be for the highest economic yield. I am not a mathematician, but if sugar is not getting its highest economic yield, then my conclusion is that you get it for the highest economic value. On the one hand, their argument is that if you can turn it into a dump farm and that is the highest return, go ahead and if housing provides the best economic return, go ahead, and then out of the next corner of their mouth they are saying do not change it. Which is it, Sir?

Is the Opposition saying that a mere vesting of land into the National Housing Corporation is a crime all of a sudden. Sir, it has to be a crime for the Opposition because none of the land in St. Philip was vested. Sir, not a soul had a title. It is just like the validation recently. They broke the Law. Sir, when we seek to do things the right way, I am not surprised that there is a cascading of use and opinions.

Sir, the land that we are vesting will be going at \$5.00 per square foot. Sir, rather than get up and applaud it and say they did not have the time to do it, they come into the Senate where we have honourable people and quarrel about if it was two houses, 91 houses or 2 000 houses. Mr. President, their record is woeful, is awesome, and would go down in the history of Government as some of the worse ever.

Mr. President, the final point has to do with water. Sir, I have asked some time ago in this Senate, I do not want to refer to our last debate, that every time we are doing a vesting for housing that consideration be given to the availability of water, not only for household use but for farming, access to fire hoses and so on.

Mr. President, I want to end on that note. I am saying to the Government to take its time, even if it means that it would take longer to build the houses, and ensure that mains are put down and hydrants are installed and properly marked so that when the housing projects start people do not have difficulties in getting a bath every morning. St. Philip, parts of Christ Church, St. George and a lot of St. John are experiencing those kinds of challenges, therefore I am urging the Government to look at water availability and do not be hastened by the political propaganda of the Opposition to hurry its programmes and do it improperly.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution in discussion. I think everybody would agree that there has been a remarkable improvement in housing over the last 50 or 60 years by successive Governments. One of our two daily newspapers helped in a large way, I think, to bring the very poor state of housing to public knowledge, and I believe that a great debt is owed to that newspaper for this public service.

Mr. President, the Government's housing policy, as outlined in the Throne Speech and in its Manifesto, has been referred to several times in the debate. All Senators are aware of it, so I do not have to read it because it has been quoted already.

Mr. President, I notice that the label "Housing Every Last Person" is not mentioned in the Throne Speech, but stated very clearly in the Manifesto. On page 9 of that document, it stated that we commit to housing every last person. This is followed by the list of activities given in the Throne Speech. The only addition in the Throne Speech is to initiate the full transfer of the National Housing Corporation units to occupants living in them for 20 or more years free of cost except for legal and transaction expenses.

Mr. President, I have inserted this detail in order not to be diverted into a discussion on whether or not a Manifesto promise is a contract with the voting public. I can understand the Government's policy to house needy persons in the society. I could have said a genuinely needy person, but that would involve more time, more money and persons to discover whether or not the person is really needy.

*Senate A20 Sequence 21*

3.30 p.m.

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, I can give many examples, from my own Ministry, of people who pretended to be needy but who were not. I remember having to go to a school to find pupils who did not have lunch money, to see that they got lunch. I remember spending a long time with Principals and Deputy Principals searching for names that were not there.

I can think of people who came pretending to be blind, they wore dark shades, had their white canes and had to be shown chairs to sit. When these people got the money and thought they were out of sight, they threw away the white cane, took off the dark shades and marched away like soldiers. I even once said that next time that any of those persons come, I was going to show them a chair which, in fact, would not be there, to see if they would use it.

Sir, I could not do that because I know that someone might have called my bluff. He might have sat and dropped to the floor and hurt his spine, only to convince others that he was blind when, in fact, he would not be blind.

Mr. President, there was a mother walking around with a typed letter saying that her three sons were dead and that she needed help. I recognised her and said to her that I had been away for a year but was it a fact that in that short space of time her three sons died? She said: "Yes, Dean, they turned Rasta and gone living in St. Andrew. They are no use to me and to me they are already dead." I can tell you several other stories but I am not going to do so.

Mr. President, I want some assistance with the phrase "Housing Every Last Person(HELP)". I do not quite understand what that means. I think to many it would mean that the Government is going to look after housing everybody, housing every last person. Of course, it cannot mean that because our system of Government is not like that.

Mr. President, I am aware that many well-to-do persons would not want Government to provide homes for them but the impression must not be given that it is

Government's job to provide homes for people. Sir, people in general must not feel that they are entitled to housing. It is the entitlement to housing that has me bothered because if you are entitled to a thing, you should get it. Everybody over a certain age is entitled to non contributory pension and people are right to take it if they want because they are entitled to it, plus the fact that the standard of living is rising all the time. There are many people in our island who do not really need that non contributory pension. Sir, I know of the days when people got \$0.25 a week to help with food and so on, but now people are getting about \$160 every fortnight, plus free medication for persons over a certain age. There are a lot of people in our island who can afford to pay for their own medication and would be happy to do so.

Mr. President, we are a very small community, without any mineral or other resources. We have no real serious exports, we import most of the products we consume. We rely on the very fragile industry, tourism, for most of our revenue. We are continually reducing direct taxation from our incomes. For various understandable reasons, Government is not perceiving to deal with cash flow problems, payment of salaries and wages, that it should from the VAT. We have become accustomed to a high standard of living but this has not been accompanied by the requisite habits of avoiding wastage in almost every department of our lives. This standard comes at a very high cost, salaries, wages, plant and equipment.

In addition to all of this, we are living some 1 600 or more persons per square mile. This is one of the densest populations in the world. Most people do not understand that we are living far above our means and we are compelled to borrow in order to pay our way. Sir, we have to repay these loans.

Mr. President, Barbados is very fortunate to enjoy free education, from nursery to tertiary, and education is very expensive. A lot of it is not appreciated. Sir, one area I should like to point to is that many of our young men are not taking advantage of the university education that is being offered. Our young women are doing so, and I am very pleased to see that, but it creates a severe imbalance if our young men are not reaching the same level as our young women, so that after a time there would be social dislocation because of this.

