
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER No. 1 (RESUMED)

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on my own behalf and that of the Democratic Labour Party, let me express profound thanks to the constituency of Christ Church East Central, which comprises many outstanding communities of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in an exercise of democracy, Barbados stands tall because whenever elections are called, its people have the opportunity to exercise their right and their franchise, which over the history of this country has been one of sweat, blood and tears. One of the things that one could always state is that outside of the combative nature of politics during times of elections and sometimes even in the House across the aisle, is that we settle down as a country and get on with the business of the State. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to commend the people of Barbados for that level of maturity which has been exercised time and time again, long may it continue.

I also want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to recognise your birthday on this day. I believe that you are now putting in two score and ten years. According to biblical reference, we will live or might live to three score and ten years, so you still have a long way to go. Since there is longevity in your family, one could well recognise that you might in fact put in five score and more, so on behalf of the Members of the Democratic Labour Party, I want to wish you a happy birthday. In recognition of your birthday today, I am sure that the House would conduct itself in a manner which would not cause you to ask for silence too often.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Yes, it is like celebrating his birthday without the rumbustiousness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been given the portfolio of education and human resource development. Sir, when one considers the amount of resources placed on education over time, one would always recognise that this country, through its governments and its people, has provided about one-fifth of the State's resources to education. That is as a recognition of the role that education has to play in the lives of Barbadians. In fact, when one goes back to the 20th Century when this country had a plethora of elementary schools, which took students to 14 years old, and many private secondary schools, one recognises that the foundation was laid then for the education system in Barbados. One recognises the thirst and hunger for persons to not only get information but to have knowledge which could be distilled into very practical usage for the development of self, community and country.

The Democratic Labour Party, which has been the harbinger of a new ethos for education, looks to position education in this 21st Century to take this country even further forward on the journey of development for Barbados. We have spoken of seeking to make Barbados a developed country by having graduates across the length and breadth of Barbados. I am referring to graduates with a tertiary level education and a university education. Mr. Deputy Speaker, one recognises that university education, once it is well-delivered, well-presented and well-taken in by those persons who have access to it...

Here in Barbados we have universal access to tertiary level education. Notwithstanding that, there are certain challenges which present themselves from time to time to many persons accessing that education. Part of it has to do with the capacity of our existing tertiary level institutions. I am particularly referring to the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic where persons over several years have not been able to gain access to tertiary level education.

House A5A Sequence 75

9.40 a.m.

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Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the next few years, the Democratic Labour Party will be seeking to address or to redress this particular imbalance because it is our view that once persons have the capacity, once persons have the qualifications, once persons have the desire to access tertiary level education, they should be able to do so. Therefore, our assistance will continue as a Government to the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, as well as to the University of the West Indies which, as you would have recognised, was developed under the aegis of the Democratic Labour Party, over 40 or so years ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, therefore, our commitment must be restated to the delivery of education in Barbados, our commitment must be restated for primary, secondary and tertiary education, both here for our citizens in Barbados and those who, from time to time, might want to go to other places on the globe, particularly where they might not be able to do the particular disciplines here in Barbados, for example, scholarship programmes, national development scholarships or special awards. There are many activities undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, which are set up to equip Barbadians to ensure that Barbados continues on a path of sustainable development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nevertheless, there have been some inefficiencies in our system over time. When one sees that this year some \$495 million will be expended on education, as per our Estimates, one would recognise this is a significant amount of money but Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not enough. It is not enough to do everything we have to do in relation to education on an annual basis. But as a country, based on the revenues of the State, revenues from taxes imposed on goods and services, international business, international trade and property and on income tax, it is not enough to service everything in the ideal way that we would want to service everything in Barbados.

There are still many schools, just like there are still many Government buildings, where employees of the State work, that need major overhaul and refurbishing. Sir, even though some years ago, approximately nine years ago, Barbados entered a major programme called the Education Sector Enhancement Programme, to deal with many of the issues I am talking about, you would recognise that the expenditure to date has not provided the kind of dent in the physical plant for what would have hoped. To date we have only been able to cover about one-third of the physical plant, going back to 1998 when we would have started this

exercise with the assistance of the Caribbean Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. We have expended quite substantial sums on this exercise, we have completed to date some 35 Government schools, four private schools and there are others still ongoing as we speak.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are some persons who, sometimes because of their own thinking, because of their own vantage point, would seek to corrupt the language or corrupt the statements used by Honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party and Ministers of State. At one time I was abashed to see one of our headlines screaming boldly in one of our newspapers, "New Minister Supports EduTech." Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know it is quite easy to come up with an all-embracing phrase to seek to capture deep and intense analysis of a process. That is not easy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was at pains to point out that, as an educator, I understand the use of technology in the modern education sector and that one has to use it. I have taught teachers how to use technology, how to integrate it in the whole pedagogical framework of our school environment, and I am still good in that regard. Therefore, I could not just stand aside and say one must abandon one's tools to deliver quality education to our young people. In fact, if one considers how young people manipulate the technology, then one would very well have to understand that technology must be like the spoon and the fork for eating, relative to the educational environment.

Sir, the young people have the I-pods and they know the names better than I do. They know what technology that could carry so many gigabytes of music which they would have attached onto their ears and they have the cellular phones. They do not have to understand how these pieces of technological equipment are made up, they just have to know that they work to their benefit. Therefore, the use of information and communication technologies within our school environment must be used. It must be harnessed for the delivery of quality education, in order to encourage some who are not comfortable with just the chalk and talk, or with just the traditional technology of the chalkboard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for those who understand it, the technology provides real life, real time education. You can use that technology to have instantaneous response and reaction to what you are doing, and you do not have to wait on a teacher to correct any script, any maths or English test, two or three days hence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we in the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development have recognised that the gap or distance between the examination and the result can sometimes be too long in our current educational system.

Sir, it is not a way of simply saying that the Democratic Labour Party supports or does not support EduTech within the school environment, because that has never been the role, task nor words of the Democratic Labour Party. What the Democratic Labour Party has been saying, and it has been shown, is that there have been several difficulties with this project. This has been the largest project when it was rolled out for this country, with it being over BDS\$450 million. That is a large amount of money and therefore one wants to see that money being spent effectively and wisely and in fact impacting on the education sector as it was supposed to do.

Sir, there were many challenges and some of these challenges were identified, such as contractors working slowly on some of these projects. Sir, these are the statements from the previous Government and all I am doing is repeating to the country Barbados what happened. Sir, these contractors who were working very slowly were not contractors hired by the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, I have made it very clear, not because I am a penny-pincher or because I like to be too frugal but there is nothing wrong with frugality, especially when dealing with people's money. Sir, sometimes one gets the feeling that Government has money.

9.50 a.m.

