
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday the May 03, 2017 at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) Dunelm, (Deputy President)

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO, M.B., B.S., (Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development) (Minister of Commerce and Trade)

Senator the Hon. D. W. BOYCE, B.Sc. (Econ.), M.B.A. (Fin.), CMA, F.C.A., (Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Energy, Immigration, Telecommunications and Invest Barbados)

Senator the Hon. P. M. T. TODD, B.Sc., (Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister)

Senator Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER, CIM, Dip. Mng., M.B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator H. A. HUSBANDS, M.L.I.R., B.Sc., (Public Administration) (Hons), Ed. Cert. (U.W.I.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)

Senator J. INCE, J.P., BB.A., M.B.A., Dip. (Mgmt.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Senator R. A. HUNTE, J.P.

Senator A. R. WORRELL, B.A. (Hons.)

Senator Miss V. A. G. DE PEIZA, B.Sc. (Hons.), LL.M. (Merit)

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT, J.P., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S

(Edin.)

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM, LL.B. (Hons).

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

Senator Professor Emeritus Sir Henry FRASER, K.A., G.C.M., C.M., B.Sc., M.B.B.S., Ph.D., F.A.C.P., F.R.C.P.

Senator Dr. Sir Trevor CARMICHAEL, K.A., L.V.O., Q.C., B.Sc., (Econ.), M.A., Ph.D.

Senator A. A. ADAMS, J.P., B.A., Ed. Cert., M.Sc. Ed.

Senator J. A. WATSON

Senator Carol Lady HAYNES, M.B.B.S.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Senate is in Session.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am in receipt of the following information: The President, Her Honour Senator Miss Kerryann F. Ifill will not be able to join us today, neither will the Leader of Government Business, Senator M. M. McClean, and Senator Rev. Dr. D. L. Durant and Senator W. A. Abrahams informed that they will be late.

I am also in receipt of the Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 29th March, 2017. There being no errors or omissions, let these Minutes stand confirmed.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Deputy President, I am commanded to lay:

(1) the National Petroleum Corporation Annual Report April 2009 to March 2010.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE
SENATE

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER No. 1

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE
WITH
SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT
CAP 228, THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION
BY THE CROWN OF A PARCEL OF LAND
THE PROPERTY OF BRIGHTON
PLANTATION LIMITED,

BRIGHTON, ST. GEORGE

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO you have the floor.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President.

This morning I have the honour to lead off on this Resolution which is the compulsory acquisition of the land at Brighton, St. George. This Land, of course, is being acquired by the Minister of Housing and Lands, as all lands acquisitions are but this for housing purposes. As everyone in here would be aware, Mr. Deputy President, when this Administration came to office we embarked on a very ambitious and aggressive programme of low income housing understanding that housing for poorer people was an important way of empowering them realising too that without some assistance from the State there were many people who would not be able to have even a small starter home for themselves and their families. This Administration embarked on a programme including the Housing Every Last Person programme (HELP) to ensure that these persons had access to housing. The houses were not large, they are in the main starter homes and certainly between 2008 and now as these homes were completed and then turned over to individuals, if you pass many of the areas now, Mr. Deputy President, you would see that residents have begun to expand on those properties. In a lot of areas you have, for example, where there are upstairs units on what look like pillars, folks are building in downstairs to create another floor or they are adding on to the back and so on. Those houses, although they were small, as I said, because you take costs and everything into consideration they really were starter homes but the persons who have been able to have access to those homes have been able to see the vision that we saw as an Administration and be able to start to, not only occupy the houses, but start to expand the homes as well. Part of that

programme, Mr. Deputy President, included housing across Barbados and the reason that I really wanted to be here to speak on this Resolution and I am glad I had the opportunity today to actually lead off on this Resolution is because our programme actually saw, for the first time in decades, housing solutions actually coming to St. George, in particular St. George South. It had been many, many years and in fact, certainly not in the previous Administration and I gather for many years before that because in talking to residents of St. George South, we cannot identify any low income housing that was done since Ellerton Housing Area and as I would say, I came along and now about Ellerton Housing Area and I do not know about any others before that. Certainly not in the previous Administration but since we have come to office we have seen housing in Marchfield, St. Philip, in Work Hall, St. Philip, in French Village, St. Peter, I do not ...

Senate D 8 Seq 1 11.40 a.m.

Wednesday, May 03, 2017

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER SUCKOO: Since we have come to office we have seen housing in Marchfield and Workhall in St. Philip, in St. Peter and in French Village. I do not know where French Village is I must confess but I am told that it is in St. Peter but you will forgive me, Mr. Deputy President, I am a St. George girl and I only know the areas I may hike through. Probably if you take to me to French Village I would probably recognised it as an area that I hiked through but I cannot tell you that I can take a map now and pinpoint French Village in St. Peter.

Closer to town, we have also done Arleigh Heights as well which was rent-to-own. I think that Arliegh Heights, if I am not mistaken, was the first rent-to-own project that was done by the Government of Barbados so that would be under this Administration. We did the rent-to-own project and that rent-to-own project really is allowing low income persons who would not have the capital upfront to buy a house to start with the rental and after they have paid a certain amount of money in rental that money then goes towards equity and they can actually then look to purchase that property outright.

We also did rent-to-own in Greens, St. George. Again, Greens in St. George was the first housing project that we have seen in St. George in many, many years. It is the first one that I can actually recall. When we did Greens in St. George we had some 36 homes that were purchased in addition to 15 houses as rent-to-own. That land, Mr. Deputy President, was acquired, I am told, back in 1999. That land is among the land that would get a little square inch pushed off every election. They would bring a bulldozer and put it up there every election with a promise of greater things to come and right after the election the

equipment will be moved until the next election time. I know I have seen it there in the 1999 election and in the 2003 election the same thing happened. The equipment would come into that corner in Greens and push off a little bit and so the folks would say they will get some action here and right after the elections that equipment would be moved, and so we have never seen anything happening in St. George South not even in Greens which was acquired many years before. It was after we came to office that we put that into our programme and we were actually then able to build homes. As I said, some were brought and some were rent-to-own and so we have been able to provide about 51 or 52 housing solutions there in Greens, St. George which is adjacent to the recreational facility that this Administration also put into St. George where we have a very huge playing field which is now sought after by many of the communities that want to come and have their activities there. Of course, Greens now can host BCL matches because they actually have a nice big playing field and all we need to do now is to put in some lights there so that we can do some night matches and we have a nice pavilion. When the construction started we realised that because of the design we would have all of this room underneath and so we went ahead and built a resource centre and the Community Development Department were able to help us then to put in Wi-Fi and computers and so on in there, so we have a nice resource centre underneath and everything in that area is being utilised and it has created a lot of activity among the communities that surround that area so you would have people from Harmony Cottage, Greens, Prerogative, St. Jude's and even Todds and Woodland coming across there to have these matches. The churches use the facility as well so on bank holidays they have something going on in that area so it is really very heavily used. In fact, the Greens cricket team went on to win in their division in the Barbados Cricket League (BCL) last year and I think that is in great part due to the fact that they have had the facilities and they have been able to train and so we have been able to have success, so yes we have been able to see some development coming to St. George South through this Administration.

We have done this programme of Housing Every Last Person (HELP) all across the country. We have had several different types of programmes. There have been joint venture programmes with the private sector, there have been programmes where small contractors would build and even the National Housing Corporation would do some building as well, so we have had several types of arrangements to ensure we have houses. We have had our multiplex units and we have also stand-alone houses. Of course, we are familiar with The Grotto which is several storeys. When we march on May Day as part of the May Day Rally as we passed across by The Grotto it was such a wonderful sight to see folks standing on the balconies at The Grotto looking down to observe the May Day Parade as we passed by.

Mr. Deputy President, that is what we do. That is the Democratic Labour Party. That has been our philosophy. Even though there are now many parties abounding that is why this Democratic Labour Party is the party of choice certainly for me because of the philosophy of this party which includes the empowerment and enfranchisement of the masses to use Patrick's phrase that he uses so often. We are empowering the masses ensuring that they have access to things that they may not be able to have based on their own earning ability such as education, again a record of the Democratic Labour Party of which we are very proud, healthcare and our social security system which is the envy in the region. Our social security system, National Insurance Scheme, will celebrate 50 years next month, and it is going strong. Indeed, it is more than a contribution, it certainly has been a lifeline to many, many Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy President, this low income housing programme fits into the programme of Government to ensure that the masses are well cared for and that they are empowered. As I said, they take the small houses and are able to expand on them as their income would allow. This is also part of Government's philosophy of social justice. It fits in with the Sustainable Development Goal Number 11. Mr. Deputy President, there are 17 Sustainable Development Goals which articulate programmes and mechanisms by which we can look to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Sustainable Development Goal Number 11 actually speaks to adequate, safe and affordable housing for everyone. Mr. Deputy President, the Democratic Labour Party again has been ahead of the game in that we have been doing this as an Administration long before they articulated the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

Mr. Deputy President, I also must mention the 20-year programme that sees persons who are renting Government units and have been doing so for 20 years finally being able to have the title to that property. I am advised that at least 72 per cent of those houses have actually been turned over to the tenants and they are getting the paperwork in order so that they would have those units outright. Mr. Deputy President, that is more than 2 000 persons, again empowering these folks because once they have title to an asset such as this then they are able to do other things. Unless you have this kind of title you cannot actually go for that loan that you may need for education or to do something else that you might have in mind and now we are making that definitely a possibility. To buy that car you may want that collateral. Low income persons may not have sufficient money put aside to serve as collateral so having the title to a property certainly ensures that they can do that.

Mr. Deputy President, as I said, I wanted to speak to this because I really wanted to look at St. George South, the Brighton area, and all of the other things we have been

doing before that. This Resolution has been on the Order Paper since March and I am glad that I have the opportunity to do this. This land in Brighton was actually proposed by the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development since about 2012. In 2012 they went and had a look at this land, the idea being then to do some as lots and some as houses. It is about 5 acres of land and the division then was multiplex units so that they would be able to house more than 100 person.

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Mr. Deputy President, the vision then was multiplexed units so that they would be able house more than 100 persons. They told me that if they were just doing separate stand-alone houses that the number would have been about 70 houses, but the kind of plan that they had envisaged would actually see them housing upwards to 110 households in this particular arrangement and it would also be for low and lower middle income persons.

Mr. Deputy President, the funding for the original programme did not materialise and so I am advised that currently the Ministry is actually looking at other funding models. I mentioned that there have been other things that they have done with the several projects that have been ongoing, there has been joint-venture arrangements with the private sector, as well as using small contractors, there are loans that you may get from external funding agencies as well, so that all of those options and models are being pursued, so that having acquired this land here today we would then be able to move ahead and development this land.

Mr. Deputy President, the land in Brighton, for those of you who know St. George, if you proceed north from the Brighton Plantation where the Brighton Farmers Market is located, you do not continue east as if going to St. Philip, there is a junction and you can proceed north as if going back to Mount Hill. When you go north it is actually the first left turn that will take you back to Waverley Cot and then back on to Ellerton. That first left turn in that corner is where that land is situated, that left turn actually would be the northern boundary, that road I described would be the eastern boundary and so it is in that particular area. It is about five acres of land.

Mr. Deputy President, that land had been looked at before for housing. I am told that other persons had been looking and had applied to use that land some time before but it was not possible under the Physical Development Plan at that time during the 1990s but that in 2003 the Physical Development Plan had changed thus allowing for agriculture land which was vacant, which is what this is and which was next to or near to expanding tenancies and residential areas to then be used as housing. Certainly the area I described is the area of Lower Brighton and

Waverley Cot and that is a very vibrant working class community which is expanding. In fact, just north of that there are also lots, the land just north of that junction has also been just acquired for the 500 lot programme, another programme what we have in our low-income housing programme which we have divided up and sold at \$5 per square foot, for the individuals then to take the land and be able to develop that land at their pace to do whatever they want. Mr. Deputy President, there are some people who have indicated that they do not necessarily want a house or that they cannot afford to build a house but simple be given a piece of land and at their own pace they would begin to build to suit. Mr. Deputy President, we have done about 500 \$5 per square foot lots.

Mr. Deputy President, next door which is east of that, Upper Brighton, we have also acquired some land for the \$5 per square foot lots as well, so the area is expanding. We have the traditional tenantry area which by the way is where my grandmother was born, so that this is bringing it home to me, Mr. Deputy President.

Asides.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Deputy President, I am Barbadian, I was born not in St. George. Mr. Deputy President, I know that I am not supposed to hear asides but somebody has challenged my nationality. Mr. Deputy President, let me say for the record, I was born at the Oistins Maternity Hospital here in Barbados on 10th September, 1968. You can check it for yourself. I am 100 per cent Bajan. My grandmother was born there at Lower Brighton, St. George, Mr. Deputy President, I would say too that a lot of the folks there are related, you would find that the folks like the Belles, the Bostics, the Harrises, the Rudders, the Lewises are all related to me through my grandmother.

Mr. Deputy President, as I was explaining, in 2003 the policy changed to allow then this agriculture land which is now vacant to be used because the area is now expanding as a residential area. Mr. Deputy President, the lots that I mentioned just north of that in Lower Brighton, many of them have been allocated but I am told that they are still awaiting the Certificate of Compliance before they can be handed over to individuals but they have been allocated, persons have been called and told of their approval for land at Lower Brighton. In Upper Brighton they have already received their Certificate of Compliance and so we will be seeing some activity in that area. Mr. Deputy President, to go along with that, the road along there is down to be repaired, it is in need of a lot of work for a long time and persons who know that area will be applauding.

