
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2022 – 2026

THE SENATE

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, the October 12, 2022 at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator R. R. FARLEY, J.P., B.Sc., C.P.A., C.M.A. (President) Her Honour H. Elizabeth THOMPSON, (Deputy President)

Senator Dr. the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, M.B.B.S., F.R.C.S (Edin.), J.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Senator Miss L. R. CUMMINS, B.Sc. M.Sc. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport) (Leader of Public Business in the Senate)

Senator Dr. the Hon. Shantal M. MUNRO-KNIGHT, PhD. (Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office)

Senator Dr. Crystal K. M. HAYNES, M.B.B.S.

Senator John A. KING, B.S.S.

Senator Patricia E. PARRIS, J.P.

Senator Lorenzo R. HAREWOOD, J.P., BSM, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.B.A.

Senator Shanika C. S. ROBERTS-ODLE, B.Sc., M.Sc.

Senator Andwele A. O. BOYCE, B.Sc., M.Sc., LL.B.

Senator Gregory P. B. NICHOLLS, LL.B., LL.M., MICArb.

Senator the Hon. L. E. NURSE, F.C.A, F.C.C.A

Senator Dr. C. A. MAYNARD, M.B.B.S., FRCS (ENT)

Senator Ms. M. C. TAITT, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.) M.B.A.

Senator Rev. Dr. J. A. ROGERS, B.Sc. (Hons.), B.A.,

M.Phil. Ph.D.

Senator K. J. BOYCE, LL.B (Hons.) L.E.C.

Senator Miss C. N. DRAKES, B.Sc., (Econ. & Mgmt.) M.Phil Econ.

Senator Andrew W. MALLALIEU, C.P.A., F.R.I.C.S.

Senator Dr. the Hon. Chelston W. DaC. BRATHWAITE, CHB, Ph.D.

Senator Dr. Kristina G. HINDS, Ph.D.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father W. Kirton.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in Session.

MESSAGES FROM HER EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senators, I have received from Her Excellency, the President a message dated 16 September and it reads as follows:

HER EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

TO

THE HONOURABLE THE SENATE

Her Excellency, The President wishes to inform The Honourable the Senate, that she will be absent from the country during the period 16 September to 23 September, 2022 on duty leave.

Her Excellency further wishes to inform The Honourable The Senate that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 33 of the Constitution, the Very Reverend Dr. Jeffrey Douglas Gibson will perform the functions of the Office of President for the period of Her Excellency's absence. Signed by: Her Excellency the President, 16 September, 2022.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am in receipt of the Minutes of our meeting held on 16 September, 2022 for confirmation. Senator Dr. Munro-Knight.

Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, I do now move that the Minutes Friday, 16 September, 2022 be confirmed.

The question that the minutes be confirmed was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In relation to other announcements and excuses; I have receipt of excuses due to leave oversees from Her Honour Senator Ms. H. E. Thompson and Senators the Hon. Ms. L. R. Cummins, Senator Dr. C. W. Dac. Brathwaite, L. R. Harewood and Mrs. S. C. S. Roberts-Odle. Also, an indication of an excuse for being late is Senator G. P. B. Nicholls who is in the Court of Appeal at this time and will be here as soon as he is released. Hence, after that matter is concluded. Those are the announcements that I have at this time.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. the Hon. Munro Knight.

Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents.

1. Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Student Revolving Loan Fund for the Year Ended March 31, 2021.

2. Sovereign Counter-Guarantee Contract No. 5568/0C--BA between the Government of Barbados and the Inter-American Development Bank: Program to Support Environmental and Economic Development in Barbados.

3. Sovereign Counter-Guarantee Contract between the Government of Barbados and the Nature Conservancy: Program to Support Environmental and Economic Development in Barbados.

4. Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Plan 2022.

5. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Multicurrency Term Facility Agreement) Order, 2022.

REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS OR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. the Hon. Munro Knight.

Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, I beg to move that the suspension of Standing Order 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of the days Sitting.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division

Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, I beg to move that Senator, the Hon. L. E. Nurse be appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees for the remainder of the days Sitting.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. the Hon. Munro Knight.

Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President I beg to give notice of the Resolution that Parliament take note of and approve the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Plan 2022 FY2022/2023 -- FY2026/27.

I beg to move the first reading of the Catastrophe Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

The question that those Bills be read a first time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senators, since we last met, we heard the sad news regarding the passing of the brother of the acting Deputy President, Senator the Honourable Lindell Nurse. I ask you to join me in a moment of silence as a mark of respect. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Thank you, Senators.

SENATOR THE HON L. E. NURSE: Mr. President and Honourable Senators, I thank you kindest for your very compassionate expressions of sympathy and strong support which I have been receiving during this time of bereavement. Thank you very much.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – SECOND READING OF THE CATASTROPHE FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022.

SENATOR Dr. THE HON. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, we live in a world of extreme uncertainty. I think that over the last three to four years, all of us can attest to the fact that we have had to reflect on the fragility of our existence. I think that the reality that we live in a world in which catastrophes and disasters can happen; and happen more frequently and with a greater intensity, has become very much a part of our lived reality. I think we could also reflect on the time when for us in Barbados, catastrophes and disasters were something that happened few and far between. I remember growing up and hearing stories of things that happened in the past.

Particularly, when I look and speak about catastrophes, Hurricane Janet which occurred in 1955 was something always used as a reference point. Our current reality of everything that has happened to us again in the last three to four years suggests that we have new reference points to identify, again, that the world is uncertain and tragedy, catastrophe and disasters are now closer to us than before. Mr. President, I believe that we all know that within three to four years, again, the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it has had on our lives came out of nowhere; unplanned and unforeseen.

The impact and the multiple layers of impact that that have had on our lives in Barbados and globally, again, reinforces that message. Even outside of COVID-19, we then had Hurricane Elsa, a freak storm and ash fall. Mr. President, I am making the point here in all of this, again, about that notion of the fragility of existence currently. The fact that we were talking about catastrophes; where before it was something we heard happen in the past, we all now can relate to this notion that we live in a world where these

things can come quickly, at the drop of a hat and that the impact can extremely devastating.

Over time, we have then begun to see that the world is changing and the nature of the impact that affects us can move extremely quickly. One of the other reference points that I want to note in the discussion is the fact that where before, again, I point to Hurricane Janet and we were scared of hurricanes; now just tropical storms and the threat of floods create a level of trepidation because of the nature of the intensity; and the fact that just tropical storms and floods here in Barbados and elsewhere can create a level of devastation. This is the reality for us as Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Mr. President, at this time I want to stand in solidarity with Venezuela. We note that two days ago, Venezuela experienced severe flooding.

In fact, we have in Venezuela 36 persons dead and 56 persons remain missing. This is just as I speak about the lives but not going into the impact it has on the country in terms of economic recovery and housing stock. We all know, I believe, and have been following what has happened in Pakistan. I was following what was happening there and I came across a story. The headline was, “There is no dry land left.” It was pointing to the devastation that Pakistan is going through and the impact, again, that it will have on the country; none of this planned and foreseen. This is the nature of catastrophe.

In the context, Mr. President, of these things that come at us that we do not plan for and are unforeseen; we have to be able that we position ourselves to respond appropriately and allow the country to build back better. The notion of building back better is tied to a word that we have been hearing quite a bit; the notion of resilience. It is of building resilience, the resilience of people; country and in our infrastructure. What does that resilience mean? Mr. President, that resilience means being able to bounce back and build back quickly from a challenge. It is not only being able to just bounce back quickly.

This is why I am saying it is tied to that notion of building back better. We bounce back and seek to mitigate, so that we are then able to strengthen infrastructure; processes; et cetera, so that should the same circumstances reoccur, we will not have the same level of impact. It is about building resilience. For SIDS, building resilience is not an easy thing. Building resilience takes time; resources and very often small economies do not have the level of capital to immediately adjust and build the level of resilience. It is a process that we must undertake, in order to ensure that we build resilience throughout all of our systems; processes and infrastructure.

When we talk about building resilience to catastrophe and the notion of catastrophe as defined in the Catastrophe Fund Act 2020; as a significant event that has

a major adverse impact on the economy, so that we are facing a significant event unplanned, unprecedented and that we must now make adjustments in terms of how we respond, not only immediately, but how we learn from the particular incidence, to ensure that then we are able to build resilience. Mr. President, if I talk about the notion that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have a difficulty in terms of building resilience and responding to catastrophes, that may seem like we are talking about something that is esoteric so let us come to the individual level; let us come to the householder; let us come to the Barbadian.

Mr. Speaker, homeownership in Barbados is, I would call it, sacred. I grew up understanding that you were working towards, not only owning a piece of the rock, but putting something on a piece of the rock. We see homeownership as a sign of progress and as a sign of achievement. It is one of those things that for us in the context of our colonial past, says to the Barbadian that there is ownership; but as we say that, Mr. President, about how important that is to the Barbadian, imagine the Barbadian who invest in the dream and in that notion of homeownership and then, through an act of nature or another act or another catastrophe all of that is wiped away. That is what we are talking about, Mr. President, in the context of a catastrophe, what happens and the impact that it has on the individual and on the very personal level, but again, I go deeper and I go further, because there are some of us, as homeowners, who have the ability to adjust, to bounce back because we can afford insurance. We can afford to build again immediately and we have those resources, but there is a large section of the population that would not have those resources, that cannot, "at the drop of a hat" pull out X amount of money to do repairs and to be able to rebuild their homes and start again. It is those persons, those businesses that as a society and as a Government, we are committed to ensuring that we protect in the context of this Fund and in the context of, as a Government, how we intend to do our social and economy policy.

Mr. President, when we look at the Catastrophe Fund and those that are eligible; we see that it is pitched to particularly homeowners that are earning less than \$25 000 annually and for dwellings up to a value of \$150 000 and also, as well, seeking to provide in security for businesses with an annual turnover, not exceeding \$500 000. Again, Mr. President, we are talking about ensuring that in the context of a catastrophe; that we are able to protect those that are most vulnerable in this society. We are able to ensure that small businesses; we often talk a lot about entrepreneurship and how we would foster to protect entrepreneurship, but it is not only about creating the enabling environment for entrepreneurs, but also to protecting them against circumstances that would come up their way that are unplanned. Think about the investment that small entrepreneurs make; think about the COVID-19

pandemic and how many businesses had to close after they had put that investment in. Then we understand the importance of the Fund, but also some of the specific amendments that we are making today, Mr. President, to ensure that we can have a Fund that is fit for purpose to deal with the circumstances that we are facing currently.

Mr. President, my first experience with a catastrophe with the impact of a hurricane and he devastates lives was not in Barbados, but actually it was in Grenada, Hurricane Ivan. My mother was in Grenada, she is a Grenadian and she had a stroke, in fact, therefore in the context of Hurricane Ivan and the situation of my mum, I tried very, very quickly after the Hurricane, two days after -- it had to be God -- but I was able to get a flight into Grenada to go down. I remember at the Airport there was not any transportation so I actually walked from the Airport in St. Georges to Beaulieu, and if you are a Grenadian or if you know anything about Grenada you would understand what that walk was like.

So walking that breadth and seeing for myself the reality of the devastation; the houses that were flattened; the hospital; the desperation on people's faces as they sat on sidewalks and we are normally a very sociable people. The shock for persons as well and my mom, her house was completely destroyed and it should have been taking in by neighbours; who themselves, were living in a crowded space, two or three families together with the only remaining structure that was standing.

When we talk about these issues and the impact and the need for us to be able to offer protection, it is very personal. It is about the individual and how we address their immediate concerns in the context of devastation.

Mr. President, I mentioned before in passing Tropical Storm Tomás previously as one of the reference points as well, in the context of before of hurricanes, et cetera, but now, even tropical storms and flooding, et cetera, can cause us some trepidation and I want to read, Mr. President, from a news report on 15 November, 2000. It was a Press conference with the then Prime Minister Freundel Stuart, who was talking about the devastation of Tropical Tomás to the housing stock specifically and I am quoting:

"It is going to take about \$37 million to deal with all of this."

SENATOR Dr. THE HON. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: This was then Prime Minister the Honourable Freundel Stuart.

"We have about \$23 million in the Catastrophe Fund, but we are going to need a legislative amendment in order to access those monies. We have, however, been able

to source \$17 million from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility and that money can be readily sourced.”

The article went on to say and quoting again, the then Prime Minister:

“What this system has revealed, is that a lot of the low income housing stock was in very poor state of repair so where chattels have lost roofs, for example, it is not going to be a simple fact of replacing a roof, because the remaining structure in some cases, is so poor that after assessment, it can be easily discovered that you need to put a new structure in place because the old structure cannot sustain a new roof.”

Mr. President, I read that quote to identify a few things of importance. 1) The importance that the Catastrophe Fund played then and continues to play, but importantly and even at that time, the then Prime Minister was pointing out that there was a challenge in the face of a need to address the situation of citizens up to \$37 million in damage to the housing stock but although there was a Catastrophe Fund, that it was difficult to access it and the Government would have needed a Legislative Amendment in order to be able to do so; in order to be able to adequately respond at that time, to that particular circumstance. Secondly, it also points to the fact that we need and need still to continue to build resilience in our housing stock. What the then Prime Minister was saying to us is, listen we can try to repair but when we go to repair, very often we have to rebuild because the structure is so poor. So you can start out with one plan and one budget; one way to approach the issue but then when you actually go to deliver on the ground to people, you find that you are then faced with a situation that is more complex that you had anticipated.

The Amendments before us in the Catastrophe Fund Bill 2020 is about ensuring that we can have legislation that is nimble; that is flexible; that is responsive and importantly as I indicated before fit for purpose in the context of the situations that we are facing. Importantly, one of the key aspects in the Amendment of this Bill is that government is seeking to move away from our traditional reactive approach to policy by ensuring that we are more proactive.

Mr. President, it is not about what you do after the event but more about what we can do before to show up; to build resilience; to prevent the extent of the impact we have seen; so that the Amendments before us are intending to reflect the learning that we have had in the context of what we have faced. We could very well rest on our laurels. We could very well be comforted by the existing Legislation. It establishes a fund. It provides that people can be able to access it but it would be irresponsible of us, particularly in this context, particularly when we are faced with the reality

of climate change. Particularly in the context of a government that has signalled commitment to sustainable development goals; not to do in every way we can ensure that we build resilience into our policies and into the way that we are intended to do business.

Mr. President, the Amendment to Sect. 4 of the principle Act introduces the fact that government as indicated before, is often times the major actor that is called upon to mobilise resources and act in a way that enables its citizens; that act in a way that is responsive to the needs of its citizens. It recognises that the State has to mobilize resources of all of its government agencies in order to be able to respond. An importantly like I said before the Amendment at Sect. 4 introduces what was not there before and now speaks to the issue of mitigation. The previous Act said,

“The purpose of the Fund is to provide financial aid to eligible persons and qualifying businesses, in need of such aid, as a result of a catastrophe.”

