
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, March 04, 2008.

PRESENT

His Honour K. ST.C. BEST, LL.B. (Hons), L.E.C.,
(Deputy Speaker)

Hon. D. H. THOMPSON, LL.B (Hons.), Prime
Minister, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and
Development, Labour, Civil Service and Energy)

Hon. Mr. G W. PAYNE, Q. C.

Hon. Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P., B.Sc., Dip. Ed.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY.

Hon. Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)

Hon. Mr. D. ST.E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B., (Leader
of the Opposition)

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.

Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P., M. A. (Ed.), B. A. (Hons.),
(Minister of Education and Human Resource
Development), (Leader of the House)

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, M.B.B.S., B.Sc.,
(Minister of Health, National Insurance and Social
Security)

Hon. Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B (Hons),
L.E.C.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B (Hons), (Minister of
Housing and Lands)

Hon. F. J. STUART, LL.M, B.A. (Attorney-General
and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. E. G. HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A., (Minister of
Trade, Industry and Commerce)

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT (Minister of Community
Development and Culture)

Hon. Mr. J. D. PAUL, B.Sc.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip.
Theology (Minister of Social Care, Constituency
Empowerment and Urban Development)

Hon. Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.)

Hon. Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.),
L.E.C., (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. P. M. T. TODD, B.Sc., (Minister of State,
Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and
Urban Development)

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, M.B.A., B.Sc. Dip.,
(Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign
Trade and International Business)

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO, M.B., B.S.
(Minister of Family, Youth Affairs, Sports and the
Environment)

*Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan
Harewood.*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House is now in
Session.

EXCUSES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am commanded to
inform this Honourable House of the absence of the
following persons:

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, (Speaker)

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND

Hon. R. R. SEALY

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday,
February 26, 2008.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my understanding that the Minutes were circulated, and subject to any observations or corrections, I beg to move that these Minutes be confirmed.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, then let these Minutes be confirmed.

PAPERS

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Report of the National Insurance Board for the year 2006;
2. Report on the Operations of the Severance Payment Scheme for the year 2006;
3. Report on the Operation of the Unemployment Fund for the year 2006;
4. Report on the Operation of the Sugar Workers' Providence Fund for the year 2006.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move a Resolution to grant the sum of \$19 625 143 from the Consolidated Fund, and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2007/2008, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 11, 2007/2008, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 17, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44, be suspended for the rest of this day's Sitting.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

10.20 a.m.

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George South.

Dr. Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I rise to speak to the Throne Speech delivered by the Acting Governor General, His Excellency the Honourable Elliott Belgrave, at the Opening of Parliament on February 12, 2008. I speak particularly as it refers to the Ministry of Family, Youth, Sports and the Environment.

Sir, with your leave, before I begin, I would first like to take this opportunity to thank the residents and constituents of St. George South for their tremendous support shown to me before, during and since the elections on 15th January. Their kind words of encouragement and demonstrations of support have sustained me. Indeed, it is because of them that I have the privilege of standing in this esteemed place today. Words cannot ably describe how I feel to be here on their behalf, and I pledge that I would not betray their trust. I would use my good office to make St. George South a better place for them and indeed make Barbados a better place for all Barbadians.

Sir, I would first like to laud the Prime Minister for having created the two new Ministries. The Ministry of Family, Youth, Sports and the Environment, and the Ministry of Social Care, Community Empowerment and Urban Development. Clearly, he has shown his vision for the development of communities and individuals across Barbados. The Ministry of Family, Youth, Sports and the Environment, for which I have been given the responsibility, is not just about addressing the issues of today, but it has far-reaching consequences deeply impacting the future of our nation. Indeed, family, youth, sports and the environment, all four sectors will have a deep impact. How we handle them today will certainly determine in the future what we have for Barbados tomorrow. Sir, I would just look at those four components briefly in my presentation this morning.

Sir, the section of the Ministry that deals with environment speaks to the sustainable development of the very systems that support us. Sir, when we build, play, plant and work, within our environment we must act responsibly. Sir, the Ministry speaks to ensuring that while we use the earth's resources, we are also cognizant of the fact that they are finite. We must preserve the environment for generations to come. Indeed, it is the mandate of the Ministry to do so. I have seen in the Ministry, staff working tirelessly to devise and implement solutions to our environmental problems, and, indeed, there are many. The sooner we address these problems the better for Barbados.

Sir, Barbados has signed on to several international conventions; therefore, we have to put systems in place to maintain that commitment, for example, our marine

environment. Our marine environment is fragile. We depend on the sea, not only for food and recreation, but it is very vital to our tourist industry. We are surrounded by the sea, and therefore it is desirable to have a harmonious relationship with the sea. Sir, when that relationship is good it is at its best and when it is bad it can ruin us. Sir, we need to preserve our beaches. We have seen how they are eroding. We need to preserve our coastal lands. Currently, there is major development along our beach front properties, which we can lose from sea erosion.

Sir, our relationship as Barbadians with the sea and the environment has to be a two-way relationship. We want our environment to be able to sustain us, our children and our children's children, so we must protect it and put a stop to the indiscriminate littering. Therefore, through the Ministry and other agencies, we have to educate Barbadians about litter and the effect it has on the environment. It is time for legislation to be put in place and for that legislation to be enforced strongly.

Sir, many Barbadians seem only to know academically about littering and its impact on the environment, but certainly in practice, we can see that they do not seem to care too much about what they do with the environment. Too often we see litter in abundance along the streets and on our beaches. Periodically there are diving cleanups of our beaches and the amount of plastic, tyres and other debris that is removed is really amazing. Barbadians still believe that because they can throw things into the sea and it disappears, all is well. Sir, we need to embark upon programmes to teach our people that the sea has no back door, and when we throw stuff in the water, it is there to stay. It damages our coral reefs and we are seeing the impact now along our coastal zones.

Sir, we also have a serious problem with our underground water supply. We all know that our water comes from the underground aquifers, yet very little is being done to prevent squatting in Zone One areas. Sir, squatting and the inevitable human waste as a result causes contamination of our ground water. Also, the indiscriminate use of fertilizers seep into our ground water. All activity that occurs above ground eventually has an impact below ground as it seeps through for months and years, into our water supply. It has its impact on the water which we drink and therefore, indeed, on our health.

Sir, our solid waste management solutions are long overdue. The Ministry of Health, along with the Ministry of the Environment is working towards those solutions. It is no secret that we have limited land in our 166 square miles for landfills. Sir, you only have to take a look at the Mangrove landfill to realise that we cannot continue using landfills to solve the problem of solid waste.

The Greenland area, if we were to continue putting our solid waste there, would result in chemicals and contaminants polluting our water. So, we cannot use the Greenland landfill as it is. We now have to come up with creative solutions to deal with our waste. Sir, for example, to process waste, before it can even be considered for use at Greenland.

Sir, it is going to be an expensive process, but I do not think that one can really put a price on how much we pay for our well-being in the long-run. Sir, it is important that we manage the process properly, with a clear understanding of what we are doing and the impact it would have on our environment. As we proceed, we must make sure no harm comes to Barbadians. Sir, if we do not act now, we will soon be drinking and wallowing in our own waste.

Sir, what is the sense of developing other sectors of Barbados; tourism, culture, housing and all sectors, even Barbadian life and culture as we know it, if we lose the water that we drink, the clean air that we breathe and the land which gives us life.

Sir, another aspect of the Ministry is sports. Sports is considered in the Ministry now, by its value not just for today and for recreation, but as the future of our people. Sir, when the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow provided free education for Barbadians, it allowed us as a people to develop our academic and intellectual potential.

Sir, men and women, since, have exceeded all barriers and were propelled into every arena in every part of the world. Indeed, we believe that you will find a Bajan in any part of the world, very often that Bajan is excelling in some area, whether it is medicine, technology, culture or art. Sir, Bajans have been excelling, primarily as a result of the vision of the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, when he allowed for us to have free education. Sir, likewise, sports can and does create opportunities for our development here in Barbados and abroad.

Sir, in the same way that the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow saw the potential, through academic empowerment, the Democratic Labour Party Government recognises today that we can reach other frontiers if we invest in sports development.

Sir, we have had our successes. I can think of Shane Brathwaite, whom we recently honoured at the National Sports Council, this past weekend, as the Sports Person of the Year. There is also Obadele Thompson and Patrick Husbands, just to name three, but they are many more.

10.30 a.m.

Sequence 3

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Dr. The Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: We can have so much more because we have the potential for it. We have that potential in terms of our genetic and physical disposition. For example, coaches, who visit our island, look at the body habitus of our people and remark that most of us have the build for athletic prowess. We also have that determination, we have done so much as a people to overcome so many odds and still we have emerged the best in so many areas.

Sir, we have the internal drive to be the best. It is what can also translate into excellence in the sporting arena. Sir, what is needed now to support this genetic and physical disposition and this drive or determination that we have is support from Government. We have invited support from corporate sponsors and we are grateful for all the support that we have got but we also need for Government to do a little more at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I have said earlier, we believe that investment in sports right now is an investment in our people. We need to invest in facilities across Barbados, programmes, coaches and funding. We have been speaking a lot to this and the response that we have been getting is overwhelming. Indeed, I have had so many requests from people to be coaches not just at the National Sports Council but many people have requested to be community coaches.

It is an idea that has resonated with the people. We also need to help athletes to break physical barriers. Sir, as I have said, with more intense coaching, we can provide that for them to help them to break those physical barriers but we also need to help them with those mental barriers so that not only will it be good enough for them to represent Barbados in the Olympics and to compete, all of which are noble, but we want them now to see it as possible to do more.

No longer are they to be satisfied with just walking around the stadium overseas at the opening parade but we want them to truly believe, to get it in their psyche that they can actually be standing on that medal stand at the end of the day. Sir, we need to get that into the psyche of our athletes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that with the funding and the right support from the Government that we can actually see more successes on the world's tracks and fields.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, sports has value, back here at home too, because it causes us to rally as families, as communities and as a nation, promoting that pride and unity and we want to see more families coming out to enjoy sports. Indeed, we see sports as being a wholesome

activity, for the most part, that families can use in terms of spending quality time together to promote those families.

I must mention too that my particular grouse is that of a lack of physical activity that we are seeing. Sports are an enticing way of encouraging physical activity at all ages, various sports for various ages. A young toddler will run around behind a brightly coloured object because it is just in him or her to get up, move and play.

Sir, as a society we have tried to prevent that from happening as they grow older. We allow young children to spend time running around and playing but then as they grow older we tell them that they need to put more effort into more worthy pursuits and spend less time playing. Sir, we have now come full circle, in that we now need to encourage our people back to physical activity. This is one way of dealing with obesity.

Sir, my particular concern is that of childhood obesity and while I do not have figures in front of me today, if you look around Barbados you would realise that childhood obesity has reached alarming proportions in Barbados. Sir, getting our people active would deal with that and the deleterious associations of obesity and those lifestyle diseases or chronic non-communicable diseases. Sir, I like the term lifestyle diseases because they speak to a lifestyle that needs to be adjusted and physical activity should be a part of that lifestyle.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to see more people involved in sports, which means that sports has to be readily accessible to people, in communities, tennis courts, football fields, all kinds of sports should be available at the community level so that those persons who are not inclined to go walking around might actually find something that gives them that drive and gives them that adrenaline rush that they seek also in their exercise. They do not have to be skilled at it, they just need somewhere to go and have some fun.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, sports is also a promising frontier for socioeconomic development. Sir, in many parts of the world sports is big business and in Barbados sports and tourism is big money. It has the potential to attract large crowds from overseas as we have seen with the Sandy Lane Gold Cup, for example where hundreds of people come to watch the races. Sir, motor races also attract large crowds and they are other sports that do that.

If we promote the value of our sports package here in Barbados, that is going to be more marketable and can draw more people to our shores. Also, when our athletes compete overseas, they showcase Barbados, they force commentators to speak of Barbados, to have to research Barbados and this forces people to look on the internet to find out what is this Barbados of which they speak.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, having outlined those points, I hope you see that it is fitting for any Government at this time to emphasize the development of sports especially community-based and school-based sports. Sir, more sports at the community level means that more children too can find something to do. Sir, not all children are inclined to netball, cricket or football, but if we encourage a variety of sports, it means that we can open up the opportunities to see more world-class athletes as they try their hands at other sports.

Who knows, we may have the next Tiger Woods in Barbados. Who knows what champion we can produce in Barbados just by allowing our children to have access to a variety of sports. They are not all skilled in cricket; they are not all skilled in football but they may be something else there and that is what the Ministry of Sports wants to do in Barbados to see these sports available at the community level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we spend a lot of time in the Ministry focusing on youth because a lot of people in the society focus on the ills of the youth today. I believe the youth of Barbados are bright and energetic and that they are only looking for creative ways in which to channel that energy. Indeed, what I believe is that the wider society must not now falter on its responsibility to supervise that process for the young people.

We must continue to display in order to demand respect, values, morals and behaviours. We cannot sit back and let the young people in our society do as they want and then complain about it. We have the responsibility as the older generation to guide that process. If we take our hand off that process, then we have only ourselves to blame.

We must teach them our values, we must teach them our culture, if we, as we so often do in Barbados, abandon quality family time, abandon community activity, we have no time for it with our busy schedules; we abandon the extended family, many of us not even visiting our older folks, some even abandoning our old folks to the Geriatric Hospital and so on. Sir, we have abandoned agriculture as a way of life. We have abandoned our local foods and many households do not take the time to prepare sweet potato and yam.