Mr. Deputy President, colleagues may recall that not so long ago we had also come to acquire land here for the

Barbados Vocational Training Board, the St. Luke's facility which is in Upper Brighton, across the road from these \$5 per square foot lots. That land we had said was for car park but that we were going to develop it so that it would now be recreational facilities for afterhours, so that this expanding community would have this hard court area so that they would be able to play basketball, net ball, road tennis and whatever else that they wanted to do.

Mr. Deputy President, it is important that when you are allocating land and when you are looking at low-income housing that there facilities that go along with it and that as you bring these lands into use for housing you have to ensure that for the persons there are recreational or otherwise called green spaces, otherwise we would only be encouraging persons to sit indoors but there have to be areas where not only can they get that exercise but that they can build that sense of community spirit as well, because they can all come out gather around and get to know one another.

Mr. Deputy President, we have too many communities in which persons do not know each other, they only know each other by car number and they have never had an opportunity to interact with them unless they find themselves at a funeral or some other occasion. Therefore it is important that these recreational spaces are provided. Mr. Deputy President, as I said, you would recall that we were here no so long to acquire that land for the Barbados Vocational Training Board to develop the car park which would also be used as recreational spaces.

Mr. Deputy President, we had a similar consideration in Todds, again another area that had not seen any housing development and Todds was an area that we had earmarked for the \$5 per square foot lots. We had selected two areas two areas in Todds for this programme, one was north of where the existing tenantry is and one was to the south. The community used a central area for recreational purposes but that land was owned by CLICO International Life Limited who then took up that area and built houses, so what we realised would be happening in Todds was that all the land in that area was then taken up by houses and that there were no spaces for recreation.

Mr. Deputy President, having to Parliament and acquired both the piece to the north and south for housing, we had to come back to Parliament. I was in the Lower House at the time and my colleagues called that the "Esther Amendment" because we came back to Parliament and at my insistence we had then to take one of the pieces, and we chose the southern piece, to be vested not in housing but in sports, so that it could then be used for recreational purposes and not be taken up so that everything would have been housing. Sir, that was something that I was very pleased to see that I could get my colleagues to agree to, so that in Todds we have the \$5 per square foot lots but we

also now have a space that is available for recreational purposes.

Mr. Deputy President, this Administration has done a lot in terms of housing and we have done a lot in St. George, St. George South in particular, that why I wanted to be here today because I wanted to put what we have done in terms of this acquisition of this land in Brighton in the context of a whole lot of development that has been happening in St. George South, an area which had not before 2008 seen kind of investment.

No.D8 (3)12.02 p.m.

I mentioned what we had been able to do in Greens and the lots in Todds. We also had a resource centre in Drax Hall and we have been able to develop that even more. Such centres allow for a number of courses to be done. The Community Development Department does a number of courses, both during working hours and after hours as well, for persons of all ages to be able to expand their skills. This is very important now, as persons are trying to improve themselves to be able to find work so that they can take advantage of these many courses now being offered. In the Ellerton community we were able to put a playpark as well. Ellerton is the largest community in St. George South, and in fact when you say "Ellerton", you are actually referring to more than one community because you are going to Mount Hill, to Waverley Cot, and in fact even sometimes this area of lower Brighton gets consumed in the whole Ellerton area. Carmichael Heights sometimes gets called.

Aside.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: Carmichael Heights, where one of our colleagues live, is also considered Ellerton, certainly by the Ellerton people. Land in Ellerton was looked at for low-income housing as well, just near to the Carmichael Heights area, but that land is still very active in agriculture, so the Town Planner in his wisdom decided that the land would not be taken out of agriculture and used for housing. They even looked at the Farm, which has developed in terms of the hill on the ridge, as well as Glenacres. Those are areas that were developed privately. Other areas in the Farm were looked at as well for housing development, but again the Town Planner determined at that time that this land was actually good agricultural land and would not be taken out, because the idea is not to take all the land out of agriculture. We do understand that there is a need for housing and that people need housing but we have to be creative about the solutions, whether we tried the zero-lot-line at Coverley or the multi-storey units which are being accepted. There was a time when they said Barbadians would never want to live in the multi-storey units and the multiplex units such as duplexes and so on, and that they wanted stand-alone

housing, but I think more and more people, as they realise the price of land and stand-alone houses, are warming to the idea of the multiple arrangements.

We cannot take all the land out of agriculture, and certainly I would not want to see that happen in St. George. St. George has grown tremendously. In St. George South, I think, when I ran in 2008, there were about 8 000 persons on the voters' list for that year's Election. Right now, there are more than 10 000 persons on the voters' list for St. George South. It is true. There was no gerrymandering. That is without anybody fudging anything. You can walk on and see where those people are, because we have had expansions. There is Bulkeley Meadows, there is now Bulkeley Heights, there is Glenacres; there are so many new areas which have developed that you can see actually where these people are living. St. George is the place to live, Mr. Deputy President, and if you are not there, well, you are just not with it. St. George South is the place to live.

More people are also moving now; we have this reverse urbanisation trend in Barbados, where more people are moving out of town and into St. George as well as St. Thomas and Christ Church, but they only do that because they cannot get the more desirable areas in St. George. There is this trend of moving out of the urban areas and into what was considered rural. Of course, with everybody driving now, apart from the traffic, we realise it does not take long to get from anywhere. It is not like you are going on a three-hour drive into the City. This is Barbados, so you could comfortably move. I am sure Sir Roy would tell you that he can get to town in ten minutes; not at eight o' clock in the morning but at other times of the day. From St. George you can get to the airport, to the West Coast, to the East Coast, to Bath Beach and so on, in very little time. It is nice and central. No, we do not have sea but in St. George we have access to every sea. The comment is being made that we do not have the sea, but we have access to every sea and all is ours; we can claim all. Not like politicians before my time, I am told, who promised they would bring a beach to St. George. I certainly would not be doing that any time soon, but that was the promise at one point.

We have been able to do a lot in St. George South. We have been able to ensure that some bus routes have been rationalised, as I said. With the distribution of houses being changed, we had to ensure that the buses are going to wider areas, because persons would now find themselves having to walk very far to get to the nearest bus. We have been able to bring buses, for example, into the Middleton area. It took a few years because we actually had to widen the road. The road was not made for buses and we had to widen it, especially in the S-bends. We had to widen the road by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Workmans and north of Middleton as well to ensure that the bus could

actually manoeuvre, because when we tried in 2008 to bring the bus through -- just a trial -- we realised the bus could not safely manoeuvre those areas, and so we started a capital works programme essentially widening and fixing the roads in order that the buses could come into that area. The Transport Board has also been trying to work with the public service vehicles (PSVs). This is a programme we have heard a lot about, to ensure that if the Transport Board is not coming to that area, the PSVs would be coming. That programme needs to be fine-tuned because I am advised and I have met with the Transport Board. In fact, I called a town hall meeting and Transport Board came and spoke to the residents. What is happening is that even though the PSVs are supposed to be taking some of the load off the Transport Board, they are only working during the peak times when it is more lucrative for them.

Aside.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: They are supposed to be sharing the load with the Transport Board but they are only working in the peak periods, so you would see the minibuses at five o' clock, and at six or seven, but you may not see one again until midday, and then after that not again until evening. That arrangement needs to be tied down, so that if they are going to help in that area, they would be committed to regular scheduled times so that the folks would have a reliable service. I dare say they are complaining that right now it is not reliable.

We have done some infrastructural work in St. George South, Mr. Deputy President. If you would allow me just to speak to some of the other things we have done in St. George South. For example, we actually were able to level the Ellerton Day Nursery. I am pretty sure that predates me, because ever since I have known myself, that nursery has been there. We were able to level it and build a new one, and then we renamed it the Geoffrey Morris Daycare Centre.

Aside.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: He was from the north. Geoffrey worked at the Child Care Board and he was also a truant officer and so on. Yes, Geoffrey Morris. He was well respected in the community and in the child care community as well, and so we named that facility after him just a few years ago. We were also able to close two of our very small schools which were becoming inadequate for the numbers. I speak of South District Primary School and St. David's Primary, and you may be aware that we closed those two schools and amalgamated them into the new Blackman-Gollop Primary, which is now a very large school and serves more than just the St. George South community.

Aside.

Senator Dr. the Honour E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: No, St. David's Primary School was in St. George South, and in fact now that is the Thelma Berry Nursery School, so we have added a new nursery school to the area. That St. David's junction is where three constituencies meet, and one is St. George South, so the Blackman-Gollop School serves what used to be the St. David's School as well as what was the South District School; and South District is, of course, in St. George South, and it belongs to two constituencies: St. George South and St. Michael South East. That is another programme that we were able to do in this area.

We had to do some roundabouts. We did the Boarded Hill Roundabout, which is in St. George South; again a dangerous junction where you used to get accidents almost daily. We have been able to do work at the Boarded Hall Police Station, but now as part of the citizens' security project that station is now in line for further upgrades as well.

12.09 p.m.

I know some will say it is Yorkshire, but Coral Ridge roundabout is also at the edge of St. George South. You know we had to do some work at the Coral Ridge roundabout as well.

We recently did the road from Brighton to Windsor and anybody going that side now uses Brighton to Windsor Road and they fly across there perhaps a little faster than they should. This was a road on which you had to negotiate very carefully, from Brighton Plantation back to Windsor Road, but that Windsor junction also is a bit of a challenge to negotiate, especially if you are coming from Windsor or you are coming down from Coral Ridge on the Yorkshire side, you come into that junction it is a little difficult and because zooming along Highway 4B going to and from St. Philip, makes

It very dangerous. I know that the Ministry of Housing acquired land there or they are in the process of acquiring land to build a roundabout at that area. They also plan find a solution for the problems at the bottom of Old Woods hill, what we call Carmichael turnpipe area. That is another area very difficult to negotiate if you are not coming from Carmichael Heights it is a very difficult junction to negotiate. Along with that we will see the Carmichael road being repaired, as well, because it is perhaps one of the bumpiest roads that I have to use.

Sir, you can thank me Sir Roy and all your colleagues and all the residents of St. George South. You can thank me. We have been working hard to ensure St. George South has a level of representation it has never had before from yours truly.

Asides.

Sen. Dr. Hon. E. BYER-SUCKOO: I am advised to be specific, if I am may be allowed to hear this particular aside, Mr. Deputy President. To be specific, St. George South has experienced since 2008 and even since 2013, where I am no longer the Member of Parliament or I am not the Member of Parliament at this time, St. George South has been well looked after by yours truly. That was for the record. I needed that to be said for the record.

Sir, this administration came to office and we made a lot of policies for the benefit of people, especially the lower income earners. I have talked about the housing policies, education, social care and social services. We have done a lot of policies and we are responsible for those policies. We take the credit and we take the blame when something goes wrong as well. The truth is, the work that ensures these policies and the projects that attend them, are actually done by the officers in the various ministries who have the responsibility.

I want to just take this opportunity to thank those officers, to recognise them and to say we really do owe them that respect for the work they do. Very often we, I say we meaning the public of Barbados, heap more blame and condemnation on them without realising that most, if not all of what gets done around here, gets done because of the civil servants that are making this happen. They are the people who do the work.

Sir, regardless of their affiliations. In fact I do not ask any officer what his or her affiliation is. That is why I have a problem when candidates of the other side or MPs of the other side who are not in office would make threats to officers, even longstanding officers, even senior officers, when we get into office you are going to have to look for a job. Those kinds of threats should never be made to public officers. I get these complaints that public officers receive these threats. Thankfully I have not been told that anybody from our side, the Democratic Labour Party, has said that to officers.

Asides.

Sen. Dr. Hon. E. BYER-SUCKOO: That is not the policy of the Democratic Labour Party. It was not this Party that said if we are in office Duglous Leopold Philips should starve. That was never the thinking of this Party. It is the other Party that has said that as long as they are in office certain people should starve, certain people should be out of work. So when you can threaten officers who have 20 and 30 years in the service, some less, some more, but you have longstanding officers and you could say to them if you are not with me or if you do not pledge to support me, you are going to have to look for a job when we get into office. That is now how we should treat our civil servants.

Our civil servants should never have to be in fear every time elections are called as to what their fate will be. That should never have to happen. I heard these things happen.

Sir, that is important. Yes our public servants are negotiating now for an increase in wages, but there are other things too. As Minister of Labour I can speak to this. There are other things that are just as important perhaps if not more so. One is the security, the security you in your job there will not be discrimination. This is in the Employment Rights Act. It is not in the Public Service Act but that is in there as well. The Employment Rights Act does not speak to the public service, but the Public Service Act also speaks to discrimination. That is discrimination when you can tell an officer because of what colour shirt you wear, or because of your affiliation, or because of your family's affiliation, or because you refuse to do this or that I am going to see to it that you get move, that you do not get a promotion, that you lose a job, those things should never happen. That is what we can ensure our public servants, that while we are in office they do not have to face that kind of victimisation. They do not have to face the threat of losing their jobs once we are in office.

Sir, we have gone a step further. We are ensuring now ... it was articulated in the last Budget -- that public officers who have served stated time -- I do not want to speak out of term because it was not articulated in the Budget, but I know they have been working very hard on this in the civil service, that public officers who have served for a given time will be appointed. This work is ongoing right now as we seek to appoint all of those officers who have met the requirements.

