
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

House A5A, Sequence 27, 10.01 a.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in this Honourable Chamber and in this debate to address the Estimates for the period 2008 - 2009, which were so succinctly presented by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance yesterday.

I want to start first by congratulating him and his team and, indeed, the entire Democratic Labour Party Cabinet for their contribution to the presentation.

Sir, this presentation was able to put the whole question of the macro- economic framework that this Government inherited in perspective. Sir, if given the opportunity, Honourable Members on the Other Side would wish to propagate another view. Sir, we know what we have inherited in the Government of Barbados and we are going to tell the public, in spite of their pleas, in spite of their quiet correspondence, in spite of their entreaties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been asked to serve as the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport in this Administration. Sir, we have been confronted with many issues there too, very similar in character to the ones referred to yesterday by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, adopted a phrase which she termed, bring drinks, somebody will pay.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, nothing better epitomizes what we have inherited and the activity in which the Barbados Labour Party was clearly engaged, in the dying days of its Administration than, bring drinks, somebody will pay. Our challenge is that the taxpayers of Barbados would be the somebody to whom the Honourable Member referred.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance introduced some 44 items. I have my list here and I stopped at No. 44. I am sure there were many after that, because other interventions distracted me. These 44 items that we have already had to bring to book in these Estimates, demonstrate clearly the adage that has been adopted for this debate, bring drinks, somebody will pay.

We have also been able to demonstrate that the Barbados Labour Party Administration, for a while, had obviously been out of touch with the reality of what was going on in this country, what was going on in the corridors of Government, what was going on in the Ministries. Sir, they were so consumed with their own businesses, they were not paying attention to the things that make a difference. They were not paying attention to what was happening in the engine room of Government.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West yesterday referred to the situation he encountered in the Accident and Emergency at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I want to indicate that in the Ministry of Public Works, we have encountered a situation, which can be only properly described as functional dilapidation. How can officers in the Public Service be expected to operate with any efficiency or effectiveness in such an environment?

I am saying to you, Sir, that we could save this country thousands and maybe millions of dollars, and we intend to save the country thousands and maybe millions of dollars, by looking after the small things and carrying out

the timely corrections that will preserve those buildings that are still structurally sound, and can be brought to effective use, by the public servants of this country. Sir, that is our task in the Ministry of Transport and Works.

Sir, we want to avoid as much as possible, the kinds of catastrophies we saw demonstrated from That Side when, for instance, they erected the Warrens Complex - and that story has been told so often, there is no real need for repetition - the wanton wastage, overruns, ineffectiveness, what you call rampant space allocation.

When we saw the kinds of suites that were allocated to some Ministers in the past Administration, it was demonstrative of their emphasis. This is where their heads were. Sir, they were Emperors, and that is why they cannot, to this day and to their own admission, understand why the public of Barbados took the decision they took on January 15, 2008.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, if we had two more weeks, none of them would be in here. Therefore, the former Prime Minister knew what he was doing when he drew up such a short campaign.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I can handle myself. I can raise my voice above anything that they can offer.

The former Prime Minister therefore understood what he was doing because in order to preserve the 10 of them, he had to shorten...

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Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could we have some order, please?

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: The former Prime Minister understood what he was doing, because in order to preserve the ten Honourable Members on That Side, he had to shorten the period in which we enlightened the public of Barbados. Sir, we enlightened them with this document, the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party, Pathways to Progress. This Manifesto is about the people and solutions for Barbadians. This is not about creating empires or more emperors.

Sir, when we entered into developmental projects or when we signed BOLTS, the term we have adopted to

describe that kind of arrangement, they will be, as stated by the Minister of Finance yesterday, so designed that they will bring benefits to the economy of Barbados and not turn out to be a cost. They have to generate savings. That is what a BOLT arrangement, under the Democratic Labour Party, a caring government, would look like. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the BOLTS that they arranged were about bring drinks, somebody would pay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North would have come to arrangements about road repairs in Barbados, but he never would have brought these accounting realities to book as they now want to pretend. Sir, we now have the task, in spite of many protestations by the public officers who serve this Government, whom we have to listen to... Sir, we are guided by our commitment to the people of Barbados in our Manifesto.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to turn for a moment to the question of transport. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Barbados were crying out for the traffic gridlock, which occurred every morning and every evening in Barbados and the Other Side did nothing about it.

Sir, I am sure you would recall that the Barbados Labour Party Government introduced a programme called Operation Free Flow just before the Cricket World Cup and pretended to Barbadians that something effective would happen to our traffic situation on or before the Cricket World Cup. The reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the traffic situation is still as bad as it was, if not worse. It can now be renamed 'Operation Gridlock.'

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the job of the Democratic Labour Party Administration is to put in place solutions for the people of Barbados. We have gone on record complimenting the Barbadian contractors for the work they have done so far on the Highway Project. We have also gone on record and made it very clear that because of the divergent views, the Ministrys views, the SRL views, and the Barbados Association of Professionals, the practising engineers of Barbados' views, as to what would be the effects of the flyovers and the cost, because they have committed Phase 1...

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East made it very clear that she did not know what we were talking about when we said we wanted to look at the project cost for Phase I she had signed off at \$117 million. Sir, Phase 1 was part of the bring drinks, somebody would pay.

Sir, we now have to make sure that with SSS (Barbados) Limited, the engineers of Barbados and the engineers of the Ministry, that the next phase, if there is one, must bring traffic solutions and add to the traffic

solutions in Barbados. It is as simple as that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, not a piece of gravel would be turned in this regard until this situation is... It will cost enough in Barbadian taxpayers' dollars and disruption that it is worth spending some time making sure it would work. That is the point we want to make at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, transport is an integral part of the effective and continual development of this country. Transportation must be effective and must make economic sense.

Sir, the new Transport Authority is now in place. The Board has been selected and the Licensing Authority staff are in discussions with the Chairman about the official setting up. We still have a few technicalities to sort out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I have said to this Chamber before, one of the first tasks that I have asked this Authority to deal with is the question of a symposium on transport. On that occasion, we would bring together all the interested parties in Barbados, the PSV operators, the Transport Board, the taxi operators, the private vehicle owners, and all those persons who have been calling me with the myriad of ideas they have about solving the gridlock in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have already said in here that the decentralisation of Governments services would assist in the programme of making sure that there is not this need to gridlock our roads at 7:00 to 8:00 o'clock every morning. Sir, we would bring those parties together again and they would make an input into the solution. We cannot continue a situation of adversarial participation in the solution to transport.

Sir, that Administration, as far back as 1996, imposed punitive taxation on the PSV operators in the guise of security, better service, getting the radios and music out off the vans, and all of that nonsense, and creating an office for them in the old Queens College block near the River Terminal.

Sir, the facts are that not a piece of mortar has been plastered on a wall in that building. Sir, we have taken it back to the drawing board to ensure that an effective structure is available for the use of the Transport Authority, the PSVs and all the transport operatives in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Members on That Side could sit there and wonder why the public of Barbados did what they did on January 15. I would help them as much as I can to show why. Sir, that would help us to implement some ideas.

Sir, the other thing I have made very clear to my officers is that I want them to put in place some of the

experiments we talked about. I want them to put in place the trial runs on the one-way streets going into Bridgetown on mornings and then on evenings out of Bridgetown.

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Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is nothing wrong with trying. Sir, as I have said before, there is a lot wrong with doing nothing. When you do nothing, you finish up like the Honourable Member for St. George North, with a pathetic record in the history of transport in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as far as permits are concerned, this Minister wants to make sure that Barbadians, who have effective business plans, could go to a Transport Authority and apply for a permit to do their business.

Sir, I term it as horse-trading and, therefore, I want to take that horse-trading out of private sector permits, and whoever is part of the horse-trading must understand that it must be removed. Sir, the citizens of Barbados must understand that it is their right, so long as there are plans and effective programmes, to be issued with a permit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no point going for a taxi licence if one does not have the funds to buy that taxi, but there is nothing wrong with driving for the owner of a taxi. Let us begin to help the public of Barbados to make effective business decisions and not to find themselves in a situation where they have to go to somebody sitting in a Ministry or where they would have to look for friends. Sir, I will not be part of that, and I have already made that clear to the people around me. Sir, I know we will get the kind of co-operation we need to have in this regard, so that an effective solution could be reached.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has 10 minutes more.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Transport and Works has now taken on board the question of International Transport as part of its portfolio. Again, it is about creating effective partnerships, so as not to burden further the taxpayers of Barbados in our economic development programmes. There are models all over the world of seaport and airport developments that are private sector driven, with some public sector input and control. We are going to work towards the effective public/private sector relationship that would bring about the modernisation of our ports.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central made the point recently that there is no question that we need to improve our ports, especially if we are going to be meaningful competitors in the cruise tourism business.

Sir, I do not know what laurels they were sitting on. The truth is that the cruise tourists arriving in Barbados have got to battle between a gantry crane and bobcats, as they try to make their way, first to the cruise terminal and if they contemplate going into Bridgetown. We cannot have that. It is not attractive.

Sir, I got a call last Wednesday and this call was: John, the people are turning back. Sir, our visitors were making their way up the seawall - as we may want to call it - and were turning back because of the negativity there. Sir, the ambience was not there. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are charged with the responsibility of creating an effective environment, a tourism environment, and we will take it on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, similarly at LIAT. The Government of Barbados has continually pumped large sums of money into the operations of LIAT, and we have to get benefits for these investments. Sir, in the meantime, we are going to look for private sector partnership, to allow us to find a solution to the question of mass maritime transport. There are already investors talking to us about fast ferries. Some are talking about what we call the old time method, such as the Federal Palm or the Federal Maple.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph is talking about the wrong type, so I do not know if the Honourable Member has a yacht he wants to contribute to the whole solution. If the Honourable Member has a yacht that could effectively help solve the problem, if he would give us, of course, at no special benefit, we might be able to throw that into the solution too.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are already seeing demonstrations of it. We are going to create the relationship with other Caribbean Governments, so as to promote the kind of movement that would make these projects even more effective.

We are not going to be walking about and hurling abuses at our friends in St. Lucia, or in Trinidad. We are going to hold them, hand in hand, and work with them, to create one Caribbean community. Sir, when we do that, we move from dealing with a population of 250 000 people to

a population of some four million persons in the Caribbean community. Sir, the economics begin to make a tremendous lot of sense, once this approach of camaraderie and cooperation is adhered to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under a special Head, Programme 513, the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport is charged with the responsibility of renovating and retrofitting Government buildings with energy-efficient solutions to save money, and we have allocated \$250 000 in the first instance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, persons, especially Honourable Members on That Side, are going to baulk and ask what can \$250 000 do? Sir, the truth is that when one looks at the figures set out in Budgets, sometimes one has to ask the question, what could I effectively complete in the timetable, given the kind of resources available to me?

Sir, we said that we are committed to ensuring that we introduce energy-efficient solutions in terms of utilities, light bulbs, switches of air-conditioning, controlling of heating, et cetera, where it applies in our Government buildings. Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring that the buildings are repaired, repainted and beautified, so that workers can feel comfortable, so that they would not have to be walking out and calling the National Union of Public Workers.

These are the kinds of projects that we will undertake, and they are not going to cost \$100 million like the Warren's Project, instead, they are going to be done for peppercorn money. They will also be done in the normal operations of the Ministry of Transport and Works. Furthermore, our people will go back to work. They will not be sitting around waiting for instructions. They will have projects in front of them. They will report regularly on those projects. Sir, effective decisions will be made as to where we are going. That is the kind of leadership that we bring.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party is here. There is leadership on board.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are the kinds of things this Ministry will be working with, and I am sure as we move into the Heads, we will have an opportunity to go into specific areas.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Suffice it to say that Barbadians can rest comfortably in their decision of January 15, 2008. Barbadians can rest comfortably in the

fact that in putting in place the solutions we see fit, we shall draw to their attention the ineffectiveness, the wastage, the squandermania and the postponement of projects, which are all hallmarks of the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, it looks good on paper, in reality the guts are no good, so we are fixing the belly.

Sir, as we make our contributions this week, I am sure my colleagues on This Side will demonstrate our support for the Estimates presented yesterday by the Honourable Member and Minister of Finance.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to speak in this debate so early in the morning. Sir, I first want to wish a speedy recovery to the Speaker, who is hospitalised in Miami at this time, from This Side. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we on This Side, would wish the Speaker every success at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened to this debate so far and it seems to me that the Democratic Labour Party would want us to believe that there are no plans for any projects in this country. They would want us to believe that there are problems in every Ministry, and Sir, they have lambasted us on everything. They have said that they have found no good things in none of the Ministries and that there is all doom and gloom.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last speaker, who sat down, who was very loud but who was very empty, said absolutely nothing new. Sir, at his first Branch Meeting, he conceded that there is gridlock but did not offer any solutions. He said he would try a thing and this is coming from the eminent engineer in the House. They do not have any plans for gridlock and they do not have any plans for solving the problems as they see them. I want to make the point that this Democratic Labour Party young team, who have just come to office, has found nothing. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John said he has found nothing worthy to emulate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that we know we have left an economy that is working. We have left an economy that is producing. We have left an economy that they can go into the office and change all the furniture in less than one month. They have not brought it to Parliament yet, but they have changed all the furniture. They have installed new television sets with flat screens and Multi-choice. Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is saying that we want luxurious suites. Sir, I

served in an office for four years and never had a flat screen TV because I came to work to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member says he has nothing to do so he sits all day long and watches movies. Sir, we know what type of movies they are accustomed watching.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The challenge I have with television is that I have a bill for the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, incurred by the Honourable Member for St. George North, and I wish he would pay it.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to push on because I do not want to waste my time. Sir, I want to say that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is batting on a good wicket, if he continues the programme of this Party. When we were in office, we did a number of programmes, not only to solve the gridlock, but we tried.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South must not mislead himself. He must not mislead this Chamber, and he must not try to mislead the country, because the country knows that today you can travel from Warrens to Bussa in less than seven minutes. We were committed to widen the ABC Highway in four lanes and that is what we did. We said, as a government, that we would provide six over-path bridges along the ABC Highway. We would widen the road in the Bridgetown area. We would provide a number of roundabouts at dangerous corners, and we did that, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South should go and look at the provisions of the Transport Authority. Sir, we set up the Transport Authority when we came to Parliament a few months ago and in it, we have members from the Police Force, the Minibus Association, the Transport Board, the CTO and Barbados Road Safety Network. Therefore, it is already in the Act, so do not mislead Parliament that you will do something new. We have said that when the Transport Authority is functioning that it would be the entity to dispense all permits.

I want to make the point that we found a situation that we inherited from the Democratic Labour Party where permits were sold by former members of the Democratic Labour Party. I want to make the point that we decided that the Transport Authority must be the mechanism and a Board is now in place, for the first time, to look at permits and all these things.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I think we have to keep this debate within

the realm of truthfulness and honour. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber to try to impute that any member of the Democratic Labour Party sold permits. I never spoke about selling permits, I carefully indicated what is going to happen going forward.

This Minister is going to make sure that the public of Barbados understands that those permits are available for economic benefits and with proper business plans and that the Transport Authority will deal with them. If the Honourable Member for St. George North knows anything about the sale of permits, he should tell the public of Barbados who he sold permits to, or who he knows sold permits.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make the point that we must understand that permits in this country ...

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Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Did you ask me which one? You are not the Speaker. I am not going to comment as to the propriety of whether the Honourable Member for St. George North should mention anything about the sale of permits in 1994. I took over the Ministry of Public Works in 1994, and there was clear evidence in the Ministry that permits were sold during the period 1991 - 1994, so the Honourable Member is telling the truth.

Sir, as a matter of fact...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: You would not know about that.

Sir, the situation was so bad that a Ministerial Statement, which lasted one hour, was given with the details. I guess you can go back to Hansard and see that Ministerial Statement.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, I want to make the point that all Honourable Members are aware. We must not bury our heads in the sand, The Minister must not bury his head in the sand. Permits are things that people have always sold.

Mr. D.ST.E KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House. The Honourable Member must withdraw those remarks. He is giving the impression that every Minister, prior to him, sold...

Asides.

Mr. D. ST.E. KELLMAN: Sir, he said that he inherited, which meant that everybody before him sold permits. I do not know that to be true. If the Honourable Member knows that to be true, he should say that. I do not know that to be true.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, the truth must be said...

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. George North, who was speaking, should indicate to the Honourable House if he, because he sent me a letter yesterday indicating that he had the names of permits and those who wanted permits, so if he had that information could he pass it on and make it a document of the Honourable House, or give this information to the wider Chamber.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must confess that this situation is being blown out of proportion by the Minister. We heard asides, but you know, because you have worked in the industry and you know what transpires within the industry. It has nothing to do with the Ministry or the Ministers. I am saying that whenever there is a scarcity, there will always be people trying to get them. That is one of the reasons why we, as a government, took the decision that you should not have to line up to get a hired car permit. Anybody who wants one can get one. We said before that permits should be...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, in this debate, made a point of order which misled the Honourable House.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member has taken his seat. I can correct a point of order if it is wrong.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is why Parliament sunk to such a low in the last Administration.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. John, please continue.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Honourable Member misled this Chamber by seeking to give the impression that a member of the Democratic Labour Party sold permits. It was a member of the Barbados Labour

Party, who is very proud of his relationship to Grantley Adams, and said so publicly on the Barbados Labour Party's platform, in the last Election, who the Honourable Member should say was accused by the Honourable Member and charged under a Commissioner of Inquiry by the Honourable Member, a Commission of Inquiry that had to be stopped because the Honourable Member did not even know how to have an Investigatory Commission of Inquiry established in this country.

Sir, the allegations were being made against a member of the Barbados Labour Party, who spoke on their platform since 1999, and during the last Election, and who is very proud of his relationship with Grantley Adams.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, this whole question of permits must be brought to an end.

Mr. G. W. A. PAYNE: On a point of order. I think that the Honourable Member for St. John is making a mockery in this debate. I never made any reference to anybody in the Democratic Labour Party, never did. I simply stated, if he has read into what I said, that the impression was created, that somebody from the Democratic Labour Party got money for permits. If that is what you read into what I said, well, that is too bad.

I am just saying that the position with respect to the sale of permits was so serious that when we came to office, we did not do like you. We did not call any Ministers names. It was so serious that a Ministerial Statement was made in this House, and that is all I said. I have not spoken in this debate on this matter other than that.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is again misleading the House. Consequent on his statement, ... Sir, he has been away from his seat for too long. Consequent on his statement, he was then a Minister and then he was stripped of office. During that period of time, a Commission of Inquiry was launched by the Government. It was targeted at a Mr. Joseph O. Tudor, a member of the Barbados Labour Party, who is extremely proud of his relationship with the Right Excellent Grantley Adams.

He spoke in support of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, at Bridgetown, very glowingly, shortly after the Commissioners had evidence, with which I concur with the Honourable Member for St. Andrew that suggested, up to that point, because it has not been contradicted that mini bus permits were sold in Barbados. However, the Commission of Inquiry did not finish its work, and it would be unfair of anybody to say... That is why I am saying that the Honourable Member is a Queen's Council in this

country. It would be unfair of anybody to come to the conclusion that permits were sold.

What we privately believe is another matter. I may agree with the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, but that is my private view of the gentleman. In relation to the Commission of Inquiry, there was no conclusion to the matter. The Commission was wrongly constituted. It was struck down by the then Chief Justice of Barbados, Sir Denis Williams, and struck down again by the Court of Appeal, in relation to the decisions of Mr. Justice Errol Chase, and in relation to the actions of the Commission of Inquiry up to that point.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, I hope that I can get back my time, because I need to get back my time.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, that is one of the reasons why members agreed to the Transport Authority. That will change this whole notion that a permit is a property.

Sir, there are members of the public who believe that once they own a taxi or mini bus permit, it is their property which they can sell them among themselves. Sir, you have to realise the reality of the situation. We believe that once the Transport Authority is functioning, this would be the entity to issue the permits to those persons who really want to make a living. That is the whole thing.

I want to make the point that we have to understand in this country, but before I go on to that point, there are a number of Ministers, I am aware, who are using the Honourable Prime Ministers name in vain. They are going to their Ministries and saying that the Prime Minister said this and that, which is not necessarily true.

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Mr. G. A. CLARKE: For example, they stopped all the permits from some people who want to make a living. Sir, I had issued a permit to a man in St. John on December 15. He came to me and said that he got a letter from the MTW. He took the letter to the Licencing Department and was told that he had to come back again, and now he is with a car without a permit and cannot work.

Sir, we have to understand that by doing things willy nilly, without a consensus and without the approval of Cabinet...

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Sir, when I took over the Ministry, I requested a report of the status of all permits in the country. The reason is that there are limits to permits, set by the previous Cabinet, which have been exceeded.

Sir, that report took some time to come to my desk and even when it came to my desk, it came with certain caveats, which I appreciate. The point I am trying to make is that the reason for the delay is that we want to make sure that we are not breaking the Law when we go forward. Sir, if the Law has to be changed, we want to bring the proper Paper to Cabinet and effect that change.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party Cabinet took the decision that there was no limit to the permits for hired cars, yet the Minister stopped the issuing of permits for hired cars, so people in this country started to suffer and the tourist industry started to suffer. Sir, there is no limit, so there is no need to go to a Minister to get a permit to hire a car. Sir, this is the point.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I know of the case he is speaking about. That person did not apply for a hired car permit, but had a Public Service vehicle permit that had expired.

Sir, do you know what is so ironic about this conversation? I was not in this House. I was merely a student that came to visit debates in here. The Late Right Hon. J. M. G. M. (Tom) Adams and Prime Minister of this country . . .

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: He was a more distinguished Representative for St. Thomas than you, and that is how I know him, and you know why. Let us go to the facts now.

Sir, when the amendments to the Road Traffic Act were introduced, he said that the then Barbados Labour Party Government was going to treat permits as property, and it would therefore be transferrable by the owner. You treat it like a conveyance. You treat it like any other property, except it would be chattel. Sir, that was introduced in here. I sat as a school boy and heard this.

Then, it was changed, such that if your permit expired, rather, if you do not renew it within a year, this property that you have is taken from you by the Government saying that you cannot have it back. Then, it does not become property anymore.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not have legal arguments with you. I told you that you trained in a different place than I. I was trained here in Cave Hill and I am proud of that. You and I do not agree on legal arguments. I realise that.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am on a point of order. You cannot rise on a point of order.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am correcting the impression given by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East that I gave an instruction to a Minister. Sir, that permit expired through the effluxion of time. The gentleman even came to see me at home and said that he got a renewal from the Honourable Member for St. George North. I told him that the Minister is currently reviewing the situation and I would not even agree to his getting a permit, while the Minister is reviewing the situation. Sir, I gave no instruction to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, therefore I could move on. The Honourable Member for St. John, who is also the Prime Minister of this country, has given me the assurance that all those persons who got letters, and were approved by the Licensing Authority that, very soon, they would get their permits. I am glad for that, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am also of the view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Members on That Side are using every opportunity to do things in the name of the Prime Minister when it is not true. For example, I heard recently - and I was very ashamed but I know for sure that the Honourable Member for St. John would not stop the consultancy of Everton Weekes, but when I heard it on the radio, I said to myself, knowing the Honourable Member for St. John as I do, I do not think that is fair. Therefore, I am asking the Honourable Member for St. John to look at that consultancy again.

I am also making the point that when you look at transport today, you have synchronisation of the traffic signals that we never had that before. We are talking about the plastic licences that are ready and are on your desk, which you have not yet done anything about. We are

talking about amendments in the Regulations in the Traffic Act.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I want to make the point that one evening, at the Cuff in Deacons Road, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West got up and said that he is going to give all the people in the tenancies, free houses.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Sir, at no time did I ever say in Barbados that I was going to give people in tenancies, houses. Sir, what the Democratic Labour Party has said in relation to that matter, and I do not believe I said anything at Deacons Road, is that it will provide additional assistance to residents.

Sir, what we said in relation to housing units is that we will erase the Barbados Labour Party's policy of punishing people who had to pay rent for 20 years or more in those units, and we will give them the units, save for the legal and other small administrative costs. Sir, that is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, the Honourable Member said that they were in power for two months. I am saying that at one meeting in Deacons Farm, the Honourable Member got up and said that all persons who were living in the housing units for more than 20 years, will get the unit free.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He needs to stop making these statements that are not true. The Prime Minister spoke to this in the introduction of the Estimates. He said that we will transfer the units to those people, save for the legal costs.

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Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: If the Honourable Member wants to call it free, he could call it that, but I never said that. If the Honourable Member has evidence that I said so, he should produce it or shut up and move on.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether or not they get free houses in a tenancy, I want the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, when he gets up, to tell me about those people in Church Village who have already paid their deposits. I also want him to tell me if the Ministry will be giving back the money to the people who have already paid the \$8 million and if this money is

already voted for in these Estimates. I want to find out these things.

I also want him to address the issue of those persons who were waiting for 20 years and could not get a unit. Would they be entitled to a free unit too? There are people who have waited for 20 years but got no solution. What about those people who were on lots for 20 years? Are they entitled to freeness too? If there is freeness for one, there has to be freeness for all. If it is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party to give free houses to people who were renting for over 20 years, let them say so.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North has two more minutes, please.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand that it is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party to give free houses and lots to the people and all that they have to do is to pay the legal fee.

I want to tell the Ministry of Housing and Lands that any housing policy must be able to be replicated and must also be able to stand up to scrutiny. Can it be replicated? I would advocate that people who want to buy the units should wait for 20 years and get their units free too. If it is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party to give houses every 20 years, let them give houses every 20 years. We have a policy that persons who live within a tenancy where there are more than five houses would get the lots at 10 cents a square foot. Within urban Barbados you could get your lot at \$2.50 per square foot. This is a policy of this Government which people are working toward. If it is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party, to do so, they can do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Public Works now has a draft of the Building Act which he needs to bring to Parliament. Rather than sitting down all day long watching television, he needs to get up and do some work for his money.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have made the point already that the only connection I have with television is that there is an unpaid bill in my office for STV. My television, therefore, has never been turned on. Until the Honourable Member for St. George North pays that Bill, I have no way of connecting with the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am of the view that this Government has done well in its time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, rather than the Government Members coming in here one after the other criticising this Opposition by saying that we have not done this, they need to get up and do some work and show us and the people of Barbados that they have the competence, the skills and the

energy to do some work. All they are doing is peeping up under themselves every day of their lives.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time has expired.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to these Estimates to see if they are really the programme of the Democratic Labour Party.