Sir, if we abandon our local foods, our traditions and our activities and sadly, even the church, then, what are we expecting of our young people, but that they do the same. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are young adults but there is still need for us to show them the way and, Sir, at the Ministry, we in the Youth Division are looking at ways in which we can creatively help to challenge that both by programmes that are operated centrally as well as programmes operated in the community. Sir, none of these programmes can be

done outside of the context of the family and the community.

3.10 a.m.

Sequence 4

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

House A3, Sequence 05, 10.40 a.m.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Indeed, the Youth Division has several programmes which addresses the concerns for families, youth and the community.

I am currently meeting with the staff and revising those programmes that are now in place, with a view to seeing how we can better use our available resources that would be allocated in the Budget in the fiscal year, 2008 to 2009, more effectively and efficiently to assist more young men and women in multiple endeavours.

We are also looking at the at-risk teens to develop programmes for those people, who desperately need our support. As I said, we are doing all of this in the context of the family and the community. We firmly believe that the young people cannot thrive if the family in which they live and the community that is supposed to support them, decay.

What has intrigued many people is the Ministry of Family. I have received several calls, several requests for interviews, everybody is using their opportunities to interact with me and are asking me what is this Ministry of Family? It is intriguing to many.

The philosophy is quite simple. It is that we see the family as the building block of our society. Indeed, the very DNA of our society and if I can use a medical analogy, when there is a problem with the DNA, it affects the entire body and so when our families have problems, it affects our entire society.

The link between the decline of the family values and the decline of societal values are obvious, and not only from a chronological perspective. Certainly, when you look at it from a physiological or psychological perspective, you see that there is indeed a correlation between the two.

Every sector is complaining about the loss of societal values. Everybody is complaining about the lack of morals. Churches and other organisations are trying and, indeed, they have had some successes. I will not stand here to berate any of their efforts. Indeed, I think that as a caring Government, the time has come for a Government to stand and support those organisations; to stand and support the Church; to develop programmes that will not replace those

programmes that the Churches have; that will not replace those programmes that other organisations have; but indeed, will buttress them, and will provide support for them. I think it behooves any caring Government to take the responsibility to address the problem of families, at the level of Government.

The Ministry, therefore, is mandated to support families. We will be working with other agencies and indeed other Ministries, such as that of Social Care, Community Empowerment and Urban Development. We know that it is challenging for families. Families are under threat - to use a popular phrase these days - even those families that have two parents, good support systems in place, extended families and good incomes are challenged to find their way today.

They are challenged when they have to balance the work and the responsibilities of their profession, as well as to train up their families and support their families in the way that they should.

If those families are challenged, one cannot even begin to imagine how difficult it is for single parent families, for example, or families which have no income or some that have one or even two incomes that together is a paltry sum. You cannot begin to imagine how difficult it must be for them. Indeed, we cannot leave them on their own. Those families need our attention and they need it now.

I am particularly concerned about the burden that mothers in our society carry. Mothers, whether, single, married, widowed or divorced. Mothers in our society have traditionally carried the bulk of the responsibility of treating the family. The responsibility of nurturing that family has fallen traditionally to the mothers.

I am not belittling the input of fathers. Indeed, let me here recognise the work of fathers across this land. They are many who work in different context, married, single parents, whatever. They are many who do their jobs, but for the most part, they are the mothers who are struggling to keep their families afloat and they are the women, I believe, that we must address. I believe that if we address the problems and concerns of mothers, we will go a long way to correcting some of the ills that we see in our families, which are translated to the youth's problems and those of children.

We need to create opportunities for development. There are programmes in place, but these need to be addressed, these need to be supported, these need to affect more people. Programmes for adult education, career development, creation of jobs, creation of wealth. We need real ways to help women to finance cottage industries and small businesses.

Too many complain that they have an idea, but because they do not have the necessary starting capital, nobody gives them a hand up. We do hear of a few success stories but that is not enough to impact the situation that our society faces today. We need to vigorously address the situation of our mothers.

We have to bring legislation that will deal with the maintenance of children and the collection of that maintenance. It is time that that was no longer a burden for the parent, usually again, the mother, who is collecting that child support. It seems such a hassle for women that many of them do not want to deal with the process. They are demeaned in the process, and it does not seem worth their while to collect the little money that they do get. Therefore, we need to put systems in place.

This is an age of technology. There is no reason why today, a mother has to be running around, bouncing from pillar to post, from door to door in order to collect a cheque. There can be a more humane method of doing it and we will find it. It will require some legislation but that is not something that we cannot handle.

We have to deal with women. I will say it again to reinforce the point. Women in our society are a very vulnerable group, especially single mothers. The single mothers are very vulnerable to poverty. They are a very vulnerable group in terms of HIV/AIDS. Single mothers are a very vulnerable group when it comes to HIV/AIDS. There are programmes in place for dealing with HIV/AIDS among single mothers. I believe those programmes for HIV/AIDS cannot be taken out of the context of supporting the families in their entirety.

Gender-based violence is also something that needs to be addressed. Sexual harassment in the workplace, we need to definitively address that matter once and for all. Issues of child care and day care for children have to be addressed, if we say that we are concerned about families let us put our money where our mouth is.

We still have a ways to go towards gender main streaming and gender equality, but given their pivotal role, I believe that when we support women, we build families and we build Barbados.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two more minutes to wrap up.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you build families, the rights of the child will be taken care of. When we build families, the elderly will have a better place in which to thrive. It will require consultation, but we are prepared to

work swiftly to implement the policies and bring the necessary legislation, so that families will function and function well.

In summary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we in the Ministry see family, youth, sports and the environment as four pillars on which the future of Barbados can be built. With any building, I am no architect, I am no contractor, but I imagine that you cannot address just one pillar. One must address all four pillars for this building to be secure.

We have the mandate in the Ministry of Family, Youth Sport and the Environment, to build those pillars, to reinforce those pillars, so that Barbados can be a better society for it. We will work with other Ministries, represented here. We will work with other agencies, other stakeholders and, indeed, with all Barbadians.

Our policies and programmes have to meet the needs of people of the Barbados today and well into the future. I outlined that as I looked at all four aspects, environment, sports, youth and family. The Ministry of Family, Youth, Sports and the Environment is committed to this. The Democratic Labour Party Government with its visionary leadership continues to be committed to the social, physical and economic development of all Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am much obliged to you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

House A3, Sequence 05, 10.50 a.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, first let me offer my sincere gratitude to the constituents of St. Philip North for reposing their confidence in me for a second term.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to express sincere condolences to you. I also wish you all the best in your future endeavours. I know that you would do your best in relation to your recent appointment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sat last week and listened to the submission from the Leader of the Opposition and it came across as if reality has not struck in as yet. Sir, one would not believe that the Democratic Labour Party captured the will of the people on the 15th of January 2008. One would not also believe that the Barbados Labour Party had the reins of Government from 1994 until the 15th of January 2008, and one would not believe that they came to the country with a Manifesto making promises. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it came across as if this Government would sit back and allow the Opposition to railroad it.

I must speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the record of the previous Administration. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West is saying to me that there is not much of a record that I could outline to you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was that Administration that pledged in their 1994 Manifesto that they would institute a form of compulsory home insurance in which Government takes responsibility for the aged and infirmed.

Further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they made a pledge in 2003 that there would be a dramatic increase in the provisions of housing to lower and lower middle income persons. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they outlined their promises to the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we came in a Throne Speech to set our policy and our programme for this term, after they had three bites at the cherry and failed. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to look at the state of affairs in relation to housing in Barbados.

The stark reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the number of persons who have applied to purchase land from the National Housing Corporation is 16 800; those who have applied for land and houses is 11 200; those who applied to rent lots is 8 000; and those who applied for rental units is 18 000. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the National Housing Corporation has not built a rental unit since 2002.

Sir, that state of affairs was not aided and abetted by the Democratic Labour Party Administration but by the then Government because of their lack of performance. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not this Administration that created the situation where today all of these persons are now looking for land, a house or to rent units.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we made a pledge in the Throne Speech that we would provide 500 lots in five months. I must report to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that from January until now we have identified 490 lots. In accordance with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who said that April is the date for the 100 days, I have from now until April to find 10 lots.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not all. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are now shocked because in a matter of time this Administration could identify 490 lots. What were they doing for 14 years?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North indicated to me that there is some 10 acres of land at Groves Cottage. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want also to report that the land was lying there since 1999 when the same Honourable Member for St. George North came out of a church service at St. Augustine's Church and said that if he had his way the money that was being wasted on the

GEMS Project would have provided 2 000 low income houses.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is grossly misleading this Chamber, I have not spoken in this debate yet.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Honourable Member for St. George North who just rose on a point of order saying that he did not go to church or he did not make the statement?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of Barbados knew that he had a problem with the money being spent on the GEMS Project. He was the Minister of Housing and Lands at the time and he indicated that if he had the opportunity he would provide affordable housing for Barbadians.

Asides.

House A3 Sequence 6

11.00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that statement aptly described the performance of the then administration in relation to housing. Sir, we have now to provide housing solutions to those persons on that waiting list. Sir, it is not good that we have more than 16 800 applicants waiting to purchase land. Furthermore, there are 11 000 applicants who want to purchase land and a house, while there are

18 000 applicants waiting for rental units. Sir, we have to do this, we have to make a dent in these numbers. We have to make sure that these proposals work for all Barbadians because shelter is an important commodity for all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to speak to the issue of the rental units of the National Housing Corporation. Sir, in terms of the maintenance of those units, this is costing the National Housing Corporation an average \$6 million. Furthermore, rental arrears are approximately \$4 million. Sir, we have now to look seriously at dealing with this issue of ensuring that those individuals residing in the units of the National Housing Corporation for 20 years and more can receive their just due from this Democratic Labour Party government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have approximately 2 372 persons who already qualify for the 20-year period and over. This would be out of approximately 4 000 persons. We have committed ourselves to the policy as outlined in

our Manifesto, that we will provide those tenants who reside for 20-years and more in those National Housing Corporation units, that they will only pay minimum legal fees. Those persons would then be entitled to own their units.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is that since 2002, the National Housing Corporation has not built any rental units to solve this problem of the demand for rental units.

Asides.

Hon. Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the stark reality is that they have not built any units since 2002, and this is a Government that was in power for 14 years.

Sir, the only housing units that were built are those housing units in Bush Hall. Sir, Minister after Minister promised that they would have started the work on Country Park Towers. The former Honourable Member for Christ Church East, on his appointment as Minister of Housing, said that with immediate effect work would have started on Country Park Towers. Sir, in doing so, the Honourable Member gave a new definition to the phrase "with immediate effect." Mr. Deputy Speaker, the National Housing Corporation has a social mandate, and we are committed to refocusing the National Housing Corporation to ensure that it fulfills that social mandate.

Sir, the stark reality is that we have persons at the low income level, for example, janitors and maids, who cannot afford to purchase land in Barbados today. Sir, that is why this Democratic Labour Party has started with the commitment of providing and developing a new plan to assist the number of persons on that waiting list. We said that for first-time homeowners we would provide 500 lots in five months at \$5 per square foot.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, we have a social conscience, and we believe in the concept of social justice. We believe that when individuals go to the National Housing Corporation literally begging on their knees for a piece of land or a housing unit, we want to ensure that the majority of those individuals would not go away empty-handed. Sir, we promised that we would provide

2 000 housing solutions per year and in order to do so, we have to work hand-in-hand with the private sector. We have to refocus and redevelop the Joint Venture Programme.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that programme will be different from that of the Primary Homes Programme. We know what happened to that Primary Homes programme, we know that Barbadians were promised primary homes. We know they were promised the cheapest land and the cheapest houses. These promises were made by Minister after Minister on That Side, but these people are still waiting. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must say that today, only 100 Primary Homes were built, which is not even a slight dent in the demand for affordable housing and land in this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that as the way forward we have to ensure that we provide programmes and policies which would redound to the benefit of those categories at the low and middle income levels.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have outlined to you the policy of the Democratic Labour Party Administration. We recognised that affordable housing is important to the development of this country, and that we as a Government must join hand in hand with those persons who are ready to come on board to help us to be able to solve this problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that I have touched on the matters that are of importance. Sir, I must also inform the Honourable Member for St. George North that those 10 acres from my analysis and from consulting - not from a consultant - a private surveyor, to get advice as to how many lots the land at Grove Cottage would bring, he has indicated that it is estimated to bring about 80 lots.

11.10 a.m.