Sir, it is about ensuring salaries, yes, they get their increments, they want an increase in salary but it is also about ensuring they have their security, that there is no unfair dismissal and that there is no discrimination. That is why ...

Asides.

Sen. Dr. Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Not really. I am speaking to the public officers who put together these policies. These public officers deserve our respect. They do not deserve to be treated like this. I can speak to this with authority because in my role as Minister of Labour I also have the responsibility of ensuring labour standards. Remember this too is the Democratic Labour Party that has made sure that although the Employment Rights Act was promised almost every election for the almost how many elections, it was this administration that brought the Employment Rights Act to bear, because this is something that we feel very strongly about, about ensuring that workers are protected. That is the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, I may stray a little bit further to say that I know there are other Parties that emerging now and I am hearing different reasons for their existence, but it is important that they have a strong philosophy and that their philosophical mores are very sound, because I am hearing of people who have been invited to join these Parties. They cannot tell you the philosophy of the Party. They are just joining because thing they should have a chance of running the Government but there is no philosophy.

Sir, this notion for example that only business people should be allowed to run a country. I have a little concern with that because I do believe we are more than an economy, it is more than about balancing the books and about ensuring that the economy is sound, but we have to ensure for example our social democratic agenda is continued. I do not know a Party that is only about business people is going to see that. I believe there needs to be a balance. When we talk about a gender balance we need to see more of a balance where gender is concern, but we also need to have a balance in terms of the perspective people bring to the electorate.

Sir, as I wrap up, again the Resolution we have before us at Brighton is about ensuring that our philosophy in the Democratic Labour Party is pursued, ensuring the masses are empowered, that they have access to education, housing, health care, security benefits, to all those things this Party has subscribed to, that in many cases have actually been brought into being to ensure Barbados knows social justice.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: ... our philosophy in the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) is pursued ensuring that the masses are empowered, that they have access to education, housing, healthcare, social security benefits and to all those things that this party has subscribed to, that we have actually in many cases brought into being to ensure that Barbados know social justice. You cannot expect that from any other party. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Is this not what the scripture says, Mr. Deputy President? The Bible says what? "You do not pick grapes from thorn bushes and figs from thistles." I believe that is how it goes in the book of Matthew so it is by their fruits and that is what this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) ... That may be the NIV version, I am sorry, you may know the King James Version better but the NIV ...

Asides.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are we talking partisan?

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: No, no, no, we are not talking partisan. We are talking fruit, Mr. Deputy President. The Gospel according to Matthew and so you can know what our philosophy is, not because I stand

here and talk but because you can see what we have been doing. It is by our fruits. You can see what I have been doing in the Ministry of Labour, Goal number 8 under the SDG, the Sustainable Development Goals but again ensuring that persons have access to fair conditions in their workplace, not just safety but holidays with pay, minimum wages, anti-discrimination, all of these things we have been doing, the sexual harassment legislation, all of these things to ensure that workers are protected. The things we have done for workers and in all of the other areas that I have outlined, by their fruits ye shall know them, Mr. Deputy President. We will continue on this programme because this is what this party is committed to. This is what we have undertaken and we said that our programme was Housing Every Last Person (HELP) and we are not there yet. We have not yet been able to house every last person. We have built several hundred houses and provided other housing solution for a few hundred others and I mentioned that there are more than 2 000 people who were able to get the title in their housing areas so we have been able to ensure housing solutions for thousands of people but we have not yet been able to house every last person. This will go a little further in ensuring this can bring when the model is finally articulated, as I said, at least another 100 or so housing solutions to the people of St. George, to Barbadians in the parish of St. George but you know it is not just for the people of St. George, along with the other work at Upper and Lower Brighton and so on that is going on. We are continuing our programme of housing every last person and I look forward to the day when every last person will have access to affordable and safe housing which is what we have committed to, that they have access to safe and affordable housing. We continue to providing that, Mr. Deputy President, and so I look forward to the support of my colleagues as we look to pass this Resolution today.

I thank you.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Sir Roy Trotman.

Senator Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support the Resolution to acquire the land at Brighton referred to in the introductory statement by the Minister who has led this debate. Naturally, I do not hope to speak with the same kind of freedom and generosity that the previous speaker used and I suppose we can expose that because the Leader in this debate has taken a certain personal pride in being able to speak to a constituency with which she enjoys a certain close relationship and I do not believe that I should stand in the way of her trying to make that relationship even closer however there are somethings which have been said during her presentation treating with the subject of housing that I would wish to touch on rather briefly but I am more concerned about the area within the Resolution that speaks to the land as opposed to the

housing, but in relation to the matter of the housing I have heard reference to the 70 per cent or so of those persons who live in Government units, I do not want to say Government owned units, because people have paid money towards the ownership of those unites and they have been waiting for some considerable time now to have the final conveyance and done so that they could claim proper legal owners of those houses for which they have made down payments and in fact, in some cases, more than that. I do not claim to understand the reason for the delays but I would wish to suggest to the Leader of Government Business, pro tempore, that we would want to examine the percentage and to see what we can do to speed up the exercise in conveying those properties. I think it is very important if we want to remain true to the commitment which we made that we do not leave any stone unturned whether that is purely due to technicalities or whatever the other reasons may be.

I have also taken note of the matter of land that has been used somewhere in the immediate area of the Brighton Farm for the \$5 per square foot usage and it triggers in my mind and I have no doubt it triggers in many other people's minds the concern that we ourselves might have for those other bits of land which may not be \$5 per square foot land but nonetheless, land that has been cynically left, I cannot say unoccupied, let me say unused, for reasons which from what the Minister has said, the Chief Town Planner has now made clear cannot be causes that can be artificially created for the norms for the occasion. I think that it is good to hear from the presentation that the appropriate ministries are now recognising very clearly that we cannot afford in this small country of Barbados to have land because it has been cynically left out of agriculture to suddenly be transformed into another use which is exploitation of that land in such a manner as to remove from our capabilities the opportunity to be able always to secure our food and our safety for our animals' wellbeing. I would know to come back more to that later on but regarding housing as well, I have taken not of the areas that have been rolled off where persons have developed housing in Greens, for example, the coming of Brighton and Todds has been mentioned as well. I think that we should bear in mind that if we are going to develop areas, when we develop those areas we have to make sure that the environmental conditions which apply are conditions that we speak to and to address. We understand that when the Todds Development was being worked on everyone was very happy until there was a certain disinterest that developed in terms of caring of the people in the region and that they had to migrate down to Greens to be able to enjoy ...

Senate D 8 Seq 6 12.29 p.m.

Juliette this should have been S7 instead of s6

Wednesday, May 03, 2017

Senator Sir Roy TROTMAN: I think it is very important as we look at this Resolution that we understand that whether that land is at Brighton or that land be part of the larger holding of the family that is responsible for Brighton that we should exercise that care. I think that there should be some 12 000 acres or so in the Barbados Farms thought and I believe that we have to be careful about how we safeguard that amount of land. I think that if we look at those 12 000 acres and we add the CLICO lands to that, I am not sure what the amount is that is involved in that - I am no mathematician but perhaps Mr. Deputy President, you could do that -- and if we divide that by the level of uncertainty regarding agriculture in those two critical areas of our agricultural land, then we have a major problem that I would like to invite the Government to give thought to as we examine this particular land acquisition Resolution.

The word is that the Barbados Farms wants to be relieved of the problem of being responsible at the level it is responsible for agriculture. My understanding is that the Barbados Farms is interested in having discussions with the Government regarding some machinery that would allow the Government or some other agency to take over responsibility for what the farms currently do. This is part of the discussion because we are talking about Brighton and Brighton is part of Barbados Farms and Barbados Farms is neighbour to CLICO Farms and so I am well within the subject and had not even claimed the generosity that you previously extended.

Nothing related to land is simple, Mr. Deputy President, and so I do not want to pretend that we can stand here and merely speak to the future of land, the future of land management and the future of land ownership by merely making platitudinous statements. In fact, we should take note that just yesterday in the world news we were grieved, and I am sure we all who heard it, at the news of the inhumane delimbing of some indigenous folks in North-east Brazil. By delimbing I mean the cutting off of a feet, the cutting off of hands and the cutting off of hands and feet of people from one of those indigenous groups in Brazil who dared to challenge those people who were cutting down forest and who were of a different tribe.

Land is a very serious thing, and sometimes where land is concerned we have evidence of the truth in Shakespeare's words that from time to time you have to look to say: "Oh judgement! Thou art fled to brutish beasts, And men have lost their reason." That is one of the areas where we confine ourselves not being as thoughtful as we otherwise might want to be.

Land, the protection of land and the protection of produce must all exercise our more urgent and consistent

attention. I believe that from time to time people must get utterly frustrated if they have produced a product and they walk the street knowing that theirs has been removed or they drive along the street or walk along the street and they see produce - you cannot always necessarily tell if it is yours but you can see it at roundabouts, and perhaps there is no authority for the sale of that product - and without your knowing you must ask yourself the question as to where is the origin and where is the certification for ownership and the questions need to be what are we doing as a people, what are we doing as a Government and what are we doing as consumers when we take ownership of some of those products and so that may very well be at the bottom of the concern which is now being expressed whether it be by Barbados Farms, by CLICO or indeed by small landowners who may have about three or four acres lot but who have made up their minds that they are no longer going to make the effort to make that land productive because they know when to plant and they know when to water and but when the reaping time comes they do not know as well as somebody else does, and so there is a kind of cynicism on the part of those who have to work the land that says that people are giving up on those investments.

I think that if we are going to recognise the value of our food security, if we are going to recognise the value of the property, and we have, and if we are going to treat our lands as though our lands are as important to us as we know when we think about it that there are, then we have to be looking very seriously at what is happening and when we move beyond the three acres or the two acres and we find like the Barbados Farms or the CLICO lands that they have become areas which are like deserts that can hardly be reclaimed unless we are seriously proceeding with that kind of softwood that we want to use in our generation plants or had planned to use in our generation programme for electricity, what we would find ourselves in is an area where the land is filled with a large number of roots that would make it particularly difficult for anybody who from hereon in will be trying to make the effort to go back into agriculture. It seems to me that we have very early to get some clear pictures and make the public understand what that picture by the Government, what that picture by the Barbados Farms and what that picture by CLICO - and I do not know if the people who run CLICO or the policy owners now, whoever may be responsible -- working together can do to make that land attractive enough to have people returned to agriculture. Without that return to agriculture, Mr. Deputy President, I think that whatever efforts that are made for any other enterprises stand the risk of being frustrated.

We cannot afford with a population that will be continuing to grow and therefore more mouths needing to be fed to think merely in terms of housing, we have to think as well in terms as to how we are going to provide

adequately and appropriately for feeding and how if people are encouraged to make the effort to invest in the effort of production how we are going in some manner better than we now do to protect the country. I do not criticise any efforts that are now being taken only that I am arguing that we must have a better system than we now have to protect the country from those who believe that it is better to take what is not yours, than to make your own personal effort at producing and at building.

Senate D8 Sequence 8

Mr. Deputy President, in conclusion, my call is that we need to make some big decisions and we need to make those decisions urgently to provide the machinery, agricultural land, including sugar land, the kind of protection, the kind of support that they need, particularly given the disposition of the current owners to relieve themselves of ownership and of management and the disposition many others may have given the attitude of the miscreants in our community who believe that they do not need to respect the rights of private property. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

Senator J. INCE: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Resolution that is before this Honourable Chamber, one that seeks to acquire parcels of land the property of Brighton Plantation in the parish of St. George. Mr. Deputy President, Brighton Plantation is rich in agriculture, some of the lands identified for housing are consistent with Government's policy in creating that housing environment that is affordable for Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy President, within that St. George area, if you are going eastward, and I am speaking from my experience having spent many years in Drax Hill and sitting on top of that hill looking over at French's Plantation, you have French's Plantation, when you go north you get Mount Plantation, then Buttals Plantation and as you go a little further it butt-and-bound to Windsor, going back towards Gripe Hill in that area. Also, heading eastward you have Constant and the Valley Plantation. Sir, that is what makes up what we call the St. George Valley, coming from Boarded Hall if you are heading in that area. Mr. Deputy President, for me it is an area that is rich in agriculture but there are areas that also have the capacity for housing development and we must create the balance between housing and agriculture if we must continue to protect our food supply.

Mr. Deputy President, it is important because I have always said in this Senate that there are persons and families in Barbados who work hard who pay their bills, they are honest but they would never be able to purchase

house and land, that is the reality and it is the responsibility of Government, we call this the social obligation of Government to provide what I would call affordable housing, because sometimes we use the term low-income housing, but if we go back to the Housing Act of 1955 and we examine that Act, we would see that the challenges in housing existed from back then until now because we came out of an era of a 1937 riot where housing in that report was a major problem and from 1937 we came through Hurricane Janet that devastated Barbados and exposed the quality of housing, so that it is important that we provide housing for Barbadians if we are going to what I would call narrow that line between the haves and the have-nots. I have always said that if we allow that division, that line between what I termed the haves and the have-nots, then you are going to have societal problems.

Mr. Deputy President, when we look at establishing labour, those persons for whom we want to cater, are we going to cater to those persons who are vulnerable? Mr. Deputy President, in this society we have persons who are vulnerable to the behaviours of what we would call capitalism, socialism, greed, to persons who think that they should have the most from the resources of a country and so it is with Government that we must pay attention to those vulnerabilities, what I would call those economic variables that would seek to sideline, that is why I always say that Barbados was built on labour. We have built this country on three principles: honesty, hard work and borrowed money and that hard work includes labour discussions on how best we were going to go forward.