Hon. D. ON. INNISS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the Appropriation Bill. As I sat yesterday and again this morning and listened to the debate, particularly from the Other Side, one would really and truly be led to believe that they did ever so much in the 14 years they controlled the affairs of this country, and that we have done so little thus far.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my constituents in St. James South, which includes the Honourable Member for St. Andrew whose support I am eternally grateful for, made a decision, like most Barbadians, on January 15, to make a change.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am satisfied beyond the shadow of a doubt that what Barbadians have seen for the last two months certainly reflects a positive change in this country. Sir, the public servants feel as though a big burden has been lifted from their shoulders. They are now free to speak their minds and to comment freely on issues whereas, before, it was almost like a jail-house that they were functioning in where Ministers ran rampage throughout the Ministries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very sorry that the Honourable Member for St. Peter is not in his seat today because he feels that he could continue to treat this House with a certain level of disrespect.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the last 14 years, we had in Barbados a situation which reflected well at the end of the 14 years where the gap between the haves and the have nots was wider than ever been before in the history of Barbados; where among the young people there was a sense of hopelessness and despair, a feeling that they could not own a piece of the rock, that there was no bright future for them; and where our educational system, despite all the monies we are pumping into it, was not yielding the kinds of results that we expected as a nation. There were so many things that were just not happening right in this society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had a government which Ruled by injecting fear into the hearts of many Barbadians, not just the public servants. We had a situation in Barbados where Government Ministers took it upon themselves to ride roughshod over all the Ministries and into the private sector as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleasantly surprised at the number of private sector individuals who now could speak loudly on a lot of what is happening in Barbados and on what has happened before. All of a sudden, like the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, they have found their voice. They could now speak freely. Sir, there is a level of fear that has been removed. Only after two months in office, Barbadians are now feeling as though they could speak freely on a number of issues that affect our society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday, I heard the Honourable Leader of the Opposition speak to investments and the kinds of investments and entrepreneurial development that took place in Barbados under the former Government. I submit to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that what we had in Barbados in the last 14 years, in particular, was an entrepreneurial class that really functioned in a very mendicant manner. We had a government that believed, or taught people to believe, that the only way they could develop a business is by getting handouts from Government. Sir, if you were not a friend of a Cabinet Minister, particularly the Prime Minister, God help you and your business. That is why today in Barbados there are so many small and medium-sized businesses that continue to be under siege and, perhaps, would feel threatened by a change in Government because they very much had been developed in a culture of mendicancy instead of a government creating a kind of enabling environment that would allow those businesses to strive in a free market enterprise situation. The Democratic Labour Party has already started to put measures in place to ensure that such businesses can survive, regardless of the political spectrum of them.

Asides.

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Hon. D. ON. INNISS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government came to office on January 15, 2008, and we have been very candid thus far in terms of what we have found. Sir, a lot more will be exposed as we progress. It is not just about consultants, because we have a situation where the Leader of the Opposition asked yesterday how are we going to find the money to do some of the things we propose to do. Sir, we indicated before, and will indicate again, that we have started by eliminating a lot of the wastage that took place in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Ministry in which I happen to work, there was a consultant... Sir, all 30 Barbados Labour Party candidates in the last General Election were gainfully employed one way or another by

the Government of Barbados. All 30 of them earned income from the Government of Barbados, whether as a Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary, a Senator, a consultant, a gopher, a driver, whatever, they all earned their income from the public purse, and that is why there was such a naked grab for power and determination to hold on to the reins of Government, but Barbadians were smart.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by giving the impression that those Honourable Members who contested the last General Election on January 15, 2008, for the Barbados Labour Party, had no other income and that they relied on they being Members of Parliament for their income.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the misleading is such that when one looks at the candidates of the Democratic Labour Party, one would have to ask which of the 30 candidates to whom he is referring; one would have to ask himself how many of those Members of Parliament, who were elected by the Democratic Labour Party, were employed. Sir, I do not want to call names because they are all my friends, but this is the first time that a lot of them over there have jobs.

Asides.

Hon. D. ON. INNIS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, now you would understand why the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would have supported me in the last Election. He was enlightened.

Asides.

Hon. D. ON. INNIS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I never sought to imply that all of them only got income from Government. Certainly, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew got more than \$9 000 per month from the taxpayers of Barbados, and one could argue whether or not he received it justly, but that is a matter for other people to deal with.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is being mischievous. I did not get \$9 000 per month. Sir, the Honourable Member should check his facts. Sir, that is the danger about being elected to Parliament and going straight into a Ministry. You really do not know the salary of a Member of Parliament or the salary of a Back Bencher.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not accustomed to looking at the respective Constituencies, but you have to excuse me for calling names like Mr. Brathwaite and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. Sir, those fellows are "scrutning". I can tell you that.

Asides.

Hon. D. ON. INNIS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, suffice it to say that in response to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East yesterday, in respect to how are we going to find the money for financing, I would want to say that it is not always about raising taxes and borrowing money, but that it is also about trimming the fat and about running a lean and mean machine. Sir, this new Government is certainly bent on ensuring that a lot of the fat is trimmed from the various Ministries and Government Departments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it needs not mean any heavy displacement of individuals. There have been a lot of programmes and projects that were undertaken by the former Government, which have borne very little relevance to the kind of development of our people and our nation. Sir, those will have to be revisited and, wherever necessary, we as a Government will take whatever steps we have to take, to ensure there is that return of investment that the taxpayers of Barbados so rightly deserve.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday I heard the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, citing the increase in borrowing for mortgage purposes as a sign of confidence in the economy, particularly for residential mortgages. Sir, this is, perhaps, one of the most misleading statements coming from That Side, time after time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1994, the cost per square foot to construct the average 3-bedroom 2-bathroom wall house was about \$100 per square foot. In 2008, thanks in large measure to the policies and programmes of the former Government, that cost has now reached almost \$200 per square foot.

Therefore, for the Honourable Member to come into this Parliament and to quote statistics in respect of the amount of mortgages borrowed, to say that it is a sign of confidence on the citizens of Barbados, is quite misleading. What one would have gotten, perhaps, for \$200 million in mortgage back in 1994, it would have certainly taken about \$400 million to get that same amount in 2008. Therefore, let us not do as you have done, for example, with the unemployment statistics and seek to mislead individuals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the true test to my mind, as a Parliamentary Representative, comes when I walk my Constituency and talk with my constituents. They are the persons who, despite the ravings and ranting of the now Opposition, could not find affordable housing. They were still paying a lot for health care, in a country where we said health care was free and affordable. They were the persons who could not find jobs or could not find meaningful jobs,

in spite of all the talk from the former Government about the unemployment statistics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are the harsh realities that each of us as Parliamentary Representatives who stick with our constituents must be fully aware of. Sir, therefore, no grandstanding would ever solve such issues. What we need is what this Government has, certainly, started to offer, which is enlightened policies and programmes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about housing, and I know the Honourable Member for St. Philip North will speak to this in more detail. Sir, there are too many young individuals in this society who feel that they will not get a chance to own a piece of this rock because of the fact that the former Government, being in power for 14 years, with all the money they collected through VAT, through direct and indirect taxation, and money borrowed, they delivered so little in respect to the housing needs of Barbadians.

Sir, it was a case of mis-spent priorities. They built a ministerial building in Warrens, which was meant to cost \$35 million, but ended up costing taxpayers \$100 million and counting, while there are people, for example, in the Haynesville Housing Area, who cannot get a chance to own a piece of this rock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not only the low-income earners. We have second-generation Barbadians who have been born into traditional middle-income families, for example, at West Terrace and Wanstead, who feel as though they cannot get a chance to own a piece of the rock. Sir, that is why when this Government comes with enlightened policies that speak, for example, to providing house lots at a cost of \$5 per square foot, we have found more in two months than they were able to find in 14 years while they were in office. Sir, that record speaks for itself.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have also spoken to issues such as creative sources of financing for housing and lands in this country.

Asides.

Hon. D. ON. INNISS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East speaking yesterday about her goal to become Prime Minister of Barbados. Sir, if the track record for the last 14 years is anything to speak of, I am sure that the former Minister of School Meals, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, would certainly stand a better chance than the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Asides.

Hon. D. ON. INNISS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, housing is one of the issues this Government has already started to address, and we could feel a sense of relief already coming from Barbadians. They know that in the last few months we have, certainly, promoted policies and programmes that speak volumes in comparison to what transpired before.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, health care was another issue we talked briefly about, which I hope would be debated more in these Estimates, but it is really sad that in 2008, prior to January 15, 2008 Elections, Barbadians could still be commenting negatively about the state of health care in this country, about having to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the only hospital we have, and they have to take along their breakfast, lunch and dinner and complain about the quality of health care in this

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Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: country from a Government that has had more money to spend than any other Government in the history of Barbados. Sir, these things are unacceptable.

When the Honourable Member for St. Philip West speaks, as he spoke yesterday, about reforms in the health care sector, those reforms come from a government that is enlightened, that is listening to the people and know how to manage the affairs of the country. The measures have all been well spoken for and those who read our Manifesto know them only too well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Administration is a people-centred one. We have listened to the people of Barbados, our Manifesto spoke well to our programme and all of my colleagues on the Front Bench and on the Back Bench are working assiduously to implement them. Sir, there is no delay in the implementation of our programmes. We have certainly recognised the kind of economic and political environment that we came into office with and all have spoken well to that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the global side, we are very much aware of the increase in oil prices, of the recession in the US economy and the impact that will have on our tourism sector, the impact it will have on inward investment and the impact it will have on all aspects of our economy.

Sir, in listening yesterday to the Honourable Member for St. John, the Honourable Prime Minister, there can be no doubt that the affairs of Barbados are undoubtedly in good hands.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that brings me to a small side point I want to make. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said yesterday that if Members would read economic journals and read about economics that they would have a better grasp of what is happening. There is this myth, which has particularly come from the Other Side, that in order to manage the affairs of this country you have to be a trained economist.

Sir, I submit to you that the experience of the last 14 years should debunk that thought. We clearly understand the domestic as well as the global challenges that we encounter and that we have to function in.

Where is the growth plan for Barbados? Where will we grow the economy? Sir, tourism continues to be the No. 1 source of foreign exchange, but we also recognised that the international business and financial services sector is, undoubtedly, one whose potential has not yet been fully tapped, and this Government is certainly committed to doing that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are committed to ensuring that on the domestic side, our educational programmes bear closer relevance to the development of international business and services sector. We have to ensure that, unlike what happened under the former Administration, there is truly a one-stop shop for people wishing to do business in Barbados. Sir, that does not mean entities existing under one roof but, certainly, inward investors must feel as though there is a seamless approach to doing business in Barbados. This thing about having to wait for months for work permits, this thing about having to wait for months for licences to be issued for people to do business in Barbados needs to be a thing of the past.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I am waiting for the Honourable Member to make contact with his portfolio and, after some 25 minutes, he has finally done so, but done so in a way that obviously shows that he has not spent much time there and, perhaps, is too busy spending time on other things. The reality is that if he had gone into his Ministry, he would have known that not only the Ministry, but the sector launched a charter for international business which now has the Government committing to short-term work permits within two weeks.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who headed that portfolio before, does not understand the difference between rhetoric and reality. I am very much aware of the Charter. In fact, prior to assuming office as a Member of Parliament and as a Minister, I would have been part of the creation of that Charter. It is one thing to have all the glossy documents....

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us not deliberate over such trivial matters. The truth of the matter is that as a Director of the Barbados International Business Association, I would have been part of any discussion bearing on that Charter. Sir, it is one thing...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: I will not spend the minutes allocated to me to engage in any trivial and puerile attempts to discredit such matters. Sir, the truth of the matter is that I have been aware of that Charter before. I am certainly aware of it now as Minister and there is no molecule of connection between what is written on paper and what really exists.

Sir, the second week in office, I would have received from the Barbados International Business Association, after a meeting with them, a long list of complaints, including the tardiness within the Ministry and other Government Departments in approving licences, work permits and in doing a lot of the things to which the Charter spoke. Sir, I am not knocking the Charter, I am just saying that the reality is that had the former Minister of Economic Development and Economic Affairs, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, attended to her duties in that Ministry, perhaps there would not be the level of complaints that we are having today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that sector is poised to create many more jobs in this country, well paying jobs, not the jobs the former Minister spoke about months ago that have not been delivered yet. It is about earning serious foreign exchange for Barbados, but it will not happen just by my wishing for it to happen. We have to get all on board.

There are inextricable linkages between the international business and the financial services sector, foreign affairs and foreign trade, as the Prime Minister quite rightly pointed out in January as well as the other aspects of our economy. Sir, that sector, you can rest assured, is poised to grow from strength to strength.

On the international front, there are some programmes we have to continue with some modifications. We will continue to work as a government assiduously on the expansion of our Double Taxation and Bilateral Trade Agreement. We will certainly work assiduously to ensure that Barbados has a greater voice in the global financial services arena.

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Hon. D. ON. INNISS: Sir, at the end of the day, this Government has clearly identified the kind of revenues it needs to earn. We know where we need to earn that revenue from. Tourism and the International Business Sector would, certainly, be the engines of growth for Barbados going forward.

Sir, unlike what transpired before, where one went out and created entity after entity, pumped millions of taxpayers dollars behind entities, and often times just to satisfy the job demands of one or two individuals, this Government will not go down that line. We are a serious Government.

We are about creating opportunities for Barbadians, about creating an enabling environment that works, ensuring that both domestic and international investors can feel comfortable spending their money investing in Barbados, gaining good returns on investment, without feeling the level of displacement that workers felt under the former Government.

Sir, this debate will be long, and I will come back with much more to say on the respective Heads.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Sir, first, let me join with the Honourable Member for St. George North, and wish the Honourable Speaker a speedy recovery on his unfortunate illness. We understand that he has been hospitalised in Miami, on his return trip from his training in the United Kingdom. I would like to join with the Honourable Members on This Side and wish the Honourable Speaker a very speedy recovery from his untimely illness.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Sir, before I get into the substance of the debate on the Estimates that have been laid before us, I would want to correct a little inaccuracy that I heard just now, from the previous Honourable Member, who just took his seat, my good friend and former colleague and, I guess, current colleague, the Honourable Member for St. James South. In his discourse he made a very interesting comparison when he tried to equate the costing of housing per square foot in the early 1990s, with that of the cost of housing today, and how it would relate to mortgages, and the quantity of mortgages that people hold in Barbados.

Sir, let us not fool ourselves. I think it flies in the face of knowledge in this country for people to suggest that less people in Barbados have mortgages now than then. It is flying in the face of pure facts. Let us look at the facts.

In 1994, the total mortgages for private dwelling was \$34.557 million. If we extrapolate his suggestion to have us believe that there was no increase in mortgages, based only on the fact that the cost of building went from \$100, by his words, in 1994, to \$200 per square foot now, if the quantum of mortgages were the same, by extension the quantum of the mortgages, if that has doubled, would have doubled. So, it would have gone from \$34 million to in the region of \$68 million, if no additional mortgages had been given. Sir, let us look at the facts.

Sir, in 2007, the mortgages for private dwelling houses from commercial banks was not \$68 million, as would have been suggested by the Honourable Member for St. James South. In fact, it was not even \$680 million, which would have been a tenfold increase, or 20 times, what the original would have been. According to the Central Bank, it was \$1.154 billion dollars.

Sir, I understand the concept the Honourable Member has taken, that the value of properties had changed over time, and I appreciate that, but the value of properties did not change over time twentyfold. Therefore, it stands to reason that people in this country have significant and had significant, over the last Administrations period, confidence in the Administration and the economy of the country. That is just private dwelling houses.

Sir, when we turn to industrial and commercial, it went from \$8 million in 1994, and that was a high point. In 1992, it was \$2 million. Sir, for it to go from \$2 million, industrial and commercial investment in 1992, 1993 and 1994 to \$105 million, if that does not show confidence in an economy as related to by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, in her presentation yesterday, and all on That Side, even the Honourable Member for St. James South, who is no longer in his seat, I understand an extensive land owner, if he could even admit that the economy of this country and the wicket left by the Barbados Labour Party Administration is a good and sound wicket...

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: We just said so, and everybody knows that, so we need not argue the point. We have left reserves in this country when we demitted office, \$2.2 billion. You do not have to take my word for it. These are the facts, right in here, \$2.2 billion. Sir, do you know what it was in the early 1990s? \$34 million. Sir, we took it in 14 years from \$34 million to a reserve of \$2.2 billion. That is a substantial economy, an economy where people showed

confidence in the economy, confidence to invest in a house, confidence to invest in a business, confidence to come here to invest foreign capital in developing the country, and helping us in developing this country. We have to accept facts.

Sir, I had a little look at their Manifesto. I read both. Even though we left the economy in a reasonably good situation, growing at over 10 per cent per year, why then ...

Asides.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: The revenue of the economy was growing at 10 per cent per year. Why then would the Democratic Labour Party start to foist on the people of Barbados these unrealistic promises in this Manifesto, Sir?

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Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I searched and I thought that it could be some means of improving the lives of people in this country. I looked all through for how they could improve the lives of people. Yes, a lot of pretty words, about how they could do this and that, but where will the money come from to do this and to do that? Sir, we only have to look at Table V in the Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in their first Estimates, when they had an opportunity to start to put in place programmes as suggested in their Manifesto, to improve the lives of people, and to bring some pathway to progress, instead what we see is a reduction in social security and welfare for the people of this country. Sir, it is a fact. They cannot refute it. It is here in black and white.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this new Democratic Labour Party Administration does not intend to spend more money for the poor; more money when they say the cost of living is the problem; when we have difficulties with inflation. Sir, rather than this Democratic Labour Party Administration spending more money on social programmes and more money on welfare, and focus the money to the people that feel the brunt of the high cost of living and inflation; instead of giving them more, they give them less.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I really did not want to disrupt the Honourable Member in his flight of fancy. The reality is

that the Democratic Labour Party is about production. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that the way forward for a Democratic Labour Party Administration would have been to give handouts and create a welfare state. Sir, this is not what this Democratic Labour Party is about. Sir, our position has been to create programmes and policies to enhance education, personal growth and development and human resource.

Asides.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there are programmes and policies to enhance education and increase production in the country, point us to them in the Estimates. There is not one programme in these Estimates to increase exports in this country. There is not one programme in these Estimates to increase tourism receipts in this country. There is not one programme in these Estimates to decrease unemployment in this country. There is not one programme to increase foreign investment in this country. The Honourable Member is entitled to his own opinions, but he is not entitled to his own facts. Sir, these are the facts, as related in the Democratic Labour Party's Estimates.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, because if the Honourable Member wants to condemn his own Administration for failure to enhancing exports of goods and services in Barbados, then he should do so, Sir, because, for the past 14 years, that Administration was only able to increase export growth in Barbados by a mere \$235 million, as a net export growth, when one puts in the re exports. The Honourable Member should read and understand what he is saying. Sir, he does not understand what he is saying and he should not dabble with figures. They are damned to him.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us keep going on the figures because it is unfortunate that the Honourable Member for St. John, the Prime Minister, is not now in his seat. In addition, we are seeing all kinds of the back- tracking, back foot- work and taking back of promises, as first put in this Democratic Labour Party Manifesto, and then those that were put first in the Budget Reply of 2007,

In the Budget reply of 2007, the Honourable Member for St. John and Prime Minister got in this Chamber and said that in the first 100 days of a DLP Administration, they were going to give access for private use, duty-free access to cars for teachers, police and nurses. Sir, do you know what that cost? I am going to work out that for you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The total numbers of those persons, police, nurses and teachers are in the region

of 6 000 people. If you take an estimate of the revenue for a simple car to Government...

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. It really is unfortunate that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is using the opportunity of the absence of the Prime Minister to mischaracterise the stated intentions of the Democratic Labour Partys policy, relative to this issue.

Sir, at no time during the presentation of the then Leader of the Opposition and now the Prime Minister, did he say or even meant to say that all teachers, nurses and police officers would receive duty-free cars in Barbados. In fact, those who are designated and eligible, that is what was said, and that is what was repeated by the Honourable Member several times.

Therefore, he should not come back in here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and try to mislead this Honourable House. I really believe that he should stay on course, conclude the nothingness that he has been producing, and let us get on with the debate.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If it were nothingness, the Honourable Member would not have had to rise to say anything. It is unfortunate. Maybe, we should send for Hansard and see the Budget Reply at page 57 of the Honourable Members reply of the Budget. Sir, you need not have to take my word for it. All those who could hear my voice, could go on NationNews.com, and look up page 57 of the Budget Reply. It has the absolute Budget reply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me read it for the benefit of the Honourable Member, who talked about special categories of people. Sir, he said that I have nothingness. I want him to get up and refute this nothingness.

This is the Budget reply for the Honourable Member for St. John. He said, and I quote:

To stop the brain drain human of resources, through recruitment by other countries.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Member for Christ Church West please indicate which document he is reading from?

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please.

I am addressing the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and not the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: This is a copy of The Hansard which is page 57.

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Dr. W. F. DUGUID: It is from the speech delivered by the Honourable Member for St. John in this House in the last Session of Parliament. It is already a document of the House. I need not make it a document, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can I please continue?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will go back to it. The Honourable Member for St. John said that to stop the brain drain of human resources through recruitment by other countries, we would seek to make the quality of life better for our police force, teachers and nurses. We would provide, in addition to the above stated policies, duty-free access to motor cars for personal use for these three categories of public servants.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 6 000 persons went to the polls on January 15, and voted for the Honourable Members on That Side expecting to get duty-free cars based on a statement by the Honourable Member for St. John.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because he is attempting to quote from a document that is supposed to be a quote from Hansard. As part of the Standing Orders of this Honourable Chamber, the Honourable Member can only quote from the Hansard document. As a result of that, he must therefore make it a document of the House with immediacy, and if that information is to be accepted, he must therefore bring the record of Parliament so indicated in Hansard to this Chair or else it must be struck from the record.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Honourable Member for St. Philip West wants the document he could come and get it any time he wants. It is right here. The Clerks could come for it. It is a document of the House.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that document is not a copy of Hansard. Under the Rules of this House, one can only quote from the Hansard document.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember when there was an attempt to put me out of this Parliament when we quoted from a Budget Speech, which was a document of the House, and we were told that one could not quote from that document because it was not an official record of the House because it was not in Hansard. Sir, that was the ruling then given and I would stand by my position. That

document is not a copy of Hansard. The Honourable Member needs to bring the copy of Hansard to so indicate that is what was said. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask for a ruling.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me move on and make the point that 6 000 by \$15 000 is \$95 million to the cost of this Treasury.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I asked for a ruling.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could I have some order, please. Thank you. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, could you please make that document you are quoting from a document of the House?

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of elucidation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am elucidating what I have just said.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I would have to give way, and I am not giving way. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will move on. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these Estimates...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, hold a minute, let me get the Clerk to get the document, please.

Would the Honourable Member for Christ Church West please indicate to this Honourable House the reference that the document came from?

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: It came from the speech made by the Honourable Member for St. John in his Reply to the Budget of 2007, page 57 of that Reply, which is already a document of this House and already in Hansard.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have indicated that this is already a document of the House?

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am not going to bring any false document to this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Where is the origin of this document?

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: The document is part of the Reply to the Budget of 2007 by the Honourable Member for St. John. It was made in this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could I have the Hansard copy, please?

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, send the Clerk for it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, at this stage we cannot determine the origin of that document and in that regard I will ask the Clerk to provide me with a copy from Hansard. Honourable Member, since I cannot ascertain the veracity of that document, I would need to find out from you from where it came. You have said in your speech that it came from Hansard. Could you indicate the page from Hansard that it came from?

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: No, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I cannot indicate the page, but I would agree that the Clerks can go and pick Hansard and get the page, but I can tell

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Dr. W. F. DUGUID: you that it came from the Honourable Member for St. John, in a Budget reply in 2007.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, while the Clerks are looking for Hansard, I would like to continue my speech.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West will continue the debate, without any reference to this document.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you suggested, I certainly would not want to refer to the document.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier in his speech, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West indicated that the Democratic Labour Party went to the people of Barbados promising that the Party would provide duty-free cars to public servants. Sir, the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party, at pages 45 and 46, under the rubric: A Modern Civil Service said that the Democratic Labour Party will:

(k) provide access to duty-free motorcars for personal use for designated public servants.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party, which is a document of this Honourable House, and this is the document on the basis of which we went to the people of Barbados. In those circumstances, Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber. I am obliged to you.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will accept your ruling that I will not mention that document any further, neither would I mention the fact that it would cost the Treasury of this country \$95 million, neither would I mention the fact that they tried to renege on that promise that was widely carried throughout this country and they have not put it in their Manifesto, as obviously suggested by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Asides.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member knows better. The Honourable Member knows that is unparliamentary.

Asides.

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

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is unfortunate that obviously I have not gotten back the time lost while waiting, but I am going to leave that aside and go straight to two simple points.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West got up and started to bring all of the negatives of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, such as elevators not working, laundry not working at full capacity, et cetera. Sir, let us also look at some of the positives. Every day there are hundreds of patients who are treated satisfactorily by medical personnel at the Hospital.