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, that is an estimate and it does not included the 490 lots that we have already identified. Sir, this not a Government that is sitting idly by, this is a Government that will produce, that is busy and will ensure that we fulfill the mandate.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North, in his exuberance as the new Minister of Housing has identified land surely in the constituency of St. George North. These lands were previously acquired by this Parliament. I am glad that he has identified those lands but he must tell us when those lands will be put on the market and what type of income group he will be targeting. He has identified the lots, he has moved with dispatch, I am supportive of this but he must identify the income group.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not believe that the Honourable Member for St. George North would have the audacity and the unmitigated gall to state in Parliament that the land was acquired since 1999 and that he, as representative for St. George North, as

Minister of Housing at the time; was powerless to ensure that his constituents benefit from the lots at Groves Cottage. Sir, oh what an indictment on himself and an indictment on the administration! Thank you, Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this administration will forge ahead and ensure that the state agencies that are responsible for providing housing and land that they meet their target and provide Barbadians with access to decent and affordable housing and that they will have the opportunity of owning a piece of this rock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is indeed an opportunity and a pleasure to once again represent the interest of the people of St. Philip West and this great Party, the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, this morning I have a charge of trying to evaluate statements made in the Throne Speech with respect to advancing and setting out a new set of policy guidelines and positions that would advance several areas that fall under the Ministry. Sir, because of time constraints I will concentrate largely on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I will speak cursorily to some administrative problems that our policy positions have outlined ways to deal with and, in particular, look at new policy positions to bring the Sanitation Service Authority in the modern world of operations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the last 14 years, sometimes I have had to sit and wonder with all the mouthings I have heard from the Other Side and all the talk and babble, I am indeed saddened when I look at the state of affairs of the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, I will get to speak to that at some stage. I am also saddened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the state of affairs of the Sanitation Service Authority and even more concerned about the state of affairs with respect to the National Insurance Department, an entity that has under the laws of Barbados a mandate to protect not only the pensions of Barbadian citizens for now but in the future. I am seriously concerned that after 14 years in office that an administration that has used that entity as a means of bankrolling their projects, I will have to tell Barbadians the state of affairs with respect to the National Insurance Department.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me go the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This administration has made a promise that we will maintain healthcare in this country free to all. That is a fundamental pledge of the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, in order to do this, I had to sit and evaluate 14 years of mismanagement. Fourteen years of underfinancing. Fourteen years of holding an institution that plays a

fundamental and pivotal role in this country at a level of under development because of actions taken by the former administration that now has the mouth and temerity to get up in here and talk about policies and programmes that the Democratic Labour Party wants to execute to develop that institution. Sir, this administration agrees with the establishment of a board to administer the affairs of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but we, Sir, in our good wisdom, back then, warned the then Minister of Health that he was making a grave error when the board was configured in the way it was configured and so passed in law. An experiment now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has proven to be a failed experiment. An experiment that will come to an end under this Administration in its present form and I have the mandate to ensure that we evolve a board structure at the hospital that allows it to function.

3.11 a.m.

Sequence 8

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Sir, the last administration, though ill-advised at the time, went ahead and brought in a Board that was an albatross around the neck of the former Minister. It should still be there all like now, because part of that is, as a result of the composition of the Board, the hospital never had the correct skills sets to effectively create policy to allow that institution to function in a modern way to deliver health care services.

As a result of that, we have taken a decision, after consultation, to restructure the hospital Board, and to ensure that we have the necessary mix and skills set to bring a level of experience that will allow the institution to chart a new path. Sir, there will be a structure that allows for a distinct and different approach, with respect to the financing and accounting with respect to that hospital. That will be reflected within the Board's composition.

Sir, the Honourable Member on That Side understood the difference between being a Financial Analyst, an Accountant and a Manager. They feel that they are all the same. As a result, these three distinct functions are going to be integral to the Board's composition at the hospital. In addition, the skill set of engineering, the skill set of human resource management, the skill set of labour relations, and the medical and paramedical skills are the other skill sets this Administration will be bringing to the Board of the QEH.

Sir, I certainly can recall when the former Minister was told that he would not be able to function under the then Board structure. We were told that we knew not what we spoke about, but sometimes hindsight is always accurate. Sir, part of the programme that the Democratic

Labour Party had to consider and to concede as a way forward, was to first get a Board with the appropriate skill sets to get the job done at the hospital.

Sir, the reason why the Democratic Labour Party, in its Manifesto and the Throne Speech, agreed to pay special attention to the healthcare system in Barbados was because; I am going to systematically list the results of what happened at the hospital, after 14 years under the former Board structure and administration. Sir, elevators are not functioning for 14 years; autoclaves sitting for 3 years and cannot fit into rooms for which they were ordered; a preeminent institution cannot provide basic services like barium and barium enemas because there is no fluoroscopy.

Somebody who is charged with the responsibility of making sure that the equipment ordered can fit into the room, that it was purchased, and that the floor can support its weight, bought equipment with the taxpayers' money, that is sitting in a corridor, because if you put it in a room, it is going to drop through the floor.

Sir, when you reach a stage where, because of a lack of manpower audit, but an audit with respect to resources, material and otherwise, something that this Democratic Labour Party administration will do very shortly, you end up in a situation where patients' families have to come to feed them during the day and at night. you end up with a situation where you are out of this and that, and nobody can tell when you are going to get it; you end up with a situation where there are no modern technological inputs to look at inventory controls and inventory management structures.

You end up with a situation where you have no inputs at all of the technological level with respect to credit management. Sir, that is the Administration over there. Sir, after all the talk, this is the state of affairs. The great administration led by the great Houdini from St. Peter, the team for the time, the great team. So, the Honourable Member for St. John, the Prime Minister, had no choice but to look and execute a completely new plan to reestablish and redevelop that institution. Sir, there are air conditioners, critical for maintaining health, for neonatals not working for years.

Sir, you have a situation where in this Honourable Chamber the then Prime Minister was warned not to cap the hospital if you are looking to expand services and you are looking for the hospital to get into redevelopment matters, how can you cap the hospital. Is it because the IMF told you to do it? Sir, as a result, last financial year, and I thank the Lord that their eyes opened, that administration gave the hospital \$139 million to run its affairs when salaries and wages amounted to \$120 million. Tell me how the hospital can function.

I knew why that happened, because ultimately, the private hospital was supposed to come on stream, and ultimately the plan would have been that poor Barbadians would be left out to sea with respect to healthcare. If that is not so, somebody has to explain it to me.

11.30 a.m.

Sequence 9

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

House A3, Sequence 10, 11.30 a.m.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is even more ridiculous is that \$140 million. Sir, if your recurrent expenditure with respect to your salaries and wages are \$119 million approximately, where do you get your materials and supplies from, where do you get your capital investment from? Sir, that is why the hospital had to borrow money. This was the great former administration. What it therefore has done, it has put the Democratic Labour Party in a position where we now have to do damage control. We have to undo what was done for the last 15 years because of mismanagement.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: A lot of hairy-fairy talk. I am a physician, Sir, and I therefore hold these matters very dearly.

When you have people in Barbados who have to go to the Accident and Emergency and wait for 48 hours, this is a chronic problem that this Administration now has to fix. In addition, I am going to pledge here today that this new Administration, in its approach to dealing with the problem of ambulances in Barbados, there is going to be a rapid movement away from those Mercedes Benz. Out of the 17 ambulances only three or four ever worked and stayed on the roads. Sir, thousands of dollars are being paid every month. The reality is that when one and one cannot add to two, look for three. Those who have sense understand what I am saying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our new health policy, as we attempt to maintain an institution to provide healthcare free to all Barbadians, we now have to look to recapitalise that institution. We now have to look for adequate nursing staff, nursing assistants, health aids, orderlies, janitors, maids and cooks. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we even had to find a grinder to grind meat.

Sir, can you imagine that when I went into the kitchen at the QEH, the staff does not even have trolleys to push around hot food. Therefore, what this new administration must do is to essentially start afresh,

because of a lot of mouth and talk out there. Talk is cheap. They have done nothing at all. There is dereliction of duty and there should be a court so established.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, can you imagine that for 14 years, we now have to attempt to bring the hospital in compliance with certain international standards, with respect to critical care beds? Sir, that is as bad as it is. Do you understand that at a 600-bed institution we should have about 10 per cent of the beds as critical care beds? Do you know how many we have? Sir, 14 beds.

Therefore, let us get real, so I do not mind the talk that tells me, "Estwick, take it easy." I cannot take it easy with the foolishness that you all have done in the last 14 years. No!. I am not going to take it easy because you know, Dodds is still there.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what we must do in order to bring the Hospital into a modern arena and in compliance with international standards. We must now expand the SICU, MICU and look to establish at least between 40 and 50 critical care beds to comply with international standards. Sir, what were they doing for 14 years apart from eating free food?

Asides.

Sir, can you imagine air-conditioning units for the hospital are in Warrens in storage for the last five years? What bothers me when I said that this Administration will be looking for a manpower audit - and I would advise my colleagues to have manpower audits done for all of their Ministries and essential Departments. We must know what you need in terms of personnel to get the job done.

Sir, it cannot be business as usual where if I need five staff nurses to run a floor, there is one that has to be addressed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are going to employ a fundamental principle of management and that is, that a qualified individual should never do a job that could be done by a lesser qualified individual. Therefore, as a result, we are going to use that principle to create the sort of staffing elements required. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is going to be so for the Polyclinics, the Geriatric Hospital, the Psychiatric Hospital, as well as the QEH.

Sir, I will spend two minutes because we in this Administration will change the focus of the National Insurance. Sir, for too long under the former

Administration the National Insurance was a bank for them. Sir, just like the National Housing Corporation when their mandate was to provide low income housing, the next minute we heard they were building high-rise apartments. Next we were hearing you were building office complexes, while they are 16 000 poor people looking for houses and house spots.

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

The Hon. Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality is that the Leader of the Opposition knows quite well that it is best to sit and be quiet. In the two minutes that I have, let me tell Barbadians what my concern is with respect to the National Insurance.

A new policy position will be adopted by this Administration. We are going to ensure that our pension monies are secured for the future. We are going to ensure that the pension monies in the National Insurance are not utilised to get involved in projects and activities that they themselves do not solve some of the more fundamental problems in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can rest assured that there are discussions in place with other players within the Ministry to determine how best we can utilise investments of the National Insurance to advance the interest of most Barbadians, not the interest of certain select groups. The next time I have to say what I have to say I will say it, Sir.

Sir, I want to also question why it is that after \$35 million of taxpayers monies have been spent on a computerised system that is not working yet, one that was commissioned since 2001, and that why it is that the most critical component, which is the auditing component, is not in place and the National Insurance cannot get an audit done since 2001.

House A3, Sequence 10, 11.40 a.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Ultimately, it means that there are over six million cheques in the National Insurance Board that have not been audited. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a former Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, who needs to come and explain those things to Barbadians.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your leniency. I know we would have

another time to debate this matter further. I thank you very much.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to add my comments to the Throne Speech that we are now debating and of course to also express my deepest gratitude to the people of St. Thomas for the privilege to be here on a third occasion to represent their interest.

I also want to indicate to you, Sir, and to the rest of Barbados, that I am extremely proud that the people of St. Thomas, almost 3 500 of them, went to the polls and voted from their heart for me because of my performance. None of them were bribed or pushed to receive money to vote in this Election. I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I witnessed what transpired in my country. We are a proud people and I have been speaking...

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I would wish, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be given the opportunity to speak. I did not interrupt anyone. I have as a right; a privilege to speak in here as indeed all Honourable Members.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we have order, please?

Miss C. Y. FORDE: The laughter would go on now but when you look at the future of our country and some of the messages that have been sent to our people particularly our youth, whom all of us in here should have a great interest in. It is going to destroy that fabric of our society that my old grandmother who was born in 1885 spoke about when she could not vote because she had no property. All she had was the hair on her head, a little chattel house and a little employment in the agricultural belt.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when she got the franchise, she went out there and voted from her heart for the party, or the individuals, that she felt could do the best job. She could not be bribed or coerced by anybody.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am so proud of the people of St. Thomas who have given me that privilege again. They know that I would not betray their trust so I want to thank them sincerely.

Anytime, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I reach the stage where I have to do something of that nature I would bow out gracefully and go home because I believe in integrity. I like what was said by the Honourable Member for St. George South. I want to look at the integrity. I want to look at the role models that we as politicians should be when it comes to upholding good standards, displaying respect for law and order and all the other things that go with it

because we are the leaders who are being focussed on, on a daily basis.

It is no wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you meet so many young people who have great potential who want to be in the political arena but have backed off because of the maligning, the cursing and the insults they received because every politician is now lumped in a big barrel of the thieves, the get rich overnight people and all kinds of things that are really untrue.

I hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that some of these new Honourable Members in here would continue, if they have not started yet, I trust they would, to focus on the youth and set that example because I was in here in December last year and witnessed behaviour that left so much to be desired that my eight-year-old grandson said: "Granny, why do they have to behave like that" "when we in school and we give any trouble, the teacher flogs us, nobody can't flog them". It was so despicable.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Do not interfere with me. Honourable Member for St. Philip West, please let me speak, I am one of three women in here and I am not going to give up my rights as a woman. I would assist the Honourable Member for St. George South and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to be able to carry the voice for women in here and will not be shut up by any of the men on That Side or even on This Side. I believe that women have a right and we are going to carry the flag for women in Barbados, so I am going to speak. I am not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, going to allow them to stop me from making my contribution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the opportunity yesterday evening to listen to the Eulogy of a woman who strove to raise her children under pressure, but with pride. She went out there and did what she had to do honestly. I am going to uphold my honesty. I am going to encourage any young person to hold fast to the rules, to the values and all those attributes that Barbadians are known to possess and have always put in place for generations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me move on. I want, Sir, to laud this Government for its success at the polls. The polls are hurdle number one. They now have many hurdles to climb. I trust that they would continue to focus on God, as I have seen in the media and so on and so forth, who would give them that opportunity to fulfil some of the dreams they have identified. I have absolutely no problem with that because the public of Barbados spoke and I highly respect it. I commend them for being successful Honourable Members of this Honourable House. I trust that they would continue to work in the interest of the public of Barbados who so willingly went out and lent them their support.

The Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a time for everything under the sun. It is now their time to show the public of Barbados that they can beat the track record of the Barbados Labour Party. Over the last 14 years I witnessed transformation in all spheres of development in this country.

I did not only witness it as a member of the Barbados Labour Party and as a member of this Honourable House. I witnessed it as a parent, as a grandparent, as a former teacher, as a member of the church and as a member of community groups. I saw things unfolding that never in my childhood dreams or my dreams of a growing young woman did I witness or did I even feel that Barbados could unfold with this kind of high-level development that matches those in the international arena.