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Hon. R.D. JONES: ...especially when one is dealing with people's money. Sir, sometimes one gets the feeling that Government has money but Government does not have one red cent. It is the people's money that Government uses as the policy makers and those who execute on behalf of the people. Sir, if it is mismanaged, if it is misused, if it is abused, then the people suffer because they do not get the facilities that were touted to be developed. You have issues with the project contractors.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 10.03 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 4.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Deputy Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

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RESUMPTION

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

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, sometimes a hiatus allows one to refocus. Sir, before the break I was speaking to the challenges, which the Education Sector Enhancement Programme encountered, and I was speaking to the whole issue of contractors with the slow execution of projects, contractors with inadequate labour force, we also have the problem of schools being constructed during school time, and finding alternative accommodation, and issues with secondary schools which impacted on the overall delivery. I believe that incidents like these need to be told to the public. It is the fault of the Barbados Labour Party, for not putting this clearly before the public of Barbados.

Sir, this has caused the project, which was a seven-year project, to be extended by a further two years through negotiation with the Caribbean Development Bank and the Inter American Development Bank. Let me state that even with that two years, we are not going to conclude the exercise, because that two years come to a conclusion on the December 31, 2008, and we are going to have to revisit the options, relative to ensuring that the schools and technology, are adequately in place.

Sir, there are some schools which are in really terrible shape. Not too far from here,

Wesley Hall Junior School, a school that is talked about by many who have gone

there. The Lodge School, which is in a very terrible shape. Harrison College, which is

in need of tremendous repair and there are many other schools across Barbados that

have to undergo that kind of work. Sir, it is going to challenge the people of Barbados

to ensure that we are able to conclude work on these schools, so that our children and

teachers would be working in...

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House A5A, Sequence 81, 10.10 a.m.

Hon. R. D. JONES: ...

Therefore, our children and our teachers would be working in conditions, which can cause them to be more

productive in the use of the space, resources and time, as provided by the people of Barbados.

There are schools which will be completed and ready for the start of the new school year, commencing on the 1st of September. They are:

- The George Lamming School, previously started under the Barbados Labour Party.

- The St. Martins/Four Roads School, where the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is a Democratic Labour Party representative, and you will be invited to its decommissioning. The people of St. Philip South should be proud of your election and representation thus far.

- The Christ Church Girls in the constituency of Christ Church East Central.

Sir, I continue to keep a keen eye and these projects are on budget and on time. One expects that any project that is undertaken by the Project Unit of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development will be on budget and on time. I am a learner. There are always contingencies which arise. I understand that but one has to work for these things.

Sir, scarce resources in a country mean that they must be maximised to their fullest benefit right across the board. We are not infants in our thinking, relative to these things. One has to work assiduously to ensure that these things come on board.

We are asking the teachers, students and the people of Barbados for some patience, as we work through all of these challenges to ensure that education and human resource development impact on the kind of country that we want. We are asking persons to give us the opportunity to reformat - if one can use some of the language used in information and communication technology - and re-access the whole educational system. Sir, this is why we have reactivated the National Advisory Commission on Education (NACE).

Sir, the National Advisory Commission on Education has been in vogue since 1994. This is not because we do not have the talent within the Ministry or within the Democratic Labour Party but, we believe in utilising the widest breadth of talent we have in Barbados. We have put together 15 talented persons under the National Advisory Commission of Education, one of our 100 day pledges. I am pleased to inform that persons are busy working through the exercise thus far, and will be shortly going out into our communities inviting papers, memoranda, whatever from persons out there. I am inviting the members of Parliament to also make their input.

Sir, education belongs to the country and it does not belong to an individual or to a Party. When the country makes the kind of input that should be made, one would see the evolution of a better educational system to serve Barbados because that is why we are here.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party is here to serve Barbados. All of its Ministers and Members of that Party see themselves as servants of the people, those who have been called to service and those who will serve.

Therefore, NACE will address the relevance of our present educational system. Sir, nothing stands static. Education is dynamic, it goes through changes and therefore we must keep abreast or be a bit ahead of many of the other countries in the world if we are to ensure that our citizens are able to work in Barbados, take part in the jobs that we have here, and to go further afield.

We know to date that there is a heavy call on our nurses, teachers, policemen and other professionals in other places, because our educational system has given them the kind of bedrock and foundation, which is necessary for them to further study, learn and to develop themselves. Barbadian students, wherever they go, because of that foundation, are counted among some of the best, within other institutions in other parts of the world, particularly the United States of America, Canada and England. Sir, this would seek to make education by its study, a rewarding experience for every child.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you see students every day in our country who have not benefited in the kind of way that one would want from the educational fare that this country has provided.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: We have to ensure that more and more of those students are brought back into

education, either in a formal, informal or non formal way. One has to appeal to the citizenry, those persons who go to school and waste time, those who come to school late, those who go the University of the West Indies and spend beyond three or four years. Sir, that is inefficient, and it costs money. Therefore, one would want persons to graduate on time, so that someone else can benefit from whatever the State provides.

We will look at the whole issue of co-education. We know that the judges are still out. There are those who attended all-girls schools and those who attended all-boys schools - single sex schools - who are still caught up with the nostalgia of that process. There are some in Barbados who have gone to co-educational schools from the

beginning, who might see nothing wrong with the process of coeducation. Sir, we will speak to the people of Barbados relative to this issue.

There is also the issue of how to treat slow learners. They cause a tremendous burden on the State. Modern societies must be able to equip the majority, if not all of its citizens with the tools to function within a modern society. It is not easy going to any Government institution or to a bank to fill out a form, if you do not understand, if you cannot analyse, if you cannot read it then, you cannot participate in the modern society. Sir, reading and comprehending what you read is at the foundation of anything else. Therefore, there will be sustained delivery of reading programmes, right across the school system, right across Barbados. I would want to say that there are persons in Barbados who cannot read, but they need to become exposed to systems of reading. Sir, what is shameful is if you hide and do not come out and learn the process of reading. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party has several challenges that we are equipped to address. We will continue the programme of nursery education, which is becoming more sustained now and it will be continued. As I said, I am not one who gets into saying that you did not do this and I will do that and that kind of stuff. Sir, it is that we are developing a country and relative to this, we will continue the process of developing a country. We will look to put a nursery school in Christ Church, so that the three-year-old children of the people near the junction of Six Roads, St. Philip, could benefit from education.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will work as well with private sector nursery institutions and assist in facilitating them, to help lift up their standards, and to ensure that there is no further expenditure on infrastructure, where infrastructure exists, to ensure that nursery children are also able to access that education at the private nursery. Sir, these are all parts of the systems and structures that we are seeking to put in place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the hiatus in time, I want to compliment the Hon. Member for St. John and Prime Minister, for a most lucid presentation on the Estimates, and for his charge of this great Party and of this great Government. I want to thank the people of Barbados. I do not mind the many naysayers, who are not willing to give this Government an opportunity to work with the citizens of Barbados, to develop this country.