The catastrophe happened and then the Fund kicks in; then you can access the fund as a result of a catastrophe. That, Mr. President is what I’m saying is the reactive approach that we are seeking in the context of this Amendment to be able to correct.

The policy of the government in building resilience for our housing stock and generally to show up the vulnerability of the island is embedded in how we do business. We are not approaching in a piece meal way. Very recently, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance would have undertaken Operation Seek and Secure which involved an audit of the housing stock and particularly looking at wooden structures and one storey dwellings, in order to access the extent to which they may be vulnerable. So that we are having a comprehensive approach to this notion of building resilience. The inputs from that audit will then help us going forward to address as much as we can; as much as the physical space allows, to be able to build some resilience in the housing stock.

Mr. President, additionally, the Government has been building out its Roof to Reefs Project which is a multi-sectoral, inter-ministerial framework intending to address the key areas of vulnerability across a variety of sectors and also build out projects and programmes, to begin to systematically address these. Again we are not approaching this issue in a piece meal way but we are building out a systematic programme. What the Roof to Reefs does for us is that it asks what are the pieces of legislation; of policies; what are the specific projects that are needed in water; in housing; in areas on the coast to show up Coastal Zone Management; so it looks multi-sectorally and says, “These are the areas of vulnerability and what it is that we need to do in order to rebuild

resilience.” But we go further than that. The Government is working under a World Bank Programme to build out what we are calling a resilience map and what that resilience map is intended to do, is to be able for us to look and see the key areas of resilience across the island; match those where we have projects and programmes and initiatives or lack thereof, to ensure that the Government can then have a long term view to see where it needs to improve in the context of resilience across this island. We are approaching this notion of building resilience in all areas, across all sectors.

I also want to point to the education programme for householders to invest in things like hurricane straps; improvements in the building codes; updating of our physical development plan. All of these things are important in the context of ensuring that as a country, and of our citizens can move along the road in order to be comforted in the context of a catastrophe. So that when we talk about mitigating, it is those initiatives that we are talking about. To allow individuals and businesses to engage in activities, before an event to help them offset some of the terrible consequences.

Mr. President, at previous, Sub-paragraph 5 of the First Schedule and I am reading in Part, it states that:

“Where with the approval of the Physical Catastrophe Committee

(a) a house is provided by an agency to a person who is entitled to a grant under this paragraph; or

(b) repairs are effected by an agency to a house owned by a person who is entitled to a grant under this paragraph, the Committee shall, instead of paying the grant to the person so entitled, pay the amount of the grant to the agency.”

Mr. President, what that essentially meant was that again, a catastrophe had to have happened; the repairs/rebuilding had to have happened; and then, so that homeowners and businesses would then be required to have all of their receipts; have the money and wherewithal upfront in order to be able to access the facility of the Catastrophe Fund; the Committee had to be satisfied that that was all done. Hence, the Committee having to be satisfied means that it would have had to have happened before.

Mr. President, if we look at the reality of Barbados. Again, I would have identified before the scope of the persons whom we are trying to aid, in the context of this Catastrophe Fund. That community often does not have the funds upfront to buy X amount of material in order to rebuild, then to come back and present. Where are the households that have put together as much as they can

already, to invest in their homes; that for many low-income earners that the idea of, by the sweat of their brow is actually a lived reality; that they have invested as much as they can, in the context of building their house, where Mr. President, are they going to be able to find all of the resources to be able to address the specific circumstances? Hence, the Amendments being proposed therefore removes that notion that the Committee has to be satisfied and says, let us look at the objective situation that something has occurred.

Mr. President, in order for the Committee again to be satisfied -- and I want to say again not only for householders but again please think of the small businesses as well that we have, and let us ask ourselves again where would they be able to find those resources?

Mr. President, I take you back to 2010 and again what I read in relation to the former Honourable Prime Minister; who was essentially saying that monies were needed now and not after the fact. In particular, I want to reflect on the fact that for a catastrophe fund, it needs to be able to reflect the most vulnerable. We ask ourselves, were we to leave the legislation as it was, would it be fit for purpose?

Mr. President, the Amendment to the First Schedule, also provides for the inclusion of the National Housing Corporation in the list of agencies in circumstances where a house is provided by an agency or the repairs are to be effected by an agency. Mr. President, let us talk about Hurricane Elsa. We have Hurricane Elsa; we have the devastation of our housing stock. We have the most vulnerable in our society. Again, for those persons who do not have the upfront resources, where do they go, to whom do they turn? Very often they turn to the Government; they turn to the Urban Development Commission; they turn to the Rural Development Commission; they turn to the National Housing Corporation. So that the inclusion in the amendment that is made to include the National Housing Corporation, again reflects the practical reality, that the National Housing Corporation is one of the key entities providing housing solutions to repair and to rebuild houses in the context of a catastrophe, similar to what we have in the context of Hurricane Elsa.

Mr. President, as we have heard in the Other Place from the Minister of Housing, Lands and Maintenance; the National Housing Corporation is responsible for 75 per cent of the repairs, and this is the objective reality of Hurricane Elsa, with the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission 12 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. In the case of the rebuilding, the National Housing Corporation is undertaking 44 per cent of the rebuilds, and the Rural Development Commission and Urban Development Commission undertaking 26 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.

Mr. President, this amendment is responding to a circumstance, in which we have institutions that people see as being primarily responsible for assisting them in the context of a catastrophe, in the context of Hurricane Elsa, and that we are making provision for the National Housing Corporation as being one of the key players in providing the solution to be included in the context of the legislation.

Mr. President, with reference to subparagraph (d) in the First Schedule in the legislation, it provides:

“6. For the purposes of this paragraph “agency” means

(a) the Urban Development Commission established under the Urban Development Commission Act, Cap. 241;

(b) the Rural Development Commission established under the Rural Development Commission Act, Cap. 238;

(c) the National Housing Corporation established under the Housing Act, Cap. 226;

(d) or any ministry, department or other authority of Government charged with providing social services, including another statutory board.”

Mr. President, it speaks to a whole gamut of Government agencies that are to play a key role in rebuilding and repairs. It speaks to the notion of State’s agencies and statutory bodies as well. Mr. President, this is important, because you do not want now to have legislation again that is limited, because as Governments change and they develop different mechanisms to deal with different situations we now then, in the context of this amendment, have broaden it to ensure that it is inclusive for all of the agencies involved.

Mr. President, I take us back again to Hurricane Elsa and the fact that we had the Urban Development Commission; the Rural Development Commission; the National Housing Corporation; but also the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs had to play an extremely critical role; as they were responsible for housing persons. There was also the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Security and its bodies which had to play a role in sourcing foods to be able to feed those families. So that the amendment is therefore seeking to ensure that we encapsulate all of the various arms of Government that are going to be critical in addressing these situations as they arise.

Mr. President, the insertion in the amendment after paragraph (1) also establishes a cap on those businesses, as I said before, up to \$500 000.

“Remedying and mitigating disruption or loss by catastrophe 1A(1): Notwithstanding paragraph 1, the Physical Catastrophes Committee may take such other measures in relation to a house referred to that paragraph as would enable the owner to mitigate or remedy the adverse effects of a catastrophe.

(2): *A business, whether incorporated or not, which*

(a) has an annual turnover in business not exceeding \$500 000; and (b) is compliant with its obligations under the Income Tax Act, Cap. 73, the Value Added Tax Act, Cap. 87, the National Insurance and Social Security Act, Cap. 47, and any other enactment relating to the payment of any other tax or impost, is entitled to claim financial aid in such amount or relief from obligations for such period as is determined by the Economic Catastrophes Committee in order to enable the business to mitigate or remedy the adverse effects of a catastrophe.”

Mr. President, again we are ensuring that we are targeting the persons whom we want to be able to help, to assist, to secure in the context of the Catastrophe Fund.

Additionally, the amendment also identifies that whereas before in the principal Act the key Committee arbitrating, in this context, as being the Economic Catastrophe Committee now also includes the Economic Catastrophe Committee, as well as the Physical Catastrophe Committee in order to be able to arbitrate and to ensure that in the context of accessing the Funds, that there is a balance, not only in the context of looking at the economic side but also assessing the needs.

Mr. President, the amendments here are really intended to ensure that we can have a Catastrophe Fund which, as I keep saying, is responsive and reflects the learning which we had in the context of our experiences thus far. I say thus far because, as I started out by saying, we live in a world of extreme uncertainty but even as we live in a world of extreme uncertainty; we must ensure that we put measures in place which demonstrate that we understand, that indeed we are learning and that we are intending to be responsive. Mr. President, I know that there is always suspicion and angst as we seek to amend legislation but again in the circumstances of our current reality; we have to ask ourselves whether we would be doing justice to our citizens if we see this problem, issue and deficiency and do not seek to ensure that we can correct it by the introduction of key measures, which will have a significant impact on how people and their livelihoods can be secured in the context of a catastrophe.

Mr. President, as I close I want to reiterate that when we speak to these amendments and to these issues, we oftentimes have to remember the faces behind them. We have to remember the people, the businesses behind them.

We have to remember the circumstances which impact the real people and their real lives. We have to remember that, again, when we are talking about a catastrophe, we are talking about something that is significant and has a major impact. Therefore, Mr. President, our intention again is to ensure that we have legislation that is responsive and fit for purpose. Mr. President, I beg to move that the Catastrophe Fund (Amendment) Bill be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Senator Dr. Munro-Knight. Senator Boyce.

Senator K.J. BOYCE: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise, Sir, to offer my small contribution today in the context of my thinking that the Leader of Government Business should have also mentioned that this legislation first came out in 2020, which speaks to the proactive-ness of the nature which was just being debated. In so saying and recognising the need to augment and improve on what was not done or what ought to be done; I think as usual I will take a somewhat philosophical approach in terms of the discourse, while offering my support, of course, to any form of legislation which tries as much as is humanly possible to prepare for the unexpected or, from what we have seen, is now the expected.

Sir, we all know the quote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Modern data scientists would say there are three premises we can adopt. The world is awful, that is one. The world is much better, that is two. The world can be much better, that is three. The paradox is that all three of those statements are true at the same time, and what we realise in the times in which we exist in now, is that what was once abnormal or what was once unique in 2022; seems to be just another day, Sir. While we contemplate this as a catastrophe; a physical and economic catastrophe; perhaps it is just a way of the Government being prepared for what may come or, as probability would say, what is to come.

Sir, for my part, I think that it makes sound sense with regard to having the ability to access funds in the short term. Now, there may be concerns with regard to such access and how it is subsequently monitored. There may be some concerns with such access and how you ensure the independence of distribution. There may be some concerns with such access and checks and balances, but what we realise is that in emergencies, when it is time to get literal boots on the ground and rapid response; the need to resolve the issue takes priority to best practices. It really is a question of balancing. Sir, we get to speak from this side with that level of independence and objectivity without having to toe any particular line and, of course, without having the responsibility of having to balance the books. From my mind, Sir, it would also make some sense to see how much of this opportunity, in terms of rapid response can be considered from a regional level; heaven forbid

disaster does strike, the resources that you are utilising on island may also be impacted. Then, who would guard the guards in essence in providing that support?

We have the Regional Security System (RSS) and we have the mechanisms which deal with certain emergencies; and maybe this is an opportunity for this type of legislation to go regional and utilise the synergies so that we have Caribbean companies which are identified to come to each other's aid in the time of crisis. If everyone in Barbados is impacted, we certainly cannot help each other. I think that this provides the framework for such a future step and, of course, when you are dealing with regional policies, regional politics -- dare I say regional egos -- it sometimes takes a lot of manoeuvring to allow such activities to become reality. Again, however, this legislation serves its purpose and it lays the foundation. I think it is also important to recognise that as the Leader of Government Business has indicated, you need to do this before disaster strikes; because when the disaster comes you are literally on the ground scrambling, so then would not be the time to get persons to help out.

We saw the images in relation to Florida where, because of the resources they had, there were fleets of trucks ready to respond afterwards. Because of our size, if there is a hit on our island, no one will come to our aid for a certain period; so we must move to ensure that we have mechanisms which facilitate regional support outside of that which exists. This would be a good framework to encourage such a process. Ideally, perhaps, what we could look at is a register which expands on the current list as set out in the legislation, which of course provides for the National Housing Corporation and the different state-owned enterprises to assist in the process. Maybe there is an economic opportunity there as well whereby certain businesses which are proactive enough or have done their part with regard to paying the areas that are set out in the legislation -- Income Tax; Value-Added Tax; registration and all of that good, ideal stuff -- are therefore pre-selected to provide this response. Then maybe, again, wishes being horses, we then encourage a form of entrepreneurship where we expand the range of persons who are able to come to the aid. The question is, can this be taken regionally in the event of an emergency.

Sir, another factor we must continue to consider, is that while we talk about resilience in the context of economic and practical response; I believe that we can say that there is also an emotional and mental need which I think persons recognise needs to be considered in these times. I think everyone is somewhat tired, I think the World is tired. We are coming out of the pandemic, so they say, I am still a bit cautious so I wear my mask very proudly and there may be other internal issue for that, maybe I just like the mask. However, the point is that we have been dealing with this for so long, and there is a certain amount of

fatigue and I think we recognise especially for the youth, that there is a concern of when will thing begin to get better. While we talk about the economic considerations for the future and while we talk about how we get back houses; how do we get back roads; those are the priority. However, again we lay it at the feet of the Government, which is so much to do, but perhaps there is some consideration to regard our social fabric. I think it is fair to say that objectively, Barbados in 2020 is going through a period where there seems to be some divergence as to what it means, that social fabric.

Now, we have the much touted and much utilised social partnership, which I think has served greatly to deal with the economic wins that come. The question is, how do we deal with the less tangible issues; how do we deal with the emotional issues; how do we deal with the mental issues. Sir, the fact is that storm clouds are gathering; we see the war; we hear the cries about the environment; the Government has certainly championed the cause of utilising the borrowing mechanisms to consider those issues; we have the fears about the economy; and we have what persons seem to believe as questions with regard to the Barbadian culture through this law. I think what is necessary to reinforce is that while we deal with the economic issues, the physical issues and the very important like access to roads and roofing, because all of these things are secondary, but you need to have the hierarchal need; you need to meet your need for shelter and you need to meet your need for food. However, after we say all of that, I think it is important that we do not forget that we take care of each other, emotionally, mentally, and because it is Barbados, even though it is not popular now, maybe even spiritually. Our fabric as a society needs to be considered, yes, economically, but also with retaining that essence of how we do things in this country and how we should continue to maintain. I think this point has been made by the Prime Minister, is that we have to be our brother's keeper, and when the time comes, which probability says will be soon rather than later, we will pay a harsh price if we do not put mechanisms in place to take care of each other.