I am not going to cast aspersions on anybody because there were times when I would have said to the Barbados Labour Party how I felt about certain things too, but we are all human beings. I want to give them the kudos today. However, the honeymoon is over, they need to get up and do the people's work and step out of the media sometimes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard one of the Honourable Ministers even before he reached his seat, before he left Kensington Oval - this is one of the Honourable Ministers who criticised the Barbados Labour Party and talked about arrogance and being pompous - saying: "I heard the civil servants saying they are not working with me, well if they are not, let them get a transfer". That is a measure of arrogance that frightens me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nobody out there seemed to have cautioned the Honourable Member because since then you heard: "If the policy papers are not given to me within a month's time I shall write them myself". I did not know that the Honourable Minister is a technical person. Those are some of the challenges. We heard all over Barbados about pompous, arrogance, looking after self and all kinds of things we knew were untrue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reform that took place in the Ministry of Education is now unfolding. Therefore, I want the Honourable Minister to relax and carry on with the good policies. The curriculum reform package and the EduTech Project, that took place in the Ministry of Education. Any sensible Government should hold on to it because beyond the land and the other few things we have, our people are our only real natural resource.

Our human resource development is pertinent. That technology must continue to be an integral part of whatever any Government does now or in the next 15 or 25 years. There is also what is happening with the University College of Barbados and the other areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a couple other things I want to mention because I heard about a 100-day delivery and I am waiting. I think the 100 days conclude sometime in April. I am waiting because I have not seen any deliveries as yet except the firing of Barbadians who have done excellent work in this country over the years to help to build culture and to develop rural development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there were no Rural Development Commission or any Urban Development Commission in Barbados I would shudder to see what would happen to the people of this country.

House A3 Sequence 11

11.50 a.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to speak for the folk in the rural Constituencies. They are the ones I know well. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe you are one of those persons who came from the rural community. As a matter of fact, I believe you still have your roots there, as I have not too long ago witnessed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I am making is that rural people are hardworking and dedicated persons. They do not rely on welfare services unless they cannot do any better. People from rural communities love to work and love to earn honestly but like anywhere else in the world, they are some who have fallen through the cracks.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party Administration has already devised strategies and has established the Rural Development Commission so that poor people in this country could have a better life, compared to what they had experienced in the past. Sir, I am also hurt by the fact that every day, one could see a poor family or an old house being shown in the newspapers. Sir, where is the dignity of these persons whose pictures are being put in the newspapers?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am hurt by the fact that there is a poor family in Spring Farm who has not received any assistance as yet. Sir, approval has already been given to assist this family but nobody has ever gone back to check on them. Sir, nobody in this Barbados Labour Party Government has ever gone back and highlighted that family's poor circumstances in any of the newspapers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know about poverty. I am not going to join with anybody who highlights the poverty of a poor woman and seven little children, who have a lot of food but little clothing. Sir, I would be embarrassed if this had been done to me too.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard that the Honourable Minister will do some restructuring in the Rural Development Commission. I hope that the Honourable Minister would not, for anything, touch the programme in relation to housing, such as waterborne toilets, the sinking of wells, and the road improvement programme. Sir, when we look at Barbados 12 years ago and compare that Barbados with now, we would see that there has been a complete transformation in rural communities.

Sir, I hope that the Honourable Member would not touch the Rural Development Commission because that is all we have going for the people in rural communities. Those people who are just as good or even better citizens because they work and try to achieve, but sometimes there are circumstances that would cause them not to be able to reach their targets.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had to wear two pairs of shoes while going to school and probably you too, because little or no attention was being paid by the then Democratic Labour Party to rural communities. Sir, there were a number of communities such as Hopewell, Lion Castle, Canefield and others that did not have proper roads, they were only cart roads.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are young people in those communities who have established their own businesses. What about those who have that dream of which the Honourable Member for St. George South spoke about earlier? Where are the dreams of those persons who want to be able to access funding so that they could borrow to establish their businesses? Sir, these persons do not want to go begging 'cap in hand' for tables, chairs, et cetera. Sir, the point I want to make is that people living in rural communities like to work to earn a living for themselves. They do not like to beg.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I call it a political cleansing and I am not going to apologise about it. I know many of those persons who have been axed within the past few weeks, whether they were consultants, working at Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission, the National Cultural Foundation or at any of the other institutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand there will be political patronage, and that is sometimes why people run behind politicians. Some of these persons are genuine and want to help, while others look to do it to get help for themselves or for their children. Sir, I do not have a problem with that because I know how ordinary people would suffer if they do not get opportunities of those kinds.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the other hand, I have a challenge in circumstances where persons are professionals, where persons have mortgages and families.

Sir, the Honourable Members on the Other Side speak a lot about families first, Sir, what happens to the families of those persons who have been sent home, who are not involved in the political arena? What happens to their children when these persons cannot pay their mortgages? What happens to them when they are on the breadline?

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a problem because this is not Kosovo this is Barbados where we are all Barbadians. If it were Trinidadian professionals who were being axed, I too would have a problem because of the fact that they are human beings who would have been working honestly, who would have been making a contribution to the development of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to ask, where is the voice of the unions? Are those persons, who have been axed, not members of unions? Sir, I want to see all forms of democracy prevailing in this country because we have always upheld those pillars, the democratic right of our people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central described the policies as being visionary and relevant, which will underpin the social, economic and the mores of this society. The Honourable Member also noted they were well-drafted initiatives which would put back Barbadians to work. Sir, I did not know that Barbadians had stopped working because as far as I can recollect, in January this year unemployment was less than 8 per cent. I now know that people are going home because I am seeing people being unceremoniously fired.

Asides.

The Hon C. Y. Forde: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say that I await the promised 500 houses in 500 days. I await the pie in the sky stories that have been given, that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central said are visionary. Sir, I am going to respect them in that manner and give them the chance to do it. I am going to give them that chance because one does not expect that Rome was built in a day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, last week the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said that if they were to make any errors, they would examine those errors and have them corrected. Therefore, any sensible person who makes mistakes and does not correct those mistakes, woe betide unto that person.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to address the issue of youth empowerment. Sir, I appreciate the ideas expressed in the Manifesto, but if I did not have access to the Internet, I would not have had a copy. Sir, poor people in Barbados

did not get a hard copy of the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party. I am not sure what people voted for yet but...

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to the empowerment of the youth, as expressed in the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto, these are ideas that have already been expressed, and many of those ideas have been implemented by the Barbados Labour Party Administration. Sir, the document for the National Youth Service of Barbados is ready for implementation.

Sir, I am one of the firm believers that every young person in Barbados should get the opportunity to do some kind of social work in this country so that they could understand that we need proper linkages with our past or aged generation, so that a lot of our cultural norms, a lot of what we stand for as a people, could be transferred to our youth. We need young people in the day nurseries; we need young people to be working with individuals in the Geriatric Hospital and in other institutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support that idea, but the Barbados Labour Party has left a track record. We left the Youth Development Programme. In 1994, on assuming office, we did not even have 20 community groups functioning in this country. Today we can boast of hundreds of community groups that are functioning exceptionally well, because of the establishment of the Youth Affairs Department but, more particularly, those 32 Youth Commissioners, who are the eyes and ears for the community to map people and the issues which they have.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Youth Development Programme has generated thousands of young people in communities in sporting activities. There is a programme called "The Youth Achieving Results." Sir, this is nothing new that I am talking about. It has been functioning for the last eight to 10 years, where young people were able to come in and with coaching were able to paint. Some were interested in music, in singing, in stilt walking and in a number of other areas. That programme is one of the most successful in the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs Department.

Sir, in relation to Project Oasis, I saw today that 19 businesses were formed. Sir, we could also look at the thousands of young people - not only the unstructured youth - who have been admitted to the Barbados Community College to do the hospitality programme. There are also those young persons enrolled at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic who are pursuing electrical installation, carpentry, joinery, masonry and a number of other areas.

H:No. A3 (12)12:00 noon.

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

The Hon. Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Sir, those in the Digital Media Programme, where we now have a young man working at CBC going all over the island taking pictures of those same old people's homes, where you always have blocked gutters. Sir, those young people have been an integral part of that programme. Therefore, I am happy that the new Government is going to continue because we cannot slip up with what we have given to young people to whet their appetites. We have to go to the next level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I witnessed that the importance of the youth is to do with the inclusion of technical skills within the schools and community and that is already happening. Sir, in 2004-2005, additional funds were put in so Combermere School, a school that would have been dealing with a lot of academics, they too are into the technical skills area. Sir, Grantley Adams School is into horticulture, masonry, carpentry, steel bending, and a number of other areas. Funding was put in our Estimates so that the young people can be a part of it.

Sir, St. George Secondary, St. Lucy Secondary and Coleridge and Parry School are a part of it. If there is going to be a further expansion, as was the plan in the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto, that is still supported because the funding of taxpayers and other funds that are coming in through tourism and otherwise must be spent on our people. Human development is critical. Sir, if we are to continue to stymie the process of crime, violence, the use of illegal drugs and so on, we need to empower our youth, so I am supporting those issues and aspects that would be implemented that would help to carry our people forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NVQs, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are ready for issuance for those persons who are at the entry level and have completed apprenticeships and it goes right across the board to the highest level. Sir, the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) can be taken from any other country. Skilled persons can come here and our people can go there and be a part of the development of those countries in the technical area. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party has put all that in place. We have established the Accreditation Board that will assist us in making sure that we know the currency of the certification that people have in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am aware of the impact that the scourge of drugs and other narcotics can have on our people. Sir, it is not only our young people but some of our senior people are really hooked on drugs as well and it is a similar pattern when it comes to HIV/AIDS. Sir, I want to express my concern with the issue of illegal drugs because

the whole aspect of destruction of family life comes to the fore.

Sir, any parent or guardian who has a child or has experienced young people within the home environment or the extended family, who are hooked on drugs are devastated. Every effort that is put in place to help to stymie that process, this Barbados Labour Party will continue to support and that is the reason why we established the Child Guidance Clinic. Sir, I agree that we need to have another institution for those students, who are in school, who are on drugs but do not want to go to the Psychiatric Hospital because of the stigma that a lot of adults have put to it. There must be somewhere for them to go to be rehabilitated.

Sir, I support that because I know productivity falls flat when people are on drugs. They do not come to work, if they come they do not come on time, they steal a lot and a lot of things go wrong when people are hooked on drugs. Therefore, I support the efforts that Government has indicated would be coming on stream and I await those policies eagerly.

I want to be an integral part of it because I have thousands of young people with whom I have worked, who have voted for me, who are my relatives and friends and I want to see them steered away from this whole issue of illegal drugs and its addiction.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Thomas, you have two more minutes.

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the final one I would like to mention is the manner in which Barbadians display respect for authority, property, traditions, icons and symbols. Sir, how do we get that done, when we lambast each other and go outside and curse each other? I should not say "we" because my political platform had absolutely nothing to do with lambasting one single person because I had more important things and messages to share with my people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a problem when people get on a platform and speak about your family and talk about how many men the women had but nobody focuses on how many women the men had and how many outside children are knocking around. Sir, nobody focuses on that because Barbadians accept that. I have a problem with it because the children are the ones who suffer as a result, therefore, we cannot be out there sending these messages. We are supposed to be the role models but we are not upholding the good standards. We are not revering our icons and the other distinguished people that we know. Sir, their names should not be bandied all over the place, articles placed in the paper and so on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support the restoration of good moral values. I strongly support persons respecting authority, despite whichever the authority may be. I may have a difficulty with some of the other members on the Other Side, but I am not going to go anywhere and disrespect any of them. I would tell them that a spade is a spade. I do it with the other members even on This Side but I want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for us to uphold our leaders. We have identified our heroes and our heroines. We have identified other distinguished people in our society. We have thousands of unsung heroes in our community and I want for them to be uplifted.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I lend my support in that respect. We have some value systems and in the same way your mother could raise children and those children did not go into the hands of the police, they did not deviate from the things that you know would put them in trouble. In the way my parents and parents of other distinguished members here and on the outside have been able to raise many children; I support the effort for families to be focused on and for policies to be devised to put systems in place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me the time. As I put my final statement, I want to remind Barbadians, that we know what we had but that we do not know what we got.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make some comments in respect of the Throne Speech that was recently laid. I first want to thank the residents of the constituency of St. James South for bestowing a high level of confidence in me during the last Election. I want to particularly note the wonderful contribution and support received in that Constituency from the Honourable Member for St. Andrew and the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I think they all recognise that it was time for a change. Sir, like most Barbadians I believe they also recognised what that change has thus far entailed.

Of those who would wish to speak about the honeymoon being over, I wish to assure them all that this Government, of which I am proud to be a part of, is not and has not been on any honeymoon. We hit the ground running because we recognised, coming out of the last campaign for elections, that there was a lot of mess that needed to be cleaned up. A lot of work has to be done and we have got on with that task immediately.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other area that touched me very much in the Throne Speech was the area of Foreign

Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business. Sir, sometimes portfolios in these areas seem so far removed from the lives of average Barbadians. The truth of the matter is that they do touch the lives of all of us very closely. I believe that going forward in this Parliament, we ought to be engaging our minds, hearts and souls a lot more to what is happening in the international arena, how it impacts upon Barbados as well as how we as a people prepare ourselves for these challenges that lie ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbados today is challenged to function in a new globalised arrangement. One where many of the developed economies are currently under siege. For example, if you look at the United States of America and the recession taking place there. We have no doubts in our minds that what is happening there will have severe consequences for us as a small open economy.

3.10 a.m.

Sequence 13

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: If we look at what is happening in the UK, and I was there just a few days ago, you would have certainly seen with the ready eye the challenges that are looming in their own financial markets. As the main source of Barbados' tourism, we too have to be aware of what is going on there that will impact upon our tourism sector and economy on the whole.

Sir, likewise, currently in the other parts of the world there are many bilateral and multilateral arrangements taking place, this would certainly force such regions to come a lot closer together, often times leaving out small open economies like us in Barbados and the wider Caribbean.