Mr. President, the young women, with their profession and qualifications, will need to make families. If there are no young men of equally intellectual and professional status to marry them, it creates many problems for our bright young women. I mentioned this when I was Chaplin at the University at Mona some 40 years ago. Today it is a problem.

Mr. President, I have to mention the fact that we have free health service and that this is something we take for granted. We take so many things for granted in Barbados that cost so much. Sir, these are all very expensive items and most of our people think that because Government is responsible for these things, that they are free and need not be treated seriously, responsibly nor cared for.

3.40 p.m.

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR the Hon. H.LaV. BENN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I was wondering if occasionally the Senator could occasionally look away from his script so as not to collide with Article 31.6 of the Standing Orders of the Senate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Point of Order made.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H.E. CRICHLOW: It is just for shortness of time that I am reading it. I think we ought to change this mindset that people are having. They must understand that nothing is free. Sir, in some countries, the very air that people breathe, they have to pay for through a poll tax. Sir, the money that Government spends on all these expensive items comes from our taxes, or from loans, that have to be repaid and people must understand that their own money is being used and that they must treat education, health, pension, housing and all that with the necessary care that they deserve.

Mr. President, I would hate people to think that they are not entitled to housing. We should try to house the very needed members of our island. Sir, in the Throne Speech, those in the middle income group, who are starting, could be helped to have an apartment but too many people, I am afraid, might understand this to mean that they do not have to work and save to buy their own houses because the Government will do. There are many people who could afford housing but prefer to use units that were provided by the National Housing Corporation for people who are not able to provide their own houses and this is not fair to the kind of society that we need.

Mr. President, people need to take pride in themselves. They need to value their work. They need to take pride in their own health and in their family's health, be willing to provide these needs and, Sir, those who are not able to do, should be helped by Government. Sir, that is why I have problems with the whole business of housing every last person.

Mr. President, I am impressed with what Government plans to do. As I have said, over the years, our housing has improved tremendously and, as a matter of

fact, as you drive around Barbados, you find there are a lot of mansions or castles being built and you wonder where all the money is coming from. Sir, at the same time, there are real pockets of poverty in our island and those should be addressed. I do not think that we should allow people to pretend they are in need when they are not.

I do not think we should encourage that kind of thinking because it is weakening our society and really showing that we do not have pride in ourselves if we can just keep what we have and catch what we can. Sir, that does not lead to healthy living; it does not lead to the spirit of community, of sharing and it does not lead to thinking about the welfare of other.

Mr. President, I would like us to get back to some of those values that we shared years ago in Barbados. Sir, when we were a proud people, we tried to live within our means; we tried to do what was right and we tried to be honest and hardworking. Sir, those are qualities that we need to resurrect and pass on to our children and grandchildren.

Mr. President, thank you very much.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to wrap up the debate...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before you do, I think I should discover whether there is any other Senator who wishes to make a contribution. There being none, you may conclude the debate.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, as I rise to wrap up the debate on the vesting of lands in St. Joseph and St. Philip, I believe I should start with a clarification for the Honourable Senator who spoke last in relation to the acronym "HELP", which really is Housing Every Last Person. Perhaps, it is a simplistic notion to believe that this translates to Government giving houses to people. I believe that in an approach to understanding this that one should recognise that the catalyst to this process is that Government will function in several capacities.

Mr. President, the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party spoke about the removal of VAT from building materials and that process has started. It is simply saying that in an effort to encourage persons to maximise the use of their financial investment in a home that they will be a leg-up. It spoke about providing lots at \$5 per square foot for first time homeowners. Sir, that recognises persons who may be of a low income level, earn small salaries et cetera, and it bears in mind the situation of land prices in Barbados and, Sir, again, that is a leg-up.

Mr. President, the provision of house spots to middle income and low income earners. Sir, again, it is not about dispensing largesse, it is about facilitating. When we look at those issues and the construction of houses for sale or rent, with an intention to buy, these are examples of assistance, so it is not a welfare or handout situation. Sir, I believe with that clarification we could understand the process.

Mr. President, much has been said and I just want to simply say that in the process of addressing the housing needs of a country, that this country recognises that a major focus has to be placed on the family and is, indeed, being placed on the family in this Administration. Sir, the family being the cornerstone of society, housing becomes an important consideration.

Mr. President, I believe it is incumbent on me to respond very quickly to a few suggestions, comments or criticisms coming from the Opposition. Sir, reference was made to the issue of failing to pass legislation, et cetera.

*S/A20/15:50 Sequence 23*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR the Hon. M.P.O. McCLEAN: I want to suggest that any commitments to deliver Manifesto promises have to be contextualised with what has been inherited. I want to say that when we talk about legislation, since we are speaking about housing, I want to respond to the criticism of Government's failure to bring certain legislation to Parliament in time, as promised. I believe the first speaker for the Opposition made reference to this.

I want to say very clearly that housing is not only important for the individual, it is also important when we talk about accommodation or housing for the public servants who have to facilitate Government's effort to deliver.

One area, in particular, which has been problematic is the housing for members of the Solicitor's Chambers, who fall under the Honourable Attorney General's Office. Sir, we inherited a situation which is impacting on this issue, and it is impacting on others, where public officers have to work from home because of the physical conditions.

We heard the Prime Minister speak of this. Therefore, if we have a situation where legal officers in Government are working from home and are now being relocated, after much effort to address the issue in a comprehensive way, because prior to the assumption of office, this was a problem that continued for at least four years.

When we talk about delivering, we deliver within the framework of what we have. I believe we could talk about a number of things but much has been said, much has been established that this is important. So history has informed the situation that prevails, and will inform what the current situation is, and what we are able to do.