I fully support this legislation. I think it builds on initiative, which the Government started in 2020, but as always, we continue to say let us see how much further we can do and how much more we can do for the people of Barbados. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before I recognise Senator Mallalieu, I just want to recognise in our limited gallery, former Senator His Honour R. N. Greenidge and he is accompanying one of our officers, Ms. Felicia Smith of the Barbados Embassy in China. I recognise Senator Mallalieu.

Senator A. W. MALLALIEU: Mr. President, thank you for recognising me. I think what I about to say might

surprise you. This Amendment that we are looking at today, which has been so well articulated by the Leader of Government Business, seeks to broaden the scope and to help more people and to use a few of the words that the Honourable Senator colleague used, to build resilience. It will be irresponsible not to do it. Things that should be done before an event and doing justice in the four areas I would pick that you mentioned.

The challenge I have with this Amendment is not to do with any of those things; it is no to do with trying to look after more people in the case of a catastrophe. It is not to do with trying to do more to avoid what might come of a catastrophe. The challenge I have with amending this legislation, is in fact Section 8 of the underlying legislation, which is not being amended today, but I will like to focus on that and perhaps it is my training as a Chartered Accountant; perhaps it is my background as a business person; perhaps it is my philosophy on what good governance, that focuses me upon Section 8.

Section 8 tells us of the underlying legislation which the Amendments refer to, that

“(1) The Director, National Insurance shall

(a) keep proper accounts of the Fund and proper records in relation thereto;

(b) prepare a monthly statement of the accounts of the Fund;”

This is the Fund that we are relying in for resilience to look after these people in case of a catastrophe. To do all of the right things; to do what is justice; to be prepared in advance. The Section continues,

(c) “not later than 2 weeks after the end of each month, submit the statements to

(i) the Chairman of the National Insurance Board; and

(ii) the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs

(2) The accounts of the Fund shall be audited at least once every financial year by the Auditor-General.”

In another part of the underlying legislation, we learned that this Fund is managed by the National Insurance Board. My understanding and I am willing to be corrected if I am wrong; that the last time the National Insurance Scheme of Barbados was audited was in 2010. That will be 12 years ago. I am willing to be corrected, but that is certainly what I read in the public domain.

My concern about these Amendments is that we are seeking to do more for those who are most vulnerable; of course we all will agree that that is the right thing to do; of course we will agree that we need to build resilience and plan for these catastrophes that may happen more and more often. We will all agree to those things. As my learned Senator on this side spoke about, we will agree that there needs to be transparency and there should be reporting on it and there should be no favouritism and in a catastrophe we should all pull together. We will agree on those things, but I ask you and all of my colleagues to please consider here today; what would happen if when you go looking for this Fund, it does not exist. Do we not have an equal responsibility to carry out all parts of the legislation? When do we just focus on one part? How is it responsible of me today to ignore the law that is not being amended? How is it responsible of any of us to do this? Where are the audited statements of the National Insurance Scheme? Where are these reports that were supposed to be filed, no later than two weeks after the end of each month? Do they exist? Can we see them? Where is the report on the investment portfolio and other economic activity of the Fund? I find this extremely difficult and I think that if we are in fact going to build resilience, the fund needs to exist and we need to know it exists.

The money that we put in there needs to be well-managed and be reported to the people. It is the people's money. It would be irresponsible of us to simply expand the mandate of this fund without actually operating it in the way in which it was designed to begin with. One of the most important things that we need to do before the event, is to make sure that there is in fact funds to deal with when there is an event. Finally, I would say that if we are going to actually do justice; we really need to not only amend this legislation to broaden its scope and all of the things that we are talking about, but, Mr. President, we also need to do all of the things that are already in the legislation.

Before we go running to amend it and broaden the scope, let us see a report. Let us see how it has been operating. I would say to you today, that unfortunately I would not be in favour of amending the legislation. I am not in favour. I am in favour of the Amendments. They are the right thing to do but they need to be done having seen the report of the fund and seen it operating. We must do all that is already in the legislation before we go amending it to do something more.

With those few words, Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR Ms. C. N. DRAKES: Thank you, Mr. President. I will be brief in my remarks this afternoon. Sir, we came to the Chamber in 2020 to repeal the Catastrophe Fund Act and we made a series of amendments that broadened the scope of the Catastrophe Fund, as was

rightly done. What I want to speak about this afternoon is something a bit more specific in terms of policy and the acting Leader of Government Business spoke to the policy briefly, but I believe a little more attention needs to be placed. Policy, management and then implementation are all tied together.

Mr. President, we are talking about catastrophes and how we deal with loss and damage of natural disasters. The Government has a Roofs to Reefs Project that is also tied to the Physical Development Plan that Barbados has. What I find a bit concerning, Sir, is that to date there is no official public document of that overarching policy. I will repeat that. To date to my knowledge, based on scanning the internet and also asking persons within public office; there is no official public document as it relates to this overarching Roofs to Reefs Project. Mr. President, it is concerning because it is supposed to be the hallmark of Barbados' climate resilient economy.

It is the policy that the Government has said it will be guideline by which we undertake all of the necessary activities, projects and programmes, that will build out a climate resilient economy. Mr. President, if you would allow me to read an article by the former Minister in Economic Affairs and Investment, that was published in July 2021, so that you understand the magnitude of what this Roofs to Reefs Project is supposed to be about. Minister Caddle at the time noted as follows:

"Roofs to Reefs was developed in order to make sure that our economic recovery; that our economic plan is not all developed separately from our sustainable development agenda. Roofs to Reefs is really all of the interventions brought together in one programme; all of the interventions that are required for a climate resilient economy."

Mr. President, I am speaking about this because the Roofs to Reefs Project is also mentioned in the Updated Barbados Nationally Determined Contributions Plan, 2021. It does give a small paragraph about what is intended for the policy but, again, given the nature or what is supposed to be the nature of the overarching policy, I find the information still insufficient. Sir, allow me to read this section from the Updated Barbados Nationally Determined Contributions, 2021.

It states as follows:

The Roofs to Reefs Programme operationalizes the Physical Development Plan and provides the vehicle through which public investment will be directed. The Roofs to Reefs can improve the standard of living and quality of life of the most vulnerable segments of the population of Barbados' by improving social well-being of individuals and communities and significantly reducing the damage to property; loss of life and the costs incurred after

a severe weather event. R to R, as it is called, will result in a more resilient housing stock through roof fortification and retrofitting aimed to withstand up to a Category 4 hurricane.

Mr. President, if the Roofs to Reef Project or policy is supposed to be an overarching framework; how is it that we do not have a public document for inspection for this policy? I find it deeply concerning, Mr. President, that to date that document is still outstanding. It is being referenced internationally; regionally and nationally but to date, as far as I am aware; by scanning the internet and also asking persons who work within the Government, there is no document that outlines what this framework is really intended to do. Sir, that is concerning to me because the acting Leader of Government Business just rightly said that we recently had an audit of the housing stock. How is that fitting into the Roofs to Reefs Project?

By what strategies are these things being implemented? Who are the ones responsible to be implementing the outcomes and the targets that are associated with the Roofs to Reefs Project? Is there an integrated approach, Mr. President? Again, Sir, Roofs to Reefs is being mentioned on page 44, Section 93 of the BERT Plan 2022 that was sent to us only last night. Therefore, if there is no official guiding document, how is this being managed? Unless I am not understanding that it is a policy framework for the Government and it is something else that we are saying, but it is not being formulated officially, then so be it.

Given the weight that it has been ventilated in public domain; there should be some document guiding this policy. I will ignore the asides, Mr. President. Sir, I also bring this up because there is also another issue related to this programme. As broad or wide as the scope is, there is only one person presently, I believe and I stand corrected, that is coordinating the Roofs to Reefs Project. You cannot have an overarching policy and there is a single individual carrying the weight of such a policy. It is unfair and that leads me to management. As I said earlier, policy, management and implementation.

If you do not have a guiding document; if you have one individual carrying the weight of this policy and integrating it into all other public sector agencies; how then is it being implemented? How is it being tracked? What resources are being given to the programme?

I would like a bit of clarification here on exactly how this policy is being implemented, managed and where is the guiding document because we can say a lot of things, but if we are serious about outcomes and impact; then it is only right that we have the right documentation that is guiding us. It is inappropriate for us to be saying that we have this

policy and when I go on a website called climatelaws.org it states that this plan was passed in 2021. It says:

“This plan aims at protecting the population’s private and community roofs from extreme weather events such as tropical storms. It also seeks to encourage the use of renewable energy sources; rain water harvesting and nature based solutions, to reduce one-off into the coastal environment. This document has been identified in Barbados’ updated N.D.C. as I mentioned before, the Nationally Determined Contribution (N.D.C.) however,...”

and this is on the website ...

“... the text itself is not publicly available.”

Is it not publicly available or is it that it does not exist?

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Senator Drakes. Senator Haynes.

Senator Dr. C. K. M. HAYNES: Thank you, Mr. President, for recognising me. I am just starting with a little bit of background about the word “hurricane”. The word “hurricane” is actually derived from Taíno (the indigenous people) word for “devil”. I found that very interesting because every hurricane season we find ourselves praying to be spared with these devils start to stir. I am hoping that today we will see safe passage of these amendments so that we could be better prepared in the event of the worst. The Catastrophe Fund, 2007 was first established under law by a previous Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government, with the purpose of providing financial aid to low income earners who resided in chattel houses, in the event that their homes were damaged or destroyed by a catastrophe.

One of the notable amendments today, would be the deletion of Section 4 of the principle legislation with substitution of that section with a new section that would not only allow for us to remedy and to respond after damage or destruction have occurred but would also allow mitigation, allowing for Barbadian home and business owners to be better prepared should there be an impending catastrophe. As Senator Munro-Knight indicated, we are trying to be proactive rather than just being reactive.

To Senator Mallalieu’s point about the need for this Act to exist and the importance of this legislation; he was suggesting that he wants the Act to be there but it has to be strong and I hear his calls, but the only time that the existence of the Catastrophe Fund legislation was ever under threat was in 2016 when the former Minister of Finance threatened -- and this is publicly known. You can see it in The Nation news; in the Advocate - to repeal the

Catastrophe Fund Act. Here it is, we live in one of the most disaster prone regions of the world and we have a Fund set up to secure us in the event of a catastrophe and we had a Minister of Finance telling Barbadians that \$35 million sitting there and nobody is doing anything with it. Let us repeal the Act. That is what we were facing. Here we are today doing the responsible thing to make sure that the Act can be properly administered so Barbadians, both individuals and businesses, who have needs can have their needs addressed and so that the funding can be accessed.

Due to our size and location; Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change. According to the inter-governmental panel on climate change, on average temperatures in the region have increased between 0.1 Celsius and 0.2 Celsius every decade for the last three decades. The report from the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change also indicated that our sea levels have risen 2 centimetres to 4 centimetres every decade for the last 33 years. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is reporting that even though the Caribbean is vulnerable, just like all other Small Island Developing States (SIDS); it says that natural disasters occur more frequently and cost more in the Caribbean than in any other region of the world. Specifically, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is saying, disaster damage as a ratio of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 4.5 times greater for small States than for large States, but six times greater for Caribbean states, in particular. That is just an overview of the level of risk that we face. The threat to not just human life, but to your infrastructure and to our economies.

In our lifetime, we have all experienced impacts of other natural phenomena. Earth tremors, and I remember in 2007, leaving the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) after a post call late and the car started to shake as I pulled up in front of St. Michael's School. Everybody stopped moving, people got out of their cars and ran, it was complete chaos, but thank God that is not something that we have experienced very often in these parts. We have all lived through the volcanic ash fall last year, but hurricanes, by far, are the most hazardous, natural phenomena that we have experienced in the Atlantic basin and the Atlantic basin encompasses the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. On average, the Atlantic basin sees about 14 named storms with seven hurricanes and three major hurricanes between category 3 and category 5 every year and the threat of the hurricanes come in a number of ways. You have the threat of the pounding waves, the torrential rains and storm surges. You can get wind destruction directly causing damage to agricultural crops, blowing down poles and that kind of thing so it has a possible effect on; as you would have seen back when Hurricane Maria, I believe it was, that impacted Dominica and wiped out 253 per cent of their GDP, just in a few hours because they have primarily an agricultural economy

and their entire banana crop was lost due to the effect of the winds. Even more damaging, it said, is that when an object becomes airborne, whether it is a light pole; whether it is roof tiles; whether it is a vehicle; anybody who did a little bit of physics in secondary school would remember that force is a fact of mass and velocity so you combine the wind speed with the weight of that object, you can do a lot more damage when something becomes airborne. That is one of the ways in which we tend to get damage from hurricanes but there is also impact related to rainfall as well. When the ground becomes overly saturated, there is a threat of landslides and land slippage, but something that we have been seeing more worryingly is actually the impact of storm surges and what actually blew my mind was that Hurricane Dorian impacted The Bahamas in 2019 with maximum sustained winds of 185 miles per hour, if you can even imagine that. The most devastation was not caused by the wind force. It was caused by the storm surge that accompanied that. Up to this day, they have said 84 fatalities, but the number of officially reported missing people was around 300; 280 something people still missing and can obviously be presumed dead; so hurricanes are not something to be taken lightly and it reinforces the importance of why we are here today because as we always say: "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure."

Caribbean economies are projected to lose up to \$10.5 billion annually from the impacts of climate change by 2025. That is in just over two years from now. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that yearly that yearly losses from storm damage in the region averages 17 per cent of GDP. We know that during the COVID-19 pandemic, we had an impact on our GDP. It was basically having a COVID-19 pandemic every time a hurricane hits and we know that the COVID-19 pandemic had our economy reeling; so this is something that we definitely have to take seriously and I'm glad that we are taking steps to mitigate against the impact of catastrophes and with this primary focus of my speech on hurricanes. In the Barbadian context, Senator Shantal Munroe-Knight would have made reference to Hurricane Janet which struck in September 1955. That hurricane had sustained winds of between 110 and 120 mph and 38 Barbadians lost their lives. Janet ultimately went on to become the first storm to claim 1000 lives and also became the first hurricane to have its name retired because it was so absolutely devastating. We fast forward to Hurricane Elsa now because it took us 65 years before we were impacted directly by another hurricane. Elsa impacted Barbados with maximum sustained winds of 74 mph and although we did not lose a single human life, I want you guys to listen to the impact. The Minister of Housing in the other place indicated that 1,796 homes were either severely damaged or destroyed by the impact of the hurricane. He also was able to give a bit of a progress report on how the Ministry of Housing is doing in terms of these repairs and he said

that roughly 71 per cent of the homes are either fully completed or under progress in terms of the rebuilds and repairs being done. Roughly 280 homeowners were able to just get building materials and were willing to do the work that they need to do themselves to do their home repairs but overall this cost the Government \$109 million dollars. As much as a hurricane impacts the island, we might say for 3-6 hours maximum as it slowly circulates and passes over the island; the impact is continually felt as we continue to respond because it causes a cascade of other effects in terms of displacement; damage to infrastructure and so on.