House A5A, Sequence 81, 10:20:14

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Hon. R. D. JONES: There are many naysayers who are not willing to give this Government an opportunity to work with the citizens of Barbados to develop this country for the people of Barbados. Sir, when the Lord is on your side, no man can stop you.

I thank you.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to take part in these discussions. Sir, at this time, we are discussing the Budget and later on we would be discussing how we will finance the Budget. Sir, it is clear that this new Government has recognised that in order for our country to develop we must not contract, we must expand. With that principle alone, one can only welcome these initiatives.

Sir, while sitting here a couple days ago, I heard the Leader of the Opposition questioning why a Prime Minister would need a political advisor at this time of our political development. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear to me that the Honourable Member did not consult the former Prime Minister of Barbados. Had the Honourable Member consulted the former Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable Member would understand that politics today is not about this Parliament or about Barbados but about the Caribbean and the world. No Prime Minister in this day and age can be expected to operate without understanding what is happening both regionally and internationally.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the Honourable Member for St. Peter would agree with the point that when you have the mandate to chart your country's destiny, you must have the best political advice, which must be regional and international.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt in this day and age that a Prime Minister must have the best advice especially at a time when you are pushing the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and its arrangements, because there are countries, even though they have signed on to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and are part of CARICOM, that are seeking to find relationships outside of relationships that have been developed for the people of the Caribbean. Sir, that advice cannot be had by a Prime Minister holding a Ministry. He needs to recognise that he needs to employ somebody to inform him of what is happening regionally and internationally.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to congratulate the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport for a very bold admission. For many years I have been telling this Parliament that we cannot operate under the belief that politicians should hold the people of Barbados to ransom. I have always opposed the belief that if a man feels that he can be a taxi owner that he has to come and beg some politician or some Government for a favour. I have always opposed that and I will continue to oppose it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also took that further - it is in the record of this House - because I do not honestly believe that any person who wants to be a vendor should be begging a politician for a right to work. I believe that every man and woman is entitled to decide what they want to do once it is legal and they should be given the opportunity to achieve that goal. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this day and age we should not be limiting people, we should be creating an atmosphere so that persons could employ themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why I have always said in this Parliament that the Democratic Labour Party has to be a Party that brings policies to make people independent, not dependent. Sir, that is why when the fishermen, the seasonal workers and the agricultural workers stopped receiving the non-contributory pension, I was the first in this House to be against it. Sir, I saw that as another way of a political organisation not understanding the importance of making people independent, when they converted those persons from being independent and made them dependent. Let me explain what I mean, Sir.

Sir, previously, once you reached the age of 65 and you applied for a non-contributory pension, you would receive it. Suddenly that system has changed and people had to stop registering and found themselves in a situation where they had to go to politicians to get letters to get confirmation from the Welfare Department to get a pension even though they would have contributed to the development of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us take the example of fishermen. I cannot understand why people do not understand the contribution of fishermen in this country. A fisherman gets up every morning or nearly every morning at 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock and goes on the sea, sometimes the waves are very high and he has to fight to bring in fish to prevent the Minister of Finance from having to fork out foreign exchange to buy beef and lamb from another country so that the Minister of Finance would not have a foreign exchange problem. However, Sir, when that fisherman gets 65 or so years old, we do not measure the contribution they made from the point of view of the savings of foreign exchange, we try to measure it on the amount of money contributed to the Treasury, which is wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this country is not run by revenue, this country is run by foreign exchange. This Parliament will continue to make a serious error if we do not understand the contribution of foreign exchange to the development of this country. I have said that in this Parliament many times, but it seems to me that there are some people who do not understand that Barbados does not operate alone, that Barbados operates in a whole world and that when we buy goods outside of Barbados, we have to use foreign exchange to buy those goods. Sir, once we

understand that then we would understand the importance of import substitution and the contribution it makes to the economy of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, once people are working, they contribute to the growth of the economy of Barbados. That is why I have always made the point in this House that social transformation should have been a policy not a ministry.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, politicians should not believe that they are entitled to operate as lords unto servants. Sir, when we are looking for votes, we always behave as if we are the servants, but as soon as we are elected, we reverse the trend. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is wrong and politicians would do well to study the political life of this country between the years 1986 and 2007. Sir, once they do that, they would understand that they are not tricking the people of Barbados, they are tricking themselves, because that turnover rate has been very great. Do not fool yourself, Sir.

I have heard many people complaining and saying that politicians only have to do two terms to get a pension, but it is not easy to get two terms. Those persons who believe that they could just come to the House and they would get a pension like that, it is not that easy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to send a warning to the trade unions of this country. Sir, I have said before that the trade unions in this country have to understand that they are there to represent the interest of the workers of Barbados. It cannot be that all of a sudden they have recognised that goal. They have to admit that they made some errors previously and must accept that this Party is not going to wait on them to understand the contribution or the worth of the workers.

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Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we understand what we have to do on the behalf of the workers of Barbados and we understood quite well what happened for the last 13 years. I am saying we cannot get real development in this country until there is a relationship between the workers, the Government and the private sector of this country.

Sir, people could talk about growth in this country but unless they understand that the workers have to be brought along, then all that would be happening would be

the fact that people would be finding themselves in trouble because all they would be doing would be frustrating the workers and that cannot work. The workers work capital and those who believe that you could just get capital to work itself, would be downright foolish. Sir, I am saying that people have to understand that in the same way an engine needs fuel, the workers need something to empower them. Once we understand that, then we would carry this country forward, but if we continue to make the error that we could operate with Government and the private sector and ignore the people, then we would always find ourselves in trouble.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is amazing, suddenly people are wondering why there is a cost of living problem in this country, and are blaming it on external inflation and on everything else. Sir, one thing I will admit is that there is something called external inflation and something called deprivation: that is the workers were not given the necessary increases to keep up with the imported inflation and the additional taxation. It means that how to solve the cost of living should not be a big problem in this country because we on this side understood quite well what was occurring.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very interesting, and one should not believe this is only a local problem because I have heard leaders within the Caribbean making the point that they thought they could only have a basket of goods and that the basket of goods would solve the problem. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want you to know that those very leaders, who were pushing for the basket of goods, have now admitted that it will not work. They are now saying what I have always been saying, what I have always heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central saying, which is when that is done and these items are relieved of taxes, those taxes do not go directly to the people who we would want them to go to, but to a group not intended.

Sir, the best example of that was when we removed the Bound Rate on lamb and beef in this country. I warned the Government that when those taxes were removed, we were not removing them on behalf of the consumers of Barbados but we were only increasing the profits of a particular group. I have heard that sentiment locally, regionally and internationally.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we so care about the people who we always brag about, it is obvious to me that the only way we could deal with the workers of Barbados would be to deal with them in a direct way. We cannot give anybody anything to give to them, we have to give it to them ourselves because they trust us and we have to trust them in return. We have to build that relationship and develop a long-lasting relationship with the workers of Barbados because they are the ones who have empowered us. Sir, the

day we make the error and give it to a third person to pass onto them, we would be in trouble. Sir, those persons do not want anybody to get close to them.