Sir, overall, the vesting of lands at Branchbury, St. Joseph, and Woodbourne, St. Philip, are, as I started to say in my opening comments, one step towards achieving the objective of housing every last person, and that does not mean giving out welfare grants or making housing free, but creating an enabling environment and also where possible, offering solutions at various levels where people are able to invest in quality housing, so that we, as a people, can aspire and realise our dream of owning a house.

Sir, on that note, I beg that this Resolution be now passed.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

#### ORDER NO. 4

#### RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF PARCELS OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT CLIFFDEN IN THE PARISH OF SAINT PHILIP AND GUINEA IN THE PARISH OF SAINT JOHN IN THIS ISLAND FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I believe that this Resolution is one which is worthy of support, and I believe that based on the lengthy debate in which we engaged in the Sitting to date, it is a matter similar to the previous one.

It is intended to contribute to the national housing programme of this Administration. It is intended to create opportunities for the provision of parcels of land for individuals seeking to acquire homes for the first time.

Therefore, I have absolutely no difficulty in asking that this Resolution do now pass, as it fits squarely into the policies and programmes enunciated by myself and others in this Honourable Chamber today.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

#### ORDER NO. 1 – ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION FUND REGULATIONS, 2006 (VALIDATION) BILL, 2009.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I would like that Order No. 1 and Order No. 2 be debated together. They contain the same subject matter – Order No. 2 to move the passing of a Resolution to approve the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund Regulations, 2006.

Sir, the importance of the arts and sports of a society like Barbados is clearly evident. The ability of a people to express their creativity, to demonstrate their skills, whether in dance, music, art work, sculpture, or painting, those things are critical element aspects of a society's culture. Similarly, when we talk about sports, sports is important not only for the shaping or building of an individual citizen, it is also becoming evident that, like the arts, sport is also an avenue for commercial activity.

If I may speak first on the issue of sports, I believe that sports in Barbados should be mandatory, recreational activity whether swimming, cricket, netball, tennis, or whatever. We are a society in which we are seeing more and more a situation where the individual child, I will start with a child, and the individual adult is often failing to engage in physical activity. An obvious characteristic of sport is physical activity.

As a society where we are plagued by chronic diseases, hypertension, obesity, and cardiac issues, Barbadians need to, again, revisit the role that sports and physical play in their lives as individuals as families, and within structured and unstructured situations.

In our schools many of us would recall the requirement to participate in physical education in a structured formal way, and many of us would recall our anxiety to get to school and leave school late as we participated in such events. Now, that is at the individual level, but as I indicated, it is also an area in which there is potential for commercial activity.

In Barbados as a jurisdiction where we rely heavily on tourism, sports tourism has become a major avenue for attracting visitors to this country. Therefore, by extension, an opportunity to create commercial ventures. If we are attracting persons to participate in sports, then there has to be the business of organising those activities, and so on. Therefore, it is necessary that we pay some attention.

Clearly, a decision was taken by the previous Administration, to establish a Fund intended to provide support to persons seeking to engage in sports promotion. In doing so, efforts were made to provide that kind of support. As with the necessity for validation, it is evident

that having put the administrative structures in place, there was clearly a need to ensure that the legislative arrangements were in place.

*S A20 16: 00 p.m. Sequence 24*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

*Senate A20, Sequence 25, 4.00 p.m.*

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Therefore, in respect of the vesting to which this Bill speaks, we are talking about ensuring that the decisions taken by the previous Administration to make funds available to at least two entities is indeed validated. Therefore, that process is one which is of necessity done as expeditiously as possible. There should therefore be no major objection to that, Sir.

In essence to be very specific, there were two areas of disbursement of money from the Art and Sports Fund. One was a disbursement to the National Sports Council on December 5, 2007 and the other to the National Cultural Foundation November 27, 2008. Therefore, this has to be validated. I think that is very straightforward.

Sir, based on that, as we can see, those two entities fall under the Government of Barbados and this, among other things, would give rise to the need to ensure that the Regulations of the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund also reflect that there is authority to provide funds in this way. Sir, this therefore gives rise to the need for the amendment of the Regulations.

In seeking to amend these, one of the key amendments is that the Regulation should speak specifically to the ability of a Statutory Corporation to access those funds. Sir, that has to be explicit in the Regulations, otherwise the actions to disburse monies to those two entities, would be falling outside of the Law.

In addition to that, the Regulations also spoke, Sir, to the issue of applications being made to the Accountant General. In the interest of ensuring that there are smooth and appropriate administrative arrangements, these applications should be made to the Chairman of a Committee for Funding, rather than the Accountant General. Therefore, as part of the process of ensuring full transparency and accountability, those arrangements need to be put in place.

Mr. President, I believe that we have to ensure that:

1. The Validation takes place.
2. The Regulations reflect the intentions in respect of the disbursements of funds.

3. The Regulations reflect the administrative arrangements that allow for proper organisation and the proper running of the Fund, where decisions can be made expeditiously.

Sir, the necessary amendments are being made to the Regulations of this piece of legislation.

Mr. President, as I indicated at the beginning, the need for validation is clear. The importance of doing it is therefore also clear. The need for ensuring that we have Regulations in place, which speak to the proper management of these funds, is important. Sir, just to reiterate, the importance of arts as part of what we see as the broader category of cultural services and the fostering of a cultural industry in its broader sense, is important.

The recognition of the role of sports and the promotion of sports as an economic activity is clear. Therefore, efforts must be made to support this. Let me say however, Mr. President, that as we talk about sports promotion, et cetera, Government alone cannot do this and I anticipate that, as has been the custom, private sector interest and other interest, will work to ensure that there is a serious effort undertaken to encourage participation in sports, not simply for recreation but beyond recreational benefits and that people, especially our young people, see the opportunities in participating in sports and the arts.