Sir, if the Honourable Member said that the elevators or laundry were not working to their full capacity, how did those things impact on the high level of health care provided at that Hospital? Sir, our medical personnel are very resourceful, and even though there may be breakdowns and malfunctions in equipment, those medical personnel still continue to provide a high level of medical care to our patients there.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are hundreds of persons who, on a daily basis, go through that Hospital and are treated well and satisfactorily.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Barbados Labour Party spent millions of dollars in purchasing equipment for the Hospital. We have renovated 11 rooms.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Sir, of course, all hospitals have difficulties, but certainly, the Honourable Member was trying to give the impression that nothing was done. Sir, that is not true. For example, \$35 million was spent, with a further \$8 million being spent on extra equipment. Sir, the previous Government has spent money to upgrade the Hospital and it was used to the benefit of the country.

Sir, what the Honourable Member, in all of his bluster, neglected to tell the people of Barbados was that his Administration intends to close the Mangrove Pond Landfill, and that there is some poetic justice in it, because they have no alternative now, but to go back to the site of their first choice, that being the Greenland Landfill.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. This Honourable Member is making the comment that the Democratic Labour Party is going to be closing the Greenland Landfill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Honourable Member would read beyond the first three paragraphs, the Honourable Member would see in the fourth paragraph where it is said that if Greenland was to be used, that it would be used to take in inner and non-toxic garbage. That is the point said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is happening is that the words "Greenland Landfill" is too big for the Honourable Member to read and to understand.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad the Honourable Member has brought up that point. Sir, it is here in the Estimates that we are debating, Head 53 (23):

This sub-programme involves the collection and disposal of garbage and the control and maintenance of cemeteries. It also provides for the closure of the Mangrove Landfill.

Sir, it is here in the Estimates.

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Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because if he read with any sense of understanding, he would have read under the Head that relates to the Sanitation Services Authority that money had been allocated for a leachate treatment plant, which is a fundamental component to getting Greenland to the point where it can take any other stage of garbage, whether raw garbage or processed garbage to another element.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order, please.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member because he continues to flip-flop on the argument. Sir, first he gets up and says non-toxic garbage and now he comes and says he is building a leachate treatment plant to take the toxins from the garbage.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member does not know what a leachate treatment plant is. It is necessary for me to explain to the Honourable Member clearly what a leachate treatment plant is and how it is used in the context of solid waste management. Sir, I would do that if he wants a lesson but I would not do it at this stage.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only lesson that the Honourable Member could give me is on flip-flopping because on March 3, he said he was not going to Greenland, then on March 15, he said that Greenland was only for non-toxic and now, in the Estimates, they say they are closing Mangrove and building a leachate treatment plant so that it could take toxic waste. Sir, he is a Minister of flip-flop.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is a confused man. I have said and I will reiterate it again for the benefit of the listening public. Sir, it was that Administration that has created a condition where the Mangrove Pond Landfill, that is supposed to represent the only major dump for municipal waste in Barbados, is in a state where it almost has no more space to put garbage in this country. Therefore, it is this Administration that has to clean up the mess of that Administration.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Sir, that is unparliamentary.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member from St. Philip South were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please. Honourable Member Christ Church West you have two more minutes.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Sir, thank you very much. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said in the beginning, it is obviously a measure of poetic justice because they are the people who selected the site and now they would be the people to oversee the first set of garbage going to that site. Sir, poetic justice it must be and you cannot refute it, it is here in the Estimates that the Honourable Member for St. John brought to this House.

I do not know why the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would get up and refute it. We know that they do not agree with each other, but do not make it so obvious. The Honourable Member for St. John, your leader, brought the matter to the House. Why are you disagreeing with your leader? We know that you are training to be the Minister of Finance and that you cannot wait to get there, so what is the problem? I do not need to come here and denigrate you. I did not have to come here and try to be personal with you, so do not try to be personal with me.

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

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity and I look forward to come back in the Heads.

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

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of the presentation by the Honourable Member for St. John, the Right Honourable Prime Minister yesterday.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I came to this Parliament, I came in the hope that I could make a contribution in this Chamber and, in particular, having listened over the last few years to what transpired in this Chamber, I hope my time here would be a time of upliftment, that we will see a renaissance, as it were, of the Parliament of this country, where once again, people come to Parliament expecting to hear debates worthy of their time and effort and members would give of their best to ensure that we have quality debates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday and, for a while, I thought that she and I were ad idem, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and I agreed that what we were here for and then, lo and behold, she proceeded to an all-time low in her behaviour, which was regrettable and, I hope that we will see going forward that once again, maybe after

the Leader of the Opposition speaks to me off camera, that we could once again agree that our role here is to ensure that we represent our constituents and ensure that this Parliament is once again looked up to.

Sir, not to be outdone, the thing that stood out most in mind yesterday when I was driving home, the thing that disturbed me most, is the comment and the behaviour of the Honourable Member for St. Peter. Sir, can you imagine that a Member of his Cabinet, on January 14, went into his office and arranged for four agreements with respect to land belonging to the Crown; two agreements in favour of known supporters of the Other Side; one agreement, I believe, in favour of his sister, and another agreement in favour of one of his best friends and confidants and, Sir, you know what the response of the Honourable Member for St. Peter was? Wanna do it in 1994. Sir, he did not say it was wrong; he did not say that he does not expect that kind of behaviour from a member of his Cabinet and that disturbed me.

Sir, if I was Prime Minister of this country, I would call on the Financial Intelligence Unit to investigate with haste the Members on the Other Side, because of the kind of behaviour we have seen exhibited over the last few years.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am asking that the Honourable Member withdraw those remarks and that those remarks be struck from the record. Can we have some decorum in this Chamber please, and bring back the level of the debate in this House to where we expect it to be.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, I will do that for the next few minutes. Sir, in the Estimates, we have pledged \$280 million towards education. We all know that education still remains the best vehicle to social and economic upliftment in this country. Over the last few years, we wonder whether we have maximised the amount of money we have put into education. Yesterday, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke about the 67 per cent rate of students, who are coming out with certificates but I do not believe that represents what I am seeing and hearing in Barbados.

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Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, we, on This Side, intend to ensure, once again, that more of our young people are brought into the educational system. We have pledged this in our Manifesto. We intend to transform education in this country. We intend to ensure that via education, more

of our ordinary Barbadians are able, once again, to uplift themselves. That is why we pledged to look at the curriculum, offer alternative programmes, and offer centres of excellence, eradicate the duplication in our educational system.

Sir, that does not cost us any money. It costs imaginative thinking. It costs to have a Minister who understands about education. It costs a Minister who wants to make education once again a Ministry we can be proud of. Once again that we can have a Minister of Education, not like we have had in the past. We do not need to have a Minister responsible for school meals. We have a Minister who understands how education can contribute to the development of this country.

Sir, I play cricket for the Government Industrial School. I have been playing cricket for that institution for 20 years. In fact, I have seen the Honourable Member for St. Joseph there on more than one occasion, Sir. He understands, like me, the importance of contributing to the young people of this country.

Sir, one of the things that saddens me, over the years that I have been there, we have lots of young boys who are told from the time they were at junior school that they were going to end up at Dodds. We have in our system, unfortunately, some teachers who did not understand, or have the necessary tools to deal with those troublesome young men. In this regard, I am sure that the Minister of Education would ensure that we have professional counsellors, even at our junior school level, so that these young men will come through a system with the necessary assistance that they require.

Sir, I am sure that if we do this, if we, in fact, allocate the necessary resources at that level, we would not have to come through the back door, through measures such as Project OASIS, and help the young men and women in our society.

Sir, I am not saying that all the men in our society who benefitted from Project OASIS actually attended the Government Industrial School. I am saying that we have lots of troubled young men and women in our society, and we need to ensure that we have proper counsellors available, even at the junior school level, to look after these young men and women.

Sir, we have pledged, once again, to make school a rewarding experience for our young men and women. I am sure that Honourable Members on the Other Side will see young boys and girls walking the streets at 9.30 a.m. or 10.00 a.m. because they do not want to go to school anymore, but we intend to change that.

Again, this does not cost money. What it requires are ideas. It requires realising that you cannot have a student who gains 10 or 20 marks in the Common Entrance Examination and place him in a class with a student who obtains 100 marks, ask them to do the same programme and at the same pace, and expect both of them to do well.

Sir, that is why we have a situation where many of our young boys and girls do not feel as if they should be part of a classroom because of the peer pressure. We have to ensure that we have horses for courses. In other words, we establish a curriculum that enables all of our students to feel as if they are part of an institution. In this regard, we pledge, and I am sure that I can speak on behalf of the Front Bench, that through education, we will once again transform Barbados, Sir.

Sir, as I said, this does not cost money. I started with Education, because without education we cannot transform Barbados and the method that we would want to transform Barbados without the level of education we need to bring to more of our people. We cannot offer them the kind of jobs that we on This Side find acceptable, not jobs that make them struggle from week to week and month to month, but I will come to that in a few more minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a primary school in my Constituency that is undergoing repairs, and I look forward to ensuring that it is completed in due course. I hope that some of the \$280 million allocated, will be used to create and maintain a playing field for that primary school. Remarkably, the last Minister of Education enabled the rebuilding of a primary school, without offering proper facilities for the young children to run around. I am sure that if the Honourable Member for St. Thomas was involved in the discussions that would not have happened.

Sir, we have a situation where the school is being rebuilt, but the students are not in favour of the new school. They are saying that they prefer to be in the old plant, where they are, because there is freedom to run around and play games. I am sure that the Minister of Education, who has already spoken, will look into this and ensure that the students at St. Martin's Four Roads, are able to have a facility that enables them to run around and be free. Sir, again, not costing us a lot of money.

We recognise that a lot of our educational plants are over-crowded, therefore, not enabling a lot of students to perform to the maximum of their capacity, and we are going to look at that. We are going to look at ensuring that we have manageable sizes for our classrooms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in fact, yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition, spoke about the unemployment figures in this country. We said on more than one occasion that we do not trust the methodology used, which allowed them to

arrive at these figures. You heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip West raise the query. How is it you have more employment, but greater unemployment benefits being claimed continuously?

Asides.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Are you saying that our people are dishonest?

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

Mr. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, we want to create an environment for our people to have quality jobs. One such avenue is in the area of International Financial Services. I will deal with this because the Leader of the Opposition, that was her previous Ministry, and I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition and myself have similar ideas as the present Minister in terms of how we can develop this sector. Unfortunately, over the last few years, we have had serious neglect of the sector. Her predecessor, in office, did little or nothing. Indeed, he may even stand up and say that he did a charter, because her predecessor, in office, did in fact have a charter, which did not materialise.

Sir, I am not going to blame the Leader of the Opposition for the fact that in the International Financial Services sector, we have not seen any progress over the last six years. I am not going to blame the Leader of the Opposition for that. She did not spend enough time in that sector. Certainly, her colleague, who sits beside her so proudly and snugly, must take some responsibility for the fact that little or nothing was done in the sector over the last six years.

Sir, we have a situation where St. Lucia, for example, our neighbour, who is young in terms of an International Financial Services Centre, is being seen as a serious competitor to us in Barbados. We are seen behind places like Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas, and several islands in the Channel Islands, because of this neglect.

Sir, we need to bring our sector to a level where it can contribute more in terms of employment and revenue to this country, is not difficult. I do not understand why That Side found it so difficult to address the issue.

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House A5A, Sequence 42, 12.30 p.m.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, we have a Mutual Funds Act that was enacted in 2002. Sir, since 2002 under That Side and under various committees, they have been looking at the Mutual Fund Act to see what amendments were necessary to ensure that it is used in Barbados, and it is not difficult.

Sir, one of the issues with the Mutual Fund Act is the fact that we are competing with other jurisdictions that have no taxes, such as Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands and the Cayman Islands, where fund administration is done. Therefore, the question is this: why would someone come to Barbados and pay 2.5 per cent taxes, as a Mutual Fund Administrator, when in fact they can go to another jurisdiction? Sir, do not say that we cannot consider exempting Mutual Fund Administrators, because we exempt insurance. We have an Exempt Insurance Act, so there is a way to get it done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from 2002 for five to six years, That Side has been looking at the Mutual Funds Act and we have not seen anything out of them. Sir, I am sure that the Minister responsible will ensure that we take the mutual funds sector forward in this country.

Sir, we have the International Trust Act and the Trustee Act. Again, we have not seen anything done by That Side, with respect to trust in this country. I looked and I saw that under the heading 'International Trust,' there is a revenue projection of \$110 000. When I compared that to the revenue in the Bahamas in 2007, which was for international trust, I read that it was US\$11 million. This is what they do in trust revenues, in comparison to what we in Barbados have gotten over the last couple of years, under their management. Again, I am confident that this is another area that my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. James South, will ensure that we transform Barbados.

Sir, when we speak of an international financial services sector, we want to offer quality jobs. This is why I make the linkage between the development of education and the sector, because we want to offer jobs for accountants.

Sir, there was an ad in the newspaper last Sunday asking for fund accountants for the Channel Islands. Sir, our accountants are leaving Barbados for Bermuda, the Bahamas and the British Virgin Islands because there are better opportunities in those countries. Therefore, we need to ensure that we create an environment that our young bright people are employed, rather than leaving the country.

Again, as I said, it does not cost us money to create these opportunities. We just need to say it, as we will, look at our legislation, as we will; work together with the private

sector, as we will; and ensure that the necessary changes are made to our legislation.

Sir, private Trust Companies is another simple example as something that we can do, to bring further revenue to this country. We do not need to reinvent the wheel. We can see legislation in the British Virgin Islands, Jersey, Mauritius and in various jurisdictions.

Sir, as I said, on That Side for many years nothing was done. All that happened on That Side for several years, as the Honourable Member just said, is that they talked about a number of incorporations. Therefore, they missed the boat.

Again, I compared what happens in the Bahamas that on the corporate side, I saw that they received \$80 million in revenue in 2007, and our projections are \$47 million. The difference is that, That Side had no idea what they were doing with the sector, whereas in the Bahamas and other jurisdictions, they understood.

Sir, thankfully for Barbados today, we have a Government that understands what is necessary to transform this sector. Sir, we intend to transform the sector.

Sir, the Leader of the Opposition spoke about her Charter and gave an explanation why the Charter had not taken off, because of the intervention of Cricket World Cup, a year ago.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. First of all, the Charter was only launched in November. Secondly, Cricket World Cup was in April or May before. Thirdly, if he was listening, he would have heard me say that the reference to Cricket World Cup related to the fact that we built a capacity within the security framework, which allowed us to be able to do vetting in a way that would not delay applications. Therefore, the Member is misleading the Chamber.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, this brings me to another point, which is that one of the things we actually need to do - with respect to International Business Companies, is to determine whether or not we actually need to have the two licensing regimes. Again, we are competing with other jurisdictions that are able to license a company in 24 hours, but we have a situation in Barbados where it takes a week, two weeks, Sir, sometimes your documents are lost or misplaced.

Sir, I am glad that was raised because we actually need on This Side to look at whether or not we need one regime, as opposed to the dual regime that we have at this point in time. Sir, as I said, we do not need to spend a lot of money transforming the International Business Sector. We

just need to work as a team and identify the issues, some of which I have just told you, and correct them.

Sir, for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, one of the things that the sector has been saying to us, is that they are confident that there will be positive changes to the sector, because they have a Minister who worked in the sector and who understands. He may not have attended briefings with the former Minister, but I can say to you that I have been told by more than one person in the sector that, finally, they look forward to great things from this Government because, they are sure that they have people on This Side and, in particular, a Minister who understands what is necessary to take the sector forward. I am confident that we will, Sir.

Asides.

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

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my two minutes, I will not deal with health or housing but I want to compliment the fact that on This Side, we have seen it necessary and fit to create a Ministry responsible for Family. Again, in terms of Barbados, we cannot proceed at the rate we are going, without ensuring that once again, we put families first.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition comment on the value of having such a Ministry and I am sure that with time, she would understand the importance of having such a Ministry. I am also sure that Members on That Side will work with us to ensure that we pay the necessary attention to the development of our young men and women, to bringing families together again, in fact, to put families first. Sir, all our programmes are directed at a holistic approach to our people. Sir, all of our programmes, from education to sports, to family, are directed to uplifting our people.

In closing, the fundamental difference between our programme and their programme is that we want to teach the people to do it themselves. Sir, on That Side, they were busy with projects that said: Come, what do you want? Let us give you.

Sir, the pride and spirit of our people would tell you - I am sure you know this, Sir, because you work hard - that there is nothing sweeter than doing it yourself, earning yourself and doing it your way.

I thank you, Sir.

House A5A, Sequence 42, 12:40:06

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.45 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 1.45 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

House A5A Sequence 43

12.43 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This House is resumed. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all, let me once again indicate what an honour it is to stand and to make my contribution in this Honourable Chamber, especially since I consider it a very high honour to have been chosen by the good people of the Constituency of Christ Church East, who have asked that I come here and represent their interest in this august Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also want to offer my full support to the Honourable Prime Minister and Member for St. John, for having delivered in this Honourable Chamber what I consider to be a very forward-looking Estimates of Expenditure. Sir, it is one that certainly represents more than just numbers, but one that captures the broad policies of the new Government, as it seeks to charter the way forward for our great country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I pondered this moment, I asked myself, what really

does the Estimates represent? I found myself concluding that they are more than just numbers. They represent more than just fiscal accounting of the inflows and outflows of Governments resources. The Estimates of Expenditure are not just about projection of economic growth, the management of fiscal deficits, revenue collections and the allocation of expenditure on various programmes. They also represent Governments policy. They represent the vision of Government, as Government looks forward and as Government contemplates the economic and social development of Barbados.

Sir, if that is true, then what that means is that the Estimates of Expenditure reflect the broad philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party Government.

1.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2008.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe: The Estimates reflect upon the Manifesto and the statement of the Manifesto. The Estimates captures the social and economic policies that should flow from the vision of this new Government. Let me say that I am proud to be a member of this new Democratic Labour Party's Government. Let me say that I am proud to be part of this new focus, this new direction, this new compass that seeks to take this country from where we have found it to its next level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems curious to me that whenever the Democratic Labour Party has assumed office in this country, there always seems to be a lot of work to do, there always seem to be a lot of cleaning up to do; there always seem to be a need for us to carefully analyse the realities of the present circumstances and then pitch our view ahead of where this country needs to go.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me make the point quite clear that the Democratic Labour Party Government intends to inform the country step by step, what we have found coming into office. We intend to ensure that, as we go forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will continue to embrace those things that should be embraced, but those things that must not be continued. It is the commitment of this Government not to do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Estimates reflect on programmes that would give new life and meaning to that vision and they reflect on the Government's practices, what is proposed to Government practices as it relates to accountability; as it relates to transparency; as it relates to equity; as it relates to justice for these must become the fundamental principles of how we must build our country from this day forward as we go on into the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these Estimates are about how the country must go forward, both economically and socially. I will focus on the latter, on the social side of national development. Of course, the Honourable Prime Minister has designated to me the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development. I consider my responsibilities in this Government to be awesome, awesome in the sense, along with the other Members of this great team. I will be involved in helping to create a transformed society where all members of this society finally get an opportunity to share in the returns of this great country and where the gap between those who always have and those who still struggle to own, that gap is

closed. This new Government, under the Honourable Member for St. John, under the Prime Minister of this country, will ensure that gap is narrowed because of our policies as we go forward in this fight for our citizens.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my view that the last Administration came so fixated on the economy side of development that the social side of development, has been left to trail in this country. We do not have to make any grand speech about that because the evidence is out there wherever you go, wherever you turn. There are people in the society who wonder what place they have in their own country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are people in this society who work harder today for less, and they are unable to meet the basic demands of human living in their own society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of us on This Side, and I am quite sure the Honourable Members on the Other Side would have been confronted already, since the January 15 Election date with so many ordinary Barbadians who are not looking for handouts, who are not looking to be a burden on the State. Simple and ordinary Barbadians, who are only seeking to live in their own country, where their ancestors would have given so much on their backs and on their brows, to build a great society.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party Government in the past, and today, is fully committed to ensuring that we make the next quantum in this society relative to the state of our social development so that all Barbadians, regardless of their walk of life, would be able to enjoy the returns of this great country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot simply believe that the rise of a society can be restricted to its economic well-being if the economic returns of that society are not felt in the day-to-day lives of the citizens. For what is a great society, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the people who make up the society continue to struggle to simply be a part of their own society? I believe that all of us in this august Chamber understand that the greatness of a country cannot be restricted to the type of buildings we have, to the type of cars we drive, to the kind of accounts we have; that the greatness of the society is ultimately demonstrated in the lives of all its citizens, not just a few. Sir, that the greatness of any society, the story of that greatness is told in the lives of ordinary citizens.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a lot of anger out there in the society. There is a lot of frustration out there. There are a lot of people out there who have lost confidence in our system of Government and governance. There are a lot of young people out there who will tell you that they do not want to be a part of the formal society, because they have

seen their parents work hard and have little to show for it in the last 15 years or so, and what they want to do is to ensure that the Government, that their Government becomes more responsive to their needs and that when the Government acts, at the heart of the actions of the Government, the concerns of ordinary people in this society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yourself, myself and others, we are the children of ordinary parents. We are the products of the working-class society. We are those, who have been able because of the policies, the vision and the direction of the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow who believed that the circumstances of one's life and into which one was born was not enough to dictate the rise of that one in his or her own society.

We know now that if we are going to be able to take this country down a road, where all of our citizens feel that they are part of the process and get a piece of the pie, that we are going to have to ensure that our policies reflect the kind of responsive policies that would impact the lives of ordinary people. When I talk to people out there, everybody says, we are just trying to survive.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have reduced the journey of many ordinary citizens to a quest for survival and if we understand anything about human development or social development, we understand that we have to move from that mode of the quest to survive to a mode where we actually live, move and have our being in own society. I wish to make a point today that the Democratic Labour Party Government is a government still believing in the principles of democratic socialism.

H/A5A/14:00

Sequence 45

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Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: It is a government that will continue to pursue policies that allow us to realize our dreams as ordinary citizens, a policy that will allow us to achieve the very heights of our human excellence with the right conditions towards social and economic programmes and services.

Sir, how do we see progress? This debate is not simply about economic performance. This debate is not simply about looking at what we spend and what we owe. That is important, and those who are responsible for articulating those issues will do so, but this debate is also about how we are living in this society. This debate is about the vision that the Government has for the progress and development of the society.

Sir, let me make the point, that we see social progress and development as the prime mover of any progressive society. It does not matter how much you have. It

does not matter where you live on the island. What really matters is whether the promises bequeathed to us by Independence, are being realised in our lives, and any modern Government that comes into office, without understanding that the way forward cannot simply be to deal with the numbers, but we have to deal with the lives of people who really want to be a part of the process.

Sir, the Honourable Member, Prime Minister, has placed a tremendous amount of emphasis on dealing with the social issues. The Honourable Member has placed a tremendous amount of emphasis on the need for each minister to contemplate the role of people as the centerfold of the policies of their Ministries. We see that social development is really the engine that would cause a society to become a great society.

Sir, we have heard a lot about a first world society. We have heard a lot about a society competing on the global stage, but you do not compete with revenue. You compete with people who are able to advance policies and practices that allow the country to blossom in its own right. Therefore, progressive social development policy sees maximum social benefit as one of the central criteria of a progressive Government.

The notion that people develop a life span and that there are basic developmental needs, and one has to understand the relationship between a man's capacity to have shelter, food, water and those kinds of basic elements are so critical to that man's ability to be able to realise his destiny. That is why the founding father of this nation, emphasised so very deeply the importance of Government being the vehicle to move people from one level of social reality to another level. This new Government begins its term in office, dealing with the real social issues and understanding what must obtain, in order for us to transform our society into a great society.

In the last few years we heard about social transformation, and about all of these symbols of social transformation. Sir, you cannot measure social transformation by simply deciding how many pit toilets have been replaced by water toilets. Sir, you cannot measure it by simply trying to build a road and where not to build a road. The real test of it is rooted in how people are able to experience a quality of life in their own society and that quality of life cannot simply be in the symbols of living. It is how we think. It is how we interpret our realities. It is how we participate in our own self-destiny, and that is what it is about. That is why this debate would

become a lost effort, if we simply focus on revenue inflows and outflows.

Sir, we want to anchor this in how we help a society to engage in daily practice, whether commercial, family, or educational practice. How do we engage a society to look beyond where it is at present, and rise to the occasion to become a greater society, so that what we came and found will be improved upon, so that those who follow us would have for themselves a brighter future, than the ones we inherited from the generation before.

Sir, the soul of this Government will never be measured in economic terms alone, but the real heart of this Administration would be measured in how we see our people, and the kind of mirror image that our people have of themselves. It was the great founding father that asked the question: "What kind of mirror image do you have of yourself?" He said: "Let me tell you what kind of mirror image we have of you, or what the Democratic Labour Party has of you." The Democratic Labour Party has an image that the people of Barbados would be able to run their own affairs, to pay for the cost of running their own country, and to have an educational system which is as good as what can be obtained in any industrialised country anywhere in the world.

Sir, if the Other Side, not only heard, but understood it, the state of today's education in Barbados would not be where it is, had they understood the lessons, the intangible lessons, the abstract lessons, that were revealed in that very statement.

Sir, I am happy to hear the Honourable Member for St. George North say we hear it, but it is now time to see it come into being. That is why the people of Barbados have vested their Government in the hands of the Democratic Labour Party. That is why it is here, and we intend to continue to move forward.

Sir, to achieve the kind of social development ideals our Government intends to pursue, we must understand that the developing and delivering of genuine transforming social services, must begin with some kind of analysis of where the society is. It must begin with some kind of analysis of where we are and where we need to go.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you really want to know where this society is, perhaps you cannot find it at the Sandy Lanes, and you cannot find it at those places where citizens of privilege hang out. If you really want to know where our society is, you have to go into the nooks and crannies of our communities. You have to spend time on the ground. You have to talk to people, mothers who cannot send their children to school, those persons who work five days a week and cannot take home \$200.