Sir, I will continue making the point: the reason we continue to have certain systems in place in Barbados is that there are some persons who do not want people to get close to them and so they keep regressive policies in place, to ensure that the masses would not get close to them. We as politicians cannot do that, the masses of Barbados cannot employ experts to help them, they have employed politicians to empower them, therefore, politicians must empower the people of Barbados because that is their only opportunity.

Sir, that is why we cannot limit the growth of the masses of Barbados and this Party is well-known for empowering the people of Barbados. Sir, the best example of that is when we brought free secondary education in 1961. Sir, people went to New Zealand and elsewhere because they understood that piece of social engineering and social transformation. They understood that we were empowering the masses of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that a political Party that has educated its people cannot only educate them. It must empower them by having trust in them; by ensuring that they have the disposable income to do what they want; so that they would want to continue to help us to develop this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have heard many people giving the impression that if you give poor people money, they would squander it. That is utter foolishness, the history of Barbados has shown that before people were oppressed, when they were children, their parents would have told them to go to school, learn well, buy a house, then buy a car. Instead, if you look at the pattern today, you would see that pattern has been reversed, not because of the people of Barbados but because of the transportation system in Barbados, which has now forced persons instead to buy a car before they buy a piece of land.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a progressive Government must change that. That is why I support the policy of the Ministry of Housing and Lands in offering cheap land to poor people of Barbados. It is nothing new, if one looks at Hansard, one would recognise that from the time I came to this Parliament, I have been calling on Government to acquire large tracts of land and to use the Ministry of Transport and Works to put roads in those areas. Sir, I have always argued that if we could build roads where houses already exist, then we should build roads where there are no houses but where there is land. Sir, this would encourage people to build.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot understand why we believe that we should only have policies in this Honourable House to look after the 'haves'. We are supposed to be empowered to look after the 'have nots' and to bring them to an equal standing to those who have. We must also create an atmosphere so that persons who have, can invest to help those persons who are looking to have something in life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe there is a law that you can only carry a road to a house where one already exists. If that is correct, then it needs to be changed because someone like me, who lives in rural Barbados, who has a demand for 115 roads and an opportunity...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, one has to understand that in rural Barbados, when you build roads, you are not just building roads, you are also solving a housing problem and creating commercial activities in those areas.

Sir, I keep saying that sometimes politicians are very quick to take taxpayers' money and fix roads in urban Barbados, roads that sometimes need not to be fixed, and refuse to build new roads in rural Barbados where building these new roads would be adding to the housing stock. Sir, Ministers sometimes should stop and think of these things. I have already said to the other side that they have forgotten their mandate, and it is true that judgment day came.

Sir, I heard another point made in this Honourable House that made me laugh. Sir, this Government is being accused of owing the Barbados National Oil Company (BNOC) some millions of dollars. I am told it was \$62 million under the Barbados Labour Party but now it is about \$82 million. It is obvious that if they owed \$62 million under the accrual system and that amount was not reflected in the books, then they cannot now come and accuse the Democratic Labour Party of not showing up those figures in the Estimates. Under the accrual system we would account for any debts and expenses. Sir, that is exactly why we adopted that system.

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Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, that is exactly why we adopted the accrual system so that we would account for any debt and any expenses.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said to this House that they were practising the cash basis and the accrual system at the same time. Sir, what that means is that only under the cash basis could you not account for the \$82 million owed to the oil company because that would have been allowed under the cash basis but under the accrual system you would have had to pick up the debt and it would have had to be reflected. Hence, it means that this Government now, under the proper accrual system would have to pick up the total debt of \$82 million: the \$62 million before and the \$20 million now.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Sir, the Prime Minister in dealing with the matter was good enough to say that my minute indicated to bring up the matter after January 15th. Sir, that is because it was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Finance in December after the House was not meeting and the intention was to cover it with a Supplementary once the House was meeting. The Minutes of the Ministry of Finance show with clarity, that it has not been brought to the House after January 15th, when other Supplementaries had been brought to the House. It is a matter we will have to discuss. Sir, that is the truth.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, nobody doubted you. It means that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who would have seen the file should not have made that comment. Sir, I would like to hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter about a political advisor at this point in time because the Honourable Member understands well what he had to deal with within CARICOM. The Honourable Member understood quite well what he had to deal with within the region, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter knew that if he did not have the best advice, he could not have taken the positions he took within CARICOM and outside of CARICOM.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember well when we were dealing with globalisation, I was on the other side, and I made a point to this House that too often we go to international agencies, accept foolishness from them. In fact, we had accepted foolishness from the OECD. The Honourable Member for St. Peter threw some lashes in me at that time. That was in March, but by August, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while I was getting ready to go to The Bahamas, to a conference, the Honourable Member asked me to deal with them, which I did, and I was able to get some gain because when I put some lashes in the OECD, the international Press carried it. Sir, you want to know why? Too often we go to international conferences and we allow people to rub us into the earth. We accept the dictates from them because they believe that they are big countries and they can dictate to us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Honourable Member that used to be in your chair would tell you that when we go to conferences, provided they were in my company, we were not easy. The last time we went to Nigeria, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North would tell you that we were able to make those conferences stand up, listen and agree.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can get in here and talk what we like across the bow and behave as we like but one thing we have to understand is that there is a lot of jealousy when it comes to the name of Barbados regionally and internationally. Sir, that is why I always make the point the Prime Ministers would do well to free up themselves because of their workload. Running the business of CARICOM alone is a job and it is even more burdensome when you have to deal with international affairs. Sir, I honestly believe that we overwork our Prime Minister and persons on this side would tell you that I have always said that. Sir, I believe that Prime Ministers should be free because I believe the job of running a Cabinet is enough. Sir, I will end on this last point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the constituency councils of which we have been speaking a lot about, is a good step in the right direction but it must be enlarged. I will tell you why, Sir. If the Ministers of Finance accept the point that I was making to his House all the time, it will ease their burden, that is, Ministers of Finance would do well to allocate the social heads to the constituency at the time of Estimates because that is one key way of keeping Ministers in check.