I wanted to move on to our efforts to build out our mitigation prevention plan. Senator Munro-Knight earlier made reference to Operation Seek and Secure which was modelled off of a project the Government rolled out during the pandemic called Operation Seek and Save. Everybody would remember during the pandemic when we were locked down. The aim was to get these volunteers out so that we could go and access the extent of infection in the community. While everybody was at home; try to reduce to movement and try to identify high risk cases so they copied that model in a sense to say well we are going to take students of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology (SJPI); train them and put them under the supervision of the Barbados Defence Force (BDF) and its facilitated by the University of the West Indies (UWI) as well and allow them to go door to door to ask a specific set of questions; so that we can collate the data to help to formulate our policy and to inform our decision making process. This is hopefully going to allow us to, I heard the Minister of Housing as well in the other place make reference to intended Hurricane Straps Programme. He said they want to disburse about 10,000 roof straps so that it would help to secure the roof of wooden and chattel houses, so that they will not be lost in the event of a calamity. What I am most impressed with, however and I had a chat with my former colleague Senator Adams; who would have been in the Chamber during the last session of Parliament because he actually is involved with the HOPE Inc. Project and I know we heard about the HOPE Inc. houses a lot in terms of the fact that they are all going to have the solar panel; the photo voltaic panels on the roof tops and such but he actually explained a little more detail how they are building these homes to hurricane resilient. So ultimately the aim is to build about 10,000 homes. The homes are going to be accessible by various categories of income earners; whether you earn under 2,000 dollars a month; under 5,000 dollars a month or HOPE Premium which will be targeting higher income earners but all of these homes are being built with hurricane resilience in mind as well. He explained that they had a team of structural engineers overlook the design plans to even ensure that the angle at which the roofing is placed, is done in such a way to minimize lift. Ultimately the homes, certainly the ones in HOPE direct where he's involved

with, should be able to withstand up to Category 3 hurricane force winds; that's up to 129 mph. In addition to, yes allowing businesses and individuals to access funding to retrofit homes; here we are factoring in resilience into our future build outs in terms of how we build out our housing stock going forward and I was really impressed by what he was able to tell me. As I wrap up, I just want to say I saw an interesting quote, The World Development Report 2017, "Long term growth is less about how fast one grows, than about how often you trip along the way." One of the challenges that we have here, is that you can have the best plans in the world when you are getting hurricane; ash fall from the volcano; freak storms all of these threats can potentially cripple us and bring us to our knees but in being proactive and in taking steps to mitigate against catastrophe; hopefully will allow us to be able to bounce back, dust ourselves off and get back on our feet faster. Mr. President, I commend these Amendments to the House. Thank You.

Senator the Hon. L. E. NURSE: Thank you, Mr. President. I should say from the very beginning that I support these Amendments. I think it is a very important aspect of our planning as we move ahead. We have seen within the last two years, how within that short period we have been affected a hurricane. How we have been affected by ash fall and of course the Covid-19 Pandemic which was over that period and of course we have had the situation where we have had significant or droughts during that period as well. These are all the things that obviously we will have to make sure that we plan for and that our mitigation efforts are such that they are included in plan as Senator Drakes mentioned. I am not aware either of a plan; overall plan or management or any plan as to how we propose to manage these risks. One of the things that I particularly wanted to ask is, there any study any risk assessment that has ever been done which we can use as a guide? Let us say for example if there was a Category 3 Hurricane, are we in a position to say look we will lose 50 percent of our housing stock? Do we have that kind of information available and if so how do we build up; make sure that this Catastrophe Bill is build up to the level, where there are sufficient funds to be able to do all of the necessary repairs and maintenance and rebuilding that would have to be done in such a situation. I think that has to be all part of the plan that government has got to do to build that resilience which Senator Munro-Knight spoke about earlier. Another aspect of building that resilience is to make sure, of course that the funds are available when we need them. In a catastrophe you need to have funds immediately. I do not know how the monies of this Catastrophe Fund are invested. I do not know what the investments are. I do not know who is holding the funds, and it would be really good because people will need to have cash or near-cash available so that they can do the things which have to be done. Again, I do not know how the Fund is financed. Is it by annual appropriations out of

the Consolidated Fund? I really do not know but I think we need to have an understanding that, as part of this resilience which we have been talking about for a while, we ensure that those funds are being set aside and being properly managed.

Mr. President, I think it is also important that the majority of those funds are not necessarily kept in Barbados. The reasoning is, of course, as we said: Suppose there was a major catastrophe. Suppose we lost a substantial part of our business activity for a while. We would need to be able to have foreign exchange; which is very important for bringing in all of the materials and other things that would be needed very quickly to do the rebuilding I just mentioned. I think it is important to understand how the investments of this Fund are allocated, and they cannot be invested necessarily in this region either. When you have a major hurricane passing through this region, it affects every other territory in the region, so again we have to look at that as another aspect of the management of our funds.

Sir, there was something else I just wanted to mention and I believe it was raised back when we were doing the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. We spoke about the importance of getting some kind of assessment of our housing stock. It must include the level and the condition of our buildings; of our roads and so on. We really need to be able to do that kind of assessment and analysis so that it gives us an idea overall about how much we have to build up this Fund and make sure that we have the level of funds necessary for such an eventuality. I believe I heard the Leader of Government Business mention \$23 million being in the Fund. I am not sure if that was the correct number I heard, but how much is \$23 million if that is the number? Therefore, we need to be able to understand where we have to get to; how soon we are going to get there and what are the plans are for the annual appropriations or whatever that may be necessary to build that Fund up to give us that level of security; whereby we would be able to recover very quickly in the event of some catastrophe.

Mr. President, there is one other little thing I want to mention and it is something that struck me. We know we have one utility currently going through a process for an increase in rates, but one of the things I heard coming out of that, was that dividends were being paid out of a Catastrophe Fund which had actually been built up to be able to replace the transmission and distribution lines in the eventuality of a catastrophe, as we were speaking about just now. Something is obviously wrong about that, in my view; if it is so that you are actually being allowed to build up this self-insurance fund, as it were, and then you pay dividends out of it. When we have a catastrophe, where would the funds be to replace those transmission and distribution systems? Perhaps we have to look at the

legislation and make sure that companies which are allowed to build up these self-insurance funds are specifically restricted in what they can do with these funds, to make sure that in some eventuality if there is a need to use the funds, they would be available and at the levels which would be necessary.

Mr. President, the other thing I want to mention is that within the last two weeks or so -- maybe three weeks -- we have had quite an excessive amount of rainfall. We saw on social media and on the news the problems with flooding in areas like Holetown and so on, and what again struck me as odd is that this is a project which was just completed a year ago. In fact, they may still be doing some snagging and so on to complete the project but yet here it is that we seem to have constructed a completely new highway along that coast road and obviously, the drainage systems do not seem to be very robust. I think this is something we have to take into account in our reconstruction efforts; in the things we are doing in the Drainage Unit, et cetera, just to make sure that we do not just go and repave a road; make it nice to drive on but then have all of the issues which people would have been complaining about and which we were supposed to have been addressing during that process. Again, that is the kind of resilience I would wish to hope is being built into our overall plan.

I think it is a good move. I think it shows that we are obviously looking towards what the future may bring for us. When you read the experts' advice on climate change, you recognise that what they are saying is that while we are experiencing these changes, they are bringing more dangerous hurricanes and causing more severe drought. We know what has happened across Europe and parts of the United States this year; so we need to be able to understand that what obtains now may be even more severe in the future. Therefore, as we go ahead, we need to seriously make sure that we have, as I said earlier, the adequate level of funds set aside to be able to deal with those issues.

Mr. President, as I said at the beginning, I support the proposed Amendments, and I just hope that we can see more or be more educated as to how this Fund is being managed and what is there and what is available should we need to call upon those Funds in any eventuality. Mr. President, with those few words, I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you very much Senator Nurse. I recognise Senator Dr. Hinds.

Senator Dr. K. G. HINDS: Thank you, Mr. President and good afternoon. I do not think anyone would really take issue with us being prepared for catastrophes; natural disasters; terrorist threats; and pandemics. It is obvious that these are really important issues, and it has been made very clear by Senator Munro-Knight that this is an important

Amendment. We need to be prepared. I was briefly a guide, briefly because I left and went to Cadets and one of the first things that I learned as a guide is to be prepared. It is good to have children join these kinds of things, because these things stick with you. This is what we are trying to do, we are trying to be prepared, we do not want to be reactive, we need to be prepared. When there is a catastrophe, yes, we need to react, but we also have to think about mitigation and preparation. This is a critical piece of the parent legislation and the Amendment is supposedly important, and I say supposedly, only because it is so important that those who have brought the Amendment, the Government side are so depleted in numbers. This is an important piece of legislation. I wonder what would happen if the four on the other side were the only ones to vote in favour of this legislation; this important piece of legislation. It would not pass. We need to be prepared. I think that when dealing with matters as serious as this; one needs to be prepared to ensure that one's legislative agenda is successful. However, I leave that where it is and refer to the legislation itself and to some of my thoughts surrounding it.

To begin with, I want to look at the parent legislation and in that legislation, under interpretation Clause 2, we are told about what a catastrophe is:

"In this Act "catastrophe" means an event, whether natural or not, that has a significant, adverse impact on the economy or a part of the economy including:

(a) a fire, an earthquake, a storm, a hurricane, a storm surge, a sea surge, flooding, lightning or another force of nature;

(b) a pandemic;

(c) a breach of cybersecurity; and

(d) an act of terrorism;"

These are the things that can be considered here. In thinking about being responsive to the times, the things that are happening around us. I just want to say that all of the things that Senator Munro-Knight said about housing, I certainly support and about support for business. As I said these things are quite obvious. We need to make sure that the economy keeps going and it functions. We need to ensure that the most vulnerable are taken care of in a natural disaster.

There are other things included in this legislation and I want to emphasise a breach of cybersecurity. Considering that in quite recent times we have seen such things. This year we have seen small businesses affected by breaches in cybersecurity. Just this month in October we had a conference; we heard a lot about this conference about Fintech and about increasing access to these technologies,

so that all of us will be able to do things, such as make payments using our mobile phones, using an app. This needs to be democratised, it is not just for the high minded. It is not just for the big businesses; our entrepreneurs; our small businesses. Those small businesses with turnover of \$500 000 or less, that are that covered in this legislation are being encouraged to make use of Fintech, get into the 21st century. While we are thinking about mitigation for these small businesses when it comes to the physical side; there are two committees that form part or come out of this legislation. One deals with physical and the other deals with economic, so while we consider the physical, we are heavily emphasising the physical elements. What about the economic side? The economic side is not just critical when we are talking about natural disasters, and I am not belittling the significance of natural disasters; but I am saying there is another side to this legislation that I believe requires some expansion, because I am very clear as to all of the things that one can do in the event of a natural disaster. I am also somewhat clear about some of the mitigation initiatives for the physical side, but what about this other side.

I turn again to the legislation. Mr. President, let me just take a minute to refer to my notes. In the legislation in the First Schedule, we are made aware that businesses, although I said be prepared I guess I am not as prepared as I thought, right, and I too am having technological difficulties in this cyber era. If I can refer to Schedule 1A(2) of the amended legislation:

"A business, whether incorporated or not, which

(a) has an annual turnover in business not exceeding \$500 000;

(b) and is compliant with its obligations under the Income Tax Act, Cap. 73, the Value Added Tax Act, Cap. 87, the National Insurance and Social Security Act, Cap. 47, and any other enactment relating to the payment of any other tax or impost,

is entitled to claim financial aid in such amount or relief from obligations for such period as is determined by the Economic Catastrophes Committee, in order to enable the business to mitigate or remedy the adverse effects of a catastrophe."

How does a small business do this for a cyber-threat or attack? I am not saying that what the Government has done here is bad, because we are in the hurricane season and we know how important it is to address this issue. We are also in a season where we have seen complaints about things like data breaches online. We know that there are these issues with credit cards; banking and persons' financial data. How are we helping the same small businesses that are supposed to drive this country into the

future; the entrepreneurs; mitigate against these kinds of threats. Are small businesses to be expected to use their own resources and capacities and what have you to build in into their use of Fintech and these websites and payment platforms on their own the ability to deal with these cyber threats? This is something that I would have wanted to see in an Amendment and I know this is a new area, I understand it is a new area, but if we are being prepared and we are thinking ahead and we are not being reactive; we are being proactive; all of the things that I heard from Senator Munro-Knight, I think these are things that we need to think about before. I cannot even say before, because these things are already happening. I know this seems like a kind of esoteric point, but it is not me that put it in the Catastrophe Fund Legislation. It is in here, and if it is in here, as Senator Mallalieu said, we need to address the things that are in the legislation.

In speaking about Senator Mallalieu, I think he made a really excellent point in stating that it is important for us to consider the management of the Fund. This Fund is critical for dealing with all of the things that Senator Munro-Knight made clear. It is important and we have to know that it is being managed appropriately. We have to be able to see the reports; we have to trust the reporting system. I find it really unfortunate that a kind of “straw man” argument was set up in order to undermine the point.

This is a sort of distortion of someone’s position. We can bring in the fact that the only time that this fund was ever under threat was in 2016, which has nothing to do with the fact that a very valid point about the management of this fund was raised in here, a critical point. This is the money of the people of Barbados. This fund is for the people of Barbados and when a serious point is raised, it should be addressed seriously. You do not set up a “straw man” to pull it down so that one can go ahead and make a point. This is the business of the people of Barbados and it is really important for us to know about how the fund is doing.

Is it healthy? When we have a catastrophe and the people’s roofs are gone and they are looking for a new roof, are they going to be able to get it? We need to be assured. I read the BLP’s Manifesto. I read the 2018 edition and the last one published in 2022. I counted the word “transparency” in the 2018 edition 11 times. It is a popular word in the Manifesto and their needs to be some transparency related to this Fund. I have just one other matter, Mr. President, pertaining to this Amendment. This has to do with the fact that it speaks to the Amendment of First Schedule to Act, 2020-13 at Clause 4 subsection (6) and states as follows:

“For the purposes of this paragraph “agency” means

a. the Urban Development Commission established under the Urban Development Commission Act, Cap. 241;

b. the Rural Development Commission established under the Rural Development Commission Act, Cap. 238;

c. the National Housing Corporation established under the Housing Act, Cap. 226; or

d. any ministry, department or other authority of Government charged with providing social services, including another statutory board.”;

I read in today’s newspaper that some things were happening to all of these entities. I read that the UDC and RDC were going to be merged. I read also that there were some issues with the efficiencies of the NHC. If we are having issues, why are these agencies that are critical to this Act? I am quoting the Prime Minister of Barbados as published in today’s Nation Newspaper as follows:

“The NHC will continue to manage the public estates; be the provider of those rent-to own but when it comes to development, the NHC is regrettably too bureaucratic and too incapable of moving alacrity.”

If I am doing something that is wrong, please object.