Mr. President, we can treat this as two areas. If there are a couple of areas in which discipline, for example, can be fostered in young people, and in the society generally, it is in these areas. A person who decides that he or she wants to learn to swim or engage in football, basketball, tennis or whatever, recognises that person has to put in dedicated time, you have to develop the discipline of engaging in the activity, even though you do not feel like it and, certainly, if you propose to pursue that kind of activity at the level of a professional athlete, or a professional sports person, then the importance of discipline becomes even more evident.

When we look around the Region at the sorry state of our cricket, it certainly is an area for concern. It is also one of the areas in which a lot of support has been given over the years, both by Governments and, certainly, in the case of Barbados by successive Governments and by the private sector.

I believe that there is room to support the traditional areas of activity. There is also room to support new areas of sporting activity and the arts, and it is by the participation of Government in an initiative to support individual and community activities of these sorts, that we are able to offer to our citizens, another avenue for developing the total person.

Mr. President, with those brief remarks, I move that this Bill, the Arts and Sport Promotion Fund Regulations 2006 (Validation Bill), 2009 be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Symmonds, you have the Floor.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I want to make a few remarks on this matter which is attracting our attention. With the greatest degree of reluctance, I want to say that I cannot envisage why this should become an issue that should attract a partisan divide.

I say that though, Sir, even as I reflect that as soon as I say that, I am sure to attract the angst of my colleague, Senator Derek Alleyne who seems unable to bear with me, whenever I seek to avoid partisan divides. However, Sir, I think there is a rich opportunity before us to reflect a little on the developmental aspect of this very vital part of our social fabric.

I agree wholeheartedly with the Leader of Government Business in her assessment that when we are talking both art and sport, we are really talking about - and this is not her formulation - the heart and soul, really, of the social fabric of Barbados. It is an inescapable part of the developmental component that makes the transformation of young people into responsible and useful citizens of this country. Therefore, Sir, I think it should attract our widest possible support.

Mr. President, having said that, my understanding of the Fund is that when it was created in 2004, the objective was to assist institutions or organisations across Barbados, which are involved in arts and sports development and promotion, to source scarce resources.

*Senate A20, Sequence 25, 16:10:06*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, one of the first things that we would wish to hear today, because I do not know the extent to which the Senate is entirely up to date on this issue, is what is the actual size of the Fund as we speak. I think that is important, Sir, because there are obviously a number of demands which are being made on the central Government and on funds created by the Government and supported by successive Governments.

Mr. President, the scarce resources obviously have to be shared. It is a question of attaching priorities I am sure, but this issue is one which is critical and central to the development of Barbados and to Barbados' young people

so that the question of the size of the Fund is a very important part of departure.

Mr. President, above and beyond that, I think we also have to see how we can, even in the course of this debate, broaden the scope from just looking at the Fund itself to supporting institutions which I think should be given assistance for the development of both arts and sports.

Mr. President, I want to take some time on the question of sporting development. Mr. President, the Senate, I am sure, is aware that the National Sports Council is the Statutory Corporation charged with the responsibility for promoting sport development in Barbados principally. In that regard, it is seen as the centrepiece of a lot of the community sporting activity, and it should be congratulated because in more recent times, it has been finding its way not only into the communities across Barbados but into the schools in performing or helping to coordinate a very important developmental role.

Mr. President, as I say that, I reflect, for example on the game of cricket. We had a lengthy discussion on this issue only last week and I do not want to trespass on that again, but suffice it to say that I think more can be done by the National Sports Council to more effectively reach out to schools and communities. In that regard, I obviously think that some assistance has to be given to the National Sports Council in order to make that come to a reality.

Sir, I use cricket as but one example, but we could also use football. Mr. President, there are a number of playing fields in Barbados, as we call them, where in the cricket season it becomes an issue to get access to a field that is in the best possible condition and circumstances because of the fact that the field needs to be cut.

This time of the year is when cricket is being played in Barbados, and it is also true that this time of the year is when the rain is also falling very heavily in Barbados. Mr. President, you would find that many Saturdays issues arise at the very community level, the fabric of developing the sport, as to the condition of the pitch, the outfield, the grass being too tall, et cetera.

Mr. President, there was a period of time I know for sure when I was in the Cabinet, that you used to have to wait on a mower to come around sent by the National Sports Council. There was only one in operation and if it broke down, the fields could not get cut. Sir, through the assistance of some well-intentioned people in the corporate community in the Constituency I represented, I believe it might be correct to say that the company that Senator Benn once worked for, lent some assistance in that regard. We were able at Bagatelle to give to the sporting organisation there their own mower. Mr. President, the reality is that

while that happened at Hoytes', I think Senator Thompson may have been instrumental in that with regard to they having their own mower, there are a number of clubs in Barbados which do not have the benefit of access to that type of resource.

Mr. President, to the extent that we are hard-pressed for some of the basic inputs, like a mower so that the field can be in a certain type of condition and covers so that the pitch can be maintained and so on and so forth, we find ourselves in a situation where sporting development becomes compromised. In the example I draw, both of those types of things, the pitch covering and the mower, are critical for the playing of cricket, but you find that there are inputs to football where we have had difficulties arising.

Mr. President, part of the whole overall approach, and this is one of the things that has bothered me, is that we need, even as we think in the context of lending assistance to organisations involved in the promotion of sports, to focus on how we can make the National Sports Council, which is the critical institution charged with developmental programmes, even more effective in the schools and communities across this island. Mr. President, I would want to hope that not even Senator Alleyne could find a partisan fault with that approach. Sir, another concern of mine is the question of what we call mass sport. I do not particularly like that terminology, but there are certain sports that attract a large proliferation of support across the communities of this country. We need to be able to understand, and I agree wholeheartedly with the way in which the Honourable Leader of Government Business has formulated the issue, that sports is now also about business.