Sir, we also have to be very much in tune with what is happening in respect of our own regional trading arrangements and agreements and the impact they have on us in Barbados. If you take, for example, the recent Economic Partnership Agreement that is being initialed between the CARIFORUM States, on our side, and the EU. That has far-reaching implications for us in Barbados and the wider Caribbean. I am very happy to note that this Government, while maintaining due respect to those who would have negotiated that arrangement, reserves the right to ensure that there is great public debate, including here in Parliament, on the Economic Partnership Agreement and its implications for Barbados. Wherever possible, we can see it fit to adequately prepare ourselves for such implementation. We would do it, but rest assured, there would be full and frank disclosure and debate about that particular agreement, and its implications for us here in Barbados, and the Caribbean on the whole.

Sir, we are functioning in a world where there is reciprocity and the liberalisation of our domestic markets. Gone are the days when Barbados and Barbadians, must feel that we can stop others from coming into our market to ply their goods and services. At the same time, we must prepare ourselves not to sit on our laurels, but to get up and go out in this new globalised arena and seek to push more Barbadian goods and services. This Government is very much committed to that cause.

Sir, we recognise the failings of those who have gone before. We recognise what the arena is today. We are also aware of what we have to do as a responsible Government to ensure that our people are prepared for the challenges that lie ahead, and that they can earn tremendous benefits therein.

Sir, what is happening in the global arena and how we prepare ourselves for these challenges, is perhaps one of the greatest concerns of this new Administration. We have as a responsible Government, to break them down and to look at the various areas to improve upon them. Sir, in order for Barbadians as individuals and as corporations to earn their rightful place in the world today, we have to ensure that we are adequately prepared. That is why in the Throne Speech you would have seen us speak to the issue of education, for example.

The Democratic Labour Party is extremely proud of its track record in terms of the education revolution and changes in Barbados. That is not to say that the other Governments have not done reasonably well as well. Suffice to say that as we are going forward, we have to be cognizant of the fact that our education must be changed in such a way that it could bring the benefits we so rightly deserve.

Sir, if I can point to a few areas that, to my mind, speak volumes in terms of our level of preparation for this new global arena. I would certainly like to see, for example, greater emphasis placed on foreign languages in schools. I believe we have reached the stage in our society, where all Barbadian graduates should be coming out of high school fluent in a second language. This Government is certainly intent on expanding its presence in other parts of the world, including the Far East and South and Central America. We have to be very much in the mode when we can prepare our citizens to be fluent in the languages of those who we have to embark with our future trading arrangements. I would certainly like, from an education perspective, to see greater emphasis placed on foreign languages.

Sir, I would also like to see greater specialisation in some areas. If you take, for example, the legal fraternity, it is not enough for Barbadians to just have a law degree. I believe that we ought, as a developing nation, as one

moving forward into this global arena, to have attorneys who specialise in various areas, International Trust, International Tax and International Finance. These are some of the training opportunities that we have to bring to our people to certainly carve out a niche and to allow them to make a wonderful contribution to development and expansion of our economy. Sir, it is so too in the area of finance and accounting. It is not enough just to have an ACCA, CA or CGA, but I would like to see many more young Barbadians specialising in areas, for example, taxation, pension fund management, and a whole range of financial areas. These things to my mind will certainly help us reshape our economy, diversify and expand it, becoming more active players in the new global arena.

Sir, we also have, as a people, to ensure that we are adequately prepared, for example, our health care system. I heard my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West speak to this, this morning. You can rest assured that the Democratic Labour Party firmly believes that the health of a nation is the wealth of a nation. That is why we will continue, as we prepare our people for the challenges that lie ahead, to ensure that health remains very much on the front burner, and affordable health care, not just health services that are of international standard, but one that all Barbadians of all walks of life can afford.

Sir, we have seen in recent time a situation where in Barbados, if you have no money or no contacts, or good friends, sometimes in the medical fraternity, you are left at the whims, fancy and mercy of a few in this society in the health care sector. We need to move beyond that as we step into the 21st century. Our health care system, I am saddened to say, is not at the level that I would have expected in the 21st century.

Sir, the other area of great importance to us is housing. I want to emphasise the importance of preparing our people, ensuring our people are taken care of, they are well housed, they are provided for in terms of health care, and as such, become the quality and kind of citizens that can make a meaningful contribution to the development of our nation.

Sir, in my Constituency of St. James South, every day I am bombarded by young men and women, who need to feel that they can own a piece of the rock. They cannot afford to rent on the open market like many of us, perhaps, can do. So housing has to remain the number one priority for this Government.

We have, certainly, in the Throne Speech and elsewhere, declared some very broad and bold initiatives designed to ensure that we can house our nation. They are far too many Barbadians that I encounter on a daily basis who continue to lament about housing being beyond their reach. We as a responsible Government and Parliament,

have to make sure that we initiate and institute the kind of programmes that would ensure that our people are well housed; and that our young people in particular feel that they can make a meaningful contribution to the development of this society.

Sir, the other area that touches very closely to Foreign Business and Foreign Trade, and to a lesser extent Foreign Affairs, relates to the development of a culture of entrepreneurship in Barbados. I am deeply saddened, as a businessman myself in another life, that there are not enough young entrepreneurs in Barbados. It is not just enough to talk about the Project OASIS, while giving people weed whackers and lawnmowers. We have to start from a very young age inculcating a sense of entrepreneurship in our people. I would certainly like to see this becoming part of our education system. It is not enough to go on the 'block' at Election time talking about taking our young men and women, giving them these tools and think that would make them entrepreneurs. It takes a lot more than that. It calls for some training, exposure, financial assistance, bold initiatives and bold leadership.

12.20 p.m.

Sequence 14

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

House A3, Sequence 15, 12.20 p.m.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: The days of handouts need to be over. This Government is committed to providing our people with hand-ups, including ensuring that they are imbued with a level of entrepreneurship from a very early age. We owe it to our next generation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is sad to see that in the 21st Century, there are still too many young men and women who are aspiring to becoming employees, as opposed to become employers. We need to move beyond that. Sir, if we are going to lift up our people and make them become active players in a global arena, we need to ensure that they are imbued with these kinds of skills. Therefore, there is a lot of shaking up that has to take place.

Sir, people would comment about the kind of shake-up that they are seeing happening or reading about in the newspaper, but there is a lot more shake up that has to take place at the fundamental level, such as our healthcare system, and our housing needs. These things are all intertwined and will ensure that we create the cadre and calibre of young men and women that can truly be good players in this global area in which Barbados will be challenged.

There are other areas such as when we speak as a Government to ensuring that 40 per cent of the procurement of goods and services goes to small and medium-sized businesses in Barbados. This is one way of ensuring that we are able to develop and sustain indigenous businesses that can develop for themselves, the level of enterprise that ensures that they survive, and there is something to pass on to the next generation. As a responsible Government, that is what we have to do.

They are those who would criticise us for making that statement, but it is one way of ensuring that people get hand-ups, as opposed to hand-outs. We would not as a Government, be seeking to just dish out largesse to supporters. We have to ensure that we build enterprises that can survive regardless of the colour of the political spectrum in Barbados.

We have to ensure that we build the kinds of enterprises that do not feel the only way they can survive or pay their bills is if they go cap in hand, begging to a Minister or begging to a Government. Those days need to be over.

We need to ensure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when all of these things are done; education, healthcare, housing and others are on stream; that Barbados continues in the global arena, particularly, in the areas of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business to ensure that our voices are heard.

This is why you would see going forward, as we start to make our changes in our Missions and Embassies abroad, that we have Barbadians working abroad for, and on behalf of the people of Barbados that have some kind of commercial knowledge, that have great interest in the areas that drive our economy, such as tourism, international finance and international trade.

Barbados cannot, in the 21st Century, have people working abroad on its behalf, who are merely interested in attending cocktail receptions and sipping tea with the Queen and whatever. We cannot afford that any more. We need workers. Therefore, I expect to hear a lot of hue and cry from others when we address this particular issue. But you can rest assured that our decisions would be sound, based on a clear understanding of where we want our society to go and what it would take to get it there.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Those who would wish to shed crocodile tears, rest assured, you can borrow our handkerchief to dry them.

We have to ensure that there is also a serious attempt at reintroducing the "Country Team" approach, which was

initiated by the former Democratic Labour Party. We believe that our Tourism sector, our International Business and Financial Services sector and our diplomacy via Foreign Affairs, should all work together as a team, in the marketplace on behalf of Barbados and Barbadians at home and abroad.

Therefore, this focus and modus operandi that you see once again coming to the fore, as Barbados seeks to diversify and expand its economy and earn its rightful place in the world, as opposed to borrowing, as others may have done before.

We also have within the area of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in particular, to ensure that those Barbadians who have gone abroad, worked, sent monies back home and are desirous of returning to Barbados are treated with a level of dignity and respect, which they so rightly deserve.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Within my Constituency, day after day I get complaints from those who are labeled as returning nationals. I much rather call them Barbadians who have opted to return home.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I do not want to use the wrong term with them.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Sir, the truth of the matter is that they have been the subject of harassment at all levels within our Government structure, and sometimes treated as stepchildren, outside children or unwanted citizens, who return home.

Sir, Barbadians who have gone abroad have made and continue to make and will continue to make wonderful contributions to the development of our economy. Those who decide that they are ready to return home ought to be treated with respect and decency and treated as Barbadians and not as foreigners.

This Government will certainly ensure that a lot of the stumbling blocks that they place in the way of their resettlement are removed with haste, without compromising the integrity and the quality of our decisions as a Government. They all have a wonderful contribution to make and let us not forget that for one minute.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am satisfied beyond a shadow of a doubt that what we have outlined in the Throne Speech, speaks volumes to the kind of Barbados

that we wish to see for ourselves, our children and our children's children.

As a parent of two young sons, I am very concerned about their future. As a member of a PTA, I am concerned about the future of many young people in Barbados. I believe that this new Democratic Labour Party Administration will ensure that all Barbadians, regardless of race, class, colour or creed are well-taken care of. That together, with our training and education, we can ensure that we earn our rightful place in the new challenged, globalised economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that further consideration of this matter be postponed.

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

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

RECOMMITTAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am to report that I am in receipt of correspondence in respect of the Honourable Member for St. James North and he would be unable to attend the Sitting of the House until the April, 2, 2008.

I am to further announce that I have received the Auditor General Report for the year 2007.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House Sitting be suspended until 1.40 p.m. today.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting be now suspended until 1.40 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

House A3, Sequence 15, 12.29 p.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER No. 1

RESOLUTION THAT THIS HOUSE RESOLVED
ITSELF
INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER
THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE
SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

*On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by
Hon. F. J. STUART, the House resolved itself into
Committee of Supply, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY in the Chair.*

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of
Supply.

(a).

HEAD 13

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this
Supplementary relates to a number of programmes in the
Prime Minister's Office, essentially relating to staff and
related costs to meet the payment of travel, entertainment,
duty and telephone allowances for the last quarter of this
fiscal year, in respect of the general management as well as
employees' contributions and for Defence and Security
Preparedness travel of \$23 000 under programme 041.

Under the Immigration Department, the sum of \$6
276 is required to meet the cost of travel. Under
Information and Broadcasting Services, the operation of the
Government Information Services, the sum of \$6 692 is
required again to meet the cost of travel for officers. Under
the programme Culture, the sum of \$11 227 is being
requested by the Film Censorship Board to meet the cost of
operations of the Board in the last quarter of this fiscal
year. Also under Culture, the Archives Department, the
sum of \$3 894 is required to meet the cost of travel for the
last quarter of this year.

I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

HEAD 14 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE

\$5 461 061

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this
Supplementary under the Ministry of Finance is for the
sum of \$5 643 526. The largest portion of this amount, \$5
million, is going to be made available by way of a grant to
the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited. The other areas are
Tax Administration and Public Expenditure Management;
the Treasury; Central Purchasing Department; Loans and
Advances; and the Modernisation of Customs, Excise and
VAT.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to start with the \$5
million. The current financial position of the Enterprise
Growth Fund Limited is that from its inception until
December 2007, the Fund has approved \$19.98 million in
financing for various businesses and \$12.7 million of this
total has actually been disbursed by the end of the 2007
financial year. When the last capital injection was received
from the Government in 2006, the total capitalisation of the
Enterprise Growth Fund Limited increased to \$10.5
million. Therefore, the ability of the institution to fulfill its
mandate of providing financing to those businesses for
which it had given commitments and for which it was
established to provide that financing would be constrained
under these circumstances.

So far, the company has been able to use the re-
flows which have been generated to date from its profits
and lapsed approvals to operate, but it has reached its
lending capacity given its current capital availability.
Actually, the funds available for lending at December 2007
were in deficit by \$897 250. In light of this, the institution
urgently needs capital to continue the work of financing the
vital small business sector.

Mr. Chairman, I shall add to this that the public
would be well aware that a large chunk of this amount was
made available to a company called Hardwood Housing
Factory Inc. I am very disturbed, Sir, about what I have
seen. I think the entire population of Barbados would be
extremely disturbed about what we have seen, in relation to
the manner in which the funds of the Enterprise Growth
Fund had been utilised in this enterprise.

House A3 Sequence 16

1.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I believe
that the person who was in business with the Enterprise
Growth Fund Limited in setting up this establishment has
fled the scene. I would not say the scene of the crime, since
that would be previous of me. Sir, a lot of equipment is no

longer there. Many of the workers were taken away or opted to leave. Therefore, what is left of that enterprise suggests to me that the taxpayers of this country are going to have to foot a significant bill, in relation to the fact that the company is unable to fill either its mandate or any other mandate.