Yet, while being too incapable of moving with alacrity; it is one of the said entities noted here as one of the agencies that are supposed to facilitate delivery of said funds. Hence, I understand that we have a lot of issues with our SOEs. I also support the need to reform some of them too; probably many of them to ensure that they do indeed perform with alacrity. I would hope that we operate with some coherence as well because if there are these concerns about the UDC; RDC and NHC; why are we bringing these agencies forward as those that are important in facilitating the delivery of these funds, when our business experience a physical emergency? These are some of the things that I just a find a bit concerning.

They are things that stand out to me and I find some what incoherent that I wanted to raise today now that I have the opportunity to do so. I think that this amendment is one that is laudable. It is laudable because it does place emphasis in an area that we need to emphasize. It is really important for us to think about flooding or what happens when we have these emergencies or catastrophes; what happens to people and businesses. I do think that we need to, using Senator Munro-Knight’s words, we need to “shore up” what we do as well.

We need to “shore up” our approach to these things so that we are truly being proactive; flexible; responsive; nimble and providing legislation that is fit for purpose. We need to move away from our traditional approach, to a

proactive one so that we can shore up resilience. My fear is that we have not done sufficient in this Amendment to do so. I really want to reemphasize how important Senator Mallalieu's point is in shoring up resilience. We need to make sure that the fund is properly managed so that when the time comes to use it, we have the ability to do what we are supposed to with it.

With these words, Mr. President, I am obliged.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Senator Dr. Hinds. Senator Mr. C. A Maynard.

SENATOR MR. C. A MAYNARD: Thank you, Mr. President. I will be brief, Sir. I want to also read from something but not the Nation Newspaper. I will read from the Act, Mr. President. The Catastrophe Fund Act 2020, under the definition of "catastrophe" states that it means an event, whether natural or not; that has a significant adverse impact on the economy or a part of the economy; including all of the areas that Senator Hinds touched on.

Mr. President, what that really means is that man-made events which we chose not speak to which happen in this country; where people have done things in an unregulated way that results in catastrophes, should be included. We spoke about 1,700-plus houses that were

damaged and had to be repaired and the amount of monies spent, but people can live outside. What people cannot live without, Mr. President, is water. Whenever there is a catastrophe in this country, there is this panic about water and bottled water. I have often wondered whether this country spent enough time and energy to secure our water supplies in case there is a catastrophe where our sources of ground water could be contaminated.

As has happened in some places and you have heard recently that in Florida that there were storm surges. The water became undrinkable. It is a major issue, Mr. President. While we can have a fund that will help persons and businesses that suffer damage in a catastrophe; we see that happening currently with the results of the hurricane that passed over a year ago. If we are going to have resilience, we have to build it out. Mr. President, as far as I am aware, there is no existing building code in this country. This is no existing enforceable building code in this country. I ask myself, why we are spending all this time speaking how we will repair what has been damaged, when we have not set a standard for how we will build?

While we continue to speak about the funds you provide; we have not spent any time stating how we build structures that will be resilient and have professional bodies such as the Barbados Association of Professional Engineers, be on hand to advise on what is best. Mr. President, we heard in another place where a Minister stood

up and beat on members of that organization but those are the people we need to advise us. We cannot say that we will provide \$40 million - I am just calling that amount - to repair houses when we have not spent any time on laying out how they must be built so that they will be resilient.

The idea of fitting hurricane straps on chattel houses may save a few but it does not prevent the walls from collapsing. The statements being made confirms that had the roofs been secured, the whole structure might have blown away. We have to spend some time doing the things that are important that would build long term resilience. I thought that Senator Munro-Knight made that excellent point there that it has to be resilient; not for tomorrow and not for 10 years, but for a long time and hopefully, Mr. President, in the near future we would see a Bill come to this Parliament that lays out a building code.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you very much Senator Maynard. Are there any more speakers? Senator Andwele Boyce.

Senator A. A. O. BOYCE: Thank you for recognising me, Mr. President.

I begin by indicating my support for the amendments before the Senate, Sir; out of an appreciation of the seriousness of the times that we live in. Times it defined; particularly in this part of the world by climate events that have the capacity to devastate us in one fell swoop and it is in that context, Mr. President, that the Amendments before the Senate are necessary. The principle piece of legislation makes it so that individuals and businesses; low income individuals specifically, and small businesses benefit from the protection of the Government, in relation to catastrophes and though I focus on hurricanes and climate events we appreciate that the legislation goes a bit further.

Mr. President, some context is necessary because in 2007 when the principle piece of legislation was tabled; we were having a very different conversation about climate and climate resilience. Perhaps it is most appropriate to say that we were not having as robust a conversation as we are now. Perhaps we did not understand the circumstances to be as dire. In the intervening period though, we have seen climate events, not only on these shores, but in other parts of the region that make it very clear that where we fail to prepare; we do so at our own peril. That is not to say, Mr. President, that the Barbadians who have been impacted by climate events and have lost parts of their structures, did not prepare. That is not to say, Mr. President, that the horrors of the hurricane season of 2017 and the ravages that it had on some of our Caribbean neighbours, was evidence of a lack of preparation. It is to say though, Mr. President, that we need to do what we can and in the name of doing

what we can; this Government has endeavoured to build resilience, a word that you have heard time and again in this afternoon's debate. Resilience here is not only about the Catastrophe Fund, although that is what we are debating. It is not only about a Roof-to-Reefs Programme; although that was highlighted here today but it is about the multiplicity of ways this Government has found to entrench in its policy of infrastructure resilience and capacity building. Mr. President, the suggestion, to the extent that we heard it today; that this is about platitudes or public relations, Sir, is one that I take, and I think that the Government will take umbrage with. It is built into the policy infrastructure of this country time and again, Mr. President. Whether it is hour international agreements; whether it is arrangements with the Bretton Woods Institutions or global advocacy. Our global advocacy seeks to ensure that the world and perhaps none more importantly than all of us; take measure of our vulnerabilities. Mr. President, we live in a country where small and micro businesses make up a large measure of our corporate and business environment. To ensure that they are protected from the ravages of climate events; to ensure that their resilience to the ravages of climate events are imperative. Where there is a post disaster economic lull, it affects all of us. This is not a debate in the abstract. It is not an esoteric conversation. It is about the lived reality and the lived realities of businesses and people across this country, Mr. President.

I make the point that resilience is built into our policy infrastructure, Mr. President, and I want to note that the Government's Manifesto has made very clear that the existence; the importance of things like the Roof-to-Reefs Programme and through that programme, it makes clear that resilience depends on all of us. It is in that context that I take the opportunity to encourage all Barbadians to do what they can. Your Government will protect you but your Government expects you also to partner in the protection of yourself from these events. It takes all of us to withstand to be resilient from; and to survive these events.

Mr. President, it is quite poetic, I suppose, that we are having this discussion in the midst of the Hurricane season. A hurricane season that has largely been uneventful, 'knock on wood'; one where as each one does, highlights the vulnerabilities of this country and that underscores the point that I made earlier about this not being an abstract or esoteric conversation. The Government of Barbados has committed to ensuring that low income Barbadians and small businesses, can withstand the test of times that we cannot be sure of; that we cannot be certain what will befall us and so it is in that context that I lend my support to the Amendments before the House and pray their safe passage. I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you very much Senator Andwele Boyce. Senator Rev. Dr. Rogers.

Senator Rev. Dr. J. A. ROGERS: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I will be brief with my statement here. It was not my intention to speak on this matter but having heard some of the concerns of some of the other Senators, I thought it necessary to say a few words. Having grown up in the Leeward Islands, I have experienced lots of hurricanes and particularly so, I saw the effects in the aftermath of Hurricane Lewis in St. Martin in 1995; where almost every roof in that country was gone. We also saw recently what happened in Barbuda and in other parts of the Caribbean. We saw what happened in Florida recently and I wish to touch on a point that Senator Boyce; Senator Kevin Boyce would have mentioned earlier about the social and psychological effects of the catastrophe which are not really highlighted here. In going to St. Martin in 1996; months after the passage of Hurricane Lewis people were still in a daze. They were people who were having panic attacks and anxiety attacks just at a high wind. I think that this is an aspect of these catastrophes that are sometimes lost on us and can be lost on us here in this country because we have not had much experience of these things. Perhaps a further Amendment to this Bill can be something that takes into account the social and psychological effects of the catastrophe and how we can mitigate the effects of those things on persons thereafter. I also wish to support the point made by Senator Mallilieu because I believe it is an important point and Senator Hinds; that we had mentioned transparency so much whereas if we were to touch on the events in the last few days, the lack of transparency and stealth can be euphemisms for governance in this time or seen in that way by some people. We have to be doting our 'I's' and crossing out 'T's' with matters such as this and I want to reinforce the point that Senator Mallalieu made. It would not be a sticking point in not supporting this Legislation; if there is a promise that we can seriously look at the audited report of the Catastrophe Fund and the NIS in general. I also want to raise a point that maybe futuristic and some persons may think its harsh but I think we have seen in recent years, that we really cannot build for the ferocity of the hurricanes that are passing here; so while we may be putting effort into building something that is resilient, we may be putting money into a bag with holes and in so doing we have to balance the economics of it because in seeking to build a more resilient structure, the cost will go up and put some people out of the market. Maybe the time will come, it may sound harsh, when we will have to invest in a few shelters within the country that can house particular number of people; when we have government projects for housing, we invest in houses that are easily replaceable. Look at that economic side of it because I don't think that we can adequately build the type of structures that can resist some of the storms and some of the effects of storms that we are seeing in recent times; so that's just my area of sobriety in this matter. I want to commend the government and previous administrations for this legislation because I think it is necessary for us in this region. We definitely must plan

and as Senator Munro-Knight would have pointed out, we definitely have to be proactive in anticipating what is to come and make the necessary preparations but I do believe the time will come, when we will have to make that decision about the type of structures that we are building; particularly as low income housing in this country. It is just a thought. I wish to once again support the view of Senator Boyce; that an integral part of this legislation has to be the social and psychological effects of catastrophes. I think that that is something we should seriously think about and strange enough I was at mass this morning and we were using, one of our readings was from Galatians Chpt 6 verse 3 in particular, which reminds us to bear each other's burdens and feel what the other person is going through and I think that that is an important part of this Legislation as well; so with those few words I wish to thank you Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you Senator Rev. Dr. Rogers. Senator King.

Senator J. A. KING: thank you Mr. President. I just want to make a few small points so to speak on this. I wholeheartedly support the changes but I wanted to try to allay some of the fears I have heard espoused here. One, the idea of the agencies that Senator Hinds spoke about. UDC, RDC and whatever. Those entities yes, are going to submerge into what is termed the NDC but let us be real and I want to be brutally honest in here this morning. Let us be real. The problems of the UDC, The RDC, The NHC, The NIS these things did not overnight and there is going to be no magic pill or any magic wand that any of us in here can wave and make them go away just like that. They are works in progress and when we speak about building codes and the other things like that which I totally agree with but as Senator Rogers made the point and I want to support him on this and I think at some point in time; as a person who has been involved in social work for a long time some of us need to get out of these rooms and go out the road and see what is really happening out there with people. They are going to numbers of people that no matter what any configuration of government does; these people are not going to be able to do things for themselves. It is totally impossible and so once, like I said I agree with the idea of building codes and these sort of things but you are always going to find people who can only do what they can do and unless we have a sustained programme that speaks to the code; not only for the people who are not below the poverty line but that the codes are adhered to at all levels, Government included. When you are building, and ensuring that those persons who cannot do it for themselves adhere to the same codes; then we would be on the road to fixing that particular problem. The expense of a lot of the things -- again, as Senator Rogers mentioned -- drives up the costs. Sometimes when I hear Barbadians speak, I wonder if we compare ourselves with what is termed as the developed world. While not understanding our own history;

where we are as a small island developing state, and what kind of finances we bring to the table.

Let us be real. What kind of money do we bring in from what we call our major thing, tourism; to fund all of the things I hear people saying Government must do or that this person should do? What kinds of salaries do people work for as opposed to the kind of expense that we have to pay for everyday living? At some point in time somebody has to get real. We can have great wish-lists, fantastic wish-lists; but we have to face the reality of where we live. A government -- I am not talking about this particular Administration -- can only do what it can do; in the same way that the person who lives below the poverty line can only do what he or she can do.

It is important that sometimes when we seek to score some points, that we stick to what it is we are supposed to be dealing with. We are talking about a Fund. Today the discussion is the Fund. I listened very carefully as we got little sidebars and different things to deal with the running of the National Insurance Scheme and these other things but, as I said, those are things which have to be worked on as we go along. I can understand how one would feel if you hear, "Yes, it is going there," but if someone can please give me a better option; I would be very open to listening to it and I would support it too if it comes. Sorry, Senator Mallalieu, all I am saying is: Bring me, as a Member of the Senate, a solution as to what the alternative is going to be. Put it on the table. This is a place where the Resolutions can come. Bring them and put them on the table and let us discuss them. I would be very happy to hear because I, like you and everybody else in this room, I am very interested in seeing the very best for the land that I call home, but at the same time I also believe that there is a time and a place for everything. With those few words, I am obliged to you, Mr. President.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator King. Senator Dr. Munro-Knight.

Senator Dr. the Hon. S.M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, I do now beg that this Sitting be suspended until 3 p.m.

SUSPENSION

The question that the Senate be suspended until 3 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and His Honour the PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. the Hon. Munro-Knight.

Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who rose to speak on this Bill. The robust discussion that we had in here, really shows the importance of the Bill and the number of areas that were identified and brought to the fore. I believe added to the discussion fully and allowed us to look at all of the nuances.

I want to address the concern that was raised in relation to a regional approach and to remind that here in Barbados, we have the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA); and CDEMA effectively coordinates on the behalf of CARICOM a regional approach to the disaster management. More than that, just quite recently, this Government in collaboration with an international partner, established right here in Barbados; so that Barbados becomes the hub for responding to regional catastrophes, and it is not only to serve as a hub for responses but also was well to provide training and capacity building as well. The Government fully appreciates that we need to be able to work with our regional partners in order to address the issue. Barbados by itself, 166 square miles. We understand that we are small and that we are vulnerable and that we have to be able to call on and work with our partners. Do not forget, we have the potential in the context of a catastrophe from refugees, and I call them refugees, but from people who have to flee their country to come to ours or for us to be able to have flee our country to go to theirs. If we approach this in a way that does not embrace our regional neighbors, then it means that we are creating a system that is not sustainable for us. So very much this Government is understanding of that and is ensuring that we work jointly in order to have the approach that is necessary.