Mr. Deputy President, it is important that when we look at the acquisition that we also consider what is happening within that agricultural corridor. I am of the opinion that from Salters to Market Hill, right up to Cottage Plantation is fast becoming an economic zone, if we look at the businesses that are now being built and businesses now opening within that area, starting from the junction of Salters, that is why I said that we have to pay special attention to what is happening and that we must create that balance and that within that agricultural zone there must be a greater need for agriculture.

Mr. Deputy President, presently St. George is actually 90 per cent of agriculture, if we go from the Valley, going all the way back to Market Hill, going back to Applewaihe's all that is agriculture. Mr. Deputy President, it is important, although we want to provide housing, although we want to meet the demands of housing we must still create that balance, that is what this Administration is doing. Mr. Deputy President, we are identifying those areas there we can have housing but at the same time we are maintaining that agriculture belt. Mr. Deputy President, it is critical and important when we look at what is happening in the international economies, when we look at what is happening worldwide, when we look at

the numbers of decisions that are being made that are going to impact on Barbados, we need to create the environment for our people where housing and all those critical services are remained intact and are provided at an affordable cost.

Mr. Deputy President, I ask to let us look at the decision recently where President Trump has literally repealed everything, he said that the whole idea of green energy is nothing more than a hoax, that it was something created by China, but we have to think about what is going to be the impact of that decision on Caribbean countries and the impact on agriculture and on housing. We have to think of how Brexit is going to impact on the Caribbean. Mr. Deputy President, that is why I said that when we look at the social vulnerabilities, it is important that we identify areas that are affordable for housing but that we must also create the balance where we continue to provide affordable housing accommodation for those persons who are in need of it because of what I call that dividing line, persons who would still need the social obligation of Government.

Mr. Deputy President, I have always said that the private sector is 10 per cent social obligation and 90 profit. On the other hand, Government is 90 per cent social obligation and 10 per cent profit, that is why we run the agency for housing, the agency for School Meals the hospitals and all of these things.

No.D8 (9)1.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, the whole idea falls within Government's initiative, as I said, providing what I term affordable housing, and I have no difficulty. Let me say to the constituents in St. George North that not only is housing coming but also the roads are going to be repaired. When we look at the condition of the road from Market Hill to Cottage Plantation, it is in a terrible state. I have had discussions with the Minister and I have requested of the Minister that if there are two things I need done in St. George North, it is for him to please fix that road from Market Hill to Cottage and also the one from Groves to that district we call Sweet Bottom or Sweet Vale; that road is atrocious. I spoke to the Minister and there is some indication that those roads will be fixed and the constituents of St. George North would be happy. That is part of this development; not only housing but also coming with housing must be infrastructural development, and if you have housing and do not have the infrastructural development, then what is the meaning of social obligation and social development?

Mr. Deputy President, I support the Resolution of acquiring the lands at Brighton and providing affordable housing for those persons as well as the constituents of St. George North. I thank you, Sir. I am obliged.

SUSPENSION

Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.30 p.m. for lunch.

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

1.02 p.m.

Insert s11 juliette

Wednesday, May 03, 2017

Senator Prof. Emeritus Sir Henry FRASER: Mind you that may have tremendous benefits in the health of the population because the obese would then become less obese and the sedentary would be forced to work a bit harder to grow something in their backyard, but the issue of food security has not been adequately addressed by any of our governments in the last several decades. It is a very serious issue.

On the matter of housing, it has been well-established that there are thousands of unoccupied house spots all over Barbados from the plains to the heights and the terraces, and so there is little justification for further housing development and certainly very little justification for agricultural land. I am as enheartened to hear of more housing for the people of St. George, they are very close to my heart. I too lived in the parish of St. George for four years and worshipped at the St. Jude's Church under Reverend Brathwaite, so St. George is very close to my heart almost as close as St. John. I am almost unapologetic for living in the metropolis of St. Michael, the mountains of St. Michael, of course all at 220 feet.

Mr. Deputy President, the issue of housing is so important yet we are producing houses but we are not actually housing people because for the issues related to governance, to assignment and all of the other mysterious issues so many of the houses that we have prepared in order to house people who need accessible affordable housing remained empty as there by the Garrison at The Grotto after so many years, so we have to think very carefully about the efficiencies that we need to get back into our system to overcome the problem of our implementation deficit disorder so that the houses we plan to build will actually become available for housing of the people who need them.

Mr. Deputy President, these are difficult times, we recognise very much that there are difficult times, and everybody's time is exceedingly precious. I think I have referred to the important points I wanted to make certainly

in relation to the issues of housing, of roads and of the loss of soil. Perhaps the only thing I have not mentioned is the relation of housing to the loss of water because all of the housing developments, and I have explored it a little bit, may be relist in two ways (1) not providing recreational facilities or little areas either where people can walk or the kids can play a game... Within the 100 houses, these are very important missing features just as many of the developments do not plan for trees and landscaping and greening of the landscape so we have these concrete blocks which are absolutely oases of heat. They are like the deserts of Gambia. When I was in Gambia the temperature for the entire two weeks I was there was 104 degrees in the day, and that is the kind of temperature that develops in a completely concreted acre of car park. Mr. Deputy President, these are some of the issues that I wanted to mention.

Mr. Deputy President, the other thing that developments often do not do is related to water. When a development takes place within a plantation on agricultural land the sinkholes that existed in almost every large field are not always retained and with the loss of the hedgerows and the Khus Khus grass not only, as Sir Roy said, do you lose soil into the road but the water runs into the road and down the road and down the hill and all the way to the sea, so even if you are in St. George where the people do not have a coastline and cannot swim then you are still losing St. George water which is running all the way down into the sea and even flooding some villages. Mr. Deputy President, those are some of the issues that we need to consider.

I am well aware that even if I were to disagree with this proposal to have this house and land that it has gone to a point where my words have no effect whatsoever, but I would like to alert people to the importance of some of the issues in our Physical Development Plan for the fact that St. George is becoming a metropolis, the fact that we are losing agricultural land both to houses and to jungle and the fact that all of these issues are making us exceedingly vulnerable to the issue of food security if and when it should happen in the future as it did happen 70 years ago.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Hunte.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to give my support to the acquisition of land at Brighton in St. George because more times than not when the Government moved to acquire land it is always for the purposes of building, widening a road or something to enhance the environment and the progress and development of the country. However, Mr. Deputy President, one of the things that have always crept up over the years by Members of Parliament, by attorneys-at-law

and by citizens is the kind of problems that arise with the acquisition of land and so on and using people's space so to speak to build roads or bridges or whatever else that the Government or the State might be preparing to do.

Mr. Deputy President, there have, however, been some concern over the years about the timely compensation for those people whose lands have been acquired for whatever purpose there is or there will be. Recently we saw in the Press in March a story of a lady whose lands, I think it is in Greenwich Village, St. James, it would seem to me was not a legislated matter at all because what the lady stated, and they showed you the picture, is that she had given up some land for the purposes of road improvement and as a result it was not only land but it was property because apparently two houses on that property were removed and as a result her son or one of her children but particularly the son is now living a distance away from her and of course he cannot give the attention to his ageing mother as he is duty-bound to do. This occurred in 2005/2006 and to this date and up to March a couple months ago she had not received any compensation or alternative sites for building back her homes. What she received at the time was alternative facts which is known now to be telling lies, non-truths.

Mr. Deputy President, I saw in the same month a Member of Parliament through rubbing shoulders with his leader I would have to say because I did not see anybody else in the picture so he could only be rubbing shoulders with his leader, and just off Fitts Village that was expressing a concern and attributing it to the Democratic Labour Party's administration for not giving these people their proper title and the people feel kind of boxed in because they do not have access to their land.

Senate D8 Sequence 12

3.04 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, it is interesting when representatives or Members of Parliament are no longer in Government how easy it is to attribute blame and tardiness to the current Administration. Mr. Deputy President, I want to draw your attention to a matter in this Senate, and I have been given permission by the family to call their names. Mr. Deputy President, the late Cameron Broome who resided at Mount Joy Avenue, yes, he has passed away but the family, his wife, his children and grandchildren are still alive, obviously they are in estate.

Mr. Cameron Broome had purchased Six Men's. He approached the then persons who were looking after Six Men's, a Butterthall who was the manager and owner of Alleynedale and a Mr. Chandler. He expressed an interest in buying that land. Six Men's, I am told, was named after six brothers. He made a down payment on that land in 1971

of \$100 000. He was a builder. By 1981 he had paid off the \$375 000 for that land. There were some persons who were living on that land, some 30 of so squatters I would say and of course he bought that land with those squatters on it. In January of 1986 a Resolution was brought to Parliament to compulsorily acquire that land, there was absolutely very little consultation. He was written and the offer for that some 29 acres of that land was supposed to be acquired. He was offered \$3 086 for those 29 acres of land, which worked out to about three cents per square foot for that land. He died in 2014. That was a big debate when the Resolution was laid. When Mr. Barrow came to office in 1986 a Resolution was laid to abandon that acquisition. That only went on until October 14, 1997, when again under the Barbados Labour Party, the first piece of legislation a few months before the election and in 1997 when the Barbados Labour Party returned to office.

Mr. Deputy President, I am going to remove any doubt to show that these are the debates that took place on the three occasions that that legislation was laid here. The records are here and they can be checked. That family went through about 10 attorneys-at-law to get compensation if they intended to give up the land which of course was close to the beach. Over a period of time people liked they had heard that free land was available in Six Men's and people from all over, Guyanese, Vincentians and others went and squatted on that land. That family to this day has not received one blind cent. Was it because Cameron Broome's family...

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Do not tell me not to introduce it, I am going to because Barbados has not changed, because they were too dark? It could not have happened to "Cow" Williams or to any of those persons where that man's family has been denied compensation for that land for which he had paid, just like how he was one of the first persons to move to Pine Gardens and bought three or four properties up there from a Mr. Carter who went on to Australia. Mr. Deputy President, today that family is going through hell trying to keep their little business alive. Yes, there are a couple of properties up there but there are not really in any condition to be sold to get their worth for them.

Mr. Deputy President, that family went through 10 attorneys, with one big trickster who tried to form a company, who then came back to Mr. Broomes and told him that he was one of the directors of that company. Mr. Broomes did not even know that a company was formed. These are the kinds of things that have taken place in this country. The debates are here on those three pieces of legislation. I brought them down but they are too lengthy, I am not going to read from them, I am just giving a summary. Mr. Deputy President, all of the "top" lawyers

spoke on that occasion, including the late Bernard St. John and the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow. Do you know what was the response querying what was offered for those 29 acres? One lawyer got up and said that an offer does not necessarily mean a fee, which might be true because that is only a technicality. Mr. Deputy President, that is what was offered but the law courts are there to fight the matter.

No.D8 (13)3.25 p.m.

It was beachfront land at three cents a square foot. That was what it worked out to be. This is in Hansard. No-one offered to respond to fight these matters in court. Why would you want to put a man who spent his money through that? I did not hear that any Cameron Broomes robbed a bank. He was a builder. When in 1956 that man moved into Pine Gardens, there were only three houses. Only three. But they felt that because of how he looked and how his children looked, they should have been treated that way to this day that people could be living down there. There were 77 houses up to when the last debate appeared in Parliament, and 181 persons were living on that land; squatting. To this day, that family receives a tax bill for 238 acres of land, and still no compensation. I am told that the value is about \$5 million now. There were ten lawyers. One crook they had to dismiss. Ten lawyers; I will not call their names. I have seen the documentation. Those were close friends of my family for years. This is a rotten matter; because they are, and I repeat, a black family? Not clear-skinned. The mantra of yesteryear still holds fast today: "If you are black, stand back. If you are brown, stick around, and if you are white, it is all right." That still holds in Barbados today. That is why I say I choose my friends. I do not play up to anybody. I choose my friends.

Today there are all kinds of people building all kinds of swamps down there. I call it a swamp. You can call it a yachting dock. You can name it what you want to name it, but that man had plans for that area, and they were denied. I spoke to one lawyer who almost cried. He was not involved. He said: "That hurt me. I do not know how people can be treated that way." Only a few Saturdays ago just before Easter, he said, "I know about it." The little guesthouse business which they run and which they are trying to keep going, the place needs repairing. Everybody else's family deserves money. Can we speak about what happened in Bennetts? A man who owned four acres of land nextdoor to Bennetts Plantation, which was sold to Sandy Lane, was stripped out of his land and paid a fee for it, saying that it was not saving -- a Zone 1 area - and it was sold to Sandy Lane for an arm, a leg, a neck and a body. I do not have the actual proof of the figure but everybody knew that five or six years ago. It was another black man.

I am saying that if certain things are to happen in this country, they will happen because people will not.... I have

said in here already that for a lot of the young lawyers who want to get into politics, there are people out there who need assistance, but they need honest and truthful persons who do not have any connections other than for them to do their job and fight on behalf of certain families. I live in Barbados. Last Saturday gone, I was 68 years old. I have not now come to town. There are a lot of people who have had to suffer this indignity in their own country where they were born. Mr. Broomes, I went to his funeral in 2014. He is gone. I am not talking about a fictitious person because I heard a voice saying just now, "I went to the funeral too." When you see how that family.... They have a few properties, yes, up in Pine Gardens, that is true, but they also have children and grandchildren. Even if they had to sell one or two, the conditions are not very good; but here other people can be enjoying somebody's land backed by the legislation, through Parliament, offering shavings. It is not fair. It is not right. That family has had to suffer and is still suffering. Ten attorneys-at-law, and not one, including an old crook who went to jail.... I do not know how he got out and is practising. They had to be dismissed.