Mr. Chairman, the only recourse available in the circumstances would be for the Government, as a shareholder through the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited, to have a forensic audit done of Hardwood Housing Factory Inc. We have requested, as shareholder, that such an audit be done as a matter of urgency, so that some element of accountability could be brought to this matter and that the perpetrators of any infelicities, if found, would be brought to justice in Barbados. That forensic audit will relate to the financial operations of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No, the forensic audit relates to the operations of Hardwood Housing Factory Inc., on the behalf of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make it clear that any additional information coming into my possession relative to any of the principals of this company; the manner in which the company was operated, which impinges either on the finances of Barbados and causes the taxpayers to pay out any money which, under normal circumstances, they should not normally have to pay out; or, in any way, affects the normal prudent business practices that a company, which is owned by the Government, and observing the Laws of this country should be practising; or any action by any principal of that company which infringes against decent business principles, such as the principles of accountability and the principles of integrity, particularly in relation to an enterprise in which Government has made such a significant investment in, or one in which Government stands to lose so much money, despite warnings by several persons in this country, the fullest extent of the Law would be brought to bear on those perpetrators, whether they are in high office, low office, or no office.

I want to make that abundantly clear because this Honourable House has already been provided with some of that information. I am not going to pronounce on the forensic audit because I do not wish to taint the process, in any way, but as I said, I will make all information that becomes available to me, available to this Honourable House.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not going to respond to that, Sir. I do not have a speech writer, so I have to think on my feet. I do not have anybody, neither do I have any more money to waste.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is worrying the Honourable Members on That Side but I know that, as I have already said, the perpetrators will be brought to justice. Sir, that goes for all persons against whom allegations were made and against whom there is evidence.

Sir, this is not only in relation to Hardwood Housing because I want to make it abundantly clear that it would be well nigh irresponsible of the Democratic Labour Party and me, as the Leader of this great Party, in whose ability the people of this country have placed so much confidence, to make allegations and not to follow up those allegations with information and evidence.

Mr. Chairman, in this particular scenario, there is abundant evidence. What is also worrying is that it is a publicly subscribed to company, by virtue of the resources of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited, and that it could have found itself operating in the way in which it has been operating in Barbados, after taxpayers had made a significant investment in it.

Sir, it is truly troubling that our public affairs have sunk to such a low in Barbados and that nobody was willing to take responsibility. Sir, the fact that there was a public company in operation, the fact that it was using the funds of the taxpayers of Barbados, the fact that it was getting contracts from statutory corporations in this country, the fact that it was being facilitated in getting land through the Town Planning processes and by meeting with Ministers and so on, and at the end of the day when questions were asked about it, people threw their hands in the air, as if they owed no accountability at all to the people of Barbados. Sir, it seems as though they were saying that as long as they were helping a poor black man, they could raid the Treasury of this country.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am hearing this all the time. I looked in yesterday's newspapers and saw that taxpayers' money was being used to help out people, just like that, so that if everybody in Barbados who was ill, had come to me and said that they were ill, that I must help them out. Am I supposed to raid the Treasury of this country and give them monthly payments because they said they were ill and needed help?

Mr. Chairman, I have never heard of any government anywhere in the world, where such a callous

disregard for the principles of accountability and transparency had been thrown through the windows.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not blame Honourable Members on That Side because the four of them who are there knew nothing about those things. They never knew because they too had people who would have liked to have a little monthly pension and did not know that such a facility was available.

Sir, I could point out people in each of those Constituencies who would have been deserving. There are people in St. Michael North who suffer from multiple sclerosis, who have contributed a lot to this country, who are deserving of similar assistance, but we cannot break down the whole system of accountability by saying whomsoever will may come and that especially if you are my good friend, you can come even more.

Mr. Chairman, I can think of people in St. Thomas, in St. Michael North East and in St. George North, who would have been deserving of similar assistance but, Sir, people had to be within the inner circle and inner sanctum to get such assistance. People's personal circumstances had to be known only to him, who had the right to dispense such largesse out of the public Treasury.

Mr. Chairman, I am very worried about these developments, and there can be no excuse...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member for St. Thomas wants to speak, the Honourable Member will have the time, but I am not going to stop her. Any time that you are a junior Minister and your only portfolio is that of School Meals Department... Any time the limit of your portfolio is the School Meal Department...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Again, Sir, more of an example of a waste of taxpayers' money in this country. Sir, I am going to say to you that the members on That Side are entitled to heckle. They have a right in here, as long as it is done with decorum and Sir, I did it in my time. I am going to say this, on a serious note, Sir, that we were elected in this Chamber on a platform of accountability and

transparency and to ensure that wrong things were made right. In that regard, the Democratic Labour Party is going to ensure that there is a full independent forensic investigation in relation to Hardwood and that those other areas of national life, in which there is a need for an investigation.

I believe the Minister of Health has pointed out some and that the Minister of Social Care has pointed out that one will be done in relation to the operations of the Urban Development Commission. We will operate on the basis of fairness because we are not on any witch hunt.

Sir, I am saying that the \$2 million out of this \$5 million that we are coming here to this Chamber today for, could have provided more school meals. It could have provided more school meals for secondary school students in Barbados, which is what the Honourable Member should have been arguing for but we did not know she was Minister for schools meals because that money could have been for that, it could have been used to improve the hospital in Barbados. It could have been used to assist in building tenantry roads and in building houses in this country through the entity that is charged with that responsibility.

Sir, at the end of the day, the people of Barbados are probably going to find that it is well nigh possible that the vast majority of these funds have already been thrown away in relation to Hardwood Housing Factory.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I have said, I am not going to prejudge the outcome of the inquiry and that everybody will have their day in court. Sir, the sum of \$251 000 is being made available for the Tax Administration and Public Expenditure Management Project; in respect of the Treasury, a supplementary of \$72 900 for utilities; \$2 400 for depreciation and \$263 000 for residual accruals; Central Purchasing Department, the sum of \$29 000 for the salary of a substitute worker as well as grant payment to the West Indies Shipping Corporation towards repayment of a loan and then the sum of \$21 993 in respect of the modernisation of the Customs, Excise and VAT Department in order to increase tax revenues and facilitate and expedite legitimate commerce and travel and improve this country's competitiveness in the global economy as well as the sum to pay the Nation Publishing in respect of subscriptions for one year and it was billed for less than one year. Sir, those are the elements of the request under this Head.

I beg to move that Head 14 stand part.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

The Hon M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in summary, we do not have a difficulty with the requests that are being made in relation to the Supplementary that is here. Suffice it to say, however, that we do anticipate that the figures which are here would be necessary because this Government, since coming into office, has spent a great deal of time talking about expenditure.

Sir, at the end of the day, if there is going to be no revenue, this expenditure, which every night is being detailed on television by Minister after Minister will become nothing but false promises. Therefore, we are anxious to see how they intend to finance most of the programmes and promises, which they are regaling us with on a daily basis. Suffice it to say, therefore, as has happened in our time, we do believe that there needs to be greater efficiency in revenue collection and, therefore, we will not block anything that admits of the Government seeking to get that.

Mr. Chairman, in relation to the other comments, which were more of a political nature under the rubric of this Head, may I say that we look forward as well to the forensic audit, which the Prime Minister has requested on Hardwood Housing, as a Party.

We also look forward, Mr. Chairman, to the fact that many things, which have been said in pursuit of transparency and accountability would also equally be treated in a similar way. I trust and hope, therefore, that these principles would not find themselves being sidelined into a room as it relates to matters pertaining to Hardwood and things like that but that they would also be applied across the board.

Mr. Chairman, as I said last week, it is early days, and the Government must be given a chance to do its work, but that they must fully expect that those same principles would be applied to them. Last week when we raised the issue of the Prime Minister's travel on the private jet, he said that we look forward to the disclosure of that information and we are looking forward to it, in the full interest of transparency and accountability.

Equally, in relation to the matters of other forensic audits, may I remind this Chamber that the Minister of Finance, under the 14 years that we were in the Government, ordered 13 special audits of Government Departments. Sir, they were not requested by the Opposition, they were not requested by members of the public, they were ordered from within the entity in the Government that had the authority so to do.

Those special audits did not necessarily reveal things that always left the Government in a good light. When they revealed that things were done wrong or that there were

infelicities, we dealt with them. Those special audits ranged from the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation to the Urban Development Commission to the Rural Development Commission to the Schools Meals Department.

In fact, I am surprised that the Honourable Prime Minister would talk about the School Meals Department today in the audit, especially seeing that there was a gentlemen in here, whose name figured prominently in relation to the loss of property in relation to that School Meals Audit. Sir, were it not for the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, we might not even have known about it. I thank God that one of the responsibilities, which she had as a Minister of Cabinet was, in fact, the School Meals Department.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just remind the House because, clearly, the Prime Minister does not recollect the various number of Departments that were under the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture initially and Education, Youth and Sports.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas had responsibility for Audio Visual Aids, for the school meals and for all 21 secondary schools in Barbados, for all 84 primary schools as it was, when I left in 2001. She had responsibility also for Youth Affairs and she had responsibility also for Sports. Sir, it would suit the Prime Minister to deflect to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas because he has now to explain to the public, how a Ministry that had no more than a few files coming to it a day..

Asides.

The Hon M.A. MOTTLEY: You cannot tell us anything about community and culture because under culture, the National Cultural Foundation is a statutory body, so it has its own workload taking care of. Sir, under culture, there is the library and you are lucky, if you see two files a month from the library.

Sir, the Archives similarly is a body and department that is self-contained and this is for the benefit of the other member of Cabinet, who might have an extraordinary workload but who will not know now, especially like environment, where you have files coming to you from international conventions and positions from all across the world that you have to take. Sir, when you add that to Family, Youth Affairs and Sports.

3.14 p.m.

Sequence 18

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

The Hon M.A. MOTTLEY: You begin to wonder whether, obviously, there had to be some special reason why the Honourable Member for St. Michael needed the support of a Parliamentary Secretary in circumstances where the work cannot detain him for more than two hours a day, if so much. In fact, not even every day, but we all know what the special reasons were.

We equally all know - the Prime Minister feels that he is the only one that hears things too. We all know that when a fellow has problems doing his Estimates, the answer is not to be able to find somebody to understudy him, but to find a solution that will remove him from that portfolio. If the portfolio is too much, then you cannot solve it by bringing in an extra body, when in truth they are other people who are carrying a disproportionate workload. So if we want to talk about Ministerial allocations or who was a Minister and for what, we can do that, but that is not the purpose of this Head. Sir, other than to respond to the Prime Minister on that point, I would leave those matters there.

Sir, in relation to the other matters, as I said, we look forward to seeing how this Government would enhance its revenue collection to meet the considerable projects and programmes that they have outlined, which, of course, would place a tremendous burden on both current and capital expenditure.

Sir, it is easy to talk about solutions, and it is easy to say what is needed, but the reality is, Governments in the Caribbean more often than not, particularly in the Post-Independence era, had suffered from a deficit of implementation, because there is not much fiscal space, and the balancing act, in relation to the priorities, and you are new, so you are not going to feel it now. It is only a matter of time before Honourable Members on the Front Bench start quarreling with one another in relation to whose Ministry should have greater priority in relation to the limited resources that are available.

I can empathise at times, because I have served in a social sector Ministry. I have served in an economic ministry and I have served in a governance ministry. Sir, the truth is, each of them has a legitimate claim on the purse strings of Government. The truth also is, in a Government where the economy is only growing at only 3 per cent on average a year, it is impossible to meet the developmental needs across the board, in the manner in which Ministers are now talking and promising to the public as if these things will happen overnight.

That is why I say, we will give you a chance. In addition to giving you a chance, we will await the outcome, because promises without performance is just a way of wasting people's time. It is simply that. So we will give you the chance and we will await the results.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, further comment on this matter. I must say that in typical style, the Honourable Member gives in one hand and then tries to take in the other. It does not make sense saying that you give people a chance in the hope that they will fail.

That is the perspective which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East brings to this exercise. We are not the unwashed and the uninitiated. Therefore, the idea that a few months from now people will suddenly wake up to reality and find out what the real world is about, as if the only world known to man or woman is the world known to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

We have our way of doing business and the Honourable Members have their way of doing business. Obviously, their way of doing business was not working to the betterment of the ordinary people in this country, that is why you are sitting over there and that is why we are sitting over here.

Sir, I do not say that as a boast I say it because we genuinely want to see problems solved. Therefore, when we were over there and we raised issues in relation to the Enterprise Growth Fund and in relation to Hardwood Housing Factory, and ended up being ridiculed by the members of the Barbados Labour Party for raising legitimate concerns, and then within your first few days in office, one of the first things you find on your desk is a request for money for an entity which invested in that enterprise and has absolutely nothing to show for it, and will have nothing to show.

Asides.

The Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is not waiting on any forensic audit. Do not fool yourself. I do not believe that we should do that to each other in here. We are here to speak on behalf of the people, and I do not normally respond in this way. I am telling you that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is not awaiting any audit. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is going to be happy because she knows what the outcome of that exercise will be. It will lead to improved transparency and accountability.

The Hon M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House. I do not know what the results of any audit will be. Suffice it to say that I do not even know what the circumstances

surrounding his request for an audit are. I am happy that he believes that I will give a process a chance in this Honourable House like anybody else. Unfortunately, he said he will not, but he is speaking in every way to prejudge a fair hearing.

The Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, if that is so, I apologise, but it would not be the first time it has been done. I would not be the first time, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East obviously has a very short memory. I am not going to prejudge anything. Let me put it another way, whatever the outcome, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East will be the happiest Member of this House of Assembly.