You have to take it to the places where there are ordinary hardworking Barbadians, who would have lived through 14 years of plenty, who would have gone through 14 years where there was successive economic growth, who would have gone through a time of bountiful returns and yet today, there are those who still struggle to do the basic things of life. There are those who still struggle day in and day out, when some of us are sound asleep, must be up contemplating where the next meal must come from. That is not the symbol of a progressive society.

2.10 p.m.

Sequence 46.

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House A5A, Sequence 47, 2.10 p.m.

Hon. Dr. D.S. LOWE: Sir, that is not a society that has benefitted from hundreds of millions of dollars in return from VAT. That is not a society that has benefited from borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars, and that is not the symbol of a society that truly believes that the real prize of a society is not in its foreign reserves, but in the quality of life it offers to its citizens, from the cradle to the grave.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Social Care understands that for us to go forward, we must evaluate what is in place. We have to understand what social service delivery is all about. We have to understand, and it is the policy of this Government, that we will not be pursuing the further development of a welfare state. We want to put people to work. We understand that we must take care of the vulnerable. We understand that we must take care of those who cannot take care of themselves, but our philosophy is about progress.

We are not going to make people comfortable in poverty. We are going to try to eradicate the conditions that lead to impoverish living, and give the people in our society a fresh start. Sir, we do not mind the weak echo of the voice of him who cries. Sir, we understand that the Government has changed and that the Democratic Labour Party Government is now in office.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we understand that the prophets of doom, on the Other Side are not only prophets of doom, but they are false prophets. Sir, on the Other Side, they went around and proclaimed that the Honourable Member for St. John will never become the Prime Minister of Barbados, and today he is the Prime Minister of Barbados.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: They are false prophets so nothing they say will ever resonate on the corridors of truth. Sir, that which they have proclaimed has been now rendered false and we have to start there. Therefore, we understand that if we want to raise the standard of living of our people, and if we want to reach those persons who are most vulnerable in our society, we have to begin from a position, not of welfare, but a position of empowerment.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Sir.

One of the important things about this Governments focus on empowerment is that we are going to empower our people to take control of their own Government, and that those who masqueraded around this country for 14 years, pretending as though they cared about the people of Barbados, who perhaps were the only beneficiaries of their own policy, this Government will empower the people and put Government back in the hands of the people at every single level of living in this country.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is repeating himself over and over again and misleading this House. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in these Estimates we see many cases where the Government is giving handouts to poor people, so he must not say these things.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is amazing that after 14 years in this place that is all that can emanate from the halls of hollow. The noise that you hear comes from an empty vessel that has a history of making the most noise. Sir, we know where we are going and the Barbados Labour Party has to understand that under no conditions will they direct this Government.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Therefore, our Government will be an empowerment-centered Government and what we seek to put in place, of course, is the Constituency Empowerment Programme. We will encourage people to manage their own affairs effectively. We will empower people to mobilise the supply of their own needs. We will empower people to take ownership of their own success. Sir, these services must be driven by a clear understanding of what is going on in the society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will not be a government who just rolls out things and then ask people later. We will not find ourselves at a Crop Over event and tell the country that we imposed a secret tax on them. We will not find it

ever on the corridors of this Government, where our country has made an agreement to bring the Concord in Barbados and to this day, nobody understands why the Concord is here, and what is the material benefit to the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are things that we would not do because at the front end of our policy, will be the voices and the views of the people. At the front end of our policy will be the opportunity for all Barbadians to become involved. Therefore, we will be engaged in research efforts to help us understand how our society is developing and what are the most critically needed areas in our society.

Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. George North had actually read the document, the Honourable Member for St. George North would know what the Government is proposing to do to address these kinds of issues.

The reason the society has made little progress under the last Administration, is because they have not been in contact with the real experiences of ordinary Barbadians out there. Sir, this is why when they sought to have a conversation with the people, they had a monologue. As I was told at one particular monologue: A bitch-dog and four puppies came to listen to you.

Sir, there comes a time in peoples lives when they are no longer prepared to be blinded by the smokes and mirrors of an Administration. It does not matter how angry they get, it does not matter how much they seek to interrupt or distort. The people of Barbados have spoken. The Democratic Labour Party is the Government of Barbados and we intend to be here as long as the people of Barbados say we should be here. Therefore, do not mind the noise. That will subside.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not going to give money to people. We are going to ensure that the services we seek to provide through our social care programmes meet the targets intended. Sir, there is a systematic way of evaluating whether or not those services are achieving the objectives they set out to achieve.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that before this Government should contemplate putting any more money anywhere, it needs to do a comprehensive analysis of what has been going on in this country for the last 14 years. I know that two months are not enough for us to fully diagnose some of the hidden things that were left behind by the last Administration. I know that the Honourable

Member for St. Andrew would not be a part of that, because he has not consented, except by his silence.

House A5A, Sequence 47, 2:20:14

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe: Mr. Deputy Speaker, before we begin to look at how we are going to enlarge the distribution of social services and make decisions about where money should be spent, this Government is committed to doing a complete analysis on every area of the social services in this country, so that duplication would no longer be a thing of the social services system in this country, and so that we do not have people who are just living off the State and are not given an opportunity to be graduated from those conditions through programmes and efforts that would meet people where they are and take them out of that cycle of poverty and move them to another level.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Members time has expired.

Dr. the D. S. LOWE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there would be a time under these Heads where we would speak specifically to our programmes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am much obliged for having the opportunity to deliver this speech today.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could we have some order please, to give the Honourable Member for St. Andrew the opportunity to speak to this House?

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have not had the opportunity of speaking in this debate, yet every Honourable Member on That Side has seen it fit to call my name. I thought the Honourable Member for Christ Church East would not forget that he has been a student of mine on Government and Politics, but he chose to preach from the pulpit today, and he chose not to address anything under his Head, but this is consistent with what we have heard from the Honourable Member for St. John and Leader of the Opposition.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was in here so long and the Honourable Member for St. John has been the Leader of the Opposition for so long that I keep referring to the Honourable Member for St. Peter as the

Prime Minister. I still cannot get use to the Honourable Member for St. John as the Prime Minister. The Honourable Member for St. Peter is still my Prime Minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John chose to speak for two and a half hours on subjects other than the Budget in a three-hour presentation. He spent just 15 minutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, speaking on the Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to address a few things which he mentioned in his presentation because all of us are in here just for a very short time. When I was first a Minister, I recall telling the officers in the Ministry that we as politicians are just passing through, and that what we go through sometimes is just a phase, and in our exuberance and excitement and in our attempt to embarrass those on the Other Side we say some things that we live to regret.

The Honourable Member for St. John and Prime Minister made the statement only yesterday that he was told by the Honourable Member for St. Peter that he should not say something in Government - the words might be different - which might come back to haunt him when he is in Opposition, or when he is not in here.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I know those are not his exact words, but it came down to the same thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was a little shocked by part of the presentation by the Honourable Member for St. John because he broke his own Rule. As I said, I was in here longer than most Honourable Members. I started to contest Elections longer than anybody in these Chambers. I have seen a situation where a government, to use the words of the Democratic Labour Party, was literally rooted out in one term, and in two short terms, only two of those individuals survived.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am saying here now mirrors what happened in 1986. When I came in here in 1981, there were 10 of us. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is in here and he knows what I am talking about. We have to be very careful when we speak ill of other individuals who are no longer in this Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was shocked by what the Honourable Member for St. John said yesterday. I speak in particular of what he said about the former Minister of Housing. It hurt me when I heard the Honourable Member for St. John speak in such terms, because I was a former Minister of Housing, and I am not even going to say that I would not have done what the Honourable Member for St. John said that the former Minister of Housing did, because

it is all right for us to get up and say that we would not do certain things if we were in that position, but we do not know the influences that were brought to bear on that Honourable Member.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are so many things that the Honourable Member for St. John said that you do not even know where to start because when you talk about pressures... The Honourable Member for St. John when he was in Opposition spoke of a reduction of Cabinet. The former Prime Minister of Barbados spoke about that and he did something about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was Minister of Housing, I also had responsibility for Public Works, Transport, Water and the Environment. I also had responsibility for Urban. I had the responsibility of four Ministers over there.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I do not want to miss the point, I was the Minister of Tourism and International Transport then. I do not deny that I got fired. I do not deny that.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: You would want to deny that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy fired you. You were fired by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. He told me so and that is well-known. You had two Members in Opposition and one Member decided to step down and you feel that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy came from the wrong class, so he cannot be the Leader of the Opposition. You should be the last person to speak in those terms.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: You are not going to stop me from saying what I want to say. I am very clear on what I want to say. I am very clear on what I want to say.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, could you address the Honourable Member by his correct title.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, now that he is addressing me and not you as the Speaker. I want to make it abundantly clear that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I never said anything about saying things in here that you cannot live

with. I do not know what he said. I said I took the Honourable Member for St. Peter's advice that you should never do things in Government that you cannot live with, in Opposition, because it is not an issue of saying things. I have heard a private letter, written to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, being read on the Floor of this House and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew sat in Cabinet and did not stop him.

House A5A Sequence 48

2.30 p.m.

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Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I saw a former Representative for St. Michael South Central, hailing from St. Andrew, Sir Frederick Smith, a former Judge of the High Court, a former Chief Justice in the Turks and Caicos Islands, who wrote a private and confidential letter to the Prime Minister of this country and that letter was read out in a Budget debate in here. I heard Mr. Philip Greaves, a former Deputy Prime Minister, a gentleman who helped negotiate the Constitution of Barbados, being accused, wrongfully so, of all kinds of things on the Floor of this Honourable House.

I heard a lady who ran against the Honourable Member being accused, and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew sat mute, of malice on the Back Bench and laughed, as the former Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, called out her name and said things about her and the Credit Union, and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said nothing. Sir, suddenly the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is so upset, he is so washed in the blood of something - because it cannot be the Blood of the Lamb - that it is upsetting him today.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that a point of order?

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member is here accusing me. Therefore, the Honourable Member would have to withdraw those remarks and they have to be struck from the records.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me say now, this Chair demands respect from each and every one of you in this House. Let me say that because the Honourable Members think this Chair is a young Chair,

that this Chair Rules according to the Laws of Parliamentary Practice.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have made certain comments. You said that because I think this Chair is a young Chair. Sir, I do not think anything.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, even referring to the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. John about the Honourable Member for St. Peter, I was not in this Honourable Chamber when those comments were made. Sir, this is why I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. John is making statements that are not true. Sir, I was not in the House when the Honourable Member for St. Peter made those comments, and the Honourable Member for St. John should be asked to withdraw those comments.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. In the event that I have misled this Honourable Chamber, I want to say that at the time the comments were made, the Honourable Member was the sitting Member of Parliament for St. Andrew, as he has been for 14 years now. Sir, if the Honourable Member was not here, because that would have been four different speeches that I have spoken about, then the Honourable Member should have been here for at least one of them. Sir, it shows a dereliction of duty by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew for the past 14 years.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was not in my seat when those comments were made and I am asking that those comments be struck from the record. Sir, those comments were not true. I was not here and I have never heard about those comments. Sir, I want your ruling on that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could the Honourable Member please continue?

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to Rule on that. You have asked me to withdraw those comments. Sir, I was not in the House when those comments were made. I never knew about those comments and I am asking that those comments made by the Honourable Member for St. John be withdrawn. Sir, as Mr. Deputy Speaker, you cannot show bias in this debate.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, so as to make it easier and so that the record would be clear, if the Honourable Member was not here, it means that the Honourable Member would have missed five Budget replies made by the Honourable Member for St. Peter, who is his Minister of Finance and former Prime Minister.

Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. Andrew was not here, then I withdraw those comments and I apologise to this Honourable Chamber, but I am saying that on behalf of the people of St. Andrew, it is a gross dereliction of duty and total disrespect to his former leader.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, how could it be a dereliction of duty, when the Honourable Member for St. John took his team and walked out of here in such a disrespectful manner? That was a dereliction of duty.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could the Honourable Member for St. Andrew please continue.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday the Honourable Members made it appear as though the former Minister of Housing had committed a criminal act. Sir, when I came...

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. You would recall that yesterday I specifically said that I was not making any accusations against the former Minister of Housing, yet. Sir, I said if there was any such allegation that it should be refuted.

Sir, all I said was that four days before the last Election, the Honourable Member was allocating beachfront land in St. John to cronies of the Barbados Labour Party and to people who helped financed the Barbados Labour Partys last Election campaign, including Mr. Hallam Nicholls. Sir, that is all I said.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member made certain disparaging comments in this Honourable Chamber of the former Minister of Housing. Sir, if you are going to say that the former Minister of Housing, a few days before the Election, was trying to use his position to give certain individuals in the Barbados Labour Party some advantage, this would be embarrassing to the former Minister of Housing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I came to the Ministry in 1994, there was a former Cabinet Minister by the name of Harcourt Lewis who, two days before the Election, sought to give the same advantage to lease lands of the Crown at Bath, to two gentlemen by the names of Valence Franklyn and Owen Estwick. Sir, I did not come into this Honourable House and tried to embarrass Harcourt Lewis. Sir, that is the difference

between them and us. Sir, what is more, the said gentleman, Mr. Owen Estwick, was the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, and he wrote a note approving the lease of the lot to himself.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I am telling you as a fact. I do not have to bring any evidence. I saw that in the Ministry. Sir, I do not think it is fair for us, whether or not we would have done it, whether or not it was wrong is beside the point. Ten years from now a lot of us will not be in here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were 10 of us in 1991 and by 1994 and 1998, two Elections after there were two of us. Sir, I will not be part of any Barbados Labour Party Government who would seek to drag down the name of any former Member of Parliament in this Honourable House, in the same way that the Honourable Member for St. John has done.

2.40 p.m.

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Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Sir, the people of Barbados voted for a change, according to Members on That Side, but as somebody told me, there is a difference between voting for change and voting for a change, because when you are voting for change, it is only one term. It reminds me of when I was at school during the French Revolution.

The leaders of the French Revolution when they had tarnished the name of all their opponents, they never thought that they themselves would be next. The Member who spoke just now, spoke in such terms, instead of dealing with his Ministry, as though they are going to unearth anything that they find in their Ministry, which would make it appear that this Government did something sinister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to go forward. The people have elected you to govern.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I want to remind Honourable Members on That Side that, like in the French Revolution, there was an implosion and then all the members started ganging up against one another and they ended up killing one another. If history is to repeat itself, I was in this House in 1994, when I saw the implosion in a similar fashion. When I saw big men on the corridors of power, right in this House, not speaking to one another and saying some of the worst things. Sir, that was my introduction.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nobody had to tell you that the Democratic Labour Party would have lost the Government because when they are finished dealing with us, they are going to deal with themselves, and it has started already. We do not even have a Deputy Prime Minister on the Other Side. We do not have it because the Honourable Member for St. John cannot trust any of you because it is fairly obvious that you might be plotting, some part of some plot to get rid...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we have some order and let the Honourable Member continue, please?

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He delivered a speech on a table in a pub and two weeks later was history politically in Barbados.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: You have to watch your back because I was not Prime Minister then. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John is doing it well because he has made sure (1) that he has not appointed a Deputy Prime Minister and (2) he has kept the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in the back. Sir, he is playing it safe.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know if I will have enough time in this debate to deal with other aspects in the Estimates. Sir, I just want to touch briefly on one or two other matters, but before I do that I was hoping that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East say a little bit more on the Constituency Councils. The Honourable Member for St. John has been in this House for a long time and he knows when to trust people. I have a feeling that he does not trust the 14 of you that just came in.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. As I said already, the Honourable Member has been absent so long that he has forgotten the Rules of this House. You cannot say that Honourable Members on This Side are untrustworthy and you cannot say that I said so, nor can you say that I feel that way.

It is an imputation on the character of the persons, who I trusted to put in my Cabinet. Sir, I do not believe that any of them would get up on a table in a pub in London and say they want to be Prime Minister, so I do not have to worry about them, Sir. I think they are all entitled to be Prime Minister of this country, as were all of the other persons in the Democratic Labour Party of talents and ability.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, please continue. Honourable Member, you have five minutes more.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the first occasion that we have had in the history of

Parliamentary Government in this country that you have had so many new individuals coming to Parliament at one time.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Sir, I speak subject to correction, but I do not think I could be wrong. You only have to go back and check but 14 are the most newcomers in one session. The Honourable Member for St. John knows what it costs to be in Parliament. I believe when he was thinking about this \$100 000 he would know that in one year you end up spending more than \$100 000. Sir, I certainly do, and I was hoping that I would have enough time to go through a list of the expenses in my Constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are a little unfair to ourselves. We talk about a Constituency Council but, personally, I do not agree with the concept of a Constituency council. If you are coming with a Constituency Council, it should be a bit weightier than that. Sir, people speak about local Government but it should be a Constituency Council that can really do something for people because you cannot do anything with \$100 000.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John cannot tell me what I believe, but I know that, to the back of his mind, he knows what it costs him because I know what it costs me. I think that amount would look like a lot of money to make available to each Parliamentarian, but that should be at the Parliamentarian's discretion with the relevant receipts to justify it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to give a small synopsis of what my expenses are like in my Constituency.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew has two minutes more and could the Honourable Member please address the Members of this House of Assembly with decorum?

H/A5A/14:50

Sequence 50

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, who is a very good friend of mine, has remained, even after the Elections, from St. Andrew, and he went to Christ Church East and told the people that he is going to copy everything that I did, because he saw me win an election and he cannot understand, but it is a system I have in place. Sir, he reminded me only yesterday, that everybody in the Honourable House should emulate my system.

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. I rise on a point of order, because I would not wish the record to continue in the manner in which the Honourable Member would have wished it.

The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House and he is casting aspersions on the integrity and good character of the Honourable Members on This Side. He said it about two minutes ago, but I wanted to refresh my mind with the Rule, because he accused the Honourable Members on This Side of plotting. He used the word 'plot.' My recollection of the word "plot" is to impute an illegal or improper action. He said the Members on This Side were plotting, and I am raising an objection to the use of that term. I am asking that the Honourable Member withdraw those remarks. They are contrary to Rule 28.7 of the Standing Order. I am a new Member, so I am telling you that I know the Rules.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, please withdraw those words and the words would be struck from the record.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Sir, as I was saying, when I was interrupted, the expenses, and I have asked my Constituency office to prepare my expenses over the last five years, the average expenses.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew has one more minute, please.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I was surprised that my expenses in one year was \$150 000, expenses that were prepared. I believe that the Government could take the opportunity, it is true that we were engaged in a lot of other matters which did not give us enough time to deal with these matters, and it is good that the Other Side could be dealing with it, even though I do not like the way they have dealt with it, but I will make this a document of the House, my expenses from St. Andrew.

There are a number of expenses which I believe that Parliament itself - there are expenses relating to things like postages, Christmas cards and birthday cards, these are things we all do. These are legitimate expenses, rent increases. I was trying to change my Constituency office and somebody said that the rents in the country are not that high. I was told that the rent would be \$1 500, and you have other expenses that you pay people. I have additional secretarial assistance, and the total of these expenses I will make this available, just to tell you not to be critical of anything that the Government has in mind, but these are expenses that I can justify.

I believe that it is time that we in this Honourable House stop treating ourselves in this way, and stop coming into this Honourable House trying to make it appear as though we have some advantage to gain over a simple matter like this.

I am obliged to you, but I will come back to it during the Head.

Thank you.

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

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to lend my voice to the Estimates debate for 2008-2009. This exercise, over the past two days, has for me been interesting, exciting and enlightening. This being my first exercise, and it is for many of my colleagues, as the Honourable Member for St. Andrew just pointed out. I must say that going through this exercise, as I said, I have enjoyed it, but through all the boisterous distractions I have heard from the Other Side, I want to encourage my colleagues, as I am sure it is coming through to them and to the people of Barbados, that despite all that we have heard from the Other Side, this Government is indeed committed to the social and economic development of Barbados and all Barbadians.

Sir, there has been an attempt to show that this is not the case, but I am sure that you would have seen, in all that has been said here, over the past two days, that indeed we continue to be committed, just as we pointed out in our Manifesto, 'Our Pathway to Progress.'

I would like to congratulate the Honourable Members on This Side, so far, on a job well done. I would like to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister for his foresight in what he has presented thus far. I would also like to congratulate the Ministers here, because I know this has been challenging.

We have had just two months in office, two months in which to assess what we have found, to determine how we can build on that shaky foundation, in the many cases, we have found, how we clean up the mess while quickly preparing projections for these Estimates.

I know it has not been easy. It has been very challenging, but I would like to congratulate every one of them so far for what they have managed to pull together in these two months. Sir, I am sure that over time you will recognise our skills and what we have managed to do here today would bear fruit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I eagerly look forward to some of the programmes that we have shown so far. We are all

very excited in Barbados about the housing plans. The Minister of Housing would have shown in the Estimates, and he would speak to it again, the plan for 500 spots. I know that in St. George South we are eagerly awaiting some of these house spots. Sir, for many years there has been no low income housing offered in St. George South, and the people of St. George South are lining up now, because they know that this is long overdue.

Sir, we have heard promises over the past many years for housing in St. George South, and nothing for low income housing has ever materialised, for at least 10 years. We are also excited because we heard of the road programme that will be carried out throughout Barbados. I heard the Minister of Transport and Works speak to his project that he has for road works.

Sir, we heard over the last many years a lot of promises, but we have not seen a lot of them materialised to the benefit of Barbadians, so I can speak on behalf of the people of St. George South who put their trust in this Government. I can speak on their behalf, when I say that we are anxious to see what the near future will hold for us.

Certainly, we look forward to the development of the road at Boarded Hall, that junction which we know is in the pipeline now, because that is a dangerous junction, where almost every day there are minor accidents and sometimes deadly accidents. Sir, the people of St. George have complained about that junction for many years and nobody has paid any attention, but we are glad that, finally, that situation will be corrected.

Indeed, the whole traffic situation that has been mentioned here with reference to the ABC Highway - This is not just confined to the ABC Highway. Certainly along Highway 4, the main Highway that leads out of St. George, the traffic is awful. We have to leave home at 6.45 a.m., if not earlier, in order to beat that traffic. Sir, we know that traffic solutions are desperately needed, and we are glad to hear that the Minister of Transport and Works is about to try anything. He said that at this point he would be experimenting, because nothing ventured, nothing gained. I certainly want to applaud him, because we are awaiting some solution. We have cried out for a long time for solutions. The traffic problem is getting worse, and anything that he can do right now, we would appreciate.

Sir, the traffic problem is of great concern in this country. Sir, the traffic problem is of great concern in this country. There is a lot of Lawlessness associated with it, which puts pressure on our Police Force. We have people jam-busting illegally at roundabouts, overtaking on curbs and sidewalks. These are things that should not happen that apply pressure on our already pressured Royal Barbados Police Force.

Sir, we need to applaud the Royal Barbados Police Force for the fine work that they are doing, in trying to maintain some control, but we also need to support the Police Force, because we know that theirs is not an easy task. We are dealing with a lot of Lawlessness now, created by impatient people held up by the traffic situation.

Sir, the road rage we are dealing with is causing all kinds of ugly manifestations, right now, in our country, and should be dealt with,

3.00 p.m.

Sequence 51

Estimates -- Tuesday, March 18, 2008

House A5A, Sequence 52, 3.00 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Sir, as we in all the Ministries put together our Estimates, we have been mindful of the fact that we really wanted to put more money to the rescue of the Queen Elizabeth Hospitals plan, and so we have all done cut-backs in some areas, just to ensure that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has received more funding. Indeed, that has been one of the biggest problems that was told to us during the Election period.

Sir, Barbadians need that Queen Elizabeth Hospital attended to, and we gave them our word, that one of the first things we would do is attend to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Sir, you have seen here that we are true to our word, and we are attending to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We are finding the funds for it. We will cut back on the wastage, over-runs and over-spending that we have seen throughout all of the Departments in the Government, so that we can put more money into the much needed Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, I worked at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and when I left there in 1996, there were complaints about how it was, but at least then, even though in our small economy we did not have everything that bigger countries would have had, the morale of the staff, I believe, was what kept us providing excellent service there. Sir, even that has gone today and they are working now with nothing, and that has shown itself through the delivery of health care in this country.

Sir, I am glad to say that over the past two months, I have seen and I have been told that the morale of the staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is gradually returning because, finally, they know that they have a Minister of Health, who is dedicated to hearing them and doing something about it, Sir. The Estimates have shown that we are putting our money where our mouths are, and we are

bringing solutions to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital once and for all.

Sir, even in improving the security measures, you have no idea how that has resonated with the members of staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Sir, in just improving those security measures, those members of staff now realise that this Government is committed to their well-being and their job satisfaction and so, that will redound to the benefit of better health care in this country and better delivery of patient care. Sir, if we have done this in two months, I am sure that all Barbados is eager to see what will be on the table when we come back to this exercise next year.

Sir, we all had a challenge when we looked at the Ministries and saw what was there, what we came and found how we can clean that up and how we can go forward. The Honourable Member who spoke before, that is where he ended when he said that we have to look at what we found, how we can clean that up and how we can move forward. Sir, it is not just in his Ministry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all the Ministries, we have been finding these problems and to have to clean those up, and to have to come here today just two months after, and say to Barbados what we have found and how we can make something out of that; literally, how we can squeeze water from stone at this point. Sir, that speaks of our determination to deliver to the people of Barbados.

Sir, we have seen in all of the Ministries where there is mismanagement of funds. We have seen in all the Ministries where we see loans that were not brought to account, and now we have to deal with them. For example, in the Ministry of Family, Youth, Sports and the Environment, we now have to bring \$17.9 million in order to bring a loan to account.

Sir, throughout all the Ministries are rife with these consultancies, where in many cases for people who are doing or have done nothing that we can see on record. I have asked questions. I have asked for records, for what some of these consultants are doing and I have not found the evidence, so I can only conclude that they were being paid for doing nothing.

It is not that these people are on the bread line, or being put on the bread line when we discontinue these consultancies. For in many cases, these people have other sources of income but they are being paid to do nothing that we can see any evidence of.