Asides.

Senator R.A. HUNTE: Mr. Deputy President, I can speak about an acquisition in here where the owner got great benefit. It is one of the most developed areas today in Barbados. That is Cave Hill. That land was owned by a man called Pillersdorf, and the Democratic Labour Party acquired that land where the University is, where all of those houses are built up there, and he did not have to wait that great amount of time for his money. Pillersdorf. I do not know if he is still alive. Those in real estate would know if Mr. Pillersdorf is still alive. Other people have received their worth, but the Broomes family must continue to suffer; not a penny. Three thousand and sixty-nine dollars is what was offered. You can doubt those figures but they are right in here. These are the debates, and all three pieces of those tabled Resolutions are right in here. There are three girls, a mother and some grandchildren who are still students, and people can take them to the cleaners.

3.23 p.m.

Insert S15 Juliette

Wednesday, May 03, 2017

Senator A. A. ADAMS: ...and so that has begun to put Barbados further along the path of a property democracy.

We also had in this country a situation where the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act was passed to enable the working class, persons who were living in tenancies not being able to own the land, their ancestors right down the line have been living on those lands, to compulsory

purchase that land at, I believe, \$5 or \$10 a square foot, and that of course also enabled landless Barbadians to be able to come into the property market.

It is very important to note, and not really because we want to belittle the chattel house, that one of the main reasons, perhaps the only reason, why chattel houses were so prevalent in Barbados was because the labouring classes were landless and they were not allowed to have substantial buildings on other people's land and they were further disadvantaged because if they did not work on the plantation they could have been sent off of the plantation and have to live in the road or having no place to go, so we have had a situation in this country where valiant efforts have been made to house our population. A number of good things have followed from that, (1) overcrowding, which has happened throughout the country, it was particularly so in the St. Michael area but also in the countryside, where people were living on top of one another and (2) that led to a lot of discomfort and sometimes noise in the house and all of that and also insanitary conditions. I am not sure if that was mentioned before but because persons were not able to put substantial property on the land you had a situation of the pit toilet situations and so on and because of poverty there was the inability to bring running water into the house and indoor plumbing, and so the efforts of Government to a large extent have alleviated some of those problems.

We also have a situation where in Barbados persons have a real pride in the ownership of their house. Indeed, it goes further because the house is not a home and when they are able to own the property they really then make it into a home. This is a very significant point and has a lot to do with the culture of this country.

I also want to make the point, Sir, that in the area of education there is a very strong positive correlation between improvements in housing and the performance of students in schools, and that is spiritually without doubt. It is not to say that because you are poor and you came out of bad conditions that you cannot learn but it is a lot better when the surroundings have been improved. We see a very big improvement in the performance of students as a result of that, although sometimes they might meet a plateau and we may not see it growing as much as we would like. We find that so long as the planning is properly done that the acquisition of land for housing generally speaking can be a good thing.

Mr. Deputy President, there is a second point which we want to mention, it has been mentioned before, that is, that there has to be a balance between the provision of housing and other usage of lands particularly as has been mentioned in the field of agriculture. The statistics are there. I will not go too far back but up to 1970 we had something like 61 or so thousand acres of land in

agriculture. Forty-nine thousand acres of that land was by plantations and 12 000 was in small holdings. Fast forward to today and we are at a very perilous kind of stage because it has been estimated that we require 30 000 acres of agricultural land to become comfortable in relation to food production in this country for food security, and we are presently below that acreage, we are actually at 28 000 acres. This was mentioned by the Prime Minister recently and he cautioned the nation about going much further in the direction of using up that agricultural land, and I want to support that. I also want to say that one of the things that we would have to do is to certainly look at reclaiming our agricultural land and improving the use of that agricultural land in order to make it more productive, that is, producing more per acre and therefore as a result we would still be able to be self-sufficient in significant areas of agricultural produce in order to help the country. This is very important because we presently import some \$800 million in foods from abroad and this is really not in the national interest. I do not want to be an alarmist but it means that we are depending upon persons outside of this country in order to feed us, and because we have a foreign exchange problem we may be in danger of not being able to pay to feed ourselves so what we want to do is to have that balance between how we use the land for housing and how we go about preserving and conserving that agricultural land and putting it to the best use possible. Those are the kinds of areas, Mr. Deputy President, that I thought I would bring to the debate.

Mr. Deputy President, Barbados has a Physical Development Plan and in relation to our housing policy we need to ensure that it is within the confines of that Development Plan and the plan in relation to greening Barbados. We believe that when land has been acquired for housing that those things must be taken into consideration.

I am actually now reading a book on Singapore and what the Honourable Prime Minister of Singapore did, and he regarded it as the most important thing of all the important things that he did, was the greening of Singapore, making Singapore a garden city and in the forefront of the countries of South-east Asia who then had to compete after seeing what have been done there.

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Mr. Deputy President, he regarded it as the most important of all the important things that he had ever done, the greening of Singapore, making Singapore a garden city and in the forefront of all the countries in Southeast Asia who then had to compete after seeing what had been done there. There were a number of things that he did, he made the point that the planting of trees and shrubs should be done not only on Government's properties but on properties throughout Singapore, and not only in the heights and terraces but also in the working-class areas. He

set up a special section within his own ministry to ensure that that was done. He probably he had the funds because he sent persons hither, thither and yon across Australia and the different places to bring the kinds of plants and greenery that would thrive in Singapore soil and as a result Singapore became a central place in relation to the environment. Mr. Deputy President, as a result of that Singapore became a tourist attraction and people began to come to Singapore. Other Prime Ministers gave kudos to the Singaporeans when they saw what they did with the planting of trees and the greening of the country.

Mr. Deputy President, he also looked very carefully at water harvesting, the country had a water problem. We do have a water problem here as well. What he did was that he ensured that the harvesting of water and the building of new reservoirs, so that every building in Singapore was able to harvest water and use that water either for domestic purposes or for other purposes and the same things for buildings, factories and so on. As a matter of fact, I forgot to mention that in relation to the greening of Singapore that factories could not be set up in the country unless they landscaped the areas. They could build as much as they liked but they could not open unless they had trees planted and the greenery in place.

Mr. Deputy President, why is that important? That is important because I have a little quote here which says that on a sunny day a good sized tree may transpire more than 100 litres of water, a process that represents three times the cooling power of an air-conditioned unit in a five-star hotel. It is extremely significant and this has come from the scientists because of the nature of water vapor, so that the trees are really doing the job of even a flowing river. Mr. Deputy President, we here in Barbados ought to set targets in relation to the number of trees that we plant per year, not just the National Conservation Commission but persons in their backyards and so on ought to be able to do that. Once we have done that, we will contribute tremendously to the greening of the country in a direct or indirect way to the water problem that we have and also enhanced the environment in relation to our major industry, tourism.

Mr. Deputy President, I thought that these were some of the things that I ought to bring to this debate and to indicate that while it is important that we continue to see that housing is provided, particularly for the poor section of the community, we have to balance that and that, in fact, we need to ensure that the buildings are green buildings, that is, that the properties that are to be placed at Brighton should from the get-go, if they are done either by Government or by the private sector they should be given incentives to ensure that solar/alternative energy is used in the construction from the get-go and that facilities are put in place for water harvesting, and that landscaping ought to be there, and that they should be built in such a way that the tenants are able to do backyard gardening. Even retired

persons ought to be able to do that. In fact, in our provision of housing we ought to have some special units for the elderly so that persons, like some of us here, can feel quite safe to sell or to rent our property and move into the purpose-built properties that would be provided. I think that is the direction in which we ought to look at.

Mr. Deputy President, there are several other things as well, and we ought to learn from our mistakes I supposed, which sometimes comes from the lack of thorough planning and that in providing housing estates that we should not just have these houses and call them solutions and so on. Yes, they could be solutions but they can only be solutions if a number of other things are done. We have to look see if you have in place recreational facilities, if you have in place nurseries for the young children to go. We have to look see if we have in place health facilities. These things may not be elaborate but they ought to be there. We need also to try to see that the schools in the area if not up to scratch, and some of them are not, that they ought to be brought up to scratch so that the students living in those areas do not have to crisscross the country in order to have to go to schools elsewhere only to say that they are going to a 'good' school, a 'good' school should be everywhere.

Mr. Deputy President, in relation to neighbourhoods, when you move children from the neighbourhoods, when you disrupt the relationship between the children and the neighborhood, you are in fact looking for a lot of social problems and a substantial number of social problems which we have can be attributed to the fact that substantial numbers of children have to leave especially large housing estates and go to school elsewhere and be at the mercy of minibuses and all those other disruptive influences to which they are exposed. The planning should take care of all of that, the school and its community, that is what it is about and from the time you disrupt that unity between the school and the community you are looking for a lot of problems.

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

Senator Alwin A. ADAMS: Mr. Deputy President, I think there are a lot of areas which we have touched on, several people have touched on others and I would think that this Resolution, coupled with the one that is coming later this evening, one is in the urban area and this is in the rural area but although you may say they are different they are connected.

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In relation to the rural housing, we want to make sure that we do not carry what you might call the "urban sprawl" out into the countryside, so the planning has to

take that into consideration and look at the physical development plan to make sure that you develop your housing units and so on in the City in such a way that you do not run persons from the City into the country and then leave the City either as a slum or as a dead city. In terms of the countryside, we should do all the things possible to enhance the ambience and to make life a lot better for the persons who are already there and for the persons who will now be coming into the countryside. With those few words, Sir, I rest my case.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Todd.

Senator Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. I rise to support the passage of this Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, CAP 228, the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of a parcel of land, the property of Brighton Plantation Limited, situate at Brighton in the Parish of St. George for the purpose of housing development. Mr. Deputy President, I am happy to support the passage of this housing Resolution and I note the fact that this is a clear, tangible demonstration of this Democratic Labour Party Government's commitment to improving the standard of living and the quality of life; in this case, the provision of housing solutions to residents of our rural corridor, as it were. Mr. Deputy President, I do recall that this very constituency, St. George South, where this parcel of land is located, was held by the Barbados Labour Party for decades, and the former longstanding Member of Parliament for that area from the Barbados Labour Party had publicly said, while being the MP and while the Barbados Labour Party was in office, that he was being treated like an outside child. It demonstrates the neglect of that rural constituency by a Barbados Labour Party Government over the years, so this Democratic Labour Party Administration has a contrasting approach to the provision of housing solutions in the rural corridor. Therefore, this Resolution is supportive of this thrust to improve the housing stock in the rural corridor.

Mr. Deputy President, not just in Barbados but throughout the world the urban corridor is often highlighted in terms of the movement of people from the rural areas to city centres seeking employment and the provision of housing solutions in those urban and suburban areas. Many Barbadians still live in the rural part of our island, and in fact they prefer to remain in that open area which is less congested and less polluted in terms of the exhaust from vehicles. The density of the population is less in the rural areas so there is more fresh air and more areas for recreation as well as areas for plants for food, fruit trees, ornamental plants and shrubbery. These things improve the aesthetics of the area. However, it is important that the living conditions of the residents in the rural areas are addressed, and as the Leader of this Resolution, Senator Byer-Suckoo, mentioned earlier, this Democratic Labour

Party Administration, with limited resources since assuming office in 2008, has been moving assiduously to provide housing solutions both in the urban and the rural corridors.

We talked about the 500-lot programme, and this was the brainchild of the late dear Prime Minister David Thompson, who realised that this was a sort of rapid response to providing house lots in short order to the many applicants to the National Housing Corporation. What we envisaged was that, rather than having to wait maybe years to develop virgin land in terms of providing the sites and services such as roads and utilities like electricity and water, we sought immediately after assuming office in 2008 to look around the island at available house lots where the sites and services already existed along major roadways. The roads were already in place, you had the sites and services in terms of electrical lines running in the area, water, telephone, gas and so on. In this process, the Democratic Labour Party Administration has been able to identify and secure a number of lots in this 500-lot programme in areas such as Pool in St. John, where a number of lots have been actually allocated and secured by residents of our country; Applewhaites in St. George, Branchbury in St. Joseph, and several other areas in our island at concessionary rates such as \$5 per square foot. These are affordable and accessible to the masses and to the working class of our country, Mr. Deputy President. Many of these lots, 99 per cent in fact, in this 500-lot programme, would be in the rural corridor, because in the densely populated urban areas there are not that many clusters of vacant lands next to existing roadways. This process is ongoing, Mr. Deputy President.

We also heard the Leader of the Resolution, Senator Esther Byer-Suckoo, talking about the rent-to-own initiative. It is one thing to offer plots or even house-and-land for sale, but if the low-income applicant is unable to secure a mortgage from a bank, credit union or other lending facility because of the low salary or wage which he or she earns from their employment, then he or she would not be able to take advantage of these housing solutions offered. When we were allocating the housing solutions at Greens, we realised that, in order to ensure that these low-income applicants were not left out, the rent-to-own programme should be extended to them, as Senator Dr. the Hon. Byer-Suckoo mentioned, we started by way of a pilot at Arlie Tenantry and this is just above the university campus, a few hundred metres away.