Sir, whatever the outcome, there will be no happier camper in this Parliament than the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I genuinely appreciate the support, the strong support which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has given to this particular exercise.

Sir, let me say that on the question of the fiscal constraints, all of this pretty language, fiscal space, fiscal constraints, the British Prime Minister now talks about fiscal arithmetic, these are catch phrases. Sir, Governments determine their priorities. Let any family, have a disposable income and you choose how to spend it. If you want to spend it buying more food, you make that judgment choice. If you want to spend it buying furniture, you make that judgment choice. The Honourable Members on that side made their choices. They threw away \$2 million in Hardwood Housing Factory. They committed this country to millions of dollars in expenditure in various projects, all of which will come to light in due course. We are saying that on This Side there will be some more fiscal space to the extent that the Government is able to stop some of that squandermania, and to the extent that the Government is able to reorder the priority.

Sir, do you know what is going to constrain fiscal space? The amount of expenditure and commitments by Government that we are going to have to bring to book before the end of this fiscal year, which is going to be a substantial amount to clean up the public finances of this country. So the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East will have a chance to speak, again, on that point.

It would not be a little \$5 million that we are going to be talking about, and the people of Barbados would get a chance to understand why. If fiscal space is constrained or if there is no fiscal elbow room, why that is the case? It could not have been the fault of a Government that has not been in office for the past 14 years.

14.20 p.m.

Sequence 19

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We will manage this economy prudently. Where we can, we will reduce wastage and expenditure that are unwarranted, and we will target those resources towards the Government's focus in this regard.

Sir, I promise that the full weight of the Law will be brought to bear at the end of the forensic audit. I would not expect, Sir, and nowhere in the world would you expect that an audit could be done of a public authority and in that audit, it would be pointed out that houses were missing, and contractors that do not exist were paid. All kinds of infelicities occurred. Do you know what the Government did? They gave the gentleman a promotion and a new job.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The man who was the Director of the entity landed a new job at a higher salary.

Sir, what is the purpose of having all these special audits? It has to be a question of your faith with the people of Barbados, so just to say that you had an audit for the sake of saying you had it, if you are not going to do anything afterwards, Sir, if you come across this information and then do nothing about it. I am sorry that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is not in his seat.

There was a situation in EduTech where it was found that a public officer had misappropriated public funds and spent them on a personal project. He too was restored to his position and promoted in the Ministry of Education, a Ministry in which apparently there is so much work to be done.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I can go right through. I can go to Culture, if you want me to get there.

Sir, we came into office and I spent two weekends ago reading a stack of reports, thicker than these pages, such as cultural industries project, all of these new ideas which the Members on That Side, when they were in Government said, were supposed to be the pioneering industries for Barbados. The cultural industries alone, were so vital and important and even before I read that report, maybe foolishly, I bought into the Honourable Member's rhetoric and set up a Ministry, which focuses on culture. The first thing out of the Minister's mouth is to attack me for doing what precisely I assume she would have done, if the people of Barbados were ever to make her leader of this country, that is to focus on cultural industries.

Therefore, you understand. I cannot call it duplicity, Sir, because that is borderline. It is not unparliamentary, because I would have to say that you are duplicitous for it to be unparliamentary.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There is a difference between that and saying that an argument is full of duplicity, but to the extent that somebody would say that I was saying that the Honourable Member is duplicitous for advancing an argument that is full of duplicity, I am not going to say that, Sir.

Sir, I am telling you that it is the Members in their short memories. You cannot criticise for the sake of criticising, although you are free to do that, if that is to distinguish your leadership of the Opposition. I am not going to stop you or assist you in any way in that regard. I am saying that the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, based on those reports, and based on everything that I have heard before, stands to play a very important role. It is a Ministry that can be carved out.

I am still trying to find out what the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development was all about.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am still battling to find out what it was about. I could not find enough work for a Minister of Economic Affairs and Development to do, maybe others did, but I could not. I felt even in my youngest days as a Cabinet Minister, with Economic Affairs tacked on to my portfolio, there was not enough work to do. Thank goodness, Finance was there, and I could not imagine 20 years later, with cultural industries on the horizon, with developments in international business, with agriculture needing major focusing attention, with the crises in health care, the need for a housing programme in Barbados, and the need for improved governance in our country, that I could have the luxury of having a Minister only responsible for Economic Affairs and Development. Sir, that would be a half day's job, for which the person should be paid a quarter day's pay.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, as I said, we are going to proceed with our focus and do the things that are necessary and important in relation to the orderly development of Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 14 stand part.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 23

MINISTRY OF HEALTH - \$6,500,000

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, this Supplementary under Head 23 is to seek funding to meet operating expenses and to meet ongoing capital expenditure at the Barbados Water Authority. The breakdown is as follows:

The sum of \$3.7 million is required to meet operating expenses for the Financial Year 2007-2008. The sum of \$2.8 million is required for the same financial period to meet capital cost of the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is important that a little be said with respect to why it becomes necessary to seek this Supplementary. At this present point in time, I have grave concerns with respect to the financial status of the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, after doing some cursory evaluations, what is frightening is that we have had a former Administration that has presided over a state of affairs, where when one looks at a period between 2008 and 2012, the Barbados Water Authority is supposed to have a cumulative net loss of \$129 million, a cash flow deficit over that same period of \$305 million and, a declining net worth of more than \$113 million.

Mr. Chairman, what is fundamental in this, is that this is a state of affairs that has deteriorated steadily over the last 14 years, under the former administration, with no solutions in sight. At present, the Barbados Water Authority gets about \$97 per cent of its operating revenue from the sale of water, and that amounts to about \$87 million annually. Sir, this expenditure is more than \$92 million.

House A3, Sequence 20, 2.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Hon. Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: This capital expenditure is over \$20 million, so we are looking at deficits in the tune of over \$25 million on an annual basis. This is the current situation that exists in the Barbados Water Authority. It is a chronic situation that the former Administration has

presided over and has left in place for the Democratic Labour Party to clean up.

Mr. Chairman, what is even more frightening is that the state of affairs is such that unless Government continues to finance the Capital Works Programme of the Barbados Water Authority, there would be no Capital Works Programme at all.

What is even more fundamental to this is that if this Administration had paid special attention to expenditure that could be contained, the Barbados Water Authority would not be in the position that it is in today, spending \$200 000 a month renting equipment and over \$100 000 renting certain pieces of real estate.

Mr. Chairman, the time will come when I would be able to deal with these matters more fully. Today is not the day. I only want to lay the background as to why we have to come for these Supplementaries, which is essentially because of 14 years of mismanagement at all levels. Sir, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part.

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

The question that Head 23 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY-GENERAL

\$4 695 500

Hon. F. J. S. STUART: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$4 695 500 is needed to supplement the Estimates under Head 30 sub-programme 0260.

The Project Office requires the sum of \$3 000 to cover travelling expenses. The travel rates were increased from April, 1, 2006 and arrears of travel were paid, therefore, the sum of \$3 000 is required because the distance travelled by officers has also increased.

In respect of the Solicitor-General's Chambers under sub-programme 0245, the sum of \$148 000 is required to cover the payment of fees due to a lawyer who had been retained to advise the Mission in New York. He was supposed to have been paid \$1 000 per month but he has not been paid any money since August 2001. The retainer has now been determined and that sum of \$148 000 is due to him.

In addition, the sum of \$144 000 is required under sub-programme 0249 to cover the cost of post mortem fees due from the Registration Department. Demands are being made of the Registration Department to pay post mortem fees at \$12 000 per month.

The sum of \$3 795 000 is also due to the Police. These sums were paid to the Police because of extra responsibilities which they had to perform in emergencies like the Arch Cot emergency and on occasions such as Crop Over, the Cricket World Cup and at Harrison's Point. The problem is that there is a shortage of police officers and a lot of them had to double up and perform extra responsibilities, and the funds therefore voted under this Head were depleted. Therefore, the sum of \$3 795 000 is required to supplement the Estimates under that sub-programme.

House A3 Sequence 21

2.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, MR. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honor Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now suspended for five minutes, to be resumed at 2.48 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.48 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

2.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$56 088 577 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2007-2008 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 12 2007-2208 WHICH FORMS THE SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 23 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE 2 TO THE RESOLUTION.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is in Committee of Supply.

H/A3:14:50

Sequence 24

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

RESUMPTION

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Members, when the suspension was taken the Honourable House was in Committee of Supply, to it we now revert.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Hon. S. A. Lashley is in the Chair

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. F.J. STUART: Sir, when the Suspension was taken I was indicating to the Committee that because of the extra responsibilities which members of the Royal Barbados Police Force had to perform on occasions like Crop Over, the Arch Cot emergency, World Cup and, of course Harrisons Point, and because of the shortage of manpower, very often members of the Force had to work double shifts and, as a result, monies voted for flexible allowances and special operations became depleted. Therefore, the sum of \$3 797 000 is required to supplement the Estimates in this regard.

Sir, with regard to the Police, the issue of utilities, due to the high cost of the electricity, an additional sum of \$433 945 is required to supplement the Estimates, and an additional sum of \$71 950 to pay the Medical Officers of the Police, four of them who served the Police, and are now due the sum of \$71 950.

Sir, those are the main items contained in this Supplementary, and I therefore beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 30 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 49

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND

THE ENVIRONMENT

\$2 587 121

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this is a very simple matter, and a very small amount that relates to the Ministry of Energy and the Environment, but in particular - for the sum of \$54 000 to meet the cost of accommodation for the Energy Division at the National Petroleum Corporation Building to the end of the financial year.

Sir, the sum of \$688 169 to meet the cost of the consultant contracted by the previous Government with regard to the drafting of a contract for the engagement of IHS Energy, and in respect of legal advice for the Offshore Petroleum Licensing Round and the Eastern Caribbean Gas Pipeline Project.

Sir, there is also the sum of \$322 535 to repay Barbados National Oil Company Limited (BNOCL) for cost incurred on behalf of the Ministry in launching road shows in Barbados, Texas and London, as part of the Offshore Petroleum Programme.

The sum of \$12 159 for the remuneration in respect of the recently created post of Chief Legal Officer, who will be recruited for duties relating to the Barbados Offshore Programme to the end of the year; \$10 000 for upgrading the technology capacity of the Natural Resources Department; \$20 000 towards training for the Chief Legal Officer and \$1.8, which is the Barbados equivalent of US\$888 415.75, to pay the contractor, Fiton Technologies Inc for the remediation of the Mobil Refinery site at Needham's Point.

Sir, I beg to move that Head 49 stand part.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 15 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. R.D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F.J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the DEPUTY SPEAKER the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R.D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F.J. STUART, the Resolution was read a first and second time and passed.

sequence 24

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

House A3, Sequence 25, 3.00 p.m.

On the motion of Mr. R.D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee of Supply.

ORDER NO. 1 (RESUMED)

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$56 880 577 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2007-2008 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 12 2007-2008 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT

THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 23 BE
AMENDED AS

SHOWN IN SCHEDULE II TO THE RESOLUTION

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Health, National Insurance and Social Security seeks a Supplementary to its Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2007 to 2008, in the amount of \$5 859 884 to facilitate the payment of Personal Emoluments and travel to various offices, operating expenses and the acquisition of land.

Sir, these monies can be broken down as follows:

With respect to environmental issues, general management and coordination services, and maintenance of property, a supplementary of \$15 000.

Personal Emoluments to the tune of \$591 409, Sir, to cover the extended hours in the Polyclinics, the sum of \$400 411 is required.

With respect to the Psychiatric Hospital, we are requiring a supplementary to the tune of \$197 338.

Travel for the St. Philip District Hospital to the tune of \$13 403.

A supplementary to the tune of \$802 490 is required to cover supplies and material and also to cover the Medical Aids Scheme to the St. Philip District Hospital.

The Sanitation Service Authority; a supplementary to the tune of \$769 833.

The sum of \$2 970 000 with respect to the West Coast Sewerage Project Land Acquisition.

Sir, these sums of money is therefore requested to continue the work under the Ministry of Health.

Sir, I would also like to add that the Ministry of Health requires the following Explanatory Note to be changed in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2007-2008 as follows:

Programme 360 with respect to primary health care services; Programme 0416, the Glebe Polyclinic; Programme 223 with respect to structures.

I would want that the Supplementary be amended accordingly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 24

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION -
\$9 515

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, the matter under Head 24, listed as the Ministry of Social Transformation - only so listed for the time being - is requesting \$9 515 under Programme 040 for the purpose of purchasing furniture to outfit the office of the Honourable Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development.

Mr. Chairman, as you would know, the Prime Minister in designating the Ministries also placed in the Ministry of Social Care, the Minister of State. Originally, there was no space allocation for the Honourable Minister of State and, in seeking to ensure that the Honourable

Minister of State enjoys the comforts associated with the status, it was felt as a matter of urgency, that we move swiftly to furnish the location that has now been so designated.

Therefore, without detaining the Chamber any longer, we would certainly move that this Head 24 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 25

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT -

\$2 920 000

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

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, the matter for consideration under Head 25, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is a supplementary of \$2 920 000. Sir, previously, the Government as guarantor for loans to Statutory Corporations, made debt payments on behalf of those Corporations and subsequently to cover the respective debts.

It is, however, agreed that from this financial year, the subvention to Statutory Corporations would be increased to allow them to make their own repayments and the practice of Government taking over the debts, would be discontinued.

Sir, no provision was made during the current year 2007-2008 for the repayment of this \$2 920 000 to the Treasury. We are now asking for a subvention to make that Supplementary reimbursement to the Treasury.