There is the business of sports and the commercialisation of sports, and it is not going to begin at the level of the West Indies cricket. The concept of the commercialisation of the thing has to take root in our communities. It takes root quite frankly when you go out into a community on a Friday evening at 7:00 o'clock and the lights are on and the game of cricket or football is being played, the vendors are selling their product under the lights and Mummy brings out the children to watch, and the family is gathered there on the sideline giving encouragement to the people who they know and interact with on a daily basis. Sir, it is there that the whole concept, not just only of the sport, but the community involvement and the commercial aspects of it, becomes more readily manifest.

Sir, I think that administrative and organisational support to that type of activity is critical. I know that cricket and football have their Secretariats and, to some extent, those Secretariats are working well, but we have to make sure that we are giving organisational support to those sporting activities which are drawing heavily on the public for its attention and support.

Mr. President, I think that the question of funding and giving technical assistance to Secretariats... Let me explain what I mean by technical assistance. The Secretariats need to be housed, to be staffed and to have the basics, the computers, the fax machines, et cetera. Quite frankly, you need also to be in a position where the Secretariat can know with certainty that members of the umbrella which it governs can access pavilions at a certain time.

Mr. President, right now some of the summer camps, not necessarily the Government's camps, are using the schools, but during school time we have a very unfortunate practice in this country where pavilions are shut down until 5:30 or 6:00 in the evening. The reality is that we are therefore not utilising the opportunity for people to have access, because the assumption is made that at 8:00 or 9:00 a.m. everybody is at work, nobody is interested in any sports, but that is not necessarily true.

Mr. President, though there may be people who are working and involved actively in sports, there are also going to be people who are going to be working and involved actively in sports but are off, and we need to make sure that the sporting infrastructure of the country is open to the people of the country and accessible by the people of the country as frequently as is possible. There was a period of time when the last Government tried to bring about a greater degree of community control of some of these sporting institutions. I do not want to comment now on how successful or otherwise that was. I believe that I would certainly hear that the Community Councils would lend a role in that regard.

Mr. President, if that is one of the benefits of the Constituency Councils, so be it. However, I do think that access to the sporting institutions is fundamental and that support for the Secretariats which govern these institutions is something we need to look at very seriously.

*Senate A20 Sequence 26*

4.20 p.m.

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, in addition to that, I think there needs to be some central administrative support given to those more recently introduced sports in Barbados, which have no real Secretariat structure, no real mass-base of support as yet but which are obviously coming along. Sir, I will give you one example.

Mr. President, if you go to the Gymnasium on weekends, it is amazing how many young men you would find there, getting very useful exercise but armed with

nothing but a short pants, a T-shirt, a pair of sneakers and a skateboard. Sir, the question of skateboarding was something that I scoffed at originally, but the reality is, and I must say to Honourable Senators, that there are a number of youngsters in Barbados, both male and female - and we may call it cultural penetration if we wish but it is a reality - who have bought into this idea of skateboarding as part of the sporting activity that they wish to follow.

The reality is also that they also do this skateboarding competitively. It is perhaps the same thing you will find in surfing and other activities, where there is not necessarily the traditional focus by the State, or by the broad community, but there is a genuine effort at giving development to this sporting activity. The question, therefore, that has to be asked is whether or not it might be a useful thing for Government to try to lend some support via the creation of a central sports administrative centre, which would basically lend the technical assistance of the kind to which I earlier alluded, to some of these other types of sporting activities.

Mr. President, the issue of sporting development in Barbados concerns me in a very serious way and I think we are sending mixed signals. I do hope that before this debate is over, we might be able to hear a word or two from the Government's Side as to what is the plan for a second stadium. I understood there was an intention to have a stadium specifically for football. I am not sure that is still on the cards. I think though that there is clearly a great demand in this country for more access to football. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that perhaps outside of motor sports, football is the most widely followed and rapidly growing sport.

Mr. President, are you signalling to me that you have some footballing expertise?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, it would not be necessary for me to signal that. That is well-known throughout for those who have played sports.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: That you have this footballing expertise?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, I have.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I think the tense is important in this debate. For the benefit of Hansard, is the President saying "had" or "have"?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, clearly "had" would be the more correct word to use. The President in his youthful years was well-known as one of the foremost goalkeepers in the sport in this country and the President was a national player for the country called Antigua and Barbuda.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I am made to understand that is perhaps where the nickname "Goalie" comes from.

Mr. PRESIDENT: At another time and on another occasion, I will give you the full information on that.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I am grateful to you, Sir. Mr. President, I think the substantive point should not be difficult to collide with. Sir, it is not by any stretch of the imagination or criticism of the Government because, as I said at the very beginning, we understand the challenge for resources. We also appreciate there is a very powerful institution known as the Barbados Football Association but I think we need to have some clarity in terms of perspective on the way forward.

One of the things one would hope to have made clear in Barbados is whether there would be any support for football and does that support include a special stadium. I think that is something we all would wish to hear something on.

Sir, by extension, I think that we would also want to know that as best as possible, the mini stadia which have begun to grow up across this island, would be a phenomenon, that is not just cast by the wayside but that it is consistently improved upon.

Mr. President, in the same way there was the introduction of lights and then there was a clamour for lights in almost every community - and I know that there are those who still do not have their lights, who would want to have and perhaps one day will have - we also need to have the proper seating facilities.

We also want to have the proper pavilion facilities, et cetera, so that playing facilities across Barbados would be developed in as holistic a manner as possible. Sir, in so doing, it might be a useful thing if Government could then exercise its central authority - and I go back to the Sports Council - and give it a little vision because it makes no sense, in my judgment.

Sir, in as much as we have this partisan approach - and politics will always have a partisan colour - this is one of the reasons I am a firm believer in the continuity of some of the policies, when once you have committed so many resources. Sir, let me give you an idea of what we are talking about. Sir, to light a playing field may be as much as \$80 000. There are pavilions which have been put down in this country for in excess of \$200 000.