4.02 p.m.

I remember a few years ago there was an unfortunate house fire in 8th Avenue, New Orleans which claimed the life of a young lad. As MP I would have responded foreday morning. People think that the life of a politician is just glamour but there I was, a foreday morning being called to

respond to that incident and I was able to make, in the wee hours of the morning, contact with the parents and other relatives of that deceased person and in short order we were able to resite that family to Arlie Tenantry. I can say those housing solutions are very well accepted by that family and other occupants. It has a panoramic view of the St. Michael Harbour area and by offering those, I think in some instances there are two apartments, duplex wall structures and by offering the rent-to-own arrangement there, working class Barbadians were able to access those housing solutions because in the first few years they would pay rent but then after a certain period has elapsed then that rental arrangement would be converted into a mortgage over an extended period so this rent-to-own programme is something that we have proven to be feasible and therefore as we look at other housing development, be it The Grotto and other areas, this is a viable option that is actively being considered to ensure that the masses of our country are able to access high quality housing solutions that otherwise would be out of their reach because of their low income level.

Mr. Deputy President, I also recall that I remember I would have served as Minister of State within the Ministry of Housing prior to the 2013 General Election and I remember in that capacity going to a housing fair at Woodbourne in the St. Philip West area the border between St. Philip and Christ Church and we had there on display that Saturday just half a dozen or so starter homes as part of this housing every last person initiative of this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration to put a serious dent in the thousands of persons applying to the National Housing Corporation for housing solutions putting a dent in terms of the number of housing solutions being provided.

What I like about those starter homes at Woodbourne, Mr. Deputy President, and indeed further north along the Highway 2A at Lancaster 1 and 2 is that in those starter homes provided the architecture of the home of the housing solution is deliberately designed so that although the starter home maybe having one or two bedrooms at the most to ensure that the cost of the house is not too high out of the reach of the working classes but as I said, the design is such that as funds become available the occupants of those houses would be able to add on an additional bedroom. Enough land would have been provided in the lots and the roof would be in such a way that, for example, whereas most of the house may have been made of concrete and stone, at least one wall would be made of wood so that the roof could be extended and as funds become available and that wooden wall could be knocked down to enable to occupants of the house to add on an addition bedroom or two as they family sizes increase or as a toddler or two is born and the family wishes to expand the housing provided.

Again at Lancaster, you had a similar situation so people passed and said, oh those houses look so small not realising that this was a deliberate approach to ensure that the cost of the house is not prohibitive in terms of excluding the low income earners in our country. This Democratic Labour Party (DLP) is very serious about the provision of housing solutions to all Barbadians both in the urban corridor as well as in the rural areas of our country. Mr. Deputy President, I would also wish to refer to the housing and neighbourhood upgrading programme called HNUP. I would have had direct responsibility in the latter stages of the roll out of this initiative while serving in the Ministry of Housing and Lands. Although the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) detractors would wish to suggest that this programme was a complete failure let me just indicate that over 450 Barbadian households were able to access grants to the tune of up to \$10 000 as part of the incremental home construction aspect of this housing and neighbourhood upgrading programme and many of these residents came from Bridgetown but also from the rural corridor, St. Thomas, St. Philip and other areas in our country. This was specifically to address low income earners. There was an upper limit in terms of the combined income of the households to qualify but in this incremental home construction aspect of the housing and neighbourhood upgrading programme the homeowners were able to get a grant, not a loan, a grant of up to \$10 000 as I said, to execute basic household repairs, be it electrical, plumbing, painting, replacement of windows, doors, siding, flooring, roof work, masonry, wells, toilet and bath and so on, Mr. Deputy President.

Again, housing solutions being provided by this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration and, of course, Senator Hunte would tell you that as part of this housing and neighbourhood upgrading programme, millions of dollars would have been provided to upgrade the Garden Land area, immediately east of the National Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Housing and Lands complex on country road where the residents in that Garden Land area were provided with connections to the Bridgetown sewerage system. The sewer lines were run throughout the various streets in that Garden Land area and acceding to the requests of the residents of that area at Town Hall meetings we took the opportunity at the same time to lay natural gas lines providing access to the natural gas provided by the state and, of course, lift stations and pumping stations were provided at Skeete's Road because that Garden Land area was below the level of the road at Country Road so in some instance you had to pump the sewerage up.

Again, a multimillion dollar aspect of the housing and neighbourhood upgrading programme that was successfully executed by this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration.

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Mr. Deputy President, we also heard questions from some Honourable Senators about what we call the 20-year programme which this Democratic Labour Party Administration promised and delivered and have been delivering since assuming office in 2008 where persons who would have occupied the National Housing Corporation rental units in what we call the housing estates or housing areas for a 20-year period and who had their rents up to date would have been given title to these apartments free of cost by the Government. Mr. Deputy President, to date, up until the last financial year, some 2 976 offers have been made to qualified tenants and occupants of which 98 per cent, some 2 946, have been accepted, and during the period April 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016, 117 new offers were made, 87 of which were accepted, and it is anticipated that during this financial year, April 1 to March 31, 2018, a further 89 tenants will qualify for offers, but of course cash flow challenges would affect this programme to some extent but various options are being considered because we have to ensure that the land surveyors, there is a lot of land surveying work involved in this process as well as engineering assessments... To date, engineering assessments have been undertaken on 31 units at Haynesville, 3 at Gall Hill; 10 at Maynard's; 17 at The Ivy; 15 at Wotton; 15 at Rosemont; 112 at Wildey; 96 at Parkinson Field; 68 at Silver Hill; 120 at Deacons; and 60 at Eden Lodge. During this period under review 50 units were actually conveyed and to date, since the whole transfer of units have been started, some 204 units have been fully conveyed and 64 are indeed at an advanced stage of preparation for conveying. This is quietly being done by the National Housing Corporation, but Opposition persons would wish to suggest that nothing is happening there. Thus far, 13 units at Bagatelle have been conveyed; 67 at Bonnetts, 4 at Eden Lodge; 1 at Farm Garden; 15 at Gall Hill; 6 at Lammings; 34 at Haynesville; 6 at Maynards; 43 at The Ivy; and 15 at Rosemont, Deacons Road in St. Michael North West for a total of 204 units, and that work continues.

Mr. Deputy President, in talking about land surveyors, I am just old enough to remember the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow making the point in terms of the Government's initiative in terms of the transfer of title in both urban and rural tenancies and that what would have sort of slowed the progress in this regard would be access to land surveyors. Back in those days I remember Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow making the point publicly that there was a shortage of land surveyors in Barbados and we had to reach out to Guyana to assist us there. Of course, in subsequent years we have had some improvements. I know that the University of the West Indies St. Augustines offers land surveying courses and at the Barbados Community College you can get some training there.

Mr. Deputy President, in the same Housing and Neighbourhood Upgrading Programme in areas such as Cats Castle and Greenfield there was a challenge in terms of attracting land surveyors to work in those areas where you have a lot of overlapping properties with palings very close to each other and disputes in terms of ownership and where the land marks are and so on, so this is where the land surveyors would have to get involved in terms of ensuring that the necessary boundaries are established unequivocally as it were, so these are issues that we have to address.

Mr. Deputy President, also in the housing areas we have the issue of the need to provide firewalls to ensure that best practices obtain in terms of making sure that we mitigate against issues of fire destroying entire blocks. The more newly constructed or more recently constructed housing estates such as Country Park Towers, London Bourne Towers and those in the Passage Road area are considered condominiums and there is legislation which deals with that in terms of common services such as septic tanks and wells and how do we manage the maintenance of these and how do we share the cost of these. These are issues that affect the transfer of title. There is also then the add-ons in terms of occupants over the years adding on a shop or an extra bedroom to them without necessarily having the necessary Town and Country Planning permission, so all of these issues have to be addressed, of course, in a caring manner to ensure that safety is not compromised but that we do not inconvenience the residents. Mr. Deputy President, these are issues we grapple with but the point is that this Administration is taking it very seriously and progress is being made.

In terms of the tenancies, we have arrangements through the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development through the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission for Government to step in in these tenancies to ensure that the tenants of these areas who have been occupying these house spots as it were for decades and for generations and who are given first option to purchase their individual plots and to ensure that the difference between what the tenants pay as a concession by the Government and what the landlord is offering... The market rate is paid by the Government and what we would be doing is that as funds become available we would be ensuring that more and more of these tenancies can be actually brought by those residents.

Mr. Deputy President, I remember while serving in the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development going with the then Minister, the Honourable Michael Lashley, to a town hall meeting in St. John, again in the rural corridor, one Sunday evening at a church and we had hundreds of residents in the rural tenancies in St. John there who were very, very excited that here it is you had Ministers and all of the other officials of the Ministry of

Housing, Lands and Rural Development there to answer their questions. The whole issue of what they call a Form 1 is a form that you have to fill out and send in to the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development in order to access that concessionary rate to purchase the land and we were able to assist and guide those rural tenancies occupants so that they would be able to access this facility. This was unheard of. We were not just staying in the offices at the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development in Country Road, we went all the way to St. John a Sunday afternoon, and the Member of Parliament was there, to ensure that the needs of the residents in rural Barbados were being addressed in a timely manner, so this is how serious this Democratic Labour Party Administration is as it relates to the provision of affordable housing to residents of our island in this case in the rural corridor.

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4.22 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, I also would wish very briefly in the time I have left to respond to some of the points that were made by other Honourable Senators earlier on in this debate, for example, we have heard the issue of food security. Senator Sir Henry Fraser, if I have quoted him correctly, has suggested that there is no food security in our country but I would like to submit that that maybe a bit extreme because that would be suggesting that there is absolutely no food security that is being provided. Sir, I think that to be fair to successive Administrations we should have a more balanced analysis.

Mr. Deputy President, last year I was fortunate to have attended the agricultural conference which was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management at the Savanah Hotel. I stayed on after the opening ceremony for the entire morning session up until lunch and I found that experience to be very informative. It is a conference that is held at least every two years but it had not been held for a few years and so this was a revival, as it were.

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

SENATOR the Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Deputy President, at that conference we learned, for example, that various varieties of sweet potatoes were being investigated and planted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management to determine which varieties would give the better yields and were more resistant to diseases. Mr. Deputy President, years ago we had issues, for example, of the yams when cut they were rotting on the inside. We learned about the various pests infecting them. There was the "bunchy top" disease almost

wiped out the paw-paw trees years ago, there was also the onions blast disease and so on. Mr. Deputy President, we have scientists at the university and at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management, many of those staff members have PhD's and so on. There are entomologists and so on, for example, Mr. Gibbs. They are professionals who are working assiduously to ensure that we have greater crop yields and that we can really make a dent in terms of reducing the food import bill and improving food security and food sovereignty.

Mr. Deputy President, I remember while serving as Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation the Minister, I met with officials from the Barbados Agricultural Society and the School Meals Department to look at a pilot project where at least one School Meal Center would ensure that all of its fresh produce would be supplied by local farmers, the challenge was that the farmers could not guarantee enough consistent supplies so again looking at supporting local agriculture. In fisheries at that conference we learned about the assistance being given to fishermen in terms of long-line fishing. When we speak of the expansion of the sale of fish to tourists and locals alike at Oistins, what the experts mentioned to us is that that demand is only supplied because of the expansion in the fisheries sector in terms of ensuring that persons are able to develop in terms of building the long-line fishing boats or ice boats that can go out for weeks.

Mr. Deputy President, as I conclude I must also say that at that agriculture conference we learned about the diversification in terms of the expansion of the sugar industry where as we speak the "river tamarind" the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management is testing various varieties to see which ones would suit out soil and which would grow in such a way that it would be feasible to harvest them mechanically to support the improvement in the sugar sector where as the Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management has outlined, we would construct a multipurpose sugar factory where we would use the bagasse, cane trash and "river tamarind" to generate electricity. When we increase the acreage of land under sugar cultivation that also improves food security because we all know that to have an effective sugar industry you must practice crop rotation where in some years you would grow yams and sweet potatoes and so on. Mr. Deputy President, I conclude by fully supporting the passage of this Resolution.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Worrell, you have the Floor.

Senator A. R. WORRELL: Mr. Deputy President, I will try not to make the mistake that others have been making all day long and I will try to refer to you as the

Deputy President. Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Resolution in terms of the acquisition of land for housing purposes in Brighton area in the constituency of St. George South. Mr. Deputy President, I choose to support this Resolution because it is an area that I traverse on a daily basis and in the area I have seen the housing development which have started over the years and I must say I am quite pleased with them, especially those initiatives that were mainly brought by the Democratic Labour Party from 2008. You know that we would have had programmes such as the \$5 per square foot projects and there have been many of those close to the area where I live in St. John, in Pool, Cherry Grove and also in St. Joseph. Mr. Deputy President, many people over the years would have just seen these signs up saying \$5 per square foot projects but now when you go into these areas the signs are down and you are seeing houses going up, in some cases there are persons already occupying those houses.

Mr. Deputy President, in one particular area as I passed, I saw one house going up, the other day I recognised that there are more than one house going up, that there were about three or four houses going up and so it has helped in terms of housing initiatives for the people of Barbados, especially for those who need it most, the lower income persons and low middle income persons from those categories.