House A3, Sequence 25, 3.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 25 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 43

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

\$47 300 824

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, it is very well-known that education has been at the heart of the transformation of Barbados. Persons in this country have played their part in education and training and the general transformation of Barbados, therefore it would be recognised that from time to time we would have to come to the House to get what you would essentially call a "top-up" on the resources necessary to carry forward the agenda. Therefore, the sum of \$47 million is now being requested to do that "top-up".

Also under this Head, the sum of \$107 111 is required to meet unforeseen expenditure as a result of payment to officers who would have been employed in place of the substantive holder in the particular Ministry. It should be noted that since officers from the Ministry would be required to act in higher positions throughout the general Public Service from time to time, that replacement at their level would be required at short notice. That is why the sum of \$95 156 is being requested.

The other sum which makes up this \$107 111 is required to replace a vehicle which is 10 years old, and which in recent times has been out of service for long periods undergoing repairs at a mechanic shop. This vehicle which is to be replaced on the recommendation of the Board of Surveyors is primarily used by the Minister on official occasions and also in circumstances where mail has to be delivered as a matter of urgency outside of the normal messenger duty roster. The vehicle identified as a replacement at the time of compiling the Estimates is no longer available and the funds allocated have been insufficient to purchase the new model, that is why the request is for just \$11 955.

The request of \$1 961 650 is to reallocate the item of expenditure under its appropriate Head since it was inappropriately placed. No additional funds are required under that Head. This is just to tidy up the accounts.

The request for an additional \$392 000 is to enable the Challenor Creative Arts and Training Centre to carry out its programme for the remainder of the current financial year. As you are aware, Sir, the Challenor School has been supported by Both Sides because of the way it caters to those students.

The Challenor Creative Arts and Training Centre is a non-governmental agency which caters to 37 severely physically and mentally challenged children up to age 18

and 54 adults between the ages of 18, and 35. The Government contributes to the operations of the Centre through the provision of an annual subvention of about \$1 million to cover mainly salaries for 40 persons to manage the facility. One could well understand that ratio because of the severely challenged, mentally and physically persons.

Over time increasing problems with the physical structure of the building and the increasing staff costs have presented financial challenges to the management of the Centre. This Ministry has approached the Ministry of Finance for assistance through its Management Accounting Section to conduct a review of the operations of the Centre including an audit of the accounts and to advise on the need for restructuring its accounting procedures.

The Ministry is of the view that the operations of the Centre should formally come under its purview to ensure that the programmes are properly monitored. That is why the request for \$392 000 is being made.

Mr. Chairman, there is a strong emphasis on Nursery Education in Barbados. Honourable Members are well aware of the nursery school being established at Six Roads. Sir, as a means of equipping that nursery, we are requesting an additional sum of \$155 000.

A sum of \$90 000 is being requested for Combermere School in an effort to forestall the possibilities of break-ins and other forms of vandalism. Persons who have been paying attention over the last few weeks, and even before, would recognise that there is a high level of break-ins and vandalism to our school structures. Sir, we have to work in providing the necessary security mechanisms, therefore, for the additional security for Combermere School, one of our EduTech schools, the sum of \$90 000 is being requested.

The sum of \$1 647 143 is being requested for the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. The level of expenditure to 2007-2008 is consistent with previous years. However, the allocation in the Estimates for 2007-2008 was down by that \$1.6 million. Therefore, all we are doing, is actually replacing the expenditure to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic.

A request for \$33 080 043 is being made by the University of the West Indies. It is known that the Government of Barbados supports the University of the West Indies. It takes a large share of educational expenditure, but if one is to propel the development of Barbados, such resources can be deemed to be well spent. All one needs is for those students who are accessing education at either the University of the West Indies, or any other tertiary level institution, to maximise the benefit of tertiary level education by going to classes on time to ensure that whatever the lecturers or the professors provide

they are able to assimilate, analyse and reproduce so that they would be successful within the particular time that they are to exit the University and go on possibly to higher levels of education. Therefore, one would have to urge all students to buckle down and ask that conservation be the call of the day.

Sir, \$105 million is quite a large sum of money. Of that amount, the sum of \$72 million was approved in 2007-2008 Estimates of Expenditure to meet expenses, and therefore the additional \$33 million is now being requested to satisfy that \$105 850 443.

Under the Higher Education Awards, the sum of \$8 433 854 is required to meet the difference between what was put into the Estimates for 2007-2008, which was \$22 million. However, the full grant under that sub-programme is \$30 443 854, which is to be paid to the University of the West Indies for Higher Education Awards.

Honourable Members know that the Barbados Accreditation Council was set up as a validation authority to accredit qualifications across the region and outside of the region. Under that Council's sub-programme 0305, an additional \$28 400 is required to meet the cost of upgrading its information technology so that they are able to track most effectively the work of that institution.

A small amount of \$9 119 is being requested by the Audio Visual Aids Department to meet the employer's contributions for National Insurance. One could well understand why the employer has to pay the contributions to the National Insurance Board so that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would not have too many headaches and have the media running down persons to pay their National Insurance.

House A3 Sequence 26

3.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, we need those resources to maintain the pension support mechanisms within this country, therefore, \$9 119 is required for the Audio Visual Aids Department.

We have heard about the School Meals Department earlier today, therefore, the sum of \$1 386 505 is required to supplement provisions under the sub-programme to meet the increased cost of food items purchased by the Department during the current financial year, as well as increased cost of general maintenance and the upkeep of the various School Meals Centres and grounds, as well as additional repairs to the Administrative offices at Country

Road. Honourable Members know that office is undergoing major repairs.

Mr. Chairman, the cost of food has gone up quite substantially and therefore the request for \$1 386 505 is to be used to supplement the Estimates for the School Meals Department. Sir, one can well understand why the School Meals is important, as it was set up way back in the 1960s by the Democratic Labour Party to support the nutritional aspects of our children. Therefore, all persons should be complimented for maintaining this agenda on the behalf of the people of Barbados, regardless of whether or not they are a Minister of School Meals or otherwise.

In the maintenance of property, a request for

\$387 629 is requested to supplement this item for the remainder of the current year as a consequence of the following:

1. Overall increases in the cost of undertaking necessary maintenance of three of the School Meals Centres, with the requirement of Health and Safety at Work legislation, including the replacement of asbestos roofs, termite-infested lockers and sanitation services;
2. The replacement of fencing at the Harbour Road Centre, in the interest of improving the security around the premises; and
3. Repairs on the administrative offices at Country Road, including electrical and air-conditioning installation, in preparation for the relocation of the office, the relocation of office staff who have been occupying rented premises at Coles Building, Lower Bay Street.

Mr. Chairman, I, therefore, beg to move that Head 43 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER, the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the Resolution was read a first, second and third time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today. I beg to move that this Honourable House be now adjourned until Tuesday, March 11, 2008, at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the Honourable House be now adjourned until Tuesday, March 11, 2008, at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the Honourable House accordingly.

3.26 p.m.

CONTENTS

EXCUSES

MINUTES

Hon. R. D. JONES.....2

Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, 2.

PAPERS

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK.....2

1. Report of the National Insurance Board for the year 2006;
2. Report on the Operations of the Severance Payment Scheme for the year 2006;
3. Report on the Operation of the Unemployment Fund for the year 2006;
4. Report on the Operation of the Sugar Workers' Providence Fund for the year 2006.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. R. D. JONES.....2

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. R. D. JONES.....2

Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12; Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, 2, 4, 5, 6; Hon. M. A. Lashley, 7, 8, 9; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 8, 9; Miss C. Y. Forde, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, 17, 19, 20; Hon. F. J. Stuart, 20.

RECOMMITTAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

RESUMPTION

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

RESOLUTION THAT THIS HOUSE RESOLVED
ITSELF
INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER
THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE
SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

COMMITTEE

HEAD 13

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON.....21

Hon. F. J. Stuart, 21.

HEAD 14 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON.....21

Hon. R. D. Jones, 23, 27; The Hon M.A. Mottley, 24, 25.

HEAD 23

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK.....27

Hon. F. J. Stuart, 28.

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Hon. F. J. STUART.....28

RESUMPTION

RESUMPTION

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. F. J. STUART.....29

Hon. R. D. Jones.

HEAD 49

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON.....29

Hon. R. D. Jones, 29.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

ORDER NO. 1 (resumed).....30

THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 23 BE
AMENDED AS

SHOWN IN SCHEDULE II TO THE RESOLUTION

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK.....30

Hon. F. J. Stuart, 30.

HEAD 24

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE.....30

Hon. F. J. Stuart, 31.

HEAD 25

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT -

Hon. E. G. HUTSON.....31

Hon. M. A. Lashley, 31.

HEAD 43

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND
SPORTS

Hon. R. D. JONES.....31

Hon. F. J. Stuart, 33.

SUSPENSIONS.....20, 28.

ADJOURNMENT.....33

Hon. R. D. Jones, 33; Hon. F. J. Stuart, 33.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BYER-SUCKOO, Dr. the Hon. E. R. (St. George South)**CLARKE, Hon. G. A. (St. George North)****ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D. C. (St. Philip West)****FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)****HUTSON, Hon. E. G. (St. James Central)****INNISS, Hon. D. O'N. (St. James South)****JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)****LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)****LOWE, Dr. the Hon. D. S. (Christ Church East)****MOTTLEY, The Hon M.A. (St. Michael North East)****STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)****THOMPSON, Hon. D. J. H. (St. John)**

DISCLAIMER. This transcript was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools and is provided for reference only. It has not been reviewed, verified or approved by the Hansard Department of the Parliament of Barbados and does not constitute an official parliamentary record. It may contain errors or omissions, including inaccuracies in wording or speaker identification. For authoritative quotations or confirmation of proceedings, consult the official Hansard record when available.

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. Throne Speech debate, after Suspension of Standing Orders. No heading or order number introduces the debate on the Throne Speech; the speeches of Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo and others follow the take-slip directly after the Suspension of Standing Orders. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Headings after the Throne Speech debate. The heading ‘RECOMMITTAL’ stands on its own with no business under it, immediately before ‘ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER’. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Throne Speech debate, point of order by Hon. G. A. Clarke. Hon. G. A. Clarke refers to ‘the Honourable Member for St. Philip South’ while Hon. M. A. Lashley, the Member for St. Philip North, is speaking. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Head 14. The figure under the heading is ‘\$5 461 061’, but the Prime Minister gives the Supplementary under the Ministry of Finance as ‘\$5 643 526’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Committee of Supply, Head 30. The Attorney-General first gives the sum due to the Police as ‘\$3 795 000’ and, after the suspension, as ‘\$3 797 000’. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Committee of Supply, Head 49. After the Prime Minister moves that Head 49 stand part, the procedural line reads ‘The question that Head 15 stand part was put’. The same speech gives ‘\$1.8, which is the Barbados equivalent of US\$888 415.75’. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Resolution for Supplementary Estimates No. 12. The Resolution is given once as ‘\$56 088 577’ (with ‘ESTIMATES NO. 12 2007-2208’) and later as ‘\$56 880 577’. A stray line ‘sequence 24’ also stands in the text before the take-slip of about 3.00 p.m. Printed as in the source.

Q9. Resumption, about 2.50 p.m.. Two ‘RESUMPTION’ headings follow each other, each with a statement that the House reverts to Committee of Supply,

and a line reads ‘Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair ... Hon. S. A. Lashley is in the Chair’ as ordinary text. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 4th March, 2008 at 10.15 a.m., with His Honour K. St.C. Best, the Deputy Speaker, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood. Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick laid four papers, among them the Report of the National Insurance Board for the year 2006. Hon. R. D. Jones gave notice of a Resolution to grant \$19 625 143 under Supplementary Estimates No. 11, 2007/2008, and Standing Orders were suspended for the rest of the Sitting.

The House then debated the Throne Speech delivered at the Opening of Parliament on 12th February, 2008. Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, Member for St. George South, presented family, youth, sports and the environment as the four pillars of her new Ministry. Hon. M. A. Lashley, Member for St. Philip North, criticised the previous Administration’s housing record, and Hon. G. A. Clarke, Member for St. George North, rose twice on points of order, the second about lands at Groves Cottage. Dr. Estwick spoke on the finances of the Barbados Water Authority and on restructuring the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board; Miss C. Y. Forde, Member for St. Thomas, spoke for rural constituencies; and Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Member for St. James South, spoke on foreign trade, entrepreneurship and returning nationals. Further consideration was postponed.

The Deputy Speaker announced receipt of the Auditor General’s Report for 2007, and the Sitting was suspended until 1.40 p.m. The House then went into Committee of Supply, Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair. Under Head 14 the Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, explained a \$5 million grant to the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited and said a forensic audit of Hardwood Housing Factory Inc. had been requested. Hon. M. A. Mottley, Member for St. Michael North East, said the Opposition had no difficulty with the requests but asked how the Government’s programmes would be financed, and rose on a point of order that the Prime Minister was misleading the House. Dr. Estwick moved Head 23, \$6.5 million for the Barbados Water Authority, which he said faced a cumulative net loss of \$129 million between 2008 and 2012; Hon. F. J. Stuart moved Head 30, including sums for extra police duty; and the Prime Minister moved Head 49. The Resolution passed.

After a short suspension the House again went into Committee on the Resolution to grant \$56 880 577 under Supplementary Estimates No. 12, 2007-2008. Dr. Estwick moved Head 23, \$5 859 884 for the Ministry of Health; Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe Head 24, \$9 515 for office furniture; Hon. E. G. Hutson Head 25, \$2 920 000 to reimburse the Treasury; and Hon. R. D. Jones Head 43, \$47 million for

education, including \$392 000 for the Challenor Creative Arts and Training Centre. Each Head passed without division and the Resolution was agreed to.

The House was adjourned until Tuesday, 11th March, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.