Sir, I have spoken to my colleagues and throughout the Ministries too, we are seeing that despite all of the spending, despite all the cost over-runs, despite all the debt, there is still a need for institutional strengthening. Sir,

many of these Ministries do not have the staff. They do not have the support. They do not have even the proper location from which they can operate properly. These are basic things that need to be attended to, if we are to spend the Governments money in a satisfactory way, so that things can happen.

Again, there is a need for institutional strengthening. The programmes that we have been told about for many years, are just on paper and nothing has happened, not because there is no goodwill among the staff. Many of these civil servants are eager to get to work, but there is no support. There is not enough staff, and some of these things never pass the paper stage. Therefore, that is why from the Other Side, we can only hear about things that have been on the books, have been on paper, have come before Cabinet years ago, and there is no evidence that they were ever started. Sir, that is the legacy that has been left, plans, policies on paper but nothing that has happened for the tangible benefit for the people of Barbados. At least, I can speak to the Ministry which I represent today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for example, let me speak about Project OASIS. We have heard a lot of long talk about all the money that is being spent for the youth of this country. Again, when I came into the Ministry, I had to uncover all that has been going on there. I will say that as far as Project OASIS goes, the members of staff in the Division of Youth were excited about this programme. They launched into it, indeed, with altruistic motives in implementing the programme.

Sir, as I speak to them, what has become clear is their disappointment that something they ventured into, because they saw where it could benefit the young people of Barbados, the project that they gave of from their heart was taken, and it was used as a political gimmick.

Sir, many of the Members of that Division feel betrayed that such a high-handed approach was taken to a project. Sir, in spite of all the records and reports that you will see within the Ministry, of the different programmes that come under Project OASIS, such as the digital media, computer repair, bobcat repair, horticulture and landscaping, all of these things are now forgotten.

Indeed, the high-handed approach that was taken by the last Administration to a project that was meant to benefit the people of Barbados has now become a sham. Therefore, if you say the word, Project OASIS to any person on the street of Barbados they would tell you, weedwackers. Sir, I dare you to ask any person on the street now, about Project OASIS. They will tell you that it is \$1 million for weedwackers. This is what Project OASIS has come down to, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government will not be a part of that political gimmickry. The motives were good. The staff means well. Their hearts are in the right places. They want to provide this service for the young people of this country, but they have been betrayed. Indeed, all of Barbados has been betrayed.

Sir, we now find ourselves in a position where we have to look at this programme again, to see what in it was worthy, how much of it we can keep and see where we can start again. For certain, we cannot continue with a programme such as that.

House A5A, Sequence 52, 3:10:14

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Hon. Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Deputy Speaker, people would talk about the cuts that would be made to the programme, but that is so because we now need to rework that entire programme so that the young people of this country would benefit, not just “the boys on the block”. It is not just the “boys on the block” who have been marginalised who need to be assisted. Indeed, there are young women who also need to be supported in their endeavours.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not only those young people who have been marginalised. There are other young people who have been quite active in developing themselves. They have been on the path to developing their careers and they have built a wall because they have had no support. Those people also need to be assisted by programmes of this Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the upcoming year, you would see us going back to the drawing board to rework a programme that is suitable for the young people of Barbados in this era, something that is tangible for them and something that would suit their needs today. As I said, it is not just those marginalised young men, but those young women and also those folks who have been trying very hard, but have hit a wall because they need somebody to give them that support. That is what we are committed to doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have heard so much about promises and about the policies that we are told: “Oh, if you look back, you would see that this was a proposal that was made by the Other Side.” There are a lot of proposals that were made that never got past the proposal stage.

Yesterday, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West spoke about the landfill gas programme, and we were told that if you go back and you look you would see that was a proposal that was made a long time ago. There were

a lot of proposals but nothing that has been implemented for the benefit of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of the Environment is eager to support the Ministry of Health in this landfill gas project, because it is time that as we chart a path to become a model in this Region for sustainable development, that we lead the way with renewable energy sources such as that landfill gas programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, never mind the attempts to mislead the House about Mangrove being closed and Greenland not being used again. The time has come for us to look at these programmes objectively and for us to state clearly to the people of Barbados, forget all the attempts to mislead the House and the people of Barbados, that anything that goes into Greenland would be material that would not pollute our waters or our soil, that it will be treated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Mangrove Landfill has reached capacity. Sir, despite the attempts to “mamaguy” people today, all Barbadians know that the Mangrove Landfill has reached its capacity and that we just cannot take our waste the way it is and dump it in Greenland. That is the point that was being made today. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the smokescreens that have gone up have been an attempt to hide that, but it is time to say it clearly. I hope that after I have said it today that everybody within the hearing of my voice would now understand clearly what it is that project is about.

We have also heard that there was a National Youth Service Plan - Again, a plan that reached Cabinet and went back and has not been brought to the people of this country. A plan that has worth for young people in this country and a plan that is there to develop them socially, to help them to put them on a pathway for economic development, to help them develop their small businesses, and to help with their education. Sir, it is a comprehensive plan and for the life of me, I cannot see why any Government that claims to be committed to the social development of young people would not seek to develop a programme such as that.

There are a lot of plans around the place that the civil servants are excited about getting on with because they see the worth, but they have never been a priority on the agenda of the former Administration. Sir, I have looked at those plans, and I have begun consultation on those plans and we would see a national youth service brought out for the young people of Barbados. It would be a plan that would see them involving themselves in community service and putting them on a chart for success in every aspect of their lives. This is what we are talking about in the Ministry of Family and this is what we are committed to doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are committed to employment. We have heard about the unemployment figures in this country. Sir, on behalf of all those persons who have approached me for a job, I feel the need to make the point again that it is not just about who has a job or who gets money in their hands.

Sir, there are so many young women who come to me who earn \$100, \$150, and \$200 a week on which they are supposed to support their children and send them to school. Sir, \$150 a week cannot do anything and then we want to tell people that these women and men are employed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they cannot be happy earning \$150 to \$200 a week. That can do absolutely nothing for them. Sir, we would then have them on figures somewhere as being employed. Sir, they are the ones who show up at our Constituency offices week after week after week because they want something else to do because the bills cannot be paid and they cannot support their families. Women are struggling to support families on that meagre amount.

Sir, we would then have people, even in this Parliament, who would say that the women who go to Court to get maintenance for their children are doing wrong. Mr. Deputy Speaker, many of these women have no alternative. They have to go to get some maintenance for their children. That is why I want to endorse the point that was made by the Honourable Minister who spoke earlier who said that this Estimates exercise is not just about how much money you see voted in these documents, but that it reflects the spirit and the focus of this Government that we are going to support the people of Barbados to make their quality of life better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would not see in these Estimates a figure that speaks to the Maintenance Act in this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to report to this House today that the Ministry of Family is in the process of reworking that Maintenance Act, so that men and women who need support for raising their children would not have to be demeaned to get the little money that they get. Sir, we are looking at this Act even as we speak so that men and women can go boldly before the Court to claim support and assistance for raising their children. Sir, you would not find that in this document.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have heard that there is nothing in these Estimates that reflect what is in here, because what is in here - the Honourable Member for St. Philip South said it earlier today - is not all about money, but about commonsense, about a will for the people and about a motivation to improve the quality of life for Barbadians. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would not see all

these dollars in here because it does not take only money to make the quality of life better for Barbadians.

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

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Thank you. The last Administration had money out of their ears, and they have done nothing to improve the quality of life of Barbadians, so it is not just about the money that you would see in these Estimates. The Other Side has asked us to name some programmes.

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Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been in here for two months and we have spent much of those two months trying to unearth a lot of what has been going on. It is not that we do not have policies or programmes. We might not have a name for them yet. Those names will come.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Stay tuned to this channel. You will see them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Members said that so far in this exercise, we are prophets of doom, that we would have the people of Barbados believing that we cannot manage this economy, that we do not know what we are doing, that we are not aware of the global situation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, somebody said today it is not about having a degree in economics, but I know that the God that we all say is a Bajan, nothing that happens in the economy in this country would catch him by surprise, and just as He prepared Israel for a hardship that was to come, when He sent Joseph ahead of them, Joseph did not have an economic degree either, but the God who sent Joseph into Egypt to prepare the people for the hardship to come, the God that put Joseph in charge of Egypt under Pharaoh, so that He could prepare them for the seven years of famine that were to come, is the same God who has allowed this Government to be here today, under the leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not here as a prophet of doom. I am not saying that we would have seven years of plenty, to be followed by seven years of doom. What I am saying is that while everybody would want to say that we are not aware of the economic climate, and that we have made these promises, or how are we going to find the money to finance these projects, and that we are only going to run the economy down, Sir, this is far from it. It is with

wisdom, courage, a heart for the people of Barbados that we will manage the affairs of this country, so that whatever the global economy brings to us, through proper management, we as Barbadians will be able to ride the tide. God only knows that had we continued on the path on which we were for the past 14 years, there would have been hell catching all of us when that time came, but we can safely say that Barbados is on the right track, that Barbados will be able to ride the tide under the leadership of the the Honourable Member for St. John and the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in spite of all the distractions we have heard over the past two days, and I know there will be more to come, I know that the people of Barbados have been listening. I know that our Parliament, being as established as it is, that Barbadians know how to sift out the noise, how to sift out the long talk and how to listen for the substance. I know that Barbadians have been doing so and will do so for the rest of this exercise.

I also know that already it has become clear to them, as it has to everyone in this Honourable Chamber, even those who do not want to admit it, that this Government is focussed on the social and economic development of this country. As a Party and as a Government, we have always been focussed and we will continue being focussed. We will rescue not only the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but all sectors of our economy. We will also rescue the people of Barbados who are now struggling to make a living for themselves, who are struggling to support their families. Sir, the various Ministries are working together, to ensure that this will happen for the people of Barbados for, indeed, it is for them that we are here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address this Honourable House.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. John, who is also Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, for his very erudite presentation on the 2008/2009 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

I think it is a happy occasion that after the prolonged and unexplained absence from this Honourable Chamber, over an extended period of time last year, of the former Minister of Finance, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, after the Honourable Member was literally run out of here after a Budget presentation, it is a happy occurrence that finally we have a Minister of Finance who can come to Parliament and can actually lay and debate his Estimates. Sir, I was happy to see the Honourable Member for St. John presenting those Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make a few observations which I have picked up since being here for

this process. Sir, I think the Honourable Member for St. George South made the point that regardless of whatever we believe, regardless of whatever we say in here, regardless of whatever we put in this document, that however well it is written and how much the figures are in here, at the end of the day, this is about the people of Barbados. It is the people who have elected us, both Government and Opposition, even though from the behaviour of Members on the Other Side, you would not think that they know they are the Opposition, but it is the people of Barbados who matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is how we are going to turn these figures and words contained in this Estimates document into reality, to serve the interest of the people. Sir, it is not about predictions of any Honourable Member becoming Prime Minister one day. The people of Barbados are not interested in that. They will speak to that when the time comes and I am sure resoundingly.

I am not I am not going to go on record as saying that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would never become Prime Minister of Barbados. If it happens in my lifetime, I would be surprised, but it is entirely possible. What I would say is that the people of Barbados are interested in how we, as Honourable Members and how the entire establishment of Government would use the resources which will be voted in these Estimates and otherwise, to improve, to enhance and to upgrade their standard of living. If this is not what this exercise is about, then we might as well not come here at all because it would be a waste of their time.

Sir, the people of Barbados have sent us in here, not by wheelbarrows, but by votes, to ensure that we protect their interest. Sir, that is why, in the process of doing so, it is equally important that whenever any new Government comes to office, it be brutally frank about what it has found. We cannot come here and pretend that everything is hunkey dorey. We cannot come here and pretend that we are going to lay out these policies set out in a Manifesto, without giving the contextualisation of what was found, in terms of the economy.

H:MO. A5A (54) 3.30 p.m.

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Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I also heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael East repeating it, even though I know she does not believe any of it, that they left this great economy of employment of 6 per cent and the Honourable Member for St. George South made the point that week after week people come to your Constituency office asking for jobs and I say: "but you have a job" and they say that the job cannot support them far less their family. It is not so

much the number of jobs you have. It is the quality of the jobs that is important.

If you are going to get someone to put on clothes every day, go down to the Harbour Road and when the week comes after deductions you have \$110 or \$140, you pay light and water, maybe telephone if you have that luxury and the money is dead. We now have to recalibrate this economy in a way that creates sustainable and meaningful jobs. This is what has to happen in this economy, but the Honourable Members on the Other Side do not want to hear that, especially the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, who is now gone. He is not interested in hearing any of that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is important to the people is the efficient delivery of quality public goods and services, that if you go into the Hospital like one of my constituents only two or three weeks ago, went in for one problem and almost did not come back out.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: No, because the machine that you left not working we have now to source and I had to call the Honourable Minister of Health about it and he is now...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: No, there is no special favour. I called him about it because the fate that befell my constituent, I did not want to befall anybody else particularly one of the constituents of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I called him and he told me he is aware of it and he is dealing with it.

Thank God, the Democratic Labour Party was elected to office, because I understand that particular machine was out of commission for almost one year, in an economy with \$2 billion in foreign reserves, according to the Opposition.

Sir, it means nothing to anybody to have \$2 billion in foreign reserves and public goods and services cannot be delivered either with efficiency or quality. It means it is just a lot of foolish talk, waste language and hot air.

Sir, we have to make these points in here, because I will tell you this. Up to last week, in my Constituency office I met close to 15 persons who work in the Ministry of Health and who have not had payment for September, October, November or December while the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was receiving salary. There are public health inspectors in Barbados and nurses, who did not get paid for September, October, November and December.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member from St. Michael North West were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, will you please use parliamentary language?

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is foolishness, nonsensical, inept verbiage. Sir, is that parliamentary enough? I hope.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really did not wish to get so hot under the collar with these matters, but I have to deal with it every week in my Constituency and, therefore, I have to speak to these matters. The Honourable Member spoke about an economy that is growing every year, yet we have a \$500 million dollar hole in the current account.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party Government of the past, thank goodness, left a \$500 million hole in the economy of Barbados and the former Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Peter admitted that the hole existed, even in spite of all the things they said they were doing. Sir, we now have to try to put in place a programme that will lead to the growth of the trading sectors in Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West said nothing is in here for that.

Sir, in these Estimates, you will find that we have put in an increased subvention of \$80 million for the Barbados Tourism Authority to ensure for greater marketing, particularly in light of the fact that there is likely to be a decline or some pressure in the US market for tourists coming into Barbados.

Sir, you would also see that there is an increase of \$2 million in the Estimates for the Barbados Coalition of Service Industries, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East ought to know, to work on promoting Barbados exports, particularly in light of the fact that we are about to sign the Economic Partnership Agreement with Europe, which is an important instrument, for which we are all enjoying and hope to take advantage of the service opportunities as market access opens in that area.

Sir, I want to say that my Ministry is going to be working with the coalition to ensure that we come up with a solid and comprehensive services export strategy by the

end of this year or before that we can bring to this Honourable House for discussion. Sir, these are the things we are doing. They are in the Estimates and they say they do not have in anything.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on. We have apportioned \$13 million for Invest Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Well, we are not going to spend the \$21 million, which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East assigned, because that was a whole lot of wastage. We went through that....

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I was letting the Honourable Member continue, but he really must not mislead the House. Please go to page 273 of this years Estimates, 2008/2009 and see that the amount voted for the private sector service export initiative at Subprogramme 0472 is \$1.2 million. If he goes to the document called Revised Estimates of Expenditure to page 158, the same Sub-programme 0472, it also has \$1.2 million, but he would have told you just now, Mr. Deputy Speaker of this Chamber, that we had increased that vote by \$2 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless he is thinking in his head, seeing in his head and ignoring documents that are before this Chamber, I hold up for all Members to see at page 273 and at page 158, the exact same amount. Sir, in relation to Invest Barbados, they have, in fact, cut the vote from \$21 million to \$13 million.

Sir, in relation to the Barbados Tourism Authority, The Barbados Tourism Authority, as I said yesterday, would have received \$60 million on budget and \$24 million via a bond so that on all three counts, it would be better if he tells us about the and stick to what he knows better.

H/A5A/3:40

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Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope I can get back my time, because the Honourable Member is listening with her ears closed. I never said \$2 million. Of course, the Coalition Service Industries cannot get \$2 million more. I said \$1.2 million has been allotted to that.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Well, if you did not hear that, let me say it again. The Coalition of Service Industries has been given \$1.2 million and we are going to ensure that they spend it in a way that benefits Barbados. Let me also

make the point that we are preparing to put another \$13 million. Let me put it in a way that the Honourable Member would not have to get up again. We are providing \$13 million to the Barbados Tourism Investment (BTI) to continue its efforts to build out capacity for the country, in order for us to upgrade the tourism project and also improve our physical infrastructure to make it a lot better for tourists coming.

It is not a fact to say that this Government has not put in the Estimates of Barbados, for 2008-2009, resources that will help the Barbados economy. The even greater point is this. The Government is also going to seek what they could not do, which is to contain the level of debt, wastage and squandermania of public resources in Barbados. That is what has happened in this country, that the last Government wasted so much resources that they did not have time to pay attention to what was important for the people of Barbados, that is, ensuring that our economy is on a footing to make money and earn foreign exchange for Barbados so that we would not have to borrow. This is what they were doing. That is why we have committed ourselves to the priority of having a balanced budget. That is our priority, but when it is necessary we will run small deficits for the servicing of Barbados society and economy. That is just the reality. Sir, you have to be able, in Barbados, to recognise that these are important aspects of economic management.

Sir, I want to speak about the whole question of the Estimates and whether the Minister of Finance wrote them. All of that is a waste of time and effort. The fact of the matter is, this Government is just over two months old. We have a mandate to run for at least 4 to 5 years. They want us to do in two months what they could not do in 14 years. That is the reality of it. The anxiety of the Right Honourable, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I called her Right Honourable, because she said that one day she will be Prime Minister of Barbados. The Honourable Member has a right to believe so, but at the end of the day, that is not important. What is important is that the Democratic Labour Party has identified a programme. We will implement it to pace, and at a pace that we know the economy and society can handle, but be sure that programme is going to be implemented.

I want to speak to the question of houses. I know that the Honourable Minister of Housing is going to speak about it, but let me make this point, because I have four housing areas in my Constituency. I made a commitment under the mandate of the Democratic Labour Party to my constituents, as have others in here who have similar housing estates in their constituencies. It is persons who have been living in those units for 20 years or more are entitled, we are not giving anybody anything free like the Honourable Member for St. George North was trying to suggest, that I said. We are not giving anybody anything

free. They are entitled. They have paid for it over 20, 30 and some even 40 years, and when you look at the dilapidated state in which those units were allowed to go, by the last Government, roofs leaking. Sir, I have a lady in Rosemont who showed me a pipe that was leaking for almost 10 years. She was calling all the time, and cannot get a response whatsoever.

Sir, the last Deputy General Manager of the National Housing Corporation, called into a call-in programme when the issue boiled over in to that programme, "Brass Tacks". Do you know what he said? It takes \$3 million a year and they do not have the \$3 million. The last Government came into this Parliament and voted \$30 million for the National Housing Corporation, and you know that was still not enough to clear off debts of the National Housing Corporation, that still was not enough. This is what was allowed to happen in Barbados. They completely disconnected themselves from the people of Barbados, and now are wondering why they were not given the economy and Government of Barbados to manage.

Sir, it is clear they were not interested in that. They were not interested in the people of Barbados, the ordinary vote that mattered, that you could go down Marhill Street and see them. They are not interested in them. They were interested in this Bonaparte State they created, this super structure of clingers and parasites, sucking like barnacles on a boat, on the ship of State.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You said that you wanted to go higher, so I am going to go a little higher. You read the 18th Brumaire Louis Bonaparte and you will hear about the Bonaparte State, and you will see that when you cannot get what you want in the regular structures of Government, you create a super structure of individuals who walk around believing that they are even more important than the people who empowered them. That is the politicians, and that is what was happening in this country.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLETR: Sir, it is because of that, regular public servants in Barbados were made to feel small, reduced to nothing, because of these "Lords of the Game" strutting through the Public Service giving people orders, then you lose control over them completely, because they start to move to a beat of their own. That is the problem, but that will not happen in this Democratic Labour Party. There will be no super structure. There is one structure of Government and that will continue for as long as we enjoy the privilege of being in office.

Sir, the cost of living is another raised by the Other Side. We would readily admit that there are some parts of

the cost of living that is beyond our control, but we know that. We import inflation, but there are some things that we can do. Sir, the people of Barbados were so angry with the Other Side, simply because they sat down for months against the pleas and cries of ordinary Barbadians and did absolutely nothing.

Sir, for years, one former Honourable Member of this House said that a little inflation is not bad. You remember that? He said that a little hardwood was not bad either. As soon as an Election was approaching the former Government rushed out in a flurry trying to do something about the cost of living, too little, too late. We have made the point that the cost of living will not be solved overnight, but it can be seriously addressed if a government is interested in addressing it on several points.

Sir, if we look at the question of reducing duties and taxes on items coming into Barbados, where we can do that safely enough, and where we do not compromise domestic production, and therefore, compromise jobs, we know that we can do it if we can get an internal liberalisation, as the Democratic Labour Party has committed, of the distributive sectors in Barbados, which were allowed to consolidate under the last Administration to an extent where, regardless to wherever you go shopping, the prices were high, because the people who were importing and distributing, are all one and the same.

Sir, they are people who are controlling the prices, internally in the market.

3.50 p.m.

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House A5A, Sequence 57, 3.50 p.m.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The third point, Sir, is that we have to find cheaper markets from which to source our products. We cannot continue to rely on the traditional markets only. We have to look into Central America and South America. We also have to ensure, as the Hon. Member for St. Michael West Central said recently on the radio, that we increase our domestic production of food items in particular, and other items that are in the basket of goods. Therefore, when we went to the COTED Meeting two weeks ago and made the changes on the items, we were doing two things.

The first thing we were doing is cleaning up the mess left by the last Government, because under the Rules of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, COTED is responsible for giving permission to any country to reduce the Common External Tariff. Sir, the last Government, in

its hurry to do something before the Election, reduced the CET without notification or permission from COTED.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member in his exuberance also ought to let the Honourable Chamber know that the first COTED Meeting that took place after the actions that we made in early December, was the COTED Meeting that took place in the third week of January after the Election. Therefore, he knows that it would have been physically impossible for the Government of Barbados to have attended and defended its position upon notification to COTED.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is only a matter of semantics for the Honourable Member. Let him tell the full truth unless, of course, he does not want to carry out the responsibility, on behalf of the Government of Barbados, since the responsibility for the Government is seamless.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, the Honourable Member knows very well that you first have to seek permission, when the formal meeting comes up, but you should really notify them. The public servants in the Ministry had the unpleasant experience of going to a COTED meeting and being told by the Jamaicans that we heard your Government did this; we heard your Government did that, and we have not been notified. The Honourable Member also knows that in the absence of a substantive COTED meeting, the Secretary General is given the power under the Revised Treaty.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you, Sir.

The Secretary General is given the power under the Revised Treaty to sanction, on a temporary basis, until a formal meeting comes of the COTED. Sir, the last Government could have done that but they did not. They passed a Statutory Instrument in contravention. Sir, I am not arguing about that because we know it was a rush for the Elections. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am saying though, is that we regularised the matter.

We also sought to ensure that the list was augmented with products that real people use, that we expanded that basket as far as we could, while still ensuring that we offered protection to our domestic producers, particularly of agricultural products. Sir, that is why you will not see on that list basic agricultural products like vegetables and fruit that we can, and intend to source from CARICOM countries. Therefore, we need to look at these things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the area of International Business, I think the Minister of State spoke ably to that as

well as the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. In addition to that, I would also like to say that we will continue to pursue vigorously our International Tax Treaty network, buttressed by an Investment Treaty network, in areas non-traditional to Barbados, South Africa and parts of Latin America.

We recently hosted the Honourable Consuls of Latin America here in Barbados and they are all happy and ready to pursue our interest in Latin America, not only for Treaties, but also in air links, looking to bring more tourists out of Panama and Brazil. We are considering and negotiating an Air Services Agreement with Brazil to bring a Charter out of South Paulo into Brazil. Sir, these are the things that we are doing to ensure that we reposition this Barbados economy, to earn quality investment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not the type of investment that would come to Barbados and alienate the Barbadian population by putting up gated communities here and there. It is not investment that takes up Barbadian land only for the purposes of leisure, but investment that can produce meaningful and sustainable jobs. This is what we want in Barbados and we intend, through my Ministry, to redirect our efforts at getting foreign investment to the extent that people in Barbados can participate in the wealth that is created and earned in Barbados. Sir, this is what we are talking about in these Estimates.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, do not bother with him. You can ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East about the diplomatic appointments. She can tell you who they are. Sir, the point of the matter is that the Honourable Member makes the point. Government has to appear to be seamless and we try as much as possible to maintain that standard. Therefore, when you transition from one Government to another, one Party to another, there will be instances where in Estimates there are programmes that are carried over. Sir, you just do not discontinue the Government.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the Honourable Member please wrap up?

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this a collage of two types of policies, some of which would have been left by the last Government and others, the majority of which would be from this new Administration. We hope to work assiduously on behalf of the public of Barbados to ensure that we deliver a government that matters to them and not a government that matters to foreign investors only, or to big businesses. Sir, this is the message we want to leave with these Estimates this year.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to give support, in relation to the proposal in the Estimates that have been put forward. Sir, I want to begin by first of all referring to page 6, of the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto, where it speaks about putting people first.

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: It states that:

The Democratic Labour Party will continue to put people first by addressing their pressing needs. Meeting these needs is the proven pathway to national improvement. It involves resolute action in a number of critical areas.

Sir, I support the view that these Estimates seek to carry out the mandate that has been set forward in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look at the Estimates, you would see that it seeks to address those pressing needs that have been identified by the Democratic Labour Party, and is seeking to bring resources in order to ensure that the critical needs of Barbadians are addressed in a meaningful way, more than we have seen in the last 14 years.