Mr. President, I want to also address the concern that was placed in the floor in relation to the National Insurance Scheme, Section 8 of the Act; where it was noted that there is supposed to be monthly reports on the Catastrophe Fund, and the concern that was raised in respect of the management of the Fund. I do want to invite all of the Honourable Senators here to go on the NIS website and type in Catastrophe Fund. Mr. President, you will see the Catastrophe Fund Financial Report as at 2021-10-31; Catastrophe Fund Financial Report as at 2021-09-30; Catastrophe Fund Financial Report as at 2021-08-31; Catastrophe Fund Financial Report as at 2021-07-31 and I can go on. I also want to make the point, and while it is appreciated that yes that is up to 2021, as of October; I want to remind this Honourable Chamber that even though, yes the NIS edited statements are not up to date, the actual reports on all of the NIS Funds every three years and in that

actuarial report there has never been an adverse report on the Catastrophe Fund to date.

Mr. President, I also want to indicate that currently the Catastrophe Fund stands at \$30.5 million at present. The Fund is not in danger. The discussion over the National Insurance Fund and the extent to which it could possibly run out in 12 years or more; let us be fair and let us have an honest discussion. The NIS Fund is not in danger of collapse. We came to this country, again I am going to use my own words, in an effort to be proactive. We intended as a Government to face it and fix it. We did not hide the fact that the audited reports were not up to date. We came to the country and said there is a problem and these are the things that we are working to do to fix it. We have said to the country, that we are working to bring up all of those audited reports and we are currently working with the auditors to ensure that those reports are up-to-date. This Government is intended on facing it and fixing it. We came to the country for the conversation.

I also want to suggest that the issue of corporate governance is one that this Government is committed to and being very transparent about. Currently, right through the public sector, there is training for every single SOE Board on the issue of corporate governance; and how we strengthen it and ensure that it operates to best practices. That is who this Government is. If we want perfection in this moment, then I am going to hold my hands up and say to you, I cannot deliver perfection. Quite humbly, I would suggest if I could, I probably do not belong here, I probably belong up in the heavens. Perfection is something that you work towards, and I will also like to suggest, again, let us be fair that the issue of corporate governance is not just a problem or challenge for Government. Sagicor collapsed and it was a problem of corporate governance, so that the issues of management of corporate governance are one that we are intending to work through. We understand many of the issues we have come and found, but we have not hidden them, Mr. President. We are working acidulously to be able to correct it. Again, I want to identify that the NIS Fund is not in danger; the NIS Fund is well. Sorry Mr. President, I am just looking to make sure that I can give the correct figures. The NIS Fund is current at \$3.9 billion strong, or five times the value of the current benefit payments. It is not in jeopardy. There has never been an adverse report on the Catastrophe Fund. Go on the NIS website and you will find the reports of the Catastrophe Fund that is there. Mr. President, I hope I have spoken to that particular issue.

Mr. President, I also want to address the issue that was raised in the context of how the Fund is capacitated. I want to point to the legislation and as well go to Section 3 of the Catastrophe Fund and I will read from the Act itself. It says,

“The Catastrophe Fund established under the former Act shall, on the repeal of the former Act, continue in existence under this Act and continue to consist of

(a) annual contributions with effect from financial year 2006-2007 in the sum of \$2.5 million voted by Parliament for the purposes of the Fund for a period of not less than 5 years;

(b) monthly contributions payable with effect from financial year 2006-2007 by every employed person and self-employed person in the amount of 0.1% of the earnings on which that person pays national insurance;

(c) amounts realised from investment proceeds;

(d) monies that may accrue from the operations of the Fund.”

Mr. President, again, just to indicate that the Act does in fact identify right there, how the Fund is capacitated, and as I have indicated; the Fund is well financed, there are monies in the Fund at current. The extent to which there are concerns in relation to whether or not we will have enough money in the fund; those can be allayed with the facts that I have given, Mr. President.

Also, I want to speak to the notion of effectiveness and efficiencies in the context of the NHC and the UDC, et cetera and the extent that there are inefficiencies within these agencies, then they are not fit for purpose to be included in the context of the legislation. Again, Mr. President, I go back to the fact, if we want perfection now, then I will say to you that I cannot deliver. I cannot give you perfection in this moment. It is a work in progress. Mr. President, what is it that we are to do? There is a catastrophe.

There are agencies that people are going to. Do we say to them, “Sorry, I cannot help you because we have an inefficiency here?” Do we at the same time that we try to address the inefficiencies, make sure as well that we are able to provide the services that people are asking for? Do we stop in the face of when it is imperfect, Mr. President? If we did, every other process that we would be doing, we would stop. To suggest that because an agency has a concern or a challenge, this means that it is not proper, it cannot act and work to fulfil its mandate, I would posit it is a very spurious argument, Mr. President. It is an unfortunate argument as well because I said there is no organization or agency, as far as I am aware, and like Senator King; I will ask to show me the evidence of the perfection.

We all work in a space in which everything is not perfect but that we need to be able to manoeuvre and still deliver to the people of Barbados. We take away these

three agencies because there are challenges and then what? What do we say to the people of Barbados? Where do they come to, Mr. President, when they are seeking housing solutions? Do we turn them away? Is that the solution? Furthermore, I want to identify that in the context of the Amendment, the Amendment broadened the same provision we are looking at to ensure that even if it is not UDC, RDC or NHC; it says any other Government department or statutory body that is able and fit for purpose to deliver, they can also deliver as well.

Mr. President, the focus then is on the fact that we need to deliver for the people of Barbados. Sir, I want to step back a bit too, so please bear with me. A comment was made on the floor in respect of the seriousness of the Government’s side in this debate because numbers were perhaps few on that side. The Government brought this legislation. The Government brought this legislation. Cabinet sat; considered it; mulled over it and looked at it. We could have left it in comfort. We did not. We brought it here again to face it and fix it; a principle that this Government operates under.

We are not comforted to just rest on our laurels and leave legislation there because it should be there or we feel it is too soon to be amended; particularly when it has to do with delivering for the people of Barbados. No way! To suggest that there is not seriousness on our side because some Members, for legitimate reasons, could not be here at the time, again, I find is unfortunate. Mr. President, it is an unfortunate indictment on this Side and how we attend to the matters before us. There has never been a time when we have ever in any of our actions demonstrated that we are not serious, about attending to the Bills that our Government is bringing before this House. I want to make that perfectly clear, Mr. President.

Also, I want to indicate and I think that we have come to a fair agreement of understanding that there are indeed building codes and standards. We understand also that these are not mandatory and this again is a work in progress that we have to be able to go forward with in order, I agree, to ensure that we build resilience on all fronts as we go forward. Finally, Mr. President, there were some questions raised in the context of the Roofs to Reefs Project and the extent to which that project is ongoing. I will say briefly, Sir, the Director of the project sits in the Prime Minister’s office; moved from another department to sit there. This move demonstrates, again, the importance that the Government is placing on that project; the Director.

I want to advise also, Mr. President, that within the next month or so, we will be recruiting staff of an additional five persons under a project for the Global

Environmental Facility (GEF), in order to be able to fund those, so it does not come out the Government’s

pockets because that is also something that we have to look at. Yes, we also want to be able to provide the service but it does not all have to come from Government coffers. The Roof to Reefs Project was designed that it is supported not just by Government but by other partners as well.

If we understood the design of the Roofs to Reefs Project, we would then be able to appreciate it is not only what that particular project is going to deliver but all of the interlinkages that are happening across Ministries; whether they are in water, what we are doing in housing or waste and all of those areas. There are several projects on the ground now that is being delivered in the context of the Roofs to Reefs Project, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR Dr. THE HON. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, HIS HONOUR SENATOR THE HON. L. E. NURSE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 was called and passed.

On the motion of Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT, Madam Deputy President, reported to His Honour the PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Catastrophe Fund (Amendment) Act, 2022.

ORDER No. 4 -- RESOLUTION: SECTION 5 CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, TREASURY BUILDING

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. MUNRO-KNIGHT.

Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, the Resolution before this Honourable Senate is for the vesting of the property comprising the former Treasury Building standing at 2 106.5 square metres of State land situated in Historic Bridgetown, in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTI).

Mr. President, this Resolution is part of the Government wider Bridgetown Regeneration Project and the aim is to repurpose the old Treasury Building for first time owners in the middle income bracket. Mr. President, I think that most of us in here can relate to the sentiment associated with Bridgetown and again, growing up hearing stories of the first time you went to Bridgetown and people dressing up; you are going to Bridgetown for the first time so there is a sentiment that you grow up with in the context of the City Center and Bridgetown. Not only in the context of the City Center itself, but even the Treasury Building so that the Treasury Building was opened on 22 November, 1967 by the former Prime Minister the late Errol Barrow now Right Excellence Errol Barrow and I also remember it as well that every time you go into Bridgetown the Treasury Building was also a good spot to say: "Meet me by the Treasury Building". You see the Treasury Building and then you turn left or you turn right so it was a focal point in the context of the Bridgetown area. Also, when we talk about the whole notion of the City Center and the Bridgetown area; one of the other phenomena that we saw was also the rural to urban move or the rural to urban drift so as Bridgetown expanded, people moving from rural areas to come to the center of what was perceived economic activity, therefore, economic opportunity as well so that the City Center stands in a particular historical view. In the context of culture, we would say it is a part of our intangible cultural heritage. How we hold and how we view Bridgetown and the memories that we hold in the context of the City Center. At the same time, we recognise that over the years the fortunes of the City Center have ebbed and flowed. We can see a time and remember a time when Bridgetown was flourishing and we can also recall a time, and some would say now, when it does not seem to be as vibrant; as flourishing as it could possibly be. We have had again the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the natural fortunes of the economic vicissitudes that have caused some businesses to close, therefore, in many respects, we need to be able to take an active approach in to the City Center. Do we let it die? Do we let it run on its own? Or as a small country, again, understanding the historical and innate value of Bridgetown; do we then make a conservative effort to ensure that we can rejuvenate the Bridgetown area. The Harvard Gazette in an article, "What Makes Cities Thrive?" was headlined by the phrase, "More people and lots of them". The article indicated that the strengthening of City Centers had to be buttressed by creating environments and spaces for people to gather. That it was no longer the traditional notion of a City Center that was just about shopping, but that the creation of thriving city centers had to do with being able to create opportunities for people to undertake various types of activities; entertainment; cultural activities; have your restaurants; living spaces; et cetera. If you think about the City Centers that we have visited and that we know of and that we view on television these are bustling places, but people are not just doing one thing. If we think about

Manhattan, which may be one of the ones that we are more familiar with and we go to Manhattan, it is bustling for shopping, but I remember going to Manhattan and sometimes there are shows that are showing on the screen and people standing up in the middle of the City and watching them; or there are performances, the tourists are taking pictures because there are iconic places all over. People go to Paris, not only just for the shopping. What do they go to Paris for? The Eiffel Tower; to go to museums, so that the notion of the City Center is changing itself and again as a country that is forward looking, this Government is seeking to invest in making sure that we build out a city center again, yes for tourism activity, but also as well to make sure that we have a cultural hub, also as well a space that people can feel safe to be able to live and experience a multiplicity of activities and for this city center once again to be able to thrive.

I also want to say, and because one of my portfolios is as Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with responsibility for Culture, to also remind that Bridgetown has the designation. It is Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison, inscribed by UNESCO by the UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021; so that there is value and there is recognition of the value that is inherit in the context of Bridgetown. I want to go through just to look and help us understand what that inscription means in terms of the value of Historic Bridgetown. The practice of gaining inscription on the World Heritage list is a long and complicated one. The inscription depends on the country being able to satisfy at least one of ten criteria set up by UNESCO's operational guidelines. Among other things for example, a site must represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; exhibit an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world and development in architecture or technology; monumental arts; town planning or landscape design; bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization which is living or has disappeared and contain superlative cultural phenomenon or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance. UNESCO has recognised the value that we have in the context of this World Heritage Site and not only then do we have that inscription but the Division of Culture has been working in many ways to make sure that it continues to enhance the value and the appearance of Bridgetown, in order to then make sure that it contributes to the rejuvenation of Bridgetown.

In terms of public education and interpretation, we have developed under the World Heritage Committee again which is an inter-ministerial committee signage has been erected. They are now thirteen entrance signs along the boundary site and approximately 200 directional signs have been installed at streets and alleys within the capital city. There is an ongoing process to erect even more interpretive sites, in order to be able to identify the historic spaces that

we have in Bridgetown. I remember earlier this year, going to a ceremony in which the Division of Culture was highlighting entrepreneurs who were doing work in the city center to create tourist attractions, tours. I did not even know they are cannons in Swan Street right around Bridgetown and so these entrepreneurs were developing tours to be able to move tourists around Bridgetown in order to look at these heritage sites and I was saying to myself as Barbadians, we don't even know them. The potential is there in the context of our city center of Bridgetown to be able to rebuild and attract the kind of atmosphere that will ensure that it thrives again and promotes economic activity. This Bridgetown Regeneration Project of which, the Resolution is that we vest these lands in the BTII against really part of a larger project; so even as we discuss this vesting, I hope that we do so in the context that the government has a larger plan. We are not just saying we are going to turn the Treasury Building into some apartments, but it's not only apartments but also as well a cultural space, restaurants as well. I also want to add and I must add this. Unlike what has been very unfortunately put out in the public over the last weekend or so the Division of Culture has actually launched, not launching since May 2022, a design competition for a monument to be placed in Heroes Square. A monument, not to an individual or anyone's family but it is a monument to celebrate the Barbadian family and commemorate the journey of the Barbadian family. That design competition for a monument to be placed in Heroes Square, was launched in May of 2022. This week an exhibition goes up in the foyer of the Division of Culture, highlighting the submissions that were received and by next week we will be announcing the three top winners of that exhibition. I am making that point to say again that this is all part of that project, in order to build out Bridgetown. Imagine that within the coming year or two years and a half, we will be able to see right in the middle, a monument that represents Barbados, that represents us; that represents the Barbadian family. I also want to take the opportunity because I feel I must; to ask those in this country that are intent in creating hysteria; public mischief through fake news, that they ought really to reflect; that they ought really to desist and I certainly would like to ask the Democratic Labour Party to join with us, in denouncing such tactics because it cannot be part of the political landscape that the DLP is saying to us, should be showing new politics; should be showing a different kind of politics and therefore we believe, we are hoping that the DLP will be able to come out and say very strongly and loudly that it is not in support of such tactics; the spreading of fake news particularly when they are using people's names; attempting to smear the Prime Minister and her family and calling into question, how the Division of Youth Affairs is undertaking a project, in as transparent a manner as we have been doing. It is share political mischief and we are denouncing it.