Sir, I thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make my first formal speech in the House of Assembly in its session of 2008. I do believe I should begin by extending congratulations to you and through you to His Honour the Speaker of the House for your elevation to this high office. I am very conscious, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the important role that you and His Honour the Speaker would have to play as guardians of our parliamentary democracy. I also will want to pledge to you that I will so comport myself as to respect the Chair and to add to the dignity with which proceedings of the House are undertaken.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on speaking to the nation on the night of January 15th, I acknowledged that the people of Barbados, in fair and free election, had elected the Democratic Labour Party to govern this country and I congratulate them now from this Parliament. I also

indicated then that the Government had a mandate to govern and that it should be given every facility to govern as it wishes. I also indicated that it was to the Prime Minister to be the kind of Prime Minister that he wanted to be and to present the kind of leadership that he felt he needed to present and I stand again on those words.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I need now in Parliament to make two additional points. I, today want, without equivocation or without any reservation to accept full and utter responsibility for everything that was done by any member of Cabinet, by any public official during the three terms that I was the leader of this country. I accept utter responsibility. I am not going to come to this House and equivocate as to whether I knew about it or not. Sir, whether I knew about it or not, it fell to my responsibility to reside over the affairs of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I say that because I would imagine that there would be things that happened that can be regarded as errors of omission or commission. That they happened under my time, I accept utter responsibility for it. There is no need to pillory anybody, Hallam Nicholls or the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, pillory me.

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Estimates that are before the House are Estimates that I had no hand in making decisions in respect of, even though their preparation started when I was Minister of Finance. I want to say also on the Floor of this House both in this speech and in all other speeches that where there were policies agreed to by the Barbados Labour Party that I feel were in the best interest of this country, I shall, in Opposition, support them with the same intensity as I would have if I were in Government. There are things in these Estimates that are new. The Housing Neighbourhood Project is a wonderful project. I am glad it is before this House and I will support it now as I would have supported it then. There are projects like the Coastal Infrastructural Project to provide better for the security of this country, I will support it now in the same way that I would have supported it if I were in Government.

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Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: There are other projects and initiatives to lift people out of poverty, by increasing the welfare payments such that no one in Barbados is living below the poverty, and I support them now with the same intensity as I supported them before.

Sir, having been a Prime Minister for three terms you must believe that I want the country to succeed. I want to live in a successful society as much now, as I would

have, as a leader of this country, and if matters are brought to this House, that are in the best interest of Barbados I shall support them. I did that in 1992, when I supported the Incomes Policy of the Democratic Labour Party, although it was not my Party's position. I begin my presentation to this House in that spirit.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John gave a presentation to Parliament, which I think was a two-part speech: (1) the speech that he read, that obviously was prepared for him, that was in the nature of the presentation of the details of the Estimates; the next was, whatever it was, a political diatribe and a political harangue. I have to say so because I genuinely feel that is what it was. He used the opportunity not to do what I thought could and should have been done to present a perspective to the strategic options he feels that his Government must face to outline the trade offs that have to be met; the change in new directions that will confront you over the next five years, especially the next three, and to indicate with respect to them, as regards...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Peter, can you speak up.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: I am sorry, Sir.

... as regards economic leadership. There is a difference between a speech that is intended to be harangue and a speech intended to provide economic leadership. Sir, it is appropriate that if Mr Comissiong troubles him he can trouble him back, as he did. Sir Henry Forde said some things that he was not happy with, and he troubled him back, but it is not a substitute for providing the economic leadership that only a Minister of Finance can provide. I say that, because in these Estimates the House is being called upon, through the Estimates to agree to the macro-economic policies of the Government of Barbados. Embodied in those macro-economic policies are aspects of strategic options, some of them difficult and complex, some of them new, that have clearly to be presented and the Honourable House make decisions about them with an open eye.

Sir, one of the harangues that was indulged in, was the harangue in respect of Hard Wood. I just want to say this again, because this is how I am going to be. I will never support this Leader of the Opposition, if she has a matter that she wants to bring to the attention of a Prime Minister of Barbados that is a serious matter that requires his attention, and that it appears to him, first by way of a letter in a newspaper with a request that he must do it or else. I will never support her. That is what happened in the case of Hard Wood. I feel that if you want to aspire to an office, respect it.

Sir, in relation to the Hard Wood matter, I first heard about the Hard Wood matter by way of a letter intended to come to the Prime Minister's Office, that appeared first and foremost on the front page of the Nation Newspaper. That is the kind of discourtesy to the office of Prime Minister of Barbados that I will not support. If this present Leader of the Opposition were to do it to any Prime Minister, it is not the way.

Sir, we are not just dealing with a set of numbers. We are dealing with an expression of the country's macro-economic policy, and the exercise of a number of judgements in respect of strategic issues, objectives to be met, course of actions to be pursued that require judgements to be reflected on, and the statement of difficult choices in the context of complex situations.

Sir, I want to structure that aspect of that presentation to the House within the limited time today. Sir, macro-economic issues as I saw them as embodied in the Estimates, that I believe the Honourable House should be discussing, but I did not feel were seriously addressed by the Minister of Finance, in what was intended to be a second reading speech to the House. First I deal with what I sense is the contradiction between the main strategic objectives to be sought by Government and the financial programme in the Estimates of expenditure.

The Honourable Member for St. John has been very clear that his most important strategic objective which is sought by his Government's policies, control of the cost of living, control of the cost of living, control of the cost of living. I had to make a judgement like that in 1994, and I said Job No. 1 for me would be jobs, and throughout three terms I sought conscientiously to be faithful to the exercise. I have no doubt that the Honourable Member for St. John, is earnest when he says, that for him, the cost of living, the cost of living, the cost of living. Sir, there is a fundamental contradiction between the achievement of that goal, and the financial plan in the Estimates.

Sir, it is simply this. The financial plan in the Estimates can only be achieved, if there is high and rising prices and surging prices in Barbados. Why do I say that? Sir, when you examine what is intended to be the source of Government revenues, there are not going to be coming from increases in taxes on incomes or profits, which are inflation free. There are coming from, in large part, energy related matters, but the core of the increase is intended to come from \$108 million increase in the Value Added Tax.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is the implication of that? The economy is intended to grow by 3 per cent. A 3 per cent growth in the economy cannot generate \$108 million increase in the Value Added Tax, unless the base of the tax increases ... a \$108 million increase in Value Added Tax means that the value base of the economy increases by

\$700 million. A 3 per cent growth in the economy will not generate that without rising prices of the goods involved. That is one of the first contradictions that has to be addressed. To what extent does the Honourable Member feel that at this immediate moment he should address rising prices in the context of the fact, that what is going to drive your revenue is the Value Added Tax and what will drive the Value Added Tax are rising prices.

Secondly, this debate takes place at a crucial watershed in the evolution of the Barbados economy and the regional economy. It takes place at a time when we have agreed to an EPA with Europe, and in short order will have to agree to a new arrangement with Canada. I would imagine that when the Honourable Member for St. John sees Mr. Bush, Mr. Bush would also say that what you have just done with Europe, you now have to set in train with the United States of America, and everything that you do, in relation to Europe, you have to do in relation to the rest of the world under the Most Favoured Nation Precept.