*Asides.*

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, the reality is that once you have committed that type of

resource to the development of sports in the community, you then want to lend to it, you want to have continuity. Sir, I would want to see the day comes when we could come to a point where we recognise that we could build out centres of excellence in Barbados. I have said to this Honourable Chamber before and I believe I am correct in saying that the Leader of Government Business has embraced the idea. I would suggest that the Leader of Government Business would use her good offices and physical location in the district to see that it continues. Sir, some time before January 15, we began a concept in the Holder's Hill area where we wanted to have a cricketing Walk of Fame. We identified that area because of the fact that there was a genuine case to be made that that area could be treated as a centre of cricketing excellence in Barbados by virtue of the phenomenal number of persons who have played representative cricket for Barbados and the West Indies and have been drawn from the immediate environs, half mile or so, or right in the centre of Holder's Hill itself.

Mr. President, the reality is that it is something that could usefully benefit from the continuation of Government's attention. What you want to do is to have as many areas of recognised centres of excellence in the communities and, by extension, in the schools around this island.

I believe it gives people a certain sense of pride and a sense of purpose. If you come from school "X" and that school has been notorious throughout the years for its performance in hockey, then it is recognised as a school of excellence in hockey, and it gives the pupils who attend that school a sense of pride and purpose.

*Asides.*

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Yes, Mr. President, I was speaking of Combermere. Yes, Mr. President, Combermere has had a rich tradition in hockey, even if nothing else.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please. I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Senator, but I think that you are fully familiar with the Rules of Debate in this Honourable Chamber and I am sure you would not wish, unnecessarily, to deviate from those Rules.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I am guided. Sir, I think that gives a certain sense of purpose and the new intake every year would feel almost duty-bound to try to connect with that rich tradition at the school.

Mr. President, I remember well when I went into Harrison's College and came face to face with the rich athletic tradition of the school in track and field. Sir, almost

every one going into First Form with me wanted to be involved in track and field. It is something that helps give a sense of purpose and continuation. I think it would be a useful thing if again we could try and build out that type of capacity across the schools and the communities in this country.

Mr. President, I want to close on this issue and to throw it out to the Government for its consideration.

4.30 p.m.

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

SENATOR K.D. SYMMONDS: I believe that in the same way that we have produced the likes of Obadalee Thompson, Andrea Blackett and others, that we have to recognise that these types of individuals are products of a process and, Sir, many times the process begins at the primary school stage. Mr. President, the average parent in Barbados is not going to be able, in the context of recessionary time; in the context of the usual give and take of our individual life, even though they recognise in the child a specific sporting talent, to lend the child the kind of resources and support that child would need to have if it is to reach the fullest fruition.

Mr. President, again this is an area, through the type of fund we are talking about, the Sports Promotion Fund, or even through Government's central coffers, that we could come to a point in Barbados where we take athletes, especially those who have come to a point when they have finished school, they may be young men in their 20s, working in the public sector or young women in the private sector, but they are given a period during which they could take paid leave and they could look after matters relating to athletic training, nutrition, et cetera.

Sir, it needs not be an around-the-year type of thing, but you could identify a pool of your best and you allow that pool to benefit from access to paid leave from the workplace because this is something they are doing to bring rich reward to the country.

Sir, I made the point last week, were it not for people like Desmond Haynes and Sir Garfield Sobers this island, then Barbados, as a tourism product would be much less rich and, therefore, we owe it to the best that we have of our athletes that we put something before them.

Mr. President, I know this is a question of scarce resources but I throw it out to the Government because I do believe it is a more novel type of approach. It is something we have not done in the past and I think we can again richly benefit if we are able to demonstrate a full and holistic commitment to the all-round development of our sports people.

Mr. President, obviously, I am supportive of the Resolution before us. I only wanted to throw some private concerns in an effort to see whether even Senator Derrick Alleyne might be able to approach those concerns in a less than contentious, and hopefully, non-partisan way.

Mr. President, I am richly and deeply obliged to you.

MR. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, as I wind up the debate on the Bill to validate, there was a question raised about the balance in the Fund and, as of today, the balance is \$1.6 million in the Fund, that compares with a balance, for example, as of September 2006 of \$1.142 million approximately, and at the end of September a balance of approximately \$1.37 million. I presume that does answer the question.

Mr. President, clearly, the support for sports and arts is a critical role with a major role to be played by Government as it partners with individuals and other entities in the private sector and the non-governmental organisation sector to support those areas of endeavour in the country.

Mr. President, the issue of amending the legislation in terms of regulation and validating previous expenditure or disbursement, in this case, to entities relating to Government, the National Sports Council and the National Cultural Foundation, as I mentioned previously, would be made legal by this validation. Therefore, I have no hesitation in supporting the passing of that Bill.

I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

*On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.*

#### COMMITTEE

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Committee.

*Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.*

*On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

*On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and*

*passed and cited as the Arts and Sport Promotion Fund Regulations 2006 (Validation) Act, 2009.*

#### ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION FUND (AMENDMENT) REGULATION, 2008.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Resolution to approve the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund (Amendment) Regulation, 2008, do now pass.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

*S/A20/16:32 Sequence 28*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

#### OBITUARY SPEECHES

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, as most Honourable Senators must be aware, Lady Husbands, the late wife of His Excellency Sir Clifford Husbands, our Governor-General, died at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on Thursday, July 2, 2009. Lady Husbands was educated at St. Michael's Girls' School, and in the tradition of graduates of that fine institution she became a nurse in the footsteps of others of that institution who included the late Governor-General Dame Nita Barrow, Mrs. Ilene Murray-Ainsley, and Mrs. Jean Springer.

Lady Husbands was the mother of three children, Sandra-Dawn Taylor, Anthony and Laura Husbands. Laura, fortunate for me, was a student of mine in the Management Studies Programme at the University of the West Indies, and I had occasion to interact with her. I am happy to report that she would have made her mother very proud. She was an excellent student. I continued to interact with her since her graduation.