Mr. Deputy President, I like that programme as well because in the past the National Housing Corporation had a model where they would build the houses and then those houses would be sold to individuals. This now gives persons the opportunity that they can do their own housing development. I recognised that the ones particularly in St. John are being built by persons from the community, this is giving employment opportunity as well to persons who are from those communities, as opposed to when the houses were built by large construction firms where the majority of those builders would have probably come from outside the community area, now you are giving opportunity for general workers, carpenters and masons from within your community to be able to get that employment opportunity, so that this is a good model to develop.

Mr. Deputy President, we also need to look at rental houses for persons. Even though over the years we have made tremendous headway in our housing project, there is still a catchment and a category of persons who are left out in housing development in Barbados and we need to pay close attention to those persons. I would explain what I mean by that.

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You find that nowadays it is not easy for persons to get a mortgage to build a house or repair a house, and a number of persons, primarily women who are in their 50s

or approaching age 60, are the heads of households and they find it difficult. They may have secure jobs but they find it difficult to go to many of the banks and lending institutions to secure a loan to actually rebuild the house they are living in or even to purchase land or another house; simply because of their age and the fact that they may not have other family members who might be able to go with them. Obviously if you are in your 50s and most mortgages are done up until the age of retirement, it may be difficult for you to actually secure a mortgage by which you can do the necessary repairs to your house. This is not to say that these persons were delinquent in the past in not being able to do that; but because their situations may have changed or because this may now be the first opportunity for them to have a secure job, they can actually go forward and try to get these loans. However, it seems as if the world is against them because even though you have a secure job and you show that you are willing to make the payments, because of your age and the fact that your children may not be old enough to join you as security for the loan or because some of them may have just started to work or may not have that additional spouse or person to join with them, they are not in a position to secure a loan.

As a caring and considerate Government and a country as well, I think we need to find ways of meeting the needs of those individuals within our country regardless of where they may come from, which constituency they may be in, or whoever they are. We need to find a way of addressing this. As I said, it would normally affect mostly mothers who are basically just trying to find a proper housing solution for their families. Because of the qualification criteria, they may not be able to qualify for some of the assistance that is offered through the various Government programmes. Through the National Housing Corporation at one time, they would have offered the general workers' loan agreement. Some of them may not be able to qualify for that or that assistance may not be there, but I think that we do need to come back to offering that assistance. Even if it was abused in the past and we had to cut back on it because persons were given the loans and may not have been paying them back or the funds may not have been there, we need to find a way of making those funds available, especially for vulnerable persons within our society who mean well and who are definitely willing to pay back these loans. We need to find a way to give them some sort of assistance and a start in terms of being able to provide adequate housing for their families.

This is an area I would ask that we pay close attention to, and if it is that we need to go back and find funds for the general workers' loan programme, I do not think that for a country with an economy of roughly \$9 billion it should be that difficult for us to find \$2 million a year to finance such a programme. Even if we put the necessary constraints on it, so that the money is repaid directly from the employer and so that you are not waiting

on persons to make the payments on a monthly basis to agencies such as the NHC or whichever lending agency is responsible, you can do things to make sure that the money is taken directly from the person's salary and paid to the NHC so that you would have a lower incidence of default on such loans. I think that we need to recognise that this is important. Let it be a revolving loan programme so that as each person pays in, more people can be assisted through such programmes.

Not everyone would be able to own their own piece of land or a house, and we need to see more rental accommodation at affordable prices being made available to persons in Barbados, especially for those young persons who are now looking to start their own families. Not everyone can afford the high rents that are expected on the private sector side, so I think that Government needs to.... In the past, we would have built a number of terrace units which were rented; and we can do the rent-to-own programme and we can also have some more units being developed strictly for rental, so that younger persons, especially those who are now in the process of starting their own families, can have that opportunity to have easily accessible rental units. If possible, it can be done in a revolving pool so that you rent them for at least five years and you are given an opportunity to purchase a unit somewhere else, so that you would still have this rental unit that comes back into the rental pool because the family that was there would have been given the opportunity to purchase a unit elsewhere as their circumstances and income level improved.

My third point with regard to this Resolution -- and I think a lot of it was addressed by Senator Adams as well in his contribution today -- is that a lot of the land which is being used for this housing programme, especially this particular land, is coming from Brighton Plantation, which means that it is prime agricultural land. I believe that we can come to a stage where we can do housing development which has a good mix between housing and agriculture. I think that this particular project may have been a good concept in which to do this; where you can set aside appropriate pieces of land so that you can have a house spot on it and you can also encourage the persons or you can sell that land to persons who have an interest in agriculture; so that more or less in areas you create an agricultural community with the land which is being assigned to this project. You can establish it as an agricultural community, so that persons know. You can do it with about ten or 20 lots, so that persons know that this area is designated to agriculture. If you give the person, say, at least 10 000 square feet of land, you can build a house on a small set of it close to the road and you can do your agriculture on the remainder of it. You can either do crop production or you can do livestock farming. You designate it as an agricultural zone so that other potential residents in that area will come knowing that this is an

agricultural zone. If one person chooses to raise pigs, you know that from time to time there will be an odour that comes with pig farming. If one chooses to raise chickens, you know from time to time that there will be an odour that comes with poultry farming. Persons in the area would be able to conduct their farming business without having to be concerned about their neighbour who just wanted to have a residential lot complaining for them, because when they are washing down the pig pen you would get the stench.

I think that we need to start developing projects in Barbados where we just do not look at a strictly residential component but we also have some agricultural component attached to it. You do not need a whole acre of land nowadays to get good yields, because if we provide the adequate facilities for shade housing or greenhouses, you would find that you could get better yields out of a small portion of land than if you had an open, one-acre lot. It is also easier for persons to actually manage the land, because if you are doing a proper shade house and you use the right techniques -- which I am certain the persons from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) would be willing to demonstrate and share the skills -- you would have to worry less about weeds within your crop production, and you would also have some better yield so that you can have some lovely tomatoes, lettuce and all sorts of crops that could definitely sustain a family.

4.41 p.m.

INSERT S23 JULIETTE

Wednesday, May 03, 2017

Senator the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy President, all land that is now classified as agricultural land is not suitable for agriculture. We all know that almost every estate has what we call rab land, that is, land that does not grow anything on, and land that would be suitable for housing but sometimes that rab land is in an area on the estate where you have to put in roads and so forth and it may be more expensive to get to, but clearly as we seek to get more housing because people want to have housing, people need to have housing, we will have to look more at the use of the rab land area so that we can strike the balance between providing the adequate number of houses and still maintain sufficient land that we can with the technology produce enough food.

Mr. Deputy President, my interest in agriculture goes beyond just the interest in food sufficiency. It also has to do with the question of power because we would probably find that a lot of the land may now be well use to grow other grasses that we can use to generate electricity. Mr. Deputy President, in the same way that we have a high dependence on imports for foods, we also have a high

dependence on imports for fuel and therefore for our electricity, and in the same way that we want to achieve self-sufficiency in food we also want to achieve some self-sufficiency in fuel from which we generate electricity, and therefore I also have a great interest in making sure that we do not overuse the land available for agriculture not only for food but also from the point of view of getting the biomass for electricity generation in the country because that is all part of the restructuring of the economy and moving some of the vulnerably out of our economy. Mr. Deputy President, I remember that back in 1973 when we had a little difficulty with shipping we had some problems with fuel back then.

Mr. Deputy President, the question of providing opportunity for everybody to own a property is something to which we should really devote some attention. I have a view which may be seen as simplistic, that is, that if a fellow can pay a rent we should be able to design a mortgage instrument that allows him to pay a mortgage. You may have to exercise some flexibility in how you design it. It may be that he pays a very small amount in the early years and then there is a little review every five years or something like that and he then pays more or have some sort of ascending scale like that. It may be that he starts out on a payment programme which covers 50 years but then as his income goes up you bring it down shorter, or it may be that you consider intergenerational mortgages where whoever inherits the property takes on the mortgage as well. I do not know how it can be structured but I do feel that we should put our minds towards finding a way that anybody who can pay rent can also own a property because in that way you get a greater sense of pride in owning your property, you provide something for your children to take over and you have that capacity then to help yourself more.

Mr. Deputy President, I really would like to challenge the financial community to find a way to structure an innovative type mortgage instrument to help people like that to own their properties. They may have to do it with the agreement of Government. Maybe you may have to get special sorts of mortgages, you may have to exempt the interest and income from income tax or part of the income tax or you may have to have a subsidy somewhere or a hidden guarantee somewhere from Government, but I think we have to find ways in which we can structure products for people to become owners of capital in the country. Mr. Deputy President, that would go too for people who normally would have borrowed from the General Workers' Loan Fund because if you are a Government department that is not a financial institution I do not know that you should be dealing in those matters. I think it is much better to get one of the credit unions or something like that to deal in those matters for you and you can be behind the scene doings such facilitation or guarantees or whatever that you want to do because not only are there salaried persons who want to benefit from

these facilities but there are also persons who are vendors and persons who are farmers who do not have a salary but who really ought not to be cut out from getting these benefits if they are able to generate enough monthly income to pay a bill, so we need to structure something that allows you to deal not only with salaried persons but with those persons who are productive and working but are not salaried persons. Mr. Deputy President, that is why I would prefer that we create within the private financial services sector some kind of module to deal with them.

The matter was raised about vacant lots. Mr. Deputy President, sometimes when you mention vacant lot, you think that we have all of these vacant lots so why do we need to create additional lots for people. I believe the facts are that there are very few lots that are at the size and cost for low income persons or the lower middle income persons which are vacant. I believe that all of the vacant lots are probably middle income, upper middle income and upper income lots. Those are the ones I get the impression that are vacant. A lot of people invest in these lots just to hold them for their children or grandchildren, and those lots are not going to be available for the market that Government's acquisition seeks to deal with because you would have to go and acquire those lots at market prices of \$30 or \$40 a square foot to be able to provide them for low income persons or for affordable housing as Senator Ince said. Mr. Deputy President, the issue of the vacant lots is going to be the nuance because they might be vacant but they may not be available for the kinds of persons for whom we want to provide lots.

Mr. Deputy President, there was the matter of the harvesting of water, that is, that as we get more housing developments that we apparently use more water probably because people now would have more lawns to water or whatever. For me we water our lawns too much that is the truth, the natural grass grows very nicely. If you cut it often enough it comes out fairly well. I do not have any fancy grass around my house, I have the one that grew there and I cut it and keep it and now it all looks the same way because it is all brown given the weather.

Mr. Deputy President, this matter of water supply has to be top of mind for us in Barbados all of the time because we are a water-scarce country

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Mr. Deputy President, yes, we are getting projects in place such as water desalination plants to be able to cater to the ongoing need for the population to have fresh water.

Mr. Deputy President, a point was raised about the matter of harvesting of water. Mr. Deputy President, in our Town Planning Department regulations we do require people to have these tanks and so on, maybe we should also

require them to have more grass and trees around their properties. Mr. Deputy President, the issue that we have, many of these houses, I am told, is that a lot of these people do not have the pumps to use that water and so they have that water there and it remains there until it dissipates. Therefore, what we need to do is to move on, to do the regulations and the guidelines that require people to use this water and permit them to use that water for more than just gardening. In some countries in the Caribbean where they are even more water-scarced than Barbados they use that water that they collect for all sorts of purposes, but with the appropriate treatment to that water and so we have to move to that as quickly as possible.

Mr. Deputy President, it is probably because I chose to study economics and finance, I know that when something is scarce that you have to pay more for it and even vendors knew how to do that very well, when something became scarced the price would go up. We have in Barbados the continuing and aged-long attitude that water is not scarce and that therefore we can use it as much as we like and we should not pay anything for it. Sir, that goes against all of the economics that I saw in real life, as eerie as listening to the hawkers sell produce in the market and as early as I saw speculators coming by, for example, the speculators who would come by and buy the sheep or pigs from you and then sell them, so that if a farmer had a lot of sheep, goats and pigs, he would be paid less for them, and that when these things became scarced then the farmer who had would get a good price for them, so that as we talk about these issues we have to look at how do we pay for these things and how do we get people to use them and to do so efficiently.

Mr. Deputy President, my last point is to come back to this matter of food security, also the matter of power security in a sense. This is just to keep reminding people that this is not a matter solely for Government, Governments do not as a rule do much production, it is a matter for our farming community to put in the food crops and the energy crops, it is also a matter for our retail community to be prepared to buy those produce. Many farmers put in produce, sometimes without thinking as to when it will be ready and how many people will put it in, sometimes depending upon rainfall rather than irrigation, then to find that the retail communities or supermarkets do not take a great lot from them.

Mr. Deputy President, I remember having about 50 or 60 banana trees and so some bananas came and I decided to sell them to the supermarkets. As I go to these supermarkets one supermarket ordered two boxes, another ordered three boxes, another ordered four. Mr. Deputy President, when I had finished driving around to all of those supermarkets at the end of it all I had only sold about 10 boxes of green bananas, so that it did not make any sense. Furthermore, I knew those people to whom I went.

In some circumstances there will be some farmers who would not know the people at those supermarkets and who might not even get a box sold. Mr. Deputy President, therefore while Government has a duty to support and to push policies and so on to beef up food security, we still have to depend on the farmers for their business to grow and they have to depend upon the retail community preparedness to buy produce from them and at a reasonable price, not to charge you back spoilage when they have those produce at their place for four or five days where those produce would spoil. Mr. Deputy President, I say that because people must understand that the issues that we are dealing with in this country are not simply issues for the Government of whatever persuasion or for one particular group of people but that they are issues for all of us in this country and the sooner that we get more people thinking that these are the issues that we all have to put our minds around then the better that it is going to be for us, the better that we are going to find the right balance that makes this country continue to grow as it has done in the past.