Sir, we are living in an age where we are seeing tremendous progress around the world. We are living in an age in which we have to be very careful that while we progress as a people, and we claim to have achieved so much, that the object of development is the individual in itself.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we continue to progress and at the same time, when we look around us we cannot see evidence that our people are progressing as a result in a very real way, we would have failed in our objective as a nation to achieve the developed status that we continue to speak about.

Sir, when you look at the Estimates in itself, it represents the first stage in the Democratic Labour Party's attempt to redress the direction in which we have been going for the last 14 years. It represents the first stage in ensuring that the resources of this country is utilised for the benefit of ordinary Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to refer to the whole question of labour and the importance of ensuring that we

have an education policy that ensures that we give to Barbadians the necessary skills to enable us to be players in the current world environment.

In this respect, Sir, I just want to make the point that one of the concerns that has been brought to me by the residents of St. Michael West Central, and I would like to deal with it now, is the issue of work permits.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party has been handed the baton, but one of the things I want to note is that we, as a Party and as a Government, need to ensure that the processes we operate are in the interest of Barbadians and in the future of this country.

One of the points I want to make on the whole issue of work permits in this country, is that we have to ensure that we do due diligence in terms of ensuring that we do not continue to approve work permits in areas where Barbadians, over a period of time, should be able to fill those positions.

Sir, we have a situation in this country where jobs that ordinary Barbadians can do are being filled by persons from abroad. Not only that, one of the things that we also need to ensure is that our education system operates in a strategic manner to ensure that futuristic job prospects in the economy are filled by persons that our education system would produce. We should not continue in the future to allow the renewal of work permits ad infinitum for positions that continue to be in the economy of Barbados that we should be training local Barbadians to fill.

Sir, it is a signal failure on the past Government that they have not been futuristic in terms of trying to ensure that we seek to fill those areas of critical expertise and use the education system in order to do that. Sir, when I look at the Estimates, I am pleased to note that we are going in that direction.

Sir, the other point I want to make is in relation to the question of Nursery Education in Barbados. One of the things I note is that there are a number of nurseries for young children in St. Michael West Central. Sir, I welcome the effort on the part of the Minister of Education and Human Resources to address the involvement of private persons in nursery education.

Sir, I want to impress upon the Government, and I hope the Opposition would be enlightening enough to support that call too, to encourage the support of the involvement of existing nurseries in the whole question of nursery education because there is a cry among some private nurseries that they are being crowded out. I want to encourage Government, under Head 54 on Nursery Education, that they be included in that. Sir, I think we

need to applaud the Government in that measure in terms of including those private nurseries there.

Sir, another issue I want to deal with is the whole question of the management of the environment. We have heard a lot about the Greenland Landfill. Sir, in that respect, I think again that we need to be futuristic in where we are going to carry Barbados.

Sir, it makes no sense trying to determine, at this particular point in time, who or not established the Greenland Landfill, and whether or not we are running out of space. The fact of the matter is that we are going to have to address the question of garbage in this country differently.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party, the Government of the day, would soon have to look at the whole issue of garbage separation. Sir, there is an opportunity using garbage separation to also create many small businesses in this country. We already have a lot of small businesses involved in the whole area of plastics. Sir, we need to go to the whole question of separation in terms of glass bottles. There is also the issue of paper.

Sir, if we do those things, we would be able to at least ensure that we reduce the quantity of waste that is going into the landfills. Sir, we have to be creative at this particular point in time. There is no need for us to argue at this particular point in time why we pursue with the area of Greenland. It was a mistake of the past Barbados Labour Party Administration to pursue a wasteful investment when we should have been concentrating on trying to sensitise Barbadians to the importance of garbage separation. Sir, that is where we need to go.

Sir, we need to start to work in our communities. Sir, in St. Michael West Central alone, we have individuals who are already involved in the whole area of the collection of glass and they make a living out of it. Sir, we are losing the opportunity of involving a lot of people who otherwise would not be able to find jobs in our economy in terms of this particular activity of garbage disposable.

Sir, I remember as a boy growing up down Deacons Road that there was this gentleman who used to engage in the process of things and every day you would see smoke and wires down there.

Asides.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Yes, the copper wire.

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am saying is that this is a business that is being carried on by an ordinary person and that one of the things we need to look at seriously, is to the extent to which we could provide assistance to such persons.

Sir, sometimes we do not appreciate the importance of that activity, but now we are beginning to see the landfill, we can appreciate the importance of such activities that were being carried on by ordinary persons. Sir, those persons do not have to become a Knight or be called Sirs, but they are serving a very important function in this community.

Sir, I believe that the Democratic Labour Party has to move to involve such persons, and not to reward foreign persons coming in and making Barbadians feel that the only persons who could make any contribution to this country are those persons from North America or Europe.

Sir, this Government cannot do like others, that is, to justify giving incentives to foreign investors because of the fact that these persons came from abroad, when we have people at home who are making valuable contributions to this country, in a situation where they have been overlooked by the Barbados Labour Party over the last 14 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak to the area of the Rural Development Commission. Sir, I was pleased to note that this Department is finally going to get out of the area of road repair programmes. Sir, I say that because there is a corporation which is supposed to play a pivotal role in the development of agriculture in the rural areas and it seems to me, for some time, that there are so many Departments that become involved in dealing with Governments Road Rehabilitation Programmes, therefore, this would be compromising the function of a very important institution in terms of facilitating rural development.

Sir, rural development is not just about building roads, it is about sustaining the activities that enrich the lives of persons living in rural communities, but what we had was the bastardisation of a rural development programme because the Barbados Labour Party did not understand the concept of rural development. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to ensure that the Rural Development Commission functions as an approved rural development agency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to deal with the question of the physical development of this country. Sir, within St. Michael West Central, we get, from time to time, problems as far as drainage is concerned. As a matter of fact, I have already spoken to the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport about the question of road building

in this country. Sir, we have a situation where we have roads being built across natural drainage areas.

There are areas in St. Stephen's Hill, Clevedale Road, St. Stephen Landing Scheme, among others, where whenever there is a heavy downpour, it becomes very difficult for the residents in those areas. Sir, one of the problems in terms of drainage, is that we have had a situation where there was incomplete drainage works, where the water is not being channelled properly, where the residents experience extreme hardship during periods of heavy rainfall.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to note that the Ministry intends to take a look at this, but I would want to indicate that we need to give it greater priority because we are seeing heavy development taking place in this country and I do not think that we should wait for accidents to happen. I think that greater priority should be given to those areas, especially those within St. Michael West Central, which have had a lot of roads being built. Sir, in some cases some of these roads have not been built with much sense. For example, there is an area off Goodland where I do not understand what happened there.

Sir, last year around December we had a situation where the road was half done. In other words, one side of it was paved, while the Other Side was left unpaved. There were also roads done in St. Michael West Central, such as Kildare Close, where that road was done in such a rushed manner that it now has to be dug up once again.

Sir, one of the things I would want the former Minister of Transport and Works to recognise is that when you go into an area to do something, you have to consider the advice of persons in those communities. Sir, there was an area where there were a number of young men who were accustomed to having road tennis competitions in the area. These young men asked that they would be taken into consideration when the road works were taking place. Sir, they were dismissed out of hand and the road was built in a manner that ensured they could not play road tennis competitions. Sir, for persons who did not know, since then these young men have had to rectify that road, out of their own pockets.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the past Minister of Transport and Works could have worked with those young people to ensure that the manner in which the roads were built would not have compromised the ability of those persons to engage in such harmless activities there. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the problem we have is that the Barbados Labour Party does not understand why we are doing the things in this country. Sir, it goes back to page 6 of the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto. Sir, who are we doing it for, other than for the people? We are not doing it for ourselves. Sir, I want to emphasise that the Democratic Labour Party

will continue to put people first by addressing their pressing needs and that as far as the dispensing of services is concerned, we have recognised the importance of consulting with the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to address the question of the Ministry of Agriculture. Sir, if it is the one failing of the past Administration, it has been the manner in which the agricultural sector in this country has been treated. In many cases, it has been treated with scant respect and with a lack of appreciation to the kind of contribution that agriculture could make to this economy, if it could be properly managed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what did we see? We saw an attempt to put all of our eggs into one basket, which accounted for the lop-sided development we see in Barbados today. Sir, because of the limited opportunities afforded to Barbadians, we now see Barbadians being forced to work for wages that keep them below the poverty line, yet we talk about having made progress.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a situation where Barbadians are being forced to work for wages of less than \$180 per week, yet Members on the Other Side continue to brag about Barbados having full employment. Sir, the Honourable Members are not telling the truth either because, in truth and in fact, even though we have Barbadians working for less than \$180 per week, many times there are many Barbadians who are employed two or three days a week.

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: Sir, even with that, some of them being employed two days a week and have to run from St. Lucy to St. Philip to find jobs to fill out the week and we talk about jobs that we have attracted over the last 13 years in this country. We stand up and brag because what we have done is to facilitate the exploitation of Barbadian labour by international investors. That is what we have done and Sir, they talk about the fact that they have brought quality jobs to Barbadians. That is what they are saying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party has, through agriculture, an opportunity to rewrite that, but it is going to be a hard task, because in the same reckless way in which they seem to embrace the suggestions of other Caribbean countries to reduce the CET, the Barbados Labour Party embraced that, and what we need to understand is that instead of paying attention to the development of the agricultural sector, understanding the trends in international commodity trading and the fact that if Barbados did not shore up its agricultural sector, that it was compromising the food security interest of this

country. They went ahead again with this lopsided mode of development of selling land to pay bills.

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

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I want to express support to the direction we are going in terms of the Estimates. I also want to say that one of things that would be strategic as far as the agricultural sector is concerned...

Asides.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: I also want to clearly indicate to Barbados the fact that the Democratic Labour Party is truly concerned about this country and the whole question of the Agriculture Protection Act. Sir, that is a clear indication that the Democratic Labour Party will support the agricultural sector in an effort to ensure that Barbadians have food security.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to say that it would ease the job considerably of the Minister of Health, if we could use the agricultural sector as a means of reducing the incidences of lifestyle diseases that we have in this country because, when you look at the increased incidences of lifestyle diseases, one of the main causes is because nutrition in this country is changing, the way in which we eat is changing, and we have to examine what is happening and take steps to address that situation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity given to speak on this measure and I would want to indicate my full support to the measures

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 4.45 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 4.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

H/A5A/16:25

Sequence 60

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RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.
The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am happy for the privilege to make my presentation in this Estimates debate, and I wish to first make a few comments in relation to education.

I listened very attentively to the contributions of all Honourable Members, who have spoken so far, and I must say that I am amazed at what has been emanating from their mouths. I am wondering where were they living over the past 14 years, because some of the comments that they have been making about education and things that have not been happening, and that poor peoples children are suffering, these things amaze me.

Sir, I want to refer to the Miniature Digest and Education Statistics 2006/2007, where a Barbados Labour Party Government in 1994, and I believe I should go as far as 1995/1996, with the Curriculum Reform, through our investigations, found out that there were quite a few children, a large number of children, first at primary level who were not mastering skills as we would expect of 11-year-olds. Therefore, there was comprehensive legislation in this Honourable Chamber to ensure that those children who were mastering the skills, who were accelerating, would be given an opportunity at 9-plus to go to secondary schools, and those who were not doing so well, scoring 30 per cent or under, those students remained at the primary school for an additional year to boost the areas where there were weaknesses. Sir, I must tell you that whole aspect of the flexible transfer has been bearing tremendous fruit.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke a lot about children not wanting to go to school. They are so concerned. There is nothing attractive about school. The Honourable Member should remember that the Honourable Member for St. Johns children have been schooled at the regular primary school, that he is now saying that children are not getting a chance to continue to work in the way they should.

Indeed, my own grandchildren go to the neighbourhood school where we live. Therefore, I would wish to say that it is unfortunate that the Honourable Members on the Other Side are not familiar with what has been happening, and I believe that they were not so interested in politics, therefore, they did not pay attention, or perhaps their children were going to other private schools where they could pay through their noses, or perhaps having no problem paying at all, they may be so rich, therefore, they did not know of the tremendous changes in the reform package that took place in education.

Sir, when it comes to the performance of students at CXC level, the whole investigations, consultations, the same things that the Honourable Members on the Other Side are talking about, were done. We had numerous Town Hall Meetings with stakeholders, who determined, from the information that was gathered and discussed, that our children at CXC level were performing at a 40 per cent or so level. Sir, as we speak today, we have surpassed the 60 per cent performance. I can make it a document of the House.

The Miniature Digest of Education 2006/2007 outlines the performance of these schools. Sir, there are students who are earning five and six CXCs in all of the schools.

Sir, we know that those who go to St. George Secondary School, Alma Parris, Grantley Adams Secondary School and St. Lucy Secondary School, because of their entry performance, they sometimes do exceptionally well, if they are late developers. Therefore, I would not call the names of some of the young people whom I know who are now teaching, or working in the Civil Service or working in the private sector as accountants. I will not make mention of those students who over the past 10 years have graduated from school and have earned themselves five, six or seven certificates and have gone to the University of the West Indies or other tertiary institutions to make their mark. So, I have a tremendous difficulty when people speak without the information.

16.50 p.m.

Sequence 61

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House A5A, Sequence 62, 4.50 p.m.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sir, when it comes to the tertiary level institution, as was explained here as well, it is not my information. It is the information gathered by the Ministry's research team. We found low numbers because hundreds of students were applying for positions, and many of them were being turned away because of capacity. The Ministry of Education - we now add to it, human development. In these Estimates it still says: "Education Youth Affairs and Sports."

The point I want to make is that because so many people were turned away, we ensured that those institutions expanded to accommodate the people of Barbados who want to improve their knowledge, those who want to pursue training and those who want to do so many other things. Therefore, the statistics of 2006/2007 tell us that the Community College, full-time and part-time, carried at that time, 4 288 students. When we came, they were not quite 2

000 students. The same thing for the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic - that has grown by leaps and bounds, to 3 148 students at that time 2006/2007; Erdiston Teachers' Training College 241, and the University of the West Indies, full-time and part-time students have surpassed the 6 835 mark. Therefore, I really am lost about some of the comments I am hearing from the Other Side.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it brings me to the other point. The University College of Barbados is one of the ways where, we believe, that we could capitalise on the extra individuals who have not been accommodated over the years. Therefore, the UCB is the concept for the amalgamation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of these three institutions, the Erdiston Teachers Training College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College. I recognise that the funding, so that UCB could be established in August this year is only \$5 million. The legislation is already prepared.

Sir, you would appreciate that there are three Principals at these institutions who have been operating at the acting level. The amalgamation would determine how the new structure will fall in place, and those persons would be given the opportunity to make applications. Sir, right now, they are all on a pause because the \$5 million is more than 12 times less than what would have been needed for the launch to take place later this year. Sir, we see how this human resource programme that this Government speaks about will unfold.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Nursery Education is also another area that the Administration of which I was really very proud to have been a part, ensured that the children of ordinary poor people in Barbados get an opportunity for Nursery Education. Sir, we call it kindergarten as well or early childhood education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is so critical as you know, because you are also a parent, that if you can afford to pay at one of the private institutions for your children, then your children get a couple pegs up ahead of other peoples children, who more often than not, have to remain at home. It inhibits parents from working. The children come into primary school at 4 years old and with numbers of deficits.

Sir, therefore, the Nursery Programme that is going into its fourth year, would have been one envisioned by this Administration that would have been ensuring that the almost 2 000 children who would be at the three-year-old level and going forward would get access to a school, so that when that child is ready for primary level, it will not have these various deficiencies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that four schools were already established. They are All Saints, Saint Boniface, St. Giles, and the Six Roads' School. There are plans for the

establishment of a school at Sharon because the catchment in that area is tremendous. Therefore, the \$1.8 million that I see in the Budget, I believe that will go towards assisting with the development of that school.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the school is not about me, as a person, but the people in rural Barbados must get the benefits that other Barbadians get. There must be a measure of equality across the length and breadth of Barbados and that is what the Barbados Labour Party did all of its years. Sir, any time the Barbados Labour Party falls short of that, I will kiss politics goodbye and go home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am waiting for the Ministry of Education to get word on that nursery school at Sharon Primary that will fill a catchment that covers a wide area of children whose parents cannot afford to pay for nursery education because of their status. Then, there are others who do not have a school nearby, so the parents in that area have nowhere to take their children. Sir, they have to keep them at home and be deprived of employment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. George South, who spoke about Project OASIS. I have a tremendous difficulty if the Honourable Member for St. George South did not do her research. I know sometimes there are programmes that persons may hear about. They may not like them. Therefore, investigate them before you put your foot in your mouth.

Sir, on my way here from the Polytechnic where I went to witness a team of persons pursuing a course, and they have done their preparation today for examination purposes, I was one of the most impressed people to see that ordinary individuals were there pursuing those courses to enhance their skills and to be ready for the job market.

Therefore, when the Minister spoke about Project OASIS and only heard weedwackers, if you go on the road, the Honourable Member should speak of the meeting that was held only last week, with the Barbados Youth Development Council, where the young people spoke strenuously about what they would do if this Government shuts down Project OASIS.

Perhaps, that is what led the Permanent Secretary whom I heard on the radio, say that Project OASIS will continue. I have seen that \$1 million has been budgeted. I am happy to see that because it is not only about young people in St. Thomas, or in the constituencies that were serviced by the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, it is about young people across the length and breadth of Barbados, who will benefit by Project OASIS.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can give you the facts. The \$1 million is inadequate, but we could always come for Supplementaries. I have absolutely no problem because

that is a project I will give my warmest support. Sir, 207 persons graduated last year from the Project OASIS programme, not for having weedwackers, because if you are going to use a weedwacker, you do not really need to graduate. Anybody can take a weedwacker, pull a string and push and cut. Therefore, I am sorry that concept has been given about that project that was so well devised by the persons working in the Youth Affairs Department, for young men in particular, who came up with the idea and sold it to the people of Barbados. Sir, it has been very warmly received.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no gender bias in Project OASIS. Among the 207 young people who graduated, more than 100 of them were females. There was one young man who was bold enough and so proud to speak about his recognition in Project OASIS. He said that he was given his wheelbarrow and the rake and he only wanted a wheelbarrow.

Sir, when he came to the Ministry to pick up his wheelbarrow, the officers were willing to put it in a vehicle to take it to the location where he lived. He told them that they did not have to give him transportation because he had his bicycle, and he guided his wheelbarrow along his bicycle. Sir, before he left the Ministrys compound he said that if it were not for Project OASIS, the amount of money that he had owed for cop tax because he was not working, he would have been in prison today. He said to Marcus and the team that if it were not for them coming on the block and working with them, he would be in prison today. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the depth of Project OASIS, but that is only one person.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I speak, there are 20 persons doing auto mechanics at SJPP. Sixteen are pursuing the bobcat course and this is the fifth batch. Sir, most of those who have graduated from the Bobcat Course have already been employed in the construction sector. Sir, 16 persons are pursuing Nail Care at this time, 16 in Computer Maintenance, 16 in Autotronics, 20 in Cake and Pastry, 20 in Cookery at the BCC, 20 in Bartending, 20 in Digital Media. Sir, more than 20 businesses have developed and registered and they are working all over Barbados.

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Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of those young men who did the Digital Media Programme have set up their own businesses and some of them have gone into the Caribbean working. There are others, who, as part of that team, did a user-friendly DVD of the whole CARICOM sector making it simple for the public to understand.

These are the same young men who graduated from Project OASIS. There is a young man who is operating cameras at the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation who had given up all hope, who said he had all the certificates but he was just tired with the society and the things he was seeing happening.

There is another one at the Audio Visual Aids Department and there are others in the private sector. Therefore, I would want again to lend my support to Project OASIS, because I know that it has made a tremendous change in the lives of the people of the parish where I live, and in the lives of the people all across the length and breadth of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that there are more than 500 applicants, that they are being serviced all the time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is beautiful about this is that they do not have to write any entrance exam to go into the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or to the Barbados Community College Hospitality Programme. Special provision is made for them. Why humiliate these young people who want to be bartenders, but may not be so good at reading, have not sat in the classroom for very long, they were expelled or whatever, by giving them an examination to write when the positions can be secured for them?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the final comment about that is when I attended the graduation over the last three years at the Hospitality Unit I was blown away at the final product that came through from Project OASIS.

Sir, when I met those young people at the inception, I saw young people who were not as tidy as I expected them to be and the language was not the best, but on graduation some of them said: "Maam, you know this is a saviour? Now that I have completed the Bartending Course, I now want to do the Associate Degree." Sir, they did not want to go back on the block. One lady said she loves to bake and she could now find employment doing that so that she can feed her children whom somebody was helping her with because she could not do it before. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the story goes on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to touch on some other areas that I would have heard in here. I heard that I am the Minister of School Meals. That is an honourable thing because over the last 14 years nobody has suffered from food poisoning because of the vigilance that this Barbados Labour Party Administration had for school meals.

Sir, I hope that under the new Honourable Minister that nobody would get food poisoned and that nothing would go wrong with anybodys child because it would shut down the School Meals. I want to put out that challenge.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard about “Pathways to Progress.” Sir, Barbados was not only built on January 15, because I am seeing crossroads already. People do not know where to turn. One lady came to me and said: “You dont know that when I went and vote for the Dems I did not know that Owen Arthur would not still be Prime Minister.” I said to her: So Madam, where are you living? Are you living in Barbados?” Professionals are coming to me saying they are so sorry at the bunch of jokers. They said that, not me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I would not disrespect any of the Honourable Members.

Sir, they are confused that today I bake, tomorrow, I brew. That is the conversation that is emanating from the mouths of the Honourable Members on the Other Side. It startles me and I am not young anymore. It startles my grandchildren because I wanted a future for them, so when the Treasury goes empty having to spend all those millions of dollars for duty-free cars, God help Barbadians. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am waiting patiently, watching and listening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Manifesto talks about a charter that would lead to integrity, accountability, transparency, good governance, opportunities and rights for all of our citizens. We would secure their rights. They would live in dignity. The workers would live with dignity.

No longer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can John Public or Jill Public feel comfortable offering a donation to any Member of Parliament because they would now be afraid that the cheque with their names on it would get fanned all over the place and they would now be assigned or aligned to a political party. That is as low as it can go.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a sad time in our history where letters...

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: The Honourable Member’s Constituency Secretary of the past would tell him where the frizzle fowl is. Do not worry.

They are looking at values, do not worry.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: She did not get kidnapped, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nor is she with “Dopey”, nor has she been accused of being a paedophile, but the Honourable Member would be able to explain.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could we have some order, please.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, private citizens’ character is now put in this Honourable Chamber where they cannot defend themselves. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if persons write to say I want to tender for an old vehicle that a Ministry says no longer has a useful life, their names would come into this Honourable Chamber and be thrown all over the place because of their political affiliation. I have a problem with that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you live in a glass house, you do not throw stones. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker...

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Very well, Sir, I can close off in the three minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is unfortunate that we heard a lot about who is involved in spending Governments money. Sir, I blame the Honourable Member with whom I worked in the past, for when a leading civil servant used the Governments funds paying dead people and receiving the cheques, and I said why not let there be a forensic audit, I was told “No” and then that Honourable Member was promoted to another institution to function, not paying back the Government one single cent, yet we could hear all kinds of things happening in here.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER)

Miss C. Y. FORDE: That is fine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no problem with that. I am not going to call yours, not when you are sitting there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party has left a legacy for the people of Barbados. We accept that change has to happen. Sir, I speak with pride about the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, because the people of Barbados are proud. Sir, urban renewal, Speightstown, Oistins, Bridgetown, the EduTech Programme that would continue; the expansion of those institutions I spoke about and the establishment of the Edgar Nicholls and the Alma Parris schools is what I call performance. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on mentioning the various institutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we came saying Job No.1 is jobs. We delivered. We appointed people. The casual workers were made permanent employees in this place and they can walk with their heads in the air because they have security of tenure. We have established housing units too. People now have ownership in a way that I have never seen it before. Poor people’s children are going to the University of the West Indies because we want to see a graduate in

every household and that has part-way been achieved, and I could go on and on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, poverty alleviation is the one that blesses my heart, especially when I see the AIDS Commission catering to persons living with AIDSHIV. They can now feel comfortable in a house that the Poverty Alleviation Bureau would assist them with. They could go to the Hospital and receive the AZT and whatever cocktails to be offered to them for free. There is a reduction of mother to child AIDSHIV as a result of the intervention.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should have an opportunity to say a lot more. I want to thank you because I believe that the people of Barbados will again have their pride and their freedom to speak. All of the activities that they are accustomed doing, one day coming soon they would get the opportunity to do again because I am not going to operate on innuendo. I am not going to operate as others are doing with the name calling, the sending home, or the political cleansing. I am going to operate by treating humankind like humankind because the Bible told me, and told you and all of us in here who are now talking about Christ, to love one another, for love is of God. That is the hallmark of what I am doing in this Honourable Chamber.

I wish to thank you.

House A5A Sequence 63

5.10 p.m.

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to give my support to this Estimates of Expenditure, 2008/2009, laid before this Parliament two days ago by the Honourable Prime Minister. Sir, these Estimates have to be viewed against the background of what we found as we took over the reins of Government and the policies of the Democratic Labour Party as proposed in our Manifesto: Pathway to Progress.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbadian public is an educated public and we must always bear that in mind. They have recognised that the programme proposed within our Manifesto is not a programme that would be completed within a matter of months. It is a programme set out for Barbados for over the next five years. It is a programme that contains a subprogramme within that 100-days programme.

Sir, I want to reaffirm the commitment of this Government to the achieving of that 100-days programme over the next 40 or so days to achieve that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we travelled the length and breadth of our country during the course of 2007, Barbadians have expressed their concerns over the loss of control of their country. They were unable to find affordable housing and house lots. Many of them found that their jobs were being exported, the cost of living was going beyond their reach, and salaries and wages were not increasing. There was also a situation of rampant mismanagement and squandermania of the financial resources of this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is against that background that we came to Government in this country.