In addition to her three children, Lady Husbands was the grandmother of two, Mia and Leah Taylor. During her career as a nurse, she worked as a midwife with the General Hospital. Many of us would know that was the forerunner to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Lady Husbands has been described as a committed professional nurse and devoted mother. In the words of her daughter, she was an excellent cook and baker, and an excellent homemaker. Lady Husbands was interred at St. Lucy's Parish Church on July 10, 2009.

Sir, on behalf of my distinguished colleagues, I take this opportunity to extend to her relatives our deepest condolences.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Sir, we join with the Leader of Government Business, in extending sympathy to his Excellency Sir Clifford and the family of Lady Husbands, and in fact, the nursing community. There is a fraternity of nurses, sorority, who have... I used fraternity in a very general, neutral way, but there is a sorority of nursing sisters who have given great service to the country.

In fact, teaching and nursing were perhaps the two preferred professions and the most obvious career options for women in Lady Husband's generation. So it is not strange that a young bright woman at that time seeking a professional career would have chosen to go into nursing or to go into teaching.

She, in fact, chose nursing. She, by all accounts, worked as a Theatre Nurse and as a nurse to many of the senior doctors of that era, Jack Leacock, Dr. Stuart and others whose names are legendary in Barbados, given their contribution to health care generally, and to the development of a social health care system.

Those of us who knew her understood fully that she was not only a nurse by profession, but a nurse by nature. When you met her, she was always kind, gracious and warm. She spoke in docile tones that were very soothing. She really had a way that charmed people, and one could see her at one's bedside patting one's hand gently while whispering encouragement and encouraging words to those who were ill and those who were dying.

Sir, it was part of her personality, that nurturing sort of caring individual, and it came across all her life when one met her, the way in which she reached out and always said the kindest things and would smile very warmly. She embraced you with her manner. I know that people may not particularly like that expression, but I think that the Chamber understands what I am trying to say. There are people who exude warmth that almost pulls you in, and she was one of those.

I commend too, the fact, that she was a former St. Michael's girl. We hear a lot about Combermere and other institutions, but the reality is, there are a number of professional women of all generations, but of that generation in particular, who went into the nursing and teaching profession out of the St. Michael's School, and that was the foundation really for many professional women in Barbados.

Dame Nita, herself, another distinguished Barbadian of that generation who was herself a nurse, another St. Michael's girl. St. Michael's School at that time gave the foundation for many women, as a platform for professional service and for academic development.

It is to be noted too that Ilene Ainsley-Murray is another person of that generation, who would have been well-known for her nursing service, and her service to the country through that service to the hospital and health care system.

Sir, I must confess that I did not know until some years ago, that young women who chose to go into nursing at that time, and I think teaching too, if they got married, were compelled to give up their professions because one had to choose between marriage and one's professional involvement. I think that she was one of the individuals who, in fact, had to make such a choice, between being mother and homemaker, and continuing in her profession as a nurse.

She also gave excellent service of love and care to her family, to her husband. They had a very long marriage. Their children have also gone on to do very well and to give service to Barbados. I think that is a point that needs also to be noted, that Lady Husband came from a family, and was part of a family that served Barbados at various levels. Her children continue to do so in the professions that they have chosen.

Sir, Sandra-Dawn was very much a Queen's College girl. I met her when I went to Queen's College to do my "A" levels, and then was with her at Cave Hill, when we were both studying Law. Therefore, I got an opportunity to see Lady Husbands as a mother through her daughter, Sandra-Dawn and through that contact.

Sir, a family mourns when a member dies, when they are people who are well-known, as indeed Lady Husbands was well-known and well-placed in Barbados. The wider country mourns, and that is why this House now pays these tributes and condolences. I think that the people whom she would have cared for as a nurse would have, perhaps, felt her best touch and would remember her really fondly, because the touch and care of a medical professional, when you are ill, really means a lot.

In that regard, she would have touched many lives well before she became First Lady in her personal capacity. She was a person who would have touched many lives.

*S A20 16.50 p.m. Sequence 29*

*Wednesday, July 29, 2009*

*Senate A20, Sequence 30, 4.50 p.m.*

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, we extend our condolences on This Side, and joining with Leader of Government Business, to His Excellency and to her wider family, her sisters, and brother. We also extend our condolences to her siblings, children and grandchildren and

pray that she will rest in peace, as we know the family will continue to mourn her passing.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F.L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, on behalf of the Independent Senators, I would like to express sincere condolences to His Excellency and the whole family of Lady Husbands.

I first met Lady Husbands when I was a member of the Soroptimist International of Barbados. She was the Patron for that organisation, and later when I was organising the Governor-General's Agriculture Camp, over the last five years, I would meet her often in the Private Secretary's office when I went to make the arrangements, and then at the Award Ceremonies.

I came into contact with Sandra Dawne because her two children, Leah and Mya attended the camps and later Laura helped me with the camp, over the last two years, so I came into contact with the family fairly often.

I would say that the word that best describes Lady Husbands is definitely, "dignified". I will always remember her as a very dignified and gracious lady, and I am sure we will all miss her. May she rest in peace.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Chair joins with those who have expressed condolences to His Excellency on the passing of his dear wife. Fortunately or unfortunately for me, I had the privilege of knowing Lady Husbands before she became Lady Husbands, having myself been born in the area that is revered as Fairfield and Tudor Bridge.

I was able to observe her in her capacity as the daughter of a police captain of Barbados, along with her sisters and her other siblings. I was able to observe them in the Church of St. Michael's and All Angels, the Cathedral Church of Barbados where they worshiped on a regular basis.

I also had the privilege of knowing her in her capacity as a nurse, because my first wife, who herself had been a graduate of the St. Michael's School and, who herself went into the noble profession of nursing, and lived just 10 houses away from Lady Husbands. They spent a lot of time together and, I believe, that Lady Husbands was the inspiration of my late wife, Marjorie, who became a nurse in the tradition of the St. Michael's Girls, of whom Senator Thompson spoke so eloquently.