Sir, what is the point? The point is, we entered a new phase in our economic relationship that is no longer haste, the long-run has arrived. It would mean that over a period of time, we will have to phase out the \$288 million of import duties that are now on the books. That is the implication of an accelerated trade liberalisation. Sir, that is where the conflict comes. You cannot at one and the same time within the macro economic framework, if your interest is in fiscal prudence, begin to phase out \$288 million in import duties as a commitment, but also begin to make the savage cuts in the Value Added Tax, that the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto says it is going to undertake. This is one of the matters that has carefully to be weighed, measured and judged to what extent can the reform of Barbados' economic circumstances, at this juncture, be accommodated by way of substantial adjustment in the Value Added Tax, given what you have agreed to, and that we are poised to bring onboard a process of accelerated trade liberalisation.

Sir, I say that because the Honourable Member for St. John is very clear that a Democratic Labour Party Government will fully honour...

11.00 a.m.

Sequence 85

Sequence 85

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House A5A, Sequence 86, 11.00 a.m.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: ...

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say that because the Honourable Member for St. John is very clear that a Democratic Labour Party Government will fully Honour the obligations in its Manifesto. Sir, some of those obligations are very substantial. The reduction, if it is to be carried out of the Value Added Tax (VAT) on utilities, would be at least \$60 million. The Manifesto said utility bills and I take that to mean not only electricity, but that could also mean the telephone.

Sir, the removal of VAT on building materials valued up to \$400 000 is large. The removal of VAT, on sporting and other equipment is also substantial, so a judgment has to be formed. What is the appropriate structure of the VAT, in an age of trade liberalisation? The House will have to deal with it, in the context of the economic reality facing the country, but taking into account what the Government has said are the promises that it wants to implement.

Mr. Speaker, it is also very important that the Hon. Member for St. John and Prime Minister speaks more about what is intended to be the overall fiscal deficit that coincides with his judgment of fiscal prudence. I am not trying to be advisory here. I am just trying to be as clear as I can be, Sir.

We have set bench marks that the fiscal deficits can vary on other side of the 2.5 per cent of the GDP. It is not a number that is set in stone, but it is within the prerogative of the Minister of Finance and him alone, to set it properly. Sir, he alone sets it, taking into account the liquidity in the system, the rate at which he wants the debt to rise, and the strategic objectives that face him at a point in time. For example, immediately after 9/11, we decided to have a larger fiscal deficit.

Sir, I raise the point because right now, the fiscal deficit is set at 1.9 per cent of the GDP. If that is the limit for this fiscal year, it means that the many things that the Democratic Labour Party said would be taken into account within the first hundred days, could not fit within that gap because there are many in the Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may illustrate, it was indicated that within the first 100 days, we will have a \$40 million Home Ownership Revolving Fund established. Sir, you would have to put that in the Estimates. Then, there are matters, in respect of the Ministry of Education. I believe that the University of the West Indies' bill would be more than \$70 million. It was \$100 million under us that we had to be brought to account.

There is also in the Ministry of Health, a rescue plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is not \$150 million. It will cost more. I will support a bigger amount for the hospital, because those are numbers that we would have

been presented with this year. If you are going to stay at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and have a rehabilitated maintenance programme as distinct from moving and having a minimal maintenance, the hospital's bill will be near \$200 million a year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point is that there are large promises made by the Democratic Labour Party, which are not yet incorporated into the public expenditure or changes in public finances. Sir, we need to know, since the Minister says that the combination of fiscal prudence, expressing a fiscal deficit and the honouring of the pledges of the Democratic Labour Party, will be what guide him in the constitution of his Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make the point to bring to the attention of the House that a careful analysis of the revenue indicates how high-risk a fiscal path the Government is on. Perhaps Members of the House will read these three documents together. Why I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of Barbados recently undertook a major Tax Reform Programme at which there was a simultaneous adjustment in income taxes, corporation taxes, and land and property taxes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the numbers in these two documents are telling us, is simply this, and I would like to give the example. We brought a programme of Income Tax that ended in 2007 and there are built-in provisions to carry forward the Income Tax reform, with major increases in the Reverse Tax Credit, beyond 2007.

In income year 2006, Income Tax yielded \$305 million. Last year, it was intended to yield \$330 million, but the outturn in the Estimates suggests that the Income Tax, because of the Tax Reform, the number was not realised. In this Income Year to end in March 2007, the Income Tax will yield less than it yielded in 2006, \$302 million, as I said, to \$305 million.

The point is that there are further inbuilt adjustments to the Income Tax that the Government had accepted, namely, to continue to provide Income Tax relief by way of serious increases in the Reverse Tax Credit. Sir, we have already begun to see that the Income Tax Reform programme led to a greater loss of revenue than was initially projected. Yet, you are producing an increase in the Income Tax, although you know that there is built-in provision for further tax relief.

In the case of Corporation Tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for this year indicate that while the original Estimate was \$527 million, you are only likely to take in \$510 million. Therefore, the cost of the reduction of the Corporation Tax to 25 per cent led to a greater loss of revenue than originally anticipated. Sir, you have seen that it has

underperformed, yet there is a projection for this financial year, that the Corporation Tax should rise from \$510 million to \$577 million. Sir, that is heroic.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I also say that here are inbuilt further adjustments in the Income Tax. Because this year we have now to start with the new lower rates of Corporation Taxes for small businesses, enterprises in special development area and construction companies. What elbow room do you have there that would enable you to build? None.

Sir, in relation to the Land Tax, as you know the Land Tax was radically readjusted with the first \$125 000 in property values and the rates reduced. The Land Tax yielded \$82 million in 2006. It was projected to raise \$92 million in 2007, in fact, Sir, it is only now in your Estimates, it is suggested that you realised \$72 million. Therefore, there is a greater cost of Tax Reform than originally projected. This makes the numbers now being put for 2008 in my judgment difficult to achieve, especially in relation to the Corporation Tax where you expect an increase from \$510 to \$577, although you have seen that in this financial year, the Estimates have not been achieved. Sir, in each of these instances, there are still more inbuilt adjustments to be made.

Sir, I am saying all of this not to condemn anybody, but to say that the elbow room you have for bringing on board the additional matters that are not yet reflected in the Estimates, are not there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very difficult not to be sanguine about the growth in the revenues, when in fact you have seen that the tax reform has taken a bite and there are still elements of tax reforms that are built into the law, and there are elements of tax reform that you say you want to bring on board, as part of your own programme. Therefore it is important that the Minister speaks very clearly to exactly what is the extent of a fiscal deficit, that he would want us to accept as coincidental with fiscal prudence. Sir, the 1.9 per cent that we are here dealing with, clearly does not reflect the obligations set out in the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto.

Sir, other promises have been made that I need to ask how they are going to be implemented. Clearly, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister has already broken one promise.