Sir, I have responsibility for the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce and one of the things we found as we came into office, was that we had to deal with some significant cost of living issues. I have already made a presentation in terms of the increasing cost of grain, the increasing cost of oil, the increasing cost of freight and the increasing cost of our imports.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point has to be made that some of these elements of the cost of living are beyond the control of this Government. Nevertheless, we have made a commitment to the people of Barbados that we will do whatever is necessary within our control to ensure that we could buffer the increases in the cost of living for persons at the bottom end of the economic scale and indeed for Barbadians in general. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have had two increases to meet two domestic price supports within the last month. The others on That Side have complained about the method we have used to make sure that we pass that subsidy into the hands of ordinary Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to advise that the method we adopted has ensured that those price supports would be to the benefit of all Barbadians. We introduced a subsidy to have the feed prices maintained at the price level at which it was in January 2007. Our subsidy administered to the Feed Company ensured that farmers in this country were able to continue feeding their animals without that increase being passed on to them.

I believe, if my memory serves me right, we were looking at an increase of about 23 cents per kilo. That was the price proposed by the Feed Company at that time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our subsidy ensured that the cost of chicken in this country was maintained at that level.

Sir, truth must be told. The price of grain, etcetera, started to increase significantly towards the end of 2007, I believe from about September, 2007. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what was the response of the then Government to these increases? Sir, there was no response. They held a consultation with the private sector, a consultation where they bullied the commercial enterprises in this country, in an impending Election, to maintain their prices.

5.20 p.m.

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are seeing now in 2007, is that in 2008, in the first quarter, that several business houses in Barbados are approaching us for advice of increases in the price of their products. Sir, as I have said, we dealt with the feed problem and we also have to deal with the increase in flour.

We have ongoing discussions right now with the question of milk and this is the problem that we are facing at this time. Sir, that consultation in November had the effect of delaying a lot of the increases until after the Elections so that business houses looking at their increases are now looking to make substantial jumps in the prices. Sir, rather than prices showing a gradual increase, business houses are now looking to have substantial 8 per cent or 10 per cent increases on their prices.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, when she made her long presentation, indicated that their approach was to introduce the Reverse Tax Credit. It is there \$800 at present and looking to go up to \$1 100 and \$1 300. That was their proposal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while that Reverse Tax Credit will have an impact on certain people within the community, there are several others, who will not benefit from that Reverse Tax Credit, because the Reverse Tax Credit is for people earning under \$20 000. Sir, what about the people who are not earning? Do they not eat too? Are they not deserving of assistance?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we made that price support in the way that we have done, everybody in Barbados benefitted from that, whether you worked or whether you did not work, whether you were working for big money or whether you are working for small money. Everybody benefitted when that support was given in that manner.

We were able to have the bread prices maintained because everybody in Barbados eats bread. Sir, the children, the elderly, everybody in Barbados benefitted from that subsidy. If it was left to the Barbados Labour Party, only a few would be benefitting in the manner in which they would approach the solution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to this, the Reverse Tax Credit is only paid out at the beginning of the financial year, when people make their tax returns. What happens to the other 11 months of the year? What is going to happen to those people? When we gave the support, people were benefitting immediately. People were benefitting on a day-to-day basis. It is important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we

recognise that. We recognise the way this Government will approach the whole question of the cost of living. It has to be for the benefit of the whole population.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, gas prices are going through the roof. There is a current subsidy and we, as a Government, will sit down and develop a holistic approach to that. The decisions that we make will be made in Cabinet as a joint decision. That is how we will approach that particular issue but, obviously, it is something that is going to be of substantial concern and influence within this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the whole question of the cost of living, we need to ensure that the whole population is aware and is sensitised as to what our approach is going to be and to what the current situation is because a lot of people do not necessarily read. Sir, when we gave the support for feed, I remember an article in the paper where one farmer said he was not aware that feed prices were going up despite the fact that the information had in the Press for some weeks before that. Sir, it is obvious that there are still some people who will not be necessarily aware of what is happening on the international level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to ensure that our public relation is such that Barbadians understand and are aware of the decisions that we are making, and aware of the implications of the increasing oil prices on the international level, and the increasing cost of freight and raw materials coming into this country. Sir, all members in the society must be conscious of that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that it is important that all the stakeholders recognise this and also recognise that they have to take some of the load, all of the stakeholders. I believe that the business houses, the prices of raw materials are going up and they have to look at their markups and ensure wherever possible, that those markups are reduced so that the profit they make on the particular goods will be the same in terms of dollar amounts. If your cost is going up and you keep your markups fixed, it means that you will make a bit more money in terms of profit on that particular item. I think that business houses need to be conscious of this and manage the situation instead of just carrying up the prices.

I believe that the shareholders of corporations in Barbados have to recognise that they are still part of the wider community. They have to be conscious of this, have a corporate responsibility to get on board instead of expecting to get 20 per cent return on their investment. They may be able to accept a 15 per cent return or whatever. Sir, the point I am trying to make is that everybody needs to be able to bear the cost of living.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the workers in this country, particularly the workers at the bottom end, are feeling the cost of living more so than all of us in here and people working for major salaries, six digit salaries and so on.

Sir, I believe that corporations in Barbados need to look at the salaries and wages they are paying people at the bottom end of the salary scale.

H/A5A/5:30

Sequence 65

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Maybe there is a need to hold some strain on the size of increases that people are given at the top end of the payroll and increase the salaries that people are getting at the bottom by a bigger percentage. That will also act as a cushion to people at the lower end of the economic scale in Barbados, in terms of being able to absorb the cost of living increases. It is obvious that some prices are going to pass through. Some of the items that are not critical to families will have to bear the increased cost. We are not going to be able to subsidise all the prices in Barbados, so it is important that everybody understands that.

Sir, some of the charges to business houses will need to be reviewed. They also have a role to play. Sir, I think that these are some of the areas needed to persuade the stakeholders in Barbados to address some of the cost of living.

Sir, surely as well, the Government has its own role. We have been making substantial efforts to review a lot of the charges, but we still have to maintain a certain level of income to meet the payroll and other costs of running this country, so there is a limit. How much we will be able to absorb?

Sir, I had several conversations with my good friend, the Minister of International Trade. We need also to review the operations at the Port. In 2007/2008, in my view, it is time that we start looking at upgrading the Port into a 24-hour or an 18-hour Port. This is a chain. We have to keep up-to-date with the operations in other jurisdictions. It should be reviewed.

Sir, I know, based on conversations I had with business people, that there are issues with respect to overtime payments at the Port, and overtime payments in terms of Customs. Sir, if you are in business, paying every week substantial amounts of overtime, it suggests to me that you are probably understaffed. Sir, I would want to suggest that is a matter we need to look at.

Sir, unemployment. There is an opportunity to create new jobs within the Port by extending those hours. If the Port is working 18 hours, or moved to a 24-hour operation, the number of persons employed can be doubled, while cutting out some of the overtime charges as well which, in itself, will act to lower the cost of operating at the Port. We need to make sure that these institutions, which contribute towards the cost of living, are operating at an efficient level.

Sir, I also believe that we have to ensure that the unions come on board, because the unions have that global responsibility in respect of productivity. Sir, I believe that the unions have that role and they should also, in 2008, be able to get on board in terms of a contribution towards the cost of living, by looking at the whole issue of productivity in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are several other areas we can look at. When we meet in Committee to formalise a long-term strategy towards the cost of living, these are some of the issues we need to have on board.

Sir, I also want to mention, in respect of this Appropriation Bill, some other concerns that I have. I speak here in terms of the ... and I want to refer to the 'Pathway to Progress.' I am quoting from Page 44, of that document, which says that the Democratic Labour Party Government is:

Prepared to be bold and move aggressively in the area of energy conservation, reducing the oil import bill and preserving our delicate environment for the future.

Sir, we are rolling out a programme, where emphasis will be placed on solar technology within the institutions of Government.

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

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, in his presentation, referred to the fact that he has already given instructions, in respect of the energy efficiency of Government buildings that come under his Ministry. I have also given direction to members of the BIDC who have responsibility for Governments estates. I believe that it is not just necessary for us to talk the talk, so to speak. We have to be at the cutting edge, leading the business community in terms of the conversion to solar energy. I have directed the officers in that area, to look at the whole question of solar-powered air conditioning, as well as ensuring that we can have a government building that will be solely powered by solar energy within the very short future. Sir, that in itself will add towards the whole question of reducing our cost, and dependence on imported oil.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also have responsibility, with respect to the Small Business Sector within this country. The whole question of jobs for small indigenous Barbadians comes within that remit. Sir, we are in the process of a study that will seek to determine, exactly, the number of players within that particular small business sector that will put us in a position to inform our policy decisions from solid data. We will be able, from that study, to see what contribution to the GDP, in terms of export sales, we are getting from the small business sector.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one more minute, please.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Sir, we will be able to see what employment levels we are getting from the sector.

Sir, we will speak more on these issues as we go further into the debate.

I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, I rise to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. John, for his presentation in this Estimates debate, and first to respond to some issues raised by Honourable Members on the Other Side.

5.40 p.m.

Sequence 66

Estimates -- Tuesday, March 18, 2008

House A5A, Sequence 67, 5.40 p.m.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Firstly, you have heard some of them mentioned or tried to project that there is a very low level of unemployment in our country. Sir, as Honourable Members on This Side have mentioned, when you look at the reality of the job situation in our country as we speak today, you see that there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of Barbadians who are under employed, and of course, there are thousands who are unemployed. I regard the wages that they receive as starvation wages because, really and truly, if your take home pay is less than \$200 per week, with the high cost of living, clearly, one is unable to survive, in a decent way, on that small income.

Sir, to further explain this situation of unemployment figures, I remember that as a student of the University, there was a book that we used called, *How to lie with statistics*. I remember the late Right Honourable Prime Minister Tom Adams, used to stress, in terms of

unemployment figures, the category of the voluntary idle. This can be used skillfully to suggest that people unemployed are not actively seeking employment. Therefore, you remove them from the official unemployment figures, to give false impressions that there are high levels of employment at a given time. Sir, we have to bear these issues in mind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when persons are in educational institutions, as the numbers increase, these persons would be taken out of the unemployment figures but they are not gainfully employed. They are still dependents of some persons. Therefore, we have to look at this holistic view of unemployment figures.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been in office for a few weeks now and I have been seeing constituents sometimes up to 11.30 p.m., many of whom are unemployed, have families to support and are desperately seeking an employment opportunity. Sir, this is the stark reality.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality in the country is that the working-class people of Barbados are suffering, as we speak, and that is why they voted for change, and voted the Barbados Labour Party out of office.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, we are not going to hide behind any academic figures. We know that people in Barbados are suffering and that the unemployment levels in this country are too high. Sir, this is why we in this Government pledge to address this situation in a tangible manner.

In fact, the waiting list to see me is down to the end of next month. Sir, hundreds of constituents are looking for work and an opportunity to earn a decent living. I can assure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these residents and citizens of Barbados, in general, the Democratic Labour Party Government will not be hiding behind these unemployment figures, but we will be definitively providing the economic and social environment in our country, which would lead to a propelling of the economy, thereby increasing job opportunities and opportunities for entrepreneurship in our country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me go further to look at the issue of the Constituency Councils. When we get into the Head of our Ministry, we will go into more details. I noticed that in the debate today, we saw the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, effectively in principle, supporting the concept. In fact, he said that we need more

than \$100 000. I assured him that on page 48 of our Manifesto we said: An initial budget of \$100 000 would be granted to each Council. Therefore, have no fear, the funds will be provided as necessary, but no pork barrel situation in which we just give an MP money to disburse in his own way, without any accountability. Sir, the funds would be properly structured.

Sir, I see that the Leader of the Opposition is in trouble. Already, three of her MPs are supporting us, even though she is not admitting it, but one by one, they are supporting the initiative of this Government. Therefore, she is being forced in a corner and That Side will have to fight among themselves in terms of this issue, but we on This Side are united. Sir, the Democratic Labour Party has been given a mandate by the electorate of Barbados to implement this programme, and it is full steam ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas had a lot to brag about in terms of the educational sector. Sir, she talked about the access to university education at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. I would like to remind her and the other Honourable Members on That Side that it was the Barbados Labour Party Government that encouraged the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, and promoted the concept at the Institution of the Student Amenities fees, user fees on Barbadians students that made it more difficult for poor Barbadians to access education at the University of the West Indies.

Sir, hundreds of dollars, Barbadian full-time students had to fork out, in order to gain access to the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies, under the Barbados Labour Party Government. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is consistent with the philosophy of the Barbados Labour Party, because prior to the 1986 General Election, the Barbados Labour Party Government at that time, actually set up a committee headed by, I would not call the name here, but a prominent jurist in the island. Sir, that is public record. The mandate of that Committee was to seriously look at the introduction of user fees for Barbadian students at the University of the West Indies. Sir, it is only because the public rose up and voted them out of office in 1986 that the people of Barbados were saved the imposition of user fees at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill. Again, it crept into the Barbados Labour Party Government's policy and the people of Barbados rose up again and voted them out. Praise the Lord that commonsense prevailed.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas also talked about school meals, but I have been a teacher for many years. I

taught primarily at the secondary level, but I did teach at the primary level at one stage.

I know that many primary school students, when the Barbados Labour Party was in office, would throw away the school meal because whereas they and their parents would have expected that a caring government would have provided wholesome, nutritious cooked food on a daily basis, many days these primary schools were provided with just buns, dry bread that they would throw away. They were not healthy, wholesome or attractive, under the watch of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Barbados Labour Party Government.

I remember reading when this Party was not in office, about outbreaks of gastroenteritis at the Psychiatric Hospital. Sir, even as we assume office now, the Democratic Labour Party Government finds itself in a situation, where we have to urgently address the lighting situation at the same Psychiatric Hospital.

Sir, with the several separate detached buildings on that compound, the patients and staff fear for their lives because they have to pass through dark areas at night, and people coming over the walls, even hearing gun shots. The Democratic Labour Party Government pledges to address this situation, as a matter of urgency. Sir, that is the track record of the Barbados Labour Party Government.

House A5A, Sequence 67, 5:50:14

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was really amazed to hear the Honourable Member for St. Thomas with pride talk about her Governments track record in terms of the urban renewal of Bridgetown.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would have to spend a little time to demonstrate that the Bridgetown the Honourable Member for St. Thomas spoke about cannot, in my view, be Bridgetown, Barbados.

As the duly elected Member of Parliament for the City of Bridgetown, I must report to this Honourable House that the track record of the Barbados Labour Party Government in terms of the redevelopment of Bridgetown over the 30 years in which they held that seat has been abysmal. That is why the electorate of Bridgetown voted that Party out of office. You had a situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in which the physical state of buildings in Bridgetown, even commercial buildings and the housing stock, was deplorable. We have inherited a situation in which the galvanise on the Empire Theatre is just blowing all over the place which could hurt people; rats as big as dogs are all over Bridgetown because there is poor sanitation in terms of the collection of garbage, and the

Fairchild Street bus stand is stink and sinking. All of this occurred under the Barbados Labour Party Government's term of office. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is awful.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, within the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development, we have a mandate to look at urban renewal. Sir, the City is the capital of our country, and so it is incumbent upon a caring government, a government that is really looking at the development of a sense of social pride in our country and in our capital, to make the development of our capital City a priority.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a crying shame for thousands of tourists coming by air and sea to congregate in Bridgetown, the capital of our beautiful island, and smell the stench coming from the allies connecting Broad Street and Swan Street because there are not sufficient public conveniences.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke on a previous occasion about the deplorable state of the public conveniences at the Fairchild Street and the Cheapside bus stands. Sir, a few months ago, before we assumed office, our leader, the Honourable Prime Minister, myself and others, toured the Cheapside Market. What we found was that right next to the meat section were the male public conveniences. Sir, they were all locked because the cubicles were out of order. All of this happened under the Barbados Labour Party Government, yet they are talking about having pride in the urban renewal of Bridgetown. They need to wake up. It is ridiculous and it is totally unacceptable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I pledge that we in the Democratic Labour Party Government would be urgently looking to solve these problems. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, we need more public conveniences and these would be provided.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the same Cheapside Market which we toured was recently rehabilitated by the Barbados Labour Party Government, by the former Member of Parliament for the City. Sir, at the time she was so busy flying all over the world, it was only at the late stages of the completion of that building that she realised that there were no counters for the vendors and she then had to hurriedly get them done. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the vendors would have had to stoop to sell their produce from the floor. That is how incompetent the last Government was.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, due to a lack of proper marketing, all of the craft and food courts were upstairs and it was like a ghost town. The last Government hardly cared about those vendors. They forced them outside only to be run by the officers of the Law. All they wanted to do was just to survive.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Democratic Labour Party Government cares about the vendors. We believe in the total development of Bridgetown. We believe that big businesses, small businesses and the vendors could all exist in a symbiotic relationship where one could enhance the other to increase business to Bridgetown and, therefore, increase the quality of life of all business people. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will not marginalise the vendors. We pledge to ensure that they would be able to carve out their niches as honest citizens in our country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I visited St. Vincent recently. They built a multi-level market with elevators, but still they have allowed vendors to vend alongside it in an organised way at certain street points.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would turn to housing in a minute, but just let me conclude the commercial aspect of the development of Bridgetown. Sir, in terms of the Pierhead Development Project, which the last Government boasted so much about to the extent that they enacted legislation in this Honourable Chamber to effect it, the last Government had to admit failure in that regard as they were unable to inspire their private sector partners into going forward in that venture. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would be looking to ensure that such projects are able to come to fruition so that you get an improvement in the infrastructure and the business activity within Bridgetown.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we look forward to the provision of more multi-level car parks to ease the traffic congestion that steers people away from Bridgetown. We look forward as well to the development of other town centres. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bridgetown is the capital of our nation and we should therefore ensure that there is real urban renewal in our nations capital.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to turn to housing because we are not just about developing the business sector of Bridgetown but also the housing stock. Again, the Barbados Labour Party Government has failed the people of Bridgetown and, indeed, the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is the neighbourhood upgrading project funded by the Inter-American Development Bank. Sir, I remember attending some of the Town Hall Meetings where senior civil servants were saying openly that they had to dust this project off the shelves in the Ministry of Housing and Lands because it was forgotten by the last Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party, as you could see in our Estimates, is committed to this project being fully executed. Sir, I attended some of the Town Hall Meetings, which were held by the last Government where they kept out the Press. I was a resident in one of the areas so they could not throw me out. At some

of those Town Hall Meetings we heard talk about the Barbados Labour Party Government planning to bring legislation to make it possible for their Government to build smaller than the normal minimum size of a house.

Sir, you could imagine the Barbados Labour Party's track record in terms of housing for poor people when you see what transpired in terms of the relocation of residents from Church Village, Bridgetown, to Lower Burney?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City has five minutes more.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, your humble servant went physically to see the replacement houses at Lower Burney and those houses are so small that when you opened the refrigerator door, it could not open fully. It hit against the stove, and the kitchen space is so small.

House A5A Sequence 68

6.00 p.m.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the toilet was right next to the kitchen. The livingroom/diningroom area was so small that if you put down your livingroom suite, the diningroom set could not fit.

In conclusion, Sir, this would have been in a situation where all this furniture could have fitted comfortably in the original houses at Church Village.

Sir, a similar situation arose in the relocation of residents from Pickwick Gap to Barbarees Gardens, to facilitate the development of Kensington Oval. It also arose with residents, who had to march with your humble servants with them, to ensure that they were relocated from Emmerton, in the face of the stench from the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant.

Those persons, like the other relocation projects, on a timely basis were not told their replacement lot numbers, so that they could have tracked the construction of their houses. At the very last minute, in the heat of an Election campaign, those residents were finally told their replacement lots at Barbarees Gardens. Sir, when we toured those replacement houses, we saw in some instances, there was poor construction. Sir, again those houses were much too small and so all the furniture could not fit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the track record of the Barbados Labour Party, and so the Democratic Labour Party is pledging to ensure that in the execution of the Neighbourhood Improvement Programme, we will not be

engaging with such disregard for poor people. We will execute this project in a meaningful way, so that Cat's Castle, which has been neglected for many years by the Barbados Labour Party, even though we have never won that polling district...

Sir, in the same Neighbourhood Improvement Programme we learned at Town Hall Meetings, when economic surveys were done, there were further persons in those neighbourhoods, with hundreds more throughout Bridgetown, who had no running water or toilet and bath. Some of those persons do not even have a pit toilet.

Sir, as I said, that area was for the bastion of support for the Barbados Labour Party and that is how they treated their supporters. That is why the people of Bridgetown and Barbados have rejected the Barbados Labour Party Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that we will upgrade the area of Cat's Castle, as well as Greenfield. Furthermore, we took note of the Barbados Labour Party's approach to that project, where they wanted to squeeze everybody back into Greenfield, Cat's Castle and other areas.

Sir, at these Town Hall Meetings I asked what would happen if somebody does not want to go back to Cat's Castle or Greenfield, but wants to go elsewhere. Sir, the response of the Barbados Labour Party at that time was that these people would have had to bear their own cost because it would not have constituted as relocation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that if persons opt for room to expand their homes, then they should be given compensation to affect this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, let me speak to the issue of hardwood houses in relation to Bridgetown. Sir, under the watch of the last Government, some houses were hurriedly erected through the Urban Development Commission. I remember one being built at 7th Avenue, New Orleans, by that infamous Hardwood Company. I remember the owner of the house, whose name I would not call, who came to me crying. He told me that one of these hardwood houses built by the Urban Development Commission to replace his house was one in which the roof was much too small, there was no back door and the kitchen was built at the front of the house. Sir, one opens the front door, the kitchen is in the front.

Sir, I went to that gentlemans funeral last Saturday. That situation took that man to his grave. He got a stroke, was hospitalised and died. God bless his soul. Sir, it really hurts me. The wicked policies of the Barbados Labour Party have sent Barbadians to their graves, but salvation is here, the Democratic Labour Party is here to help the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have talked about people's lives, yet they treated poor people as though they were less than humans. Sir, enough is enough, I will want Honourable Members on That Side to understand that they must wake up and smell the coffee and that the people of Barbados have spoken. Sir, we will move on and develop this country in a positive way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have not talked about drainage. For instance, there is a hurricane shelter at St. Marys Primary School. If there is a heavy downpour, due to lack of proper drainage the whole of Mason Hall Street becomes flooded out and, therefore, getting in or out of the hurricane shelter becomes impassable.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North should realise that he has failed in the provision of proper drainage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with all the talk about the preparations for Cricket World Cup 2007, I am saying it is my view that the last Government did not care much about repairing houses. It was only because the residents and I pointed out that the last Government was more concerned about redeveloping Kensington Oval and that the poor housing and drainage in the environs of Kensington was only an afterthought because of the number of rushed jobs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, although they gave over \$2 million to my opponent at the time, they did such a terrible job that they only painted, in some instances, the part of the houses that could be seen from the front, while the back parts of the houses are unpainted, including the inside.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, your time has expired.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I first want to say what an honour it is for me to be speaking in this Honourable House. I also want to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. John for his stellar performance on Monday. I also want to congratulate Honourable Members on This Side for their brilliant performances. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I certainly cannot say the same thing for the Other Side, for their contributions have been nothing short of bizarre, in some cases.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these Estimates are designed to move this country forward and to reposition the good people of Barbados to be able to achieve what has been eluding them for the past 14 years. It is generally believed in this country that there has been a breath of fresh air

sweeping this country, resulting in a lightening of the air, a cleansing of the air, a new pristine condition in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, during the General Elections, it was widely believed that the Barbados Labour Party was out of touch with the people of Barbados and, to this day, they remain out of touch with the people of Barbados. They have been seethed with bitterness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must admit that I used to observe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas from afar. I liked her. Her abrasiveness was to me sexy, but up close the Honourable Member most epitomises the bitterness of the Barbados Labour Party. The face of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is racked and con torted with bitterness.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: It does not suit you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we have order from Both Sides of this House please, to allow the Honourable Member to continue with his speech?

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have not yet awakened to the reality that they are in Opposition. They have told us that several of us have tried most times and failed, but I want to say to the Honourable Members on That Side that this is our time.

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Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: If you keep paying attention to us on This Side and do not attend to your constituents when our programmes begin to roll out, we are going to have a constitutional problem on our hands, because the next time around That Side will be bereft of any Members.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to warn members on This Side the vast majority of public servants in this country are diligent, conscientious, hardworking professional people, 99.9 per cent of the public servants. It has been revealed in this debate and previous debates that there are some snitches and informants among that 1 per cent of civil servants.

I want to warn Members on This Side, because I have observed, in my own Ministry, that there are some people setting out to derail and compromise the programmes and policies of this Government and we have to be mindful and watchful of those people. They try to

betray the trust that we put in them, passing on information to the Opposition.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Sir, I have said that 99.9 per cent of them are professionals. Sir, in the Ministry of Culture, we are busy correcting the ill-conceived programmes implemented by the former Government. We have returned the planning and execution of the national festival Crop Over to the National Cultural Foundation.

I have said last week that the execution of that festival should really be placed in the hands of the people who know best how to execute the festival. It has cost us to date, \$42 000 for the mis-step the former Government made. I was criticised in the newspaper recently by the former Chairman of that Committee saying that I, under Parliamentary privilege, accused him of certain things, truths, half truths and innuendos and inaccuracies.

Sir, all I have said in that debate is that he has wrapped up a Bill of \$42 000 and has not yet produced a written report. Where are the inaccuracies there? There are certainly no inaccuracies. Mr. Deputy Speaker, he has caused this Government \$42 000. We are about rebuilding the morale at the National Cultural Foundation.