She was a different kind of person in the sense that she exuded not only charm, but she gave the impression of always being ready and able to embrace and to extend that warmth and charm to all who came within her ambit.

Fortunately or unfortunately and, I think, in this case it would be unfortunately, I was able to represent the Senate on the occasion of her funeral, when she was laid to rest, after a very impressive ceremony in the main church of that distinguished parish of Barbados, St. Lucy.

I am told from very reliable sources that her husband, His Excellency, continues to cherish the fact that she has been laid to rest in an area which he reveres. I am therefore very comfortable in sharing with the Senate, my own and my family's expression of condolences to the family. I have no doubt that she will rest in peace because she has always been, and she has died as a Christian, in the highest form.

I shall now ask the Senate to rise in their places, and let us pay respect to her memory, in one minute of silence.

One minute's silence was observed.

Mr. PRESIDENT: May she rest in peace.

#### ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate be adjourned sine die.

*The question that the Senate be adjourned sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.*

Senate A20, Sequence 20, 16:57:26

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**HUTSON, Senator J. A. C.**

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**SYMMONDS, Senator K. D.**

**THOMPSON, Senator Miss H.E.**

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**EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT**


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

**EDITORIAL QUERIES**

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

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

**Q2. Order No. 3, heading.** The Resolution is headed as vesting land ‘IN THE PARISH OF SAINT PHILIP’, but Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean moves it as a vesting of land ‘in two parishes’, at Branchbury, St. Joseph and Woodbourne, St. Philip, and in reply refers to ‘the vesting of lands in St. Joseph and St. Philip’. Printed as in the source.

**Q3. Order No. 1, Committee.** Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow was appointed to act as Chairman of Committees for the sitting, and the President had announced the Deputy President’s excuse, but the Committee on the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund Regulations Bill is recorded with ‘Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair’. Printed as in the source.

**Q4. Order No. 3, Senator Miss H. E. Thompson.** In a sitting held on July 29, 2009 the Senator says ‘if there is an increase today, August 28’. Printed as in the source.

**Q5. Order No. 1, Senator McClean’s reply.** The balance of the Fund is compared with ‘\$1.142 million approximately’ as of September 2006 and ‘at the end of September a balance of approximately \$1.37 million’, with no year given for the second figure. Printed as in the source.

**Q6. Order No. 1, title.** The Bill is headed ‘ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION FUND REGULATIONS, 2006 (VALIDATION) BILL, 2009’ but cited on third reading as the ‘Arts and Sport Promotion Fund Regulations 2006 (Validation) Act, 2009’; the Leader also refers to the ‘Art and Sports Fund’. Printed as in the source.

**DEBATE SUMMARY**

*(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)*

The Senate met on Wednesday, 29th July, 2009 at 11.10 a.m., with the President, Senator Dr. B. M. Taitt, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. The President said that it had not been the practice to confirm the Senate’s Minutes and that from that day he would seek to have them confirmed before signing them; the Minutes of July 22, 2009 were confirmed. He

announced excuses for the Deputy President and Sir John Stanley Goddard, and Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow was appointed to act as Chairman of Committees. The Leader of Government Business, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, laid the Value Added Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Order, 2009 and the Reports of the Community Legal Services Commission for 2005 to 2007, and gave notice of a Resolution to borrow \$165 million from the Barbados National Bank Inc. for the Barbados Road Network Infrastructure Improvement Project.

Order No. 3 was the Resolution under section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 to vest in the National Housing Corporation land at Branchbury, St. Joseph and Woodbourne, St. Philip for residential purposes. Senator McClean said the lots formed part of the HELP (Housing Every Last Person) initiative, which would offer an initial 500 lots to first-time buyers at \$5 a square foot, against market prices of \$15 to \$25.

Senator K. D. Symmonds asked for a progress report on the Manifesto commitment to 2 000 housing solutions and on the promised Agricultural Protection Act. Senator Dr. F. L. Chandler welcomed the housing but urged stricter rules on changing the use of agricultural land. Senator D. K. A. Griffith cautioned against 100 per cent mortgages for young people. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Senator the Hon. H. LaV. Benn, criticised the former Administration’s land banks, which led to points of order from Senator Miss H. E. Thompson, among them on the 60 000 acres she said were retained by law for agriculture, which he put at 45 000. After the suspension Senator J. A. C. Hutson suggested building upwards. Senator Thompson said the Prime Minister’s Budget showed 91 houses built and 155 lots created in 2008-2009, against promises of 2 500 house spots and 2 000 houses a year, and that the price of tenantry land had risen from \$2.50 to \$5.00 a square foot; her remarks on oil prices, the IMF and offer letters drew repeated points of order from Senator McClean, who withdrew a remark that the Senator was screaming. Senator D. McD. Alleyne and Senator Crichlow, who argued that people must not expect the Government to provide their homes, also spoke. After Senator McClean replied, the Resolution was agreed to.

Order No. 4, the Resolution to vest land at Cliffden, St. Philip and Guinea, St. John in the Corporation for residential purposes, was agreed to without further debate.

Orders No. 1 and 2, the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund Regulations, 2006 (Validation) Bill, 2009 and the Resolution to approve the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund (Amendment) Regulation, 2008, were taken together. Senator McClean explained that disbursements from the

Fund to the National Sports Council on December 5, 2007 and to the National Cultural Foundation on November 27, 2008 had to be validated, as the Regulations did not expressly allow statutory corporations to receive money. Senator Symmonds supported the measure, asked the size of the Fund and urged support for school sports and newer sports; Senator McClean replied that the balance stood at \$1.6 million. The Bill passed all stages and the Resolution was agreed to.

Senator McClean led obituary tributes to Lady Husbands, wife of the Governor-General, Sir Clifford Husbands, who died on July 2, 2009; Senator Thompson, Senator Chandler for the Independent Senators and the President joined in them. The Senate was adjourned sine die.