Mr. Deputy President, I wanted to share a couple of those views and I want to give this Resolution my full support. I thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Byer-Suckoo, you have the Floor.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to wrap up the debate on this Resolution for the acquisition of land at Brighton, St. George for housing purposes. We have had a full debate today and I want to thank all those colleagues who have contributed. I have heard a couple of things raised which I will just briefly touch on but suffice it to say I am satisfied that nobody has actually challenged the fundamental position in the Resolution, that is, that Government still has to provide low-income housing solutions for those low and lower middle income earners. I know that there are some persons abroad, thankfully not in this room, who do hold that view, but we know enough people around who were it not for the interventions of the State would have never been able to achieve housing and we know that housing is an integral part of human development and that it is important for our families and our societies.

Mr. Deputy President, let me make the point, first of all, from a couple of things I have heard. Let me just clarify that this is not land that is being acquired for the people of St. George South, as much as I would like it to be, this is land acquired in St. George South to provide housing solutions and that just as has happened with all of the other housing solutions, this is for persons who have applied to the National Housing Corporation for such a solution. Of course, you would know that when you go to the National Housing Corporation you can apply for either house, house and land, land spot or whatever else, so that persons who

have applied for this particular solution, once they meet the requirements, will be considered for these solutions.

Mr. Deputy President, that being said, I do know that when we did the 52 houses at Greens I made a very strong case to have a lot of St. George people in there because as I said, for decade St. George south had had not housing solutions and so it was important that if you brought a development into a community, that the people in that community would first and foremost have the opportunity to benefit because they had not had that opportunity for quite a while. Further, if you live in St. George you would not be that too eager to go live in Bridgetown, because they would have gone to the National Housing Corporation and would have been told about Country Park Towers and other developments in Bridgetown, but after you have feasted on the St. George area you really do not want to go and live anywhere else. Mr. Deputy President, we did Greens and we had a lot of St. George people moving into Greens. We also then added the rent-to-own component so that St. George people could have that option, which was not in the original plan.

No.D8 (25)5.19 p.m.

It was not in the original plan. I do agree with Senator Boyce when he says he would like to see the maximum use of the land, and I hinted at that. That is really the plan; rather than doing about 70 stand-alone units which we would expect to accommodate, the preferred design is to have multiple units. The actual arrangement has not been worked out yet. That is under consideration and would depend, too, on the funding that is available to have this development done, but it is hoped that we can get, rather than 70, upwards of 110 solutions in this particular piece of land. Let me also make a correction that was pointed out to me. I kept referring to the Ministry of Housing and, yes, the Ministry of Housing has been responsible for a lot of the preparation of the Resolution to get to this point, but it is in tandem with the National Housing Corporation. The NHC is the one who does a lot of the development and allocations and so on; so lest I offend anyone at NHC, let me hasten to say it is not just the Ministry of Housing. When I gave kudos to officers who were responsible for us having been able to provide housing solutions thus far, I meant to include the Ministry of Housing, the NHC as well as agencies like the Town Planning Department, because we have heard several times today that the Town Planning Department, the Environmental Department and other agencies are also responsible.

Let me clarify something else. Of course there is a concern that we do not use prime agricultural land and take it all up in housing, and if you look at the current Physical Development Plan and the one that is on its way, you would realise that there is an effort to keep some land in

agriculture. Yes, again I agree with Senator Boyce that we do have to find techniques to ensure that we can get more food from the land that we do have available. Let me just remind the Senate that when the \$5 lots were identified - and I did mention those lots because we have two \$5 lots next to this particular property -- these were actually lots that were on the margins of land which may be agriculturally vacant. Because they are on the margins and next to the road, the services are already there, so you are not even going two lots deep; they are actually just on the margins. There is water, light, roads and so on that are accessible, which is why you can then do the \$5 lots, because if Government had to take up this land and put these services in, then you really could not turn around and send it off at \$5. That really would not have made sense. This is land on the margins, where there is already development. In the case of upper Brighton and lower Brighton which I mentioned, there is a community on the other side of the road, so there is already water and so on in the area, so you are just taking up the strip on the other side of the road. That is what is happening certainly in the Brighton area.

I want to support and echo the concern, too -- as we talk more about agriculture during the course of the day -- about the techniques used in agriculture that are allowing us to lose so much of the beautiful topsoil. It hurts my heart when I drive through St. John and St. George after the heavy rains and I see that rich, dark, beautiful soil that is just flowing down and banking up at the side of the road. Kuss-kuss grass was mentioned; nobody is using kuss-kuss grass. They are spraying off all the margins of the agricultural lands, so that when it rains all of this runs down the street and ends up in the sucks and, of course, we then have a problem with the sucks because they then become so full of this soil and we do get problems. We do have this in St. George; problems with flooding because so much of the topsoil is being allowed to run off into the sucks. We also know from those persons who are responsible for managing our coastal areas that a lot of this soil runs off into the ocean as well, and it is responsible for, among other factors, damaging our coral reef. Our coral reef was not meant to take this much soil, so we need to do something in terms of developing proper agricultural practices.

There is a lot happening at the Ministry of Agriculture in terms of teaching proper agricultural techniques and in terms of revitalising and rekindling agriculture in Barbados. There are several programmes now at the Ministry of Agriculture, including the 'Youth in Agriculture' programme. There are several similar names and I would probably get them mixed up, so let me just say that there are several agricultural programmes which are teaching our young people new techniques in agriculture. We have the 'Youth in Agriculture' programme being done by the Poverty Alleviation Bureau, and they are now into

Phase 9. This is a programme that takes young people and actually gives them a stipend of \$150 a week while teaching them agricultural techniques. They are not just taught techniques in terms of how to go and work in the soil, but agro-processing and other aspects of the agricultural industry, along with business. For young people to whom the idea of just working the field may not be attractive, they have an opportunity to see agriculture as a business because they can see that you can start with the ground or with the animal and move from there into creating a value-added product. That seems to be more appealing to our young people.

We are not just sitting back and saying we have to do something about food security or that people are not interested in agriculture anymore. I am pleased to say that I have attended several graduations of the 'Youth in Agriculture' programme, and I see now that there is a generation of young people coming up who are keen to work in agriculture in areas such as aquaponics, greenhouses and so on, bringing their education, their technology and what they understand about business to be able to make a viable business out of an agricultural pursuit. We are developing Caribbean Vocation Qualifications and National Vocational Qualifications in this area as well in certain agricultural areas. In relation to the schools, I mentioned the Ministry of Agriculture, my Ministry is doing something, the Poverty Alleviation Bureau is doing something with young people, the Ministry of Youth is doing something with young people in agriculture, and then the schools themselves are also doing something. There is a lot going on to ensure that agriculture does not die. We know that we have to maintain our food security; it is vital to our national security and to our sustainability. We have to ensure that we do have food sustainability; and we did hear Senator Boyce speak to the issue of sugar and the value for sugar now and perhaps the need to shift to something else.

I also noted the point from Senator Worrell about the agricultural community. Yes, I do see where we can develop these communities and where low-income persons can come, have their own homes, fix them up nicely and then all of a sudden get offended by the smell of the pigs upwind. When you are coming to St. George for sure, you have to be prepared for that because somebody along the road or just upwind of you has pigs or chickens or something. You cannot come into St. George and say you do not want that. Perhaps we should invite them, when they are coming into St. George, to come and create that kind of community. Maybe that is something which we can develop a model for between the Ministry of Housing and the Town and Country Planning Department. There is no need to look for a model overseas. If it is not there, we have shown in Barbados that we have the ability to create innovative solutions as well, so we have to do that.

I noted too the guidelines which Senator Adams put forward for ensuring that when we provide houses and lots, there are actually solutions. I like how he said that, Mr. Deputy President; that they are not solutions until we also look at the green spaces and the recreational spaces. There is also the idea of the schools in the area, because certainly in St. George South, the schools nearby are very small. The St. Luke's Brighton School is the nearest one to this. I think the whole roll of the school is 100 and something; it is a very small school. Ellerton just down the way is also 100 and something in terms of the total roll. Again, we would probably have to be looking at expanding the schools. Blackman-Gollop is the nearest one that is a big school now, after we amalgamated the two schools, so Blackman-Gollop takes people from all over the surrounding areas and as far afield as St. John and St. Philip because that is the big one in the area.

Regarding the idea of water harvesting and backyard gardening and looking after the elderly, Senator Todd may be able to tell me but I am pretty sure that when we did Valery, I think, and maybe the Grotto as well, the bottom floors were earmarked for disabled persons and the elderly so that they could have access.

5.20 p.m.

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HUNTE, Senator R. A.

INCE, Senator J.

SUCKOO, Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER

TODD, Senator Hon. P.M.T.

TROTMAN, Senator Sir Roy

WORRELL, Senator A. R.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Order No. 1, end of Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo's opening speech and start of Senator Sir Roy Trotman's speech, take-slips Sequence 5 and 6. The source carries two reporters' versions of the same passage, from 'You cannot expect it from any other Party' to Senator Sir Roy Trotman's remarks on Todds and Greens. The fuller second version, which includes the Deputy President's question 'Are we talking partisan?', is printed and the first version (about 1,170 words, with take-slips 'Sequence 5', 'Sequence 6' and 'Senate D 8 Seq 6 12.29 p.m.') has been left out. In the omitted version Senator Trotman is called by 'SENATOR the Very Reverend H.E. CRICHLow' and addresses 'Mr. Acting President'. Please confirm.

Q3. Opening. The convening sentence reads 'on Wednesday the May 03, 2017 at 11.15 a.m.', and the heading reads 'PRESENTATION OF PAPERS'. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Take-slips and reporters' notes. Reporters' notes appear in the text, some as ordinary paragraphs or headings: 'Insert s11 juliette', 'Insert S15 juliette', 'INSERT S23 JULIETTE', 'INSERT S27 JULIETTE', 'TO END' and 'Juliette this should have been S7 instead of s6'. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 1, after the lunch suspension. Senator Prof. Emeritus Sir Henry Fraser's speech begins mid-sentence ('Mind you that may have tremendous benefits...') after the note 'Insert s11 juliette', with no call from the Chair; the opening of the speech appears to be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 1, Senator A. A. Adams. Senator Adams's speech begins mid-sentence ('...and so that has begun to put Barbados further along the path of a property democracy.') after the note 'Insert S15 juliette', with no call from the Chair; the end of Senator R. A. Hunte's speech and the opening of Senator Adams's appear to be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 1, Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce. Senator Boyce's speech follows the note 'INSERT S23 JULIETTE' directly after Senator A. R. Worrell's speech,

with no call from the Chair, and Senator Worrell's speech has no closing. Printed as in the source.

Q8. End of the report. The record stops during Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo's reply, at take-slip 'S:D8(26) 5.20 p.m.', followed by 'INSERT S27 JULIETTE' and 'TO END'. The end of the reply, the question on the Resolution and the adjournment are not in the source. Please confirm.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, 3rd May, 2017 at 11.15 a.m., with the Deputy President, His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichtlow, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. The Deputy President announced that the President, Her Honour Senator Miss Kerryann F. Ifill, and the Leader of Government Business would not attend, and confirmed the Minutes of 29th March, 2017. Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo laid the National Petroleum Corporation Annual Report for April 2009 to March 2010.

Under Order No. 1, Senator Byer-Suckoo moved the Resolution under Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228, for the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of land of Brighton Plantation Limited at Brighton, St. George, for housing. She described the Housing Every Last Person programme of starter homes since 2008, housing at Marchfield, Workhall, French Village, Greens and the \$5 per square foot lots at Todds, and the change of policy in 2003 that allowed vacant agricultural land there to be used. She listed roads and schools in St. George South and said more than 2 000 people had received title to their homes, and that the acquisition could bring at least another 100 housing solutions; the Deputy President asked whether she was 'talking partisan' when she quoted the Gospel according to Matthew.

Senator Sir Roy Trotman supported the Resolution but urged that conveyances to those in Government units be speeded up and warned against agricultural land 'cynically left unused' being turned to other uses; he noted the 12 000 acres or so of Barbados Farms and the CLICO lands and called for urgent decisions to protect agriculture. Senator J. Ince supported the Resolution as affordable housing for St. George North. The Sitting was then suspended until 2.30 p.m.

After the suspension, Senator Prof. Emeritus Sir Henry Fraser argued that there were thousands of

unoccupied house spots across Barbados and little justification for building on agricultural land, and warned of the loss of sinkholes in developments. Senator R. A. Hunte supported the Resolution but raised concern over timely compensation for owners. Senator A. A. Adams spoke of a property democracy, the chattel house, the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and the example of Singapore. Senator the Hon. P. M. T. Todd described the 500-lot programme begun by the late Prime Minister David Thompson, the starter homes at Woodbourne and Lancaster and the 20-year programme. Senator A. R. Worrell spoke of the difficulty women in their 50s faced in getting mortgages and proposed housing projects with an agricultural component, and Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce

said that not all land classified as agricultural was suitable for agriculture and that some might grow grasses to generate electricity.

Senator Byer-Suckoo began her reply, saying the land was not for St. George South alone, that denser development than about 70 stand-alone units was planned, and that the Physical Development Plan protected prime agricultural land, before the record ends.