Mr. President, in the context of again looking at the Bridgetown Rejuvenation, a project is also underway to have the National Cultural Foundation (NCF) relocated to Queen's Park transforming Queen's Park as part of the wider project, to create a cultural hub within this space. So you will have NCF located at Queen's Park but along with NCF and its offices, we will have spaces for artists in residence. We will create a permanent space for our steel orchestras. We will have dance studios and productions. Imagine walking through Queen's Park and engaging as artists are painting and performing. That is the vision that this Government has when we talk about Bridgetown and rejuvenating Bridgetown. I am hoping as I say so, that you are getting the sense as well that when you talk about spaces for culture and performing; we are talking about people. We are not talking about building edifices, just for so. We are talking about creating spaces one that entrepreneurs can have opportunities to secure their trade but also that Barbadians, we talked about this earlier taking care of the social and the mental as well and creating a Bridgetown that is more open. Again not just about the shopping, not just about that level of economic activity but a full experience, a full cultural and social experience highlighting the fundamental culture and heritage of this country for all. I want to remind you as well that if you can imagine that picture I painted of walking to Queen's Park. On your way to Queen's Park, you are also going to pass the green space that was created just in front of the Central Bank of Barbados. Mr. President, also as you traverse the Bridgetown area, you are going to be reminded that the Government has invested extremely heavily as well in Golden Square Freedom Park; again creating a space for families and others. I do not know how many of you use or have visited Golden Square. If you go there during the day, at five o'clock or six o'clock, weekends there are people sitting; some playing dominoes; some gathering and talking; families are there on Sundays with their children; some having picnics and talking; young people are there roller skating. There are all sorts of activities and this is within the context of the City Center. That is what we are talking about when we talk about the rejuvenation of the City Centre.

Mr. President, I can also speak to you about the tourism projects that are planned: The building of the Hyatt Hotel; the fact that we are going to build out from the Pierhead right down to Kensington, again with restaurants and open spaces. That is all part of the project in which the Treasury Building is a critical part of. Sir, importantly, within that context, we are then hoping that that level of economic activity will then revitalise the already existing businesses in Bridgetown; that it would bring back the business and people that have probably left Bridgetown and gone other ways, because they can now feel that they can move back into Bridgetown and that they can have an entire experience in the context of the City Center and the creation of living spaces as well. As was said before, we

create the Port side and in order for City Centers to thrive they need people and lot of them.

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

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has the Floor.

Senator J. A. KING: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution and to make a few points where this is concerned. Mr. President, if you look around the world, wherever we travel, and this would be easier for persons in and outside of this room for them to understand. Oftentimes, if you talk about England; you are going to speak about London. If you talk about United States of America; we are going to speak about the "Big Apple" New York. If you talk about Japan; you are going to talk about or zero in on Tokyo. It is important for any country regardless of size, that it has a vibrant city. This is where commerce happens. This is where culture happens. This is where people socialise. This is where business deals are made, and in all of these things that have just been outlined by Senator Monro-Knight; the effort to get people to live in the city is important. Mr. President, those of us who have been traversing this Bridgetown for many years, we have seen a number of restaurants, night clubs, et cetera, that have helped to make Bridgetown what it was in the past. Very active, all through the day and nights; a lot of these things have passed away. For those of us when we were young, there were lots of activities in the City as this was the place to come and as we seek again to build it out, let us also bear in mind that this Bridgetown might be fearful for some persons to have to face the reality but this City was part and parcel of the center for commerce for the British Empire. From slavery up to the days of "King" sugar. This Bridgetown was important, as it sent rum and a number of other things to the Carolinas. The wealth that was created within this City helped to fund wars within the Caribbean region.

Mr. President, I know that some people will get upset by what I am now going to say, but I will say it. It bothers me when we moved from the old colonial days and all the other things about which we speak passionately, and then when we have it in our own hands, it comes to this. Bridgetown is dead and the efforts that have to be put into revitalising it now, to get it back to its glory days, so to speak, is going to be a monumental one. It is going to take the support of, to my mind, a lot of those younger people; those who are going to be leaving university and would be looking for jobs and other places to live. These are going to be the ones, along with persons from outside of this country. who may want to move to a place like Barbados to live. These are the persons whom we are going to be seriously targeting in order to build out the City as it should be.

Mr. President, one may ask oneself who is going to support the night life, the night time economy as we call it? It is going to be the young people. Certainly not people in my age group or above, as we did when we were young; so that whatever we do, as we build this out; we talk about the culture; restaurants; the businesses and these other things but the emphasis really, to my mind, has to be on providing that space, including job opportunities for younger people because they are the ones who are going to drive the growth of the City. I just wanted to make that small contribution because as I said before, it is important and like most other things, it is a work in progress but I believe that in the right direction, housing in itself, is going to be very important as to how we build it out and bring that life back to the City.

Mr. President, again from the business standpoint; a lot of our young people definitely need the supporting agencies that we have on island, the FUNDACCESS; Enterprise Growth Fund Limited, et cetera, are going to have to be accessible and easily so, for those young people who may want to start businesses and can bring back business to the City. Financial institutions are going to have to be flexible in terms of helping people who may need mortgages and the other things to purchase the properties such as condominiums; apartments; housing; et cetera, that is being built out. This effort is one that requires many facets of this society to be on board with it and to basically understand the importance of having a very vibrant City in Barbados. Mr. President, with those few words, I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has the Floor.

Senator P. E. PARRIS: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution before this Honourable Chamber which is seeking to vesting the property of a parcel of land to the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporation (BTII). The building we all know as the Treasury Building. As I support this Resolution, I would like to commend the Board and staff of the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporation (BTII) for the outstanding work it is doing in the transformation of The City. We have seen the work done by the BTII in its effort to transform Bridgetown in areas like Halls Road; Constitution River; Fairchild Street where we have the beautifully-built kiosks for the vendors and the Golden Square Freedom Park.

Mr. President, when this Resolution was debated in the Another Place a couple of weeks ago, I heard a few familiar voices on the call-in programme; the same voices we hear every day. I heard them making mockery of this Resolution; saying why the project should not be done; how we have people in The City with clothes on the line which we can see, and all of those negative comments. Mr. President, I remember clearly that these same familiar

voices were the ones who were opposing the demolition of the National Insurance building.

Asides.

Senator P.E. PARRIS: I said callers, I never said moderators, and I do not listen to 'asides'. They were against the demolition of the National Insurance building, saying that we were demolishing a building; we were not going to build back anything there and they went down the road and how it was a waste of money. Mr. President, I know, like me, you have visited the Golden Square Freedom Park and it is an investment that has not only beautified The City but it has brought life to The City. We always hear that after five o'clock there is no activity in The City but the Golden Square Freedom Park has brought life to The City from Sunday to Sunday. You just have to drive through Bridgetown around Golden Square any evening, especially on Saturdays and Sundays and you will see families there. You see parents with their children; picnic baskets and the like and the parents are trying to find the family names on the wall. I think this is something that, if persons have not experienced or have not done with their children, they should do it because they are exposing the children to some history. It brings an awareness to where we were; where we came from and where we are now. It exposes them to history.

Mr. President, the renovations to the building -- the old Treasury Building in the vesting of this land -- will include shopping and restaurant facilities. Not only will this residential development bring life to The City; it will create job opportunities as well, providing families with incomes at the same time. It will also contain two-bedroom apartments and will be a part of the development which will assist with the housing that is much needed in this country. Mr. President, I heard one caller saying how unsightly it is going to be. We have persons living in apartments outside of Barbados in cities and we go to these countries and we admire the life in the cities and the city centers. For them this is too good for our Barbados. I am looking forward to the development of this city. We heard the same voices and the same noise when the vendors had to relocate from the Fairchild Street Market. We heard things like, "They were there for so many years and the Government is now displacing them and stopping them from plying their trade." Mr. President, the Fairchild Street Market project was designed to make these vendors more comfortable while at the same time making the facilities pleasing to the eye. Those unsightly structures are now a thing of the past and we have the beautifully designed, spacious kiosks which have transformed this area.

Mr. President, I was so pleased to hear some of the vendors who have located to these kiosks and they did not do it behind the shadow. They came out and identified themselves, they gave their names, so they were not doing

it in the dark, they were not afraid of anything. They were saying how happy they were for what had been done for them. They are comfortable and have more space to accommodate their customers and they say their businesses have seen an increase in sales. Mr. President, this is the work of a caring Barbados Labour Party Government.

Asides.

Senator Miss P.E. PARRIS: Mr. President, I would like to encourage other Honourable Members of this Chamber to pass on a Friday or a Saturday outside of the Fairchild Street Market and see the hive of activity in this area; as persons relax while patronising the vendors. Not only are persons happy to be on the outside but these vendors, who suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, are happy for these improvements which have brought them more business and more customers. The Government, once again, has proven that these few familiar voices to the call-in programmes, who objected to these two projects, were wrong. We will again do so when this residential development is completed in The City. Mr. President, I am looking forward to yet another project being undertaken by the BTII that would again enhance The City of Bridgetown. I am speaking of the Constitution River Phase 3. This project will see vending being done from the Constitution River area back to the Globe Roundabout. Again, this is going to provide more employment opportunities.

Mr. President, the renovations to this building and the one at Speightstown, are all part of the national development which is aimed at bringing this country into the 21st century. We need to come forward, not keep going backwards. In closing, Mr. President, I would like to encourage Barbadians to appreciate the efforts being made by this Government to enhance The City and urge them to treat these premises as they would treat their own premises because they belong to them. They are taxpayers and the money is used when they pay taxes to do these renovations and to make The City come alive. Mr. President, with those few words, I once again pledge my support to this Resolution. I am obliged to you.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Senator Parris. I recognise Senator Dr. Hinds.

Senator Dr. K. G. HINDS: Good afternoon, thank you Mr. President. I too think that this is a laudable initiative. I do not like that Bridgetown pretty much closes at 5.00 p.m., there is not a lot to do. I mean I come into Bridgetown at night mostly to go to Baxter's Road, so there are some things to do. There is food there; the vendors are still doing a pretty good trade; at least when I go there on Fridays or Saturdays. Outside of that, it really is quite

disappointing that such a historic City, lacks a lot of activity. We even see a lot of the commercial activity moving out of the City and going to other places and all of the malls and so on that are being established around the country. Warrens is now kind of like another Bridgetown, although not so much focus is on pedestrians and the buses but more for persons with cars, and there is also Sheraton Centre. We know there is another mall that is being built in Wilkey and this is a historic City. I have done the historic walking tour and there is so much to learn about this City. There is a lot of interesting history about the Careenage; economic activities that we no longer have. This was a place where ships were brought to be cleaned and taken care of. This is a critical part of our history in Barbados and to revitalise this City is absolutely important. I look forward to initiatives that bring life back to the City. I am really glad that people listen to the call in programs, keep listening.

I am one of the people that certainly loves that Freedom Park. I think this was one of the best things I have seen done in the City because it brings a certain type of activity to the area. People come for leisure and recreation and to bring their families. Those who are Barbadians from the diaspora; they like to go and look on that wall to see if they can find their names and some people are so irritated if they are looking and they cannot find their names. This is how meaningful this wall has become and I think it is a wonderful initiative.

I have listened to the discussion about bringing people to live in Bridgetown, which I find a little bit surprising because there are 6 492 registered electors in the City of Bridgetown. This is really why I wanted to stand up and speak. People live here already, and I think in this discussion we have to be also cognisant of the persons that already live in the City of Bridgetown. We have to be very aware that the areas in which persons in Bridgetown live are not high income areas. We are talking about people who live in very modest households and areas. As Senator Munro-Knight said, it is really important to have a lot of people but we have to cognisant of the social dynamics while we bring people into the City. They are 6 492 registered electors, so those are persons who are 18 and older but they are more people than that because they are those who are younger, and we know there are some issues with the electoral lists, so maybe some persons are there that should not be there. They are living overseas but they still want to be on the list or what have you. We can say that they may be around 7 000 people already living in the City.

We need to have different types of activities for persons to engage in, so the Freedom Park is a different type of activity beyond going shopping and beyond eating. When we are constructing developments and so on, we need to think about mixed uses; so we want to have

different types of activities when we build things like whatever this residential complex will be. We have to be careful of gentrification. Why do we need to be careful of gentrification? Gentrification, in terms of bring persons from higher income brackets with particular expectations and putting them in particular areas has its benefits and we have heard of some of the benefits today. Some of these benefits include increasing investment; increasing consumption and economic activity. These are the persons that we are expecting to go the restaurants; to demand things like night clubs, which we used to have. I used to go to some night clubs in the City, I mean, I kind of aging myself, but anyway, but we used to have these things in the City. There probably are still some night clubs, may be not as big and popular as the Warehouse or La Mirage, but I digress. The point I am really making here, is that these persons are going to drive certain types of activities that we want to bring into the City, so that after 5.00 p.m. we will see activity, so that you are not just going to Sheraton Mall, or to wherever the other malls are like, Dome Mall; Sky mall and all the rest of them. When people get home on evenings and they are living here in the City, can just get up and go to the stores around that are open. They can go to the eateries that are open and so on.

Therefore, these are some of the good things that we can see from this kind of development. There are some other pitfalls that we really have to ensure that we avoid because they are already people living who are not necessarily fitting into that kind of income bracket that I believe we are targeting in this new development.

Gentrification can reduce social capital. It can do this by causing some tensions between established communities and the new communities that we are implanting or inserting in the area. They can increase property prices; so as the area becomes better looking with better facilities and so on, it may become increasingly attractive. I believe this is the hope to other people to do these kinds of developments in the City; to take some of the buildings that are looking kind of musty and revitalise them and do other sorts of developments and bring some people into the City. In doing that, this increases things like property prices. In increasing property prices, it can cause some issues for persons who are already living in the area. It can also cost some benefits for them and they can sell some of their homes in the area and make a sweet penny and move elsewhere. For others, this can be problematic; there can be pressures on people to sell their homes and to move; there can also be pressures on some of the commercial entities in the City as we see gentrification. People may be demanding certain types of stores and eateries. This can also change the character of the City. Change is not bad but we have to think about these social dynamics when we consider the change.

I also want to say that surveillance and policing are one of the things that in many parts of the world, people note who come from the established communities. We know there are some issues already across this country, with crime, violence and all sorts of things, so I am not saying that because persons live in the City there is something special about crime in the City because just yesterday on the news I heard about a stalker being caught in Clermont. We have these things happening all over. What we see when there is gentrification, is that the persons who are more affluent to move in; they require a certain level of security and they may view those from certain areas that are low income as kind of threats and in need of being watched. I visited a part of the United States of America and I was taken around by a colleague there to some of the historically black colleges and universities. This is one of the stories that she was telling me about certain areas that experience gentrification and it was really beautiful to see the development but some of the stories were very unfortunate; where there are a lot of police patrols in particular areas because there is a view that these poor people are criminals. We have this over surveillance of persons because they come from low income areas. We may already have some of this because there is the view that this is where the gangs are located; this is where the rude boys are; the boys on the block are up to no good; and the girls are at home probably doing things that are no good. When we add this dynamic to the City, we can then do some things that are not conducive to the development of social capital. Rather than building community, we can build some antagonisms.

I want that we are very careful and cautious when we do this sort of thing; not just to think about the benefits in terms of how Bridgetown will look and feel.