I visited it on Friday last and it was at an all-time low. Again, they are regaining their footing. We have eliminated the reign of terror, the tyranny that was visited upon them by the last Administration. We have held out an olive branch to the stakeholders, invited them and embraced them to come into the fold and to participate in the planning and execution of the festival.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are embracing them so the National Cultural Foundation is not starved of any funds. We have injected over \$6 million in the budget for next year and once again, they are on the road to achieving what they must achieve, segmenting the foundation into two separate and distinct components: (1) developmental; and (2) commercial and they are going to be pursuing those two components vigorously. Sir, some people believe that the NCF is an abbreviation for the National Crop Over Foundation, but certainly, it is an agency that is empowered to develop Crop-Over and, at the same time, promote the festival.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am moving along to the National Library Service. We boast of 98 per cent literacy in this country and it is a crying shame that the Barbados Labour Party in Government for three years to date, has kept the Public Library operating out of the Carnegie Building closed, did not relocate it and it now falls to the Government...

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: It was closed for three years and we boast of 98 per cent literacy in our population, no place for our students to go and conduct studies, research, anything like that, and they sat idly by for three whole years, but it now falls to us. I want to assure the House that a report is pending in this coming week when we will clear up all the environmental problems that exist there and the Public Library. You have my assurance on this. It will be reopened in the shortest possible time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Community Development Department. There are conscientious workers at that Department, brimming with ideas, but stifled by the last Government. There are about to be refocussed under a new and vibrant Community Development Department. We are going to expand the Community Technology Programme within that Department without losing the original focus of training our people at the first tier of computer programming and computer operations. To date, we have trained over 866 females and 264 males. We are allocating \$2.3 million in the new financial year up from the \$1.8 million that was allocated to them in the previous year, because we believe that without losing the focus of the programme, we should be moving the recipients of that programme to a new level, a new tier.

Of course, there will be the entry level tier, but a new level will be developed to assist the graduates to find jobs in the normal workplace. Our Arts Career Programme will be enhanced, Air Brushing, Graphic Arts Programme, Animation, all of this is happening now, I hear, but it will be enhanced and be given new impetus.

We will also be experimenting at one of the centres by introducing a pilot programme for a breakfast feeding programme, which is an extension of what is being done now in the Farm and that pilot programme will be happening at Waterford. If it is successful, we will be widening the programme, so I want to put the other Members of the House on alert that we will be widening that breakfast feeding programme to all the community centres situated throughout the length and breadth of Barbados in your individual Constituencies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, over at our Policy Research Department, that is one Department at the Ministry of Culture and Community Development that is least known about.

H/A5A/6:20

Sequence 70

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Sir, it is the engine room of the Ministry. It is where the policy of culture and the research Department lie, where interesting things are happening.. It is the new cultural policy in Barbados that we are wrapping our brains around to present a Bill to this House that will provide for the establishment of a regime for the recognition and approval of the cultural industry projects and stakeholders, and for the entitlement to incentives geared towards the development of culture and cultural industries.

Sir, it would be given the potential for income earning and income generating capacity, cultural industries that will be poised as a new economic frontier of the 21st century, interesting innovative activities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Pan African Commission, a Commission which was developed by the last Administration, purely to say: "keep quiet", and rein in the Pan Africanists in this country. That is what it is, to bring all of the Pan Africanists under one roof and to silence them. They have, in some ways, succeeded in that regard, but there will be a new focus for the Pan African Commission.

Sir, the trade section that exists presently at the Pan African Commission is costing us some \$3 000 a month. What does it have to show? Absolutely nothing up to this time. Absolutely nothing. A new focus will be given to the Pan African Commission. You can be assured of that.

Sir, the Independence Festival, the trading of community theatre, the trading of video and film-making, music training, computer training, a lot of new ideas are being focussed in that particular Department. Sir, we are standing on the cusp of a wonderful happening in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture.

In the coming year a lot of our plans will be rolled out and revealed to Barbadians, a new approach to this exciting area of cultural industries, which will very shortly be presented to Cabinet and before this Honourable House in the form of a Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will again speak during this debate. However, I give this Honourable House the assurance that I will be supporting this Bill.

I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, first of all, greetings in the name of the Most High. Despite that Honourable Members of this Honourable House may not very well acknowledge the Most High, I want to remind Honourable

Members of this Honourable House that this is the season of Lent and approximately 3 000 years ago, or so, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was tormented, persecuted, and finally executed.

Sir, I am obviously very humbled to be taking part in this Budgetary debate this afternoon, in these Estimates. I want to give thanks to the people of St. Michael South East for allowing me the opportunity to be back in this Chamber to represent them. Sir, this debate, for the 14 years that I have been in this Chamber, this Chamber was hot, to use an ordinary Barbadian term. The debate was fast and furious, and sometimes there was verbal hostility that developed in this Chamber. Sir, the passion and furor exhibited in this Chamber, certainly, I hope that same passion will also redound to the benefit of the people of Barbados. Sir, all of the Honourable Members who spoke before me, spoke with this passion.

Sir, I listened to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. I was in pain, not in pain of listening to the Honourable Member, but in pain because I hurt my back under unusual circumstances. Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, enunciated a very serious policy of social development. That policy was based on the premise of the empowerment of the Barbadian.

Sir, he divorced economic development and social development, because all of the Senior Members of this Honourable House would have heard me over many years, always quoting, that the development of this country cannot and should not be measured only in dollars and cents.

Sir, we have to look at all of the varying social development programmes. I thought that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, certainly enunciated a policy of social development. Being fair, you have to congratulate him. I thought that he really presented a picture. The only part, in my view, that was a little wrong with the presentation is that, as a true community practitioner and sociologist, he should have held the middle ground entirely of the masses and let the Party run second.

Sir, I must warn him, in terms of his furor and passion towards pushing a new way forward for Barbadians, his first hurdle, and I would have witnessed it, is to tackle the inherent bureaucracy that he will be facing. I am saying that if he does not unshackle the bureaucracy, particularly in the social sectors that exist at present, he will become a victim of the system. He might very well have to take the upper hand, while realising that he might have to do certain things himself with a vigorous approach. Sir, if he relies, solely, on the technocrats and bureaucrats within the civil establishment system, he will fall victim.

Sir, I am saying there is need for transparency and accountability, but also as Minister, he has to show direct leadership, because the policy enunciated here today is one which impressed me and one that I would want to identify with. I must warn him. I know that Ministry well. I know that sometimes you have to take the high road. You have to make decisions, and sometimes your worst enemy is some of the same persons you are working closely with.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. John speak about the Auditor General's Report. The Auditor General audits books, audits numbers when he sees incidents, based on information given to him. I heard the Honourable Member speak about vagrants getting contract work at the Urban Development Commission. The ordinary Barbadian listening would say: "Oh my God, they stooped that low to give a vagrant, who does not have a clue about what is going on, a contract or contracts?" That was not it, at all.

Sir, I am going, for the very first time to relate the story, because the so-called vagrant, who got that contract, got it through me. For the very first time I am going to reveal to Barbadians why, because you should not always and at all times judge people by their looks and what they wear, but by their social circumstances. Sometimes you find that you will have to keep it a secret.

6.30 a.m.

Sequence 71

Estimates - Tuesday, March 18, 2008

House A5A, Sequence 72, 6.30 p.m.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, when everybody is casting criticism at you, you may very well have to stand firm on the decision that you have to make.

Sir, let me relay the story why this vagrant was so prophesied inside this Chamber. There was a man who came to me in the Ministry of Social Transformation at the time, who was sleeping right here by the Treasury Building. He did not want to be a burden on his family, because he had terminal cancer.

This man was a skilled carpenter and determined that he wanted a job. Do you know why? He wanted his job to basically pay for his own funeral. Sir, he did not want his family to know that he had terminal cancer. He did not want to be a burden on his family, so he rested away under the Treasury Building.

Sir, when he came to me and I sent him to the Urban Development Commission, they judged him by his smell and the clothes he wore. This reminded me of the time when Jesus came in disguise as a vagrant, and they judged

him by the way he looked. Do you know what Jesus said? I came to you and you did not even accept me because you judged me by the standards of the day.

Sir, when the man was refused the contract, based on how he looked and smelled at the time, he did not want to be a burden on his family. Do you know what happened? Three weeks later, he died. Sir, do you know why he died? He died of a broken heart because they did not give him the contract. Sir, anyone could check and see. I admired him because he did not want to place a burden on his family.

Sir, the broader point is that in Barbados, we have people 50 years old and older, particularly men, who are dropping out of the society who, when you could do an analysis of them, you will find them drinking in the rum shop. They are the most difficult people to get involved in any sort of social "practitioneering". Sir, I do not know why they are giving up, but I know that the Research Department at the Ministry, is doing research to find the reason.

Sir, there is a time, and a call now in Barbados for us to really come to the rescue, in a structural social way, of these older men who really are not getting involved in any aspect of social development in Barbados. The only socialising that they are doing is in the rum shops and they are not interested or even caring, outside of playing dominoes and the one-armed bandits. Sir, a stark example is the Senior Citizens Drama Group.

There is a Senior Citizens Drama Group with about 15 women and one man, and that one man is only there because he is the Chaplain at St. Matthias Church, who has a Christian inclination to be of help.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to do something very practical to help those senior men among us. Sir, what I might say right here now might be very provocative, but I will say it just the same, because that is the way I feel, and when I feel strongly about something, you have to carry me to my grave, because if you cannot believe in something, you will fall for anything. The least that any one of us in this Honourable Chamber could fall for, is being a victim of strict and pure politics. It is preferably that we stay up and die for a social just cause, than to be part of a partisan political approach all the time.

Sir, here is it that all across the world, countries are baffling with the high cost of living and some people may ask what do I know about economics. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East made the point, as a social practitioner and a social engineer, at points in time you

have to learn something about economics. I have been privileged to be in this Chamber to sit alongside probably one of the best economists that we have produced in the likes of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, here it is that all over the world, developed countries, developing countries, poor countries are grappling with the high cost of living. We in the Caribbean are also trying all kinds of initiatives to cope with the high cost of living.

What is happening is that most of the countries in the southern Caribbean have aligned their economies with that of North America. The American economy is wobbling and it is virtually in a state of collapse. Yet, we are slavishly going behind America and the President of the United States of America, Mr. George Bush, who thinks that he is the Saviour of the world, having spent trillions of dollars on a war in Iraq. Sir, we are continuing to stick with this policy of free enterprise with North America.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I certainly do not subscribe that we should be the buoys on the burning deck and sink when America is sinking. Sir, I just heard Mr. Alan Greenspan who used to control the American economy, speaking to the fact that their economy is in a recession. Therefore, what solutions do we have?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also heard the gentleman at the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited saying that at some point in time, they are going to have to raise fuel and energy charges. Sir, last week these kinds of pronouncements were made by prominent people in Barbados. This means that at some point in time, Governments will have to contemplate raising, maybe, gasoline prices and gas prices. Sir, I am not saying that they will do that because right now, the Government is absorbing and subsidising fuel and energy rates, which is laudable. Sir, how long can the Government continue to sustain this effort?

I want to offer a practical solution in this Honourable Chamber this evening. The solution that I want to offer is that the Government re-examines the PetroCaribe deal that has been offered to us. Sir, 14 countries in the Caribbean signed on to Petro Caribe and the citizens are benefitting. I do not want us to have a closed-door policy like North America or nothing else, because soon from now, you would have to look at nothing else, because North America would not exist as a powerful nation in this world any longer.

Sir, why are we afraid to re-engage ourselves in dialogue with Venezuela, President Chavez, whose PetroCaribe policy not only speaks to the fact that it offers

cheaper oil per barrel, and if you want to advance the argument to me that at some point in time, you are going to have to pay for it in the long run. What is wrong with that? Sir, we in this generation had to pay for debt, so all of the money that we borrowed at some point in time, our children and our childrens children will pay.

Certainly, the price that Venezuela is offering is not as enormous as what is on the open market. I read in the Nation newspaper that the price of oil is US\$130. When will it stop? Virgin Atlantic and Shell are making millions of dollars every month at the expense of the poor across the world.

Sir, we are talking about social protection, and the eradication of poverty, and you did it well when you linked the importance of the economy and social engineering, and being able to lift the standard of the poor, to make them feel proud of themselves and lift them out of poverty. How could you achieve that noble ideal when, at the same time, your efforts will be impacted by the outside world and the high energy prices which, obviously is going to impact on the small man and the poor man in the respective country? Sir, it is only necessary and the right thing to do at this time is that we re-engage ourselves in some dialogue with Venezuela.

House A5A, Sequence 72, 6:40:14

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Fourteen countries across the Caribbean have signed the PetroCaribe deal and it is working for them. The PetroCaribe deal also offers a poverty fund which we could access to help cushion the impact of these energy prices. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am urging you not to close your eyes and ears to the PetroCaribe deal. I know that both governments at some point in time share a similar idea. We are not dealing with Venezuela.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I went to Venezuela to a conference on poverty and I sat and watched the poor people in the rural areas of Venezuela being emancipated using education as a pathway out of poverty. Mr. Deputy Speaker, part of the larger economy of Venezuela helps to subsidise the poor in Venezuela, that is why President Chavez is in trouble from the elitist group.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I heard a social Revolutionary in here today speaking on social matters and about the empowerment of the masses of people across Barbados, I said brilliant. However, at the same time, we have to be very cognisant of the fact that all of our great plans as social workers would be heavily impacted upon, due to external shocks and external circumstances of which we have no control.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I found historically is that whenever there is a recession throughout the world and it starts to impact on small island economies like ours, the first services that get cut are the social services, which we cannot afford to at this point in time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you cannot make a newspaper article a document of this House, but I could obviously refer to the fact that I read the newspaper during the course of the week and they have continued to speak to this whole burning issue of the high cost of living. Sir, all we are doing right now is butting our heads, when there is a practical solution available to us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also would want to look at some other issues. I really believe that the time has come in Barbados that when we start looking at issues of disabilities that we really examine the opportunities that are given to persons with disabilities. I think that disability is an area that we really and seriously have to look at. A lot is being done. I want to congratulate the Council for the Disabled and all the other entities, but at some time, in terms of an all-inclusive approach to social development, I would really love to have the opportunity to sit with the Minister and let us really look to see how best we could develop that sort of policy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. John speak of an organisation that got \$3 million. He did not name the organisation, but a deaf man in a disco would know exactly who he was talking about.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: The organisation the Honourable Member spoke about resides in the Constituency of St. Michael South East. Sir, I do not want the perception being given that this organisation took \$3 million and spent it in St. Michael South East alone. That is like saying that the United Nations, the Organisation of American States, or the Caribbean Development Bank, which have offices which are based in St. Michael South East, spent all the money in St. Michael South East, which is not true.

I challenge any single Member of this Honourable Chamber to name one organisation in Barbados at the community level that has done more work throughout this country and the Region than the same organisation. I agree in principle that we should diversify funds to other organisations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a number of paper groups that exist throughout Barbados that only have an executive of five or so members that should be held accountable for their stewardship, simply because they

actually do not function. They keep the most noise with two or three members calling themselves organisations.

The fact of the matter is that this group that I am talking about can stand on its feet in terms of transparency and accountability, but more so in terms of performance, in terms of their social duties, in terms of their cultural expertise and experience, and in terms of their community work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have to do in Barbados is to work with those organisations that are already established. The YWCA is doing an excellent job because they have recognised that there is a problem with school children going to school hungry on mornings. I cannot remember the lady's name but the fact is that I believe that the YWCA should come in for....

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that at some point in time we are going to have to recognise these social engineers and practitioners who are doing good work.

The First Caribbean Bank with its Unsung Heroes should also be complimented for the work they are doing. At some point in time I am going to come to the Minister because I really believe that we should take a bipartisan approach on national issues.

I really believe that at some point in time we should meet and have awards for centenarians, what I call a Centennial Award. Everybody in Barbados does not achieve the distinction of living for 100 years. When persons reach 100 years, the Governor-General goes and visits and takes a picture. That is good and laudable, but what happens after that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we come through this hallowed hall of Parliament, which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North just departed, you would see that the names of every single Honourable Member that served in this Honourable Chamber are placed on the sides of the hallowed walls. Why cannot we have a place reserved in Barbados, or in an institution where the names of all of our centenarians are placed permanently so that their families... and when we start to do our research, we would know exactly how many centenarians we had.

We should now start to adopt the Centennial Awards for these persons. I am going to work on it through the St. Michael South East Constituency Council. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to start doing things differently. We have to transform the social landscape of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East making one of possibly the best social speeches that I have heard in here for a long time. I also heard the whole issue of independence rather than dependence on the State. Professor Downes from the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, recently gave a lecture on it. All of us know that we have to provide the necessary, protective and safety nets for the most vulnerable. The Minister spoke to that. He also spoke about hand-outs, and I want him to be careful using these Civil Service terms sometimes, because they like to tell you about hand-outs and hand-downs.

Sir, the process toward social empowerment is vitally critical at this point in time in order to take people off welfare and make them independent. The Welfare-to-Work Programme is most laudable. It is true that all of us would like to see people stop being dependent on the State.

It is a very noble ideal that you are moving towards in terms of emancipating persons from a syndrome of dependency. Both parties have also practised the politics of social liberation. The fact of the matter, however, is that you and I and all of us in this Honourable Chamber have a duty now to make it a total reality in Barbados.

House A5A Sequence 73

6.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbados was voted the No. 1 country as it relates to its fight against poverty in the developing world. Sir, during this Lenten Season, all of us should have a pure ideal in our hearts that we would want to emancipate every poor Barbadian out of poverty.

There are some amongst us who said to take what Jesus said, that is that the poor will always be among us, but the fact of the matter is that in doing so, these people stopped there and did not go any further to say that in the next verse Jesus said we must help the poor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, both you and I know that if Jesus said we must help the poor, then we have to devise programmes and policies and find solutions for the others. Sir, there is a country located north of England where poverty does not exist, and this would be by the guidelines set up by the United Nations which says that any person living on less than US\$2 would be living in abject poverty.

Sir, poverty does not exist in the Channel Islands in Jersey. Do you know that beggars in Barbados earn more than BDS\$4 a day? Sir, the fact is that if we could come to that mutual nexus, it means that when we leave this earth,

we all could look back and say that we have left a platform for our children and our childrens children to continue upon. We are going to be harshly judged if we come into this Honourable Chamber and just talk and no action.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you. Sir, people do not expect that the Rastaman from the Pine would know anything about Shakespeare, about the economy or about social development. People only see the Rastaman walking down the road and people might say: Hammie La, wha gine on? Sir, people must not be tricked by that. That was a name given to me while I was at school when the question was asked who is the President of Nigeria. Sir, children did not know he was Sir Abbukar Ta Farwah Belewa.

Sir, the fact is that the only person who knew was me, the fact that the others could not get the name repeated, they called me Hammie La. It was not a short version for Hamilton Lashley. Therefore, when I said I am a Rastaman, I am identifying with my African heritage. I am identifying with who I am, as a human being on the face of Planet Earth. Sir, sometimes people might irk or quirk at what I say but it does not matter the Rastaman, as long as my sound philosophical mores are standing firm on this solid rock, Barbados.... Sir, that is the bottom line.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER.)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it does not matter if standing up for a just cause causes this Rastaman to be placed anywhere in Barbados, even if it means to prison, because I have a strong philosophical belief that poverty must be eradicated by all means necessary.

Sir, furthermore, Shakespeare said it well. I do not want us to become a victim of it. Sir, Shakespeare said: All the world is a stage and the people in it are merely players. It has its exits and its entrances. Sir, a man in his lifetime plays many roles. The role that we are playing here in this Honourable Chamber is a very serious role. It is a role where people are expecting a great deal from us. It is a role towards social emancipation based on good social judgment and engineering. It is a role from which every Barbadian will benefit, once we play our role well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this week in the pioneering stages of the West Indies Womens Cricket Tournament, 14 teams from across the Caribbean are coming into the Constituency. That is why I was not that prevalent in this Honourable Chamber this week, but let me say I am hoping

and would like to solicit the support from all Honourable Members. Sir, I have you on the team for the celebrity match on Friday. I also have the Leader of the Opposition on the team of celebrities.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I want the Honourable Members to come because we are supporting social causes in St. Michael South East.

Sir, as I am about to take my seat, I want to go back to Julius Caesar, Marcus Brutus and Mark Anthony. Sir, Shakespeare said: Beware of the Ides of the evil that men doeth liveth after them. Sir, I want to say that every one of us in this Honourable Chamber has a serious role to play.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I take my seat, I want to remind you - I am speaking for you because you cannot speak from that Chair - that as you represent the people of St. Michael East, you must do so without fear or favour. Sir, finally, let no obstacle be greater than the cause.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now suspended until Wednesday, March 19, 2008, at 9.30 a.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until Wednesday, March 19, 2008, at 9.30 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

6.57 p.m.

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BYER-SUCKOO, Dr. the Hon. E. R. (St. George South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
DUGID, Dr. W. F.
DUGUID, Dr. W. F. (Christ Church West)
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THOMPSON, Hon. D. J. H. (St. John)
TODD, Hon. P. M. T. (City of Bridgetown)
TOOD, Hon. P. M. T.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Opening. The source opens without the convening sentence (Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at ...). The date is taken from the heading of the source.

Q3. Speech labels. Several speech labels vary or appear misspelt in the source: ‘Hon. P. M. T. TODD’ (elsewhere ‘TODD’), ‘Hon. C. P. SINCKLETR’ (elsewhere ‘SINCKLER’), ‘Hon. D. ON. INNISS’ alongside ‘Hon. D. O’N. INNISS’, ‘Hon. Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO’ alongside ‘Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO’, ‘Hon. Dr. D.S. LOWE’ and ‘Dr. the D. S. LOWE’ alongside ‘Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE’, and ‘Dr. W. F. DUGID’ alongside ‘Dr. W. F. DUGUID’. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Speech of Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, take-slip after his remarks on housing. After a take-slip the speech resumes mid-sentence with ‘country from a Government that has had more money to spend than any other Government in the history of Barbados’. Part of the text may be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Take-slip at the first resumption. The Sitting was suspended at about 12.40 p.m. until 1.45 p.m., but the take-slip immediately before the resumption reads ‘12.43 p.m.’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Speech of Hon. P. M. T. Todd, take-slip about 5.40 p.m.. Between two take-slips the line ‘Estimates -- Tuesday, March 18, 2008’ appears as a paragraph of the speech; it seems to be a reporter’s page heading. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Speech of Dr. W. F. Duguid, quotation of the Budget reply. The Deputy Speaker asked for the Hansard copy of the document Dr. Duguid was quoting; the source does not record whether it was produced, only the ruling that he continue without reference to it. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Tuesday, 18th March, 2008 at about 10.00 a.m., with Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair, to continue the debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2008-2009 and the Appropriation Bill presented the day before by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, Member for St. John. Several Members wished a speedy recovery to the Speaker, who was in hospital in Miami.

Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Member for Christ Church South and Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport, said the Government had inherited a culture summed up in the Leader of the Opposition’s phrase ‘bring drinks, somebody will pay’, described the ‘BOLT’ arrangements for development projects, which had to generate savings, and spoke on traffic gridlock and port improvement for cruise tourism. Mr. G. A. Clarke, Member for St. George North, replied that the Government had no plans of its own; his speech drew repeated points of order on route permits and the Transport Authority from Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, the Prime Minister and Hon. C. P. Sinckler. Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Member for St. James South, said all 30 Barbados Labour Party candidates had earned income from the Government, which Mr. G. W. Payne, Member for St. Andrew, disputed on points of order, denying that he received \$9 000 a month.

Dr. W. F. Duguid, Member for Christ Church West, challenged Hon. D. O’N. Inniss’s mortgage figures and quoted a 2007 Budget reply by the Prime Minister on duty-free cars for public servants, which he said would cost the Treasury \$95 million. Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick objected that only Hansard could be quoted; the Deputy Speaker asked for the Hansard copy and ruled that Dr. Duguid continue without reference to the document, and Hon. F. J. Stuart read the Manifesto’s commitment on duty-free motorcars for designated public servants. Mr. A. D. Brathwaite supported the Estimates, discussing the Mutual Funds Act of 2002 and the competition from tax-free jurisdictions, and welcomed the new Ministry responsible for Family. The Sitting was suspended at 12.40 p.m. on the motion of Hon. R. D. Jones, seconded by Hon. F. J. Stuart.

After the suspension, Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe, Member for Christ Church East, said the Estimates reflected the Manifesto and described a Constituency Empowerment Programme. Mr. G. W. Payne said the Prime Minister had spent only 15 minutes of a three-hour presentation on the Estimates; in exchanges about his attendance, the Prime Minister withdrew remarks and apologised, and the Deputy Speaker ordered certain remarks of Mr. Payne to be expunged. Mr. Payne said his constituency expenses had come to \$150 000 in one year. Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo said cuts had been made

elsewhere to put more money into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and spoke on programmes for young people. Hon. C. P. Sinckler cited an increased subvention of \$80 million for the Barbados Tourism Authority and \$1.2 million for the Coalition of Service Industries, which Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley challenged on points of order. Mr. J. D. Paul, for St. Michael West Central, spoke on work permits, nursery education, waste separation at the Greenland Landfill, drainage and agriculture.

After a second suspension until 4.45 p.m., Miss C. Y. Forde, Member for St. Thomas, defended the former Government's record in education, citing the Miniature Digest and Education Statistics 2006/2007. Hon. E. G.

Hutson spoke on price increases for feed and milk; Hon. P. M. T. Todd disputed the unemployment figures and the former Government's record on the urban renewal of Bridgetown and replacement houses; Hon. S. D. Blackett described changes in the Ministry of Culture, saying a misstep by the former Government had cost \$42 000; and Mr. H. F. Lashley, Member for St. Michael South East, spoke on the high cost of living and urged consideration of the PetroCaribe arrangement, which he said 14 Caribbean countries had signed.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. Jones, seconded by Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, the Sitting was suspended at about 6.57 p.m. until Wednesday, 19th March, 2008 at 9.30 a.m.