It will look like a lovely, modern developed city that will also have to take care to preserve its heritage because this is a World Heritage site. I want us also to think very carefully about how we do this so that those approximate 7, 000 people already living in the City are not displaced, harmed and criminalized because they are viewed as some troublesome poor people. I want us to take care in doing this. I would hope that in addition to the other kinds of assessments that we always have to do such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Social Impact Assessments (SIA). Those persons who live in the City already and businesses already established there are not just brought along but are included; so that they not only understand how this supposed to work but they have an input and they are not pushed to the margins in any development.

This is a really serious concern. This is already an island that focuses on tourism and we have this dynamic already present. When we have people that look and dress different; we can tell that they are coming with money and

some of the antagonisms that this can cause in our societies. If it is that this development is not just to attract locals, who can afford to live in the City but persons coming from other parts of the world, I think a lot of care has to be taken to ensure that when we do this, we do this in a way that is productive for all of the persons who are already resident in the City of Bridgetown to the existing businesses and also for the wider society.

We do not want Bridgetown to become a place that people do not come because there is nothing to do there but they are not coming because of some “bougie bougie” area that only certain people are supposed to go to. We want to create this in a way that is really beneficial for the entire society.

With these few words, Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR Dr. THE HON. Mrs. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Mr. President, let me thank those Senators who contributed to the debate on this Resolution and in particular Senator Dr. Hinds for her discussion on gentrification and the impact of that. Certainly, this Government is taking a phased approach. There are those that would criticize this as we are taking too long but it is for those very same reasons; we need to make sure that we are not going to be perfect, but that we as much as possible try to get it right and do things in a phased approach. Not only focused on the buildings and so on but make sure that we are including social spaces; taking care of the various communities and listening to them and ensuring that in the context of building out Bridgetown as a thriving city center, that all can be able to participate equally within that context.

I want to say again as I do quite often; the Government is taking a full and comprehensive approach in the way that it works. Again, when we have these separate debates and discussions, they can look distinct but they should not be separated from the overall way that the Government is taking and treating to social policy. I know that, for instance, the residents of the City of Bridgetown were exposed to a financial literacy workshop over the weekend, held by the Financial Literacy Bureau under the Ministry of Energy. It was directly for average citizens being identified who not brown or whatever to be able to come out and understand opportunities that could be available to invest; where to get information from and all of those things as well.

We are also adding that as well to Government's effort to improve the housing stock in City areas and the infrastructure for the existing residents. Mr. President, I am emphasizing that I take onboard the discussion about the possible impacts. We are attending to that but also as well we are hoping that we have a discussion which appreciates

that this particular Resolution sits within the context of a wider policy landscape for the Government, in terms of how it is rolling out its social policy as well.

Finally, Mr. President, I just wanted to reflect on the discussion around the creation of employment opportunities which are also going to be extremely beneficial to those residents that already exist. Yes, while we bring people into the area that have money that are able to invest, again, like I said, the building out of Queen's Park; the creation of restaurants and other spaces, such as kiosks are opportunities that will be afforded to residents within the area and through building their capacities in several interventions that are being done by the representatives for those constituencies to ensure that they can encourage their citizens, to actively participate and also take a hold of the benefits.

Also, Mr. President, do not feel that I can close this discussion unless I recognize the renaming of the Fairchild Street Bus Terminal which happened a few weekends ago. It was renamed after Archbishop Granville Williams and to say as well that this is also another attempt by the Government, through the Division of Culture to ensure, again, that in the city center that we have reflections of ourselves; our communities and families, et cetera. Therefore, the renaming of that comes into this discussion in a big way because in the context of the city center, your child; my child a cousin and grandmothers can now look at the Fairchild Street Bus Terminal and be able to identify with that name of the Archbishop Granville Williams.

Taking pride of place in the context of the City of Bridgetown. I want to indicate, Mr. President, we are intending to do that more as a deliberate policy to ensure that throughout this country, we can have spaces that are reflective of Barbadians. The Division of Culture has just started a committee that will be looking at the naming of several parks, again, historically and several spaces. It will look and see what is the historical connections again with Barbadians and be able to inscribe them so that we as a new Republic can ensure that we have a country that is reflective of its people.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 5 – SECTION 5: CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, BRIGHTON,
ST. GEORGE

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. MUNRO-KNIGHT.

Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT: Thank you, Mr. President. This Resolution before us is

really reflective of an ongoing move by the Government to honour its commitment to the citizens of Barbados in undertaking the silent housing revolution.

Mr. President, I want to speak to this notion of the silent housing revolution again as something that is fundamental and as a fundamental principle. I am extremely passionate, Mr. President, and you would hear me speak and be reflective of that passion when I speak on issues of education and training because I believe, fundamentally, that education and training are critical pillars of the underpinning of being able to move people from a situation of poverty to one of empowerment. Similarly, in the context of housing and having adequate house, I am equally passionate about that. I am equally passionate about that, Mr. President, because being appreciative of our history; being appreciative of the fact that we have a history in the context of colonialism and the post-emancipation period that we had such dire housing conditions in this country; that we had situations and perhaps still have situations in which people are forced to live in some conditions that are really not acceptable; large households being forced because of economic realities to be able to live in small quarters. The Government cannot take responsibility for everything on its own in a short space of time but certainly, tackling the question of the provision of affordable and safe housing, particularly for low income people is one of the principal actions of this Government, designed to make sure that we pull everybody along on this journey of development because if you can give people affordable housing, when the Bajan gets to turn the key and step into his/her house and be comfortable, that is empowerment; that is pride in who you are as a person. This silent revolution that this Government has embarked on in order to be able to provide housing says that we will provide 10 000 houses, as indicated in our Manifesto, is one that this Government is dedicated principally to be able to deliver.

Mr. President, I also want to say that even in the context of delivering on that promise we all can appreciate that 1) we have constrained resources both financial and both in the context of manpower to then to be able to deliver as quickly as perhaps the society needs. We have, Mr. President, as we discussed before, some operational challenges that we have to be able to work out, but this Government, as I always say, is about facing it and fixing it and in that context, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance has been challenged in the context of their commitment for results framework which is the Government's overarching framework to be able to monitor the performance of Ministries and agencies has been challenged to ensure that it can provide metrics and indicators, on its delivery of housing solutions so that they can remain accountable for that level of delivery to the people of Barbados.

I also want to say that the provision of safe and affordable housing is also a part of Government's overall commitment to the delivery of the sustainable development goals. While it is not a specific goal, we recognise that it is very much tied to delivery of reduction in poverty and inequality as well. Mr. President, in another discussion, we talked about the fact that if you are not careful we can establish systems and processes, even unintentionally, that can create inequalities. In this country, we have a level of inequality in the context of access to affordable housing. There are those of us who can, through our own means, obtain mortgages and be able to build on our own but the Government in the context of the revolution that it is attempting to deliver is saying that it is not intending to leave those who can least afford it behind. It is saying that it is committed to ensuring that we will create an opportunity for those that are in the lower income brackets to have housing that is not just housing, but good housing as well. That is important because before if you look at housing policy, we talk about Bajan colloquialism, you know we are thinking of the scheme houses; of people living in apartments that are so small they are not able to have all of their things in there. There is no facility for parks. There is no facility for people to hang their clothes and all of those things. The provision of this housing that we would be providing in the context of this revolution, is attempting to be responsive to those things, is attempting to be able to ensure that we can reflect the Bajan tradition of having a space, as much as we can, in the context of the human resources, that allows the individual to feel valued and that we are not just attempting because they may be on the lower social economic ground, to push them into spaces that will not add value to their lives and their personal esteem.

Mr. President, the literature would also suggest that housing is a platform for household resilience and sustainability as well. Housing is juxtaposed to homelessness. You can have housing but it can be inadequate. It can be unsafe; so that if you provide people with safe and adequate housing, then we are building resilience and sustainability, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I want to also indicate that as I indicated before, the Government has placed this revolution as part of our priorities. This year, the Government and the Prime Minister in her Budget Speech, and as it was indicated in the President's Throne Speech, has set itself a target of delivering 12 000 houses this year. The Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance is reporting that it is on track to exceed the delivery of that amount for this year and also for next year. It is doing so in the context of public and private partnerships and again that is a conversation because the Government has been criticised in some quarters for its delivery but we have recognised that the Government on its own with its resources, cannot always be the one solely going out there to be able to deliver the

housing solutions for people and therefore is engaging in the necessary partnerships, in order to be able to deliver on this housing that we want to make sure is accessible for all. The Ministry of Housing and Lands, as I indicated before will exceed that target by some 1428 houses; expected to be available to citizens during the current year and approximately 6000 more houses being targeted during year two (2). The Government is delivering on its promises but as we seek to do so; we recognise and I believe that if we are all truthful and honest with ourselves is that there are resource constraints even in relation to land, so you would see that the Government is moving to vest available lands in order to ensure that it can deliver on its housing promise. The vesting of these lands allows the Government then to be able to deliver in areas where there is the greatest need. I also want to remind this Honourable Chamber, that over the last month the Ministry of Housing has been engaging in a wide programme; I believe that there was a mortgage fair that was held in Golden Square Freedom Park. I think it was last month or so allowing people to be able to come and sign up; get information in relation to access to housing; to be able to understand the process. I will not stand here before you and say that it is all perfect that we have been able to deliver at the pace of the demand of the society. We haven't been able to. The demand is extremely high but the Ministry of Housing and Lands is working first of all to look at the back log that it has on the one hand, so it's doing multiple things not one and then the other. It is working to look at the backlog and to be able to clear that backlog. Even as it does so, then be able to offer housing solutions. Those that are currently in housing, operated through the NHC, to ensure that repairs are carried out and that there is a programme moving from Rent-to-Own. Multiple planks and multiple pillars in the context of this silent housing revolution.

Mr. President, also as I close want to indicate as well that the focus again of this housing policy as it is on low income brackets and also what you would call perhaps a middle income bracket; whether they be teachers or those in other areas of employment, that unfortunately might not be able to easily access mortgages and loans from traditional private sector. In fact, again the Government understands that the environment that we have within the country; if we are not careful, can set up a system in which those who have the capacity will be able to run ahead and those who have not quite enough capacity can be left somewhere in the middle without any recourse. The Government is also seeking to close that gap, through its initiative in the context of HOPE Inc. again with the provision of housing and also financing for these homeowners. Sir, I do now beg that this Resolution be now passed.

The question was put and resolved in affirmative without division and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Sitting accordingly.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Order No. 5, end of record. Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. Munro-Knight's speech on the Brighton, St. George Resolution ends without the usual motion that the Resolution pass, and the source closes with 'The question was put and resolved in affirmative without division and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Sitting accordingly.' No motion for the adjournment and no date for the next Sitting are recorded. Printed as in the source; the record may be incomplete.

Q3. Order No. 6, Committee. Senator the Hon. L. E. Nurse was in the Chair in Committee, but the procedural note reads 'Madam Deputy President, reported to His Honour the PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee'. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Motions relating to the business of the Senate. The motion reads 'I beg to move that the suspension of Standing Order 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of the days Sitting'. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Introduction of Bills. The heading 'INTRODUCTION OF BILLS' appears twice, the second time over the President's tribute on the death of Senator Nurse's brother; and after notice of the BERT Plan Resolution and the first reading of a single Bill, the note reads 'The question that those Bills be read a first time'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. PRESENT and announcements. The PRESENT list names Her Honour H. Elizabeth Thompson as Deputy President, on the same line as the President, but the President later reports her excused because of leave overseas. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Speech labels. Senator Rev. Dr. J. A. Rogers, so called by the President, is labelled 'Dr. J. A. ROGERS'; other labels read 'SENATOR Dr. THE HON. Mrs. S. M. MUNRO-KNIGHT' and 'Senator Miss P.E. PARRIS'. The heading of Order No. 4 is set as a procedural line. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, 12th October, 2022 at 11.00 a.m., with the President, His Honour Senator R. R. Farley, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father W. Kirton. The President read a message from Her Excellency the President that she would be absent from 16th to 23rd September, 2022, the Very Reverend Dr. Jeffrey Douglas Gibson performing the functions of the office. The Minutes of 16th September were confirmed and the President announced excuses from several Senators. Senator Dr. the Hon. S. M. Munro-Knight laid five papers, among them the Annual Report of the Student Revolving Loan Fund for 2020–2021, sovereign counter-guarantee contracts with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Nature Conservancy, and the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Plan 2022. Standing Order 45(2) was suspended, Senator the Hon. L. E. Nurse was appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, notice was given of a Resolution to approve the BERT Plan, and the Catastrophe Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2022 was read a first time. The Senate stood in silence on the death of Senator Nurse's brother.

Senator Munro-Knight moved the second reading of the Catastrophe Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2022, speaking of COVID-19, Hurricane Elsa and the ash fall as new reference points beside Hurricane Janet of 1955. She quoted the then Prime Minister, Hon. Freundel Stuart, on needing a legislative amendment to reach about \$23 million in the Fund, and said the Bill would replace section 4 so that the Fund could support mitigation before a catastrophe as well as relief after it. Senator K. J. Boyce noted that the legislation had first come in 2020. Senator A. W. Mallalieu supported broadening the Fund but questioned section 8 of the Act on its management by the Director of National Insurance. Senator Ms. C. N. Drakes said there was no official public document of the Roofs to Reefs policy. Senator Dr. C. K. M. Haynes, Senator the Hon. L. E. Nurse, Senator Dr. K. G. Hinds, Senator C. A. Maynard, Senator A. A. O. Boyce, Senator Rev. Dr. J. A. Rogers and Senator J. A. King also spoke; Senator Nurse urged that much of the Fund be held outside Barbados in foreign exchange, Senator Hinds examined the definitions of 'catastrophe' and of a qualifying business, and Senator King addressed concerns about the merger of the UDC and RDC.

After a suspension until 3.00 p.m., Senator Munro-Knight replied that CDEMA coordinated the regional approach, that the Fund's financial reports were on the NIS website and that the Fund stood at \$30.5 million, and she denied that the National Insurance Fund was in danger of collapse. The Bill was read a second time, clauses 1 to 4 passed in Committee with Senator Nurse in the Chair, and

it was read a third time as the Catastrophe Fund (Amendment) Act, 2022.

Under Order No. 4 Senator Munro-Knight moved a Resolution under section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 to vest the former Treasury Building, 2 106.5 square metres of State land in Historic Bridgetown, in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. Senators J. A. King, Miss P. E. Parris and Dr. K. G. Hinds supported it, Senator Hinds regretting that Bridgetown closed at 5.00 p.m. and raising gentrification. In reply Senator Munro-Knight described a phased approach, a

financial literacy workshop for City residents and the renaming of the Fairchild Street Bus Terminal after Archbishop Granville Williams, and the Resolution was agreed to.

Senator Munro-Knight then moved Order No. 5, a Resolution under the same Act concerning land at Brighton, St. George, as part of the ‘silent housing revolution’, saying the Government had set a target of 12 000 houses for the year and was on track to exceed it. The source records the question as resolved without division and the President adjourning the Sitting.