House A5A, Sequence 86, 11:10:12

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Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Clearly, the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister, has already broken one promise although he has enough flexibility to change it. In

the employment strategies of the Democratic Labour Party, it was indicated that the Democratic Labour Party's approach to employment creation would be to integrate a Ministry of Innovation and Economic Empowerment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I understand it, it is only the Prime Minister who can create ministries. If this Ministry of Innovation and Economic Empowerment was central to the Democratic Labour Party's employment programme, and it is not created, then I bring it to attention of the Minister and hope that within the first 100 days he would begin to honour that.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: You would account for the interruptions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was one fundamental matter that I think they have to take seriously. The Democratic Labour Party has committed itself to ensuring that 40 per cent of all Government purchase of goods and services are reserved for small and medium-size enterprises. Sir, that is a serious undertaking. The biggest increase in the Estimates is this Government's purchase of goods and services which moved from \$330 million to \$430 million. That would mean that \$173 million of business is reserved for small businesses. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would need to know what particular arrangements are to be made to the financial and other rules to enable this to be implemented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would allow me to deal with two ministries. The Minister for Culture spoke in this debate. Sir, I am always gracious to the younger members of the House. I feel that they should be given opportunity to speak and speak graciously. However, when Honourable Members come to the House with an attitude to attack other persons, we have to treat it as a serious matter. I will respond to what the Minister of Culture has said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I heard the attack on me by the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, I came better to understand what it would be to be savaged by a sheep.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I have some order, please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the Government says it wants to cut out waste and he came here to 'pomposette' over presiding over a \$28 million Ministry. Sir, even before he had settled in the job, the Prime Minister had to give him a Parliamentary Secretary. I want to say for the record

that the Government should know where it must look to cut out waste if it is serious about cutting out waste. To have a Minister and a Parliamentary Secretary presiding over a \$28 million Ministry leads me to have to say that any wages and salaries paid to the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central is in the nature of a cost overrun.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I have some order, please?

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Government has professed that it is about efficiency and cutting out waste.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am anxious in this debate to hear culture call. Sir, I would have wanted to get to the issue of the social capital. Sir, there is a business in the United States of America called "Crazy Eddy" where you can get more for less. The vote for social welfare has been reduced by \$21 million, but like "Crazy Eddy", he believes that he can get more for less.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be here for the whole week. Sir, I want to get to the business of the Constituency Councils because if you get a \$27 million cut and you supplement it by four, then that is the "Crazy Eddy" approach to the management of public affairs. Sir, in a way it sums up what I wanted to say in all seriousness. I feel that the Government has to govern and it has been given a mandate to govern and it must make strategic options. However, as far as I am concerned, all that they have been doing today are a number of silly little things.

Sir, the sooner they get to the delivery of their programme, the better. What I am saying is that the programme is not reflected in the Estimates. The fundamental point we are making is that the sooner the Government gets to it, the better we can make judgments as to how much of it we could legitimately support and how much of it is not appropriate. We have a duty as the Opposition to do that.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak for the first time in this Parliament's new life. Sir, I offer congratulations to you and through you to His Honour the Speaker and indeed all the new officers of Parliament. I also take this opportunity to thank the people of St. Michael South Central on whose behalf I occupy this piece of furniture for another parliamentary term.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure of course to be standing during Parliament to do something I have never

done before, that is, to support the Appropriation Bill. I am not doing so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I happened to be sitting on the Other Side, I am doing so because I am comfortable and clear that this Government, under the Democratic Labour Party, has got it right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened to the last Speaker and what he had to say in his new role now, trying to be an elder statesman, complaining about harangue in the House of Assembly. I nearly fell out of my seat when I heard that because I remember Terry Ally, Irene Sandiford-Garner, Philip Greaves and all of those people. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not even to get into the Honourable Members of Parliament who suffered from the harangue. Mr. Deputy Speaker, apparently in going from One Side of the Floor to the other, somewhere along the line he was washed in the blood of the lamb. He has now been purified and he now wants to come in here in a measured tone and try to render advice to a new Government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, he could not even last the full half hour, he made 25 minutes.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: On a point of privilege. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you told me that I had five more minutes and I spoke for five more minutes. If I did not, you have short-changed me and I ask you for my time to return.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I have some order so that the Honourable Member could continue with his speech.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is quite alright. This is a joke compared to what I had to deal with before, there were 24 of them. Mr. Deputy Speaker, a leopard cannot change its spot.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that with five minutes to go, he proceeded to launch a broadside on a young Barbadian who is seeking to give his very best to the Ministry that he has been assigned in a new Government. The Honourable Member just could not help himself. To take the high road for 30 minutes was too tall an angst for the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

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11.20 a.m.

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Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, can I have order, please.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the more important point is that the Honourable Member for St. Peter took responsibility for everything and I find it a little hard to take advice from someone who has taken the national debt to \$5 billion, when we as a country are struggling to see what we have to show for it.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, over \$200 million in debt is owed by Hotel and Resorts Limited, and there is no clear strategy to get out of it. Sir, year after year, the Auditor-General talks about the mis-management, the over-runs and the misappropriations that have been going on, yet the Honourable Member for St. Peter wants to come here and lecture a new Government? I am sorry but I was flabbergasted, but I am not sure what the Honourable Member was after. I am not sure if the Honourable Member was after a knighthood but the Honourable Member is trying his best to appear to be in some refined state now.

Asides.

Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is not a new Honourable Member to this Honourable Chamber and knows better. The Honourable Member knows that it is improper...but then again I should say I am not surprised because he was the first person in his maiden speech to refer to the oldest Member of the last Parliament as a political corpse, but that is his nature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think it is proper for the Honourable Member to refer to the Honourable Member for St. Peter as expecting a Knighthood. The Honourable Member has not asked for one, and it is simply unfortunate and seeks to cast innuendo as to why the Honourable Member for St. Peter would want to be an Honourable Member on this side and would want to speak in the manner in which he has spoken. I think it is unfortunate and improper that the Honourable Member should speak in such terms but again, I am really not surprised. Sir, it is very wrong.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not sure if that was part of the arrangement to see who would or would not assume leadership of the Opposition, in terms of who will defend whom and for what purpose.

Sir, I will hear about not understanding the Rules of this Honourable House but I have never tried to...

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Asides.

Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I got up just now and asked you to rule. In addition, the Honourable Member is now going further and purporting to suggest certain things. With respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member knows exactly what he is imputing in breach of the Rules of this Chamber. If the Honourable Member believes that to be his standard of behaviour, then I will not go down in the gutter with him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am asking you for protection for the rights of Honourable Members of this House, to which you are sworn to protect.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, you must have some decorum for this Chair. Those remarks are struck from the records.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is an attempt by this Government to increase expenditure in the correct areas. Sir, as I have said earlier, it is unfortunate that given what we have inherited by way of the macroeconomic situation, we do not have as much elbow space as we would want but notwithstanding that fact, we have tried to be as responsible as we could. Therefore, I think the attempt not only to increase the expenditure in the Ministry of Health but also the management systems that are coming to the Ministry of Health, especially in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, are steps in the right direction.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not cutting the funds that are going towards social services, on the contrary, they are being increased. Sir, persons must understand that these funds are going to the different ministries and that we are splitting the functions.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member continues to mislead this Honourable House. Sir, according to the Estimates which we are debating here today, which is printed here in black and white, it is not about who is getting what, neither is it about the different ministries. Sir, it is clearly set out here: Total Expenditure by Functional Classification. It says Social Security and Welfare has decreased by \$27 558 986. It is a decrease in Social Security and Welfare. Sir, therefore, for the Honourable Member to come and suggest to this Honourable House that it is not a decrease because it is under different ministries is a falsehood.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask that you would rule and that it be struck from the record.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Honourable Member would care to read the entire Table, the Honourable Member would see that the votes for the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and other Communities and Social Services are up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member has to look at the Estimates in its entirety, the Honourable Member simply cannot select a line item and jump up because he wants to hear his own voice.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member continues to mislead this Honourable House. The Classification Table clearly states that it is Social Security and Welfare and those Estimates are divided up into those categories.

Sir, therefore, for the Honourable Member to suggest that Social Security and Welfare is not where it should be but that it is under "Other", is misleading this Honourable House, and I ask you to rule on the matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, your position here is to defend the minority, and so I ask you to rule.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, again the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is laughing because he is trying to put words into my mouth. I never said Social Security and Welfare are up. Sir, Social Services is also under another category as well. The Honourable Member cannot simply look at it in isolation.

Sir, the real reason we are in this position goes back to the original point I was making. Sir, presently we have to service debt of over \$800 million this year, with half of it being in interest. Therefore when we talk about a \$3.4 billion in expenditure, we are spending over \$800 million in servicing debts, which had been growing and growing under the previous Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East likes to talk about Errol Barrow and his views and the use of financing deficits. However, the same Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow used to speak about prudence and used to warn about the debt trap. Sir, this is the point that we were making, time and time again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in spite of our ambition and our social programme, we are still committed to seeing that the debt is going to be paid down over a period of time. The paradigm shift in the macroeconomic management has

taken place in Barbados and that is why we do not need to take lectures from anyone in here, least of all the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

11.30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Hon. R.L. SEALY: We promised a tightly managed debt accumulation strategy targeted at the reduction in both the domestic and foreign components of the national debt. If you look at Table 10 of the Estimates, you can see, under total debt that we are actually projecting the balance sheet for the end of the financial year which will show the projections that we actually have as smaller national debt and that is responsible and prudent management. Sir, this is a new Government that has an ambitious programme but understand the constraints that we are working within.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think what is important and of particular importance too is to see that the foreign component of that debt would actually be paid down. Sir, that is the dangerous one and, as you know, that is the one we always look at. There was a former member, who actually said in here not to worry about the local component of the debt because you owe it to yourself but when you owe outside that is another matter. I think that is clear evidence of our determination to be responsible in executing the task that the people of Barbados asked us to do on January 15th.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also must salute the efforts on the part of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and his team and the Honourable Member for the City in trying to bring to reality this whole question of the constituency councils. I know that it has evoked much debate in this Chamber already. When I was away on Government business, I know there was a heated debate on it but I would like to say that I believe it is a step in the right direction. People are outside of the process and still feel a little removed and distant and so for this Government to try to bring more people into the whole process of governance is a step in the right direction. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew feels that you can just take the money and cut a cheque to each member of Parliament. I understand that is his approach but even he would agree that....

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Democratic Labour Party in their Manifesto and in these Estimates speak to constituency councils. I am opposed, like Honourable Members on this side, to a cosy council. I indicated yesterday that I believe the Democratic Labour Party is trying to relate to the expenses which are incurred by Members of Parliament. I said that the leader of the House probably does not trust members over there to

spend \$100 000 themselves and that is the reason why they have come up with this constituency council and, Sir, that constituency council cannot function on \$100 000.

Mr. Chairman, I took the time to list the expenses, which were incurred by me on average during the past five years. Those expenses were actually prepared by my constituency office. As a matter of fact, I was surprised when my constituency presented me with those expenses. I did not realise that amount of money was spent in my constituency during the last five years.

Sir, I must say that the suggestion I made with respect to those accounts, which I presented yesterday, was a lesson to us as parliamentarians, that we should take care of ourselves. There are certain expenses like postage that I believe that Government should take on. There is no reason why a Member of Parliament should spend \$15 000 a year in postage to his constituents. That is the reason why those expenses were presented. Sir, I do not believe that Government should give any particular Member of Parliament \$100 000 but I thank you for giving me the opportunity of making that point and clarifying that.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, through you, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is most welcomed because I have been struggling to hear him make a point in here for the past five years so the fact that he is making points is good and Sir, they are good points. I am sure the people of St. Andrew are happy that he is making points too, finally.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that we have come up with a good idea. I do not necessarily think that it needs to replace the work of the parliamentarian, they can work together and it can draw more people into the whole exercise of community developmental work and projects. Sir, a lot of the pressure that is put on a sitting parliamentary representative can be taken off them but in a way where more people are involved. I am looking forward to this idea being developed. I think it is an idea, that the time has come for it, and I look forward to seeing when it would happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, obviously, if we are going to do these things, and as I have said, we have to pay down this debt because our productive sectors need to work well. Sir, we had mentioned in here about the newest productive sector Barbados has and that is the question of exploring our petrol chemicals. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East in here presentation tried to suggest that when I was leading off the debate for the then Opposition on the offshore petroleum industry that I said you could leave the oil in the ground, it has been down there for so many years.

Aside.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: You can pull up all the Hansard you want. Any position I took in Opposition I can stand by in Government because I made it in the name of the Democratic Labour Party and this is part of the reason that we are in Government today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I was making was that we needed to be careful how we went about pursuing the exploration and exploitation of our non-living resources in the outer continental shelf. We needed to be responsible about it and I was not happy with the deadlines that were set for the allocation of those blocks. We have a land-based oil petroleum industry, you are going into a marine-based one and we need to be careful. I did say that if we had to hold off for a few months or even a year or two to make sure we had best practices, that they had been down there for all these years and that they could wait a few more months or a few more years. Sir, that was the responsible approach.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the way, that is the identical position I have taken with this Government too. I made the point in another place to my colleagues that we should not set any unrealistic deadlines because the sale of the seismic data is very rewarding and you could earn a lot of money. The Honourable Member for St. John, in his erudite presentation of the Estimates- I laud him for it- mentioned \$70 million in revenue. But let us understand that if we go about it in an irresponsible manner there can be a cost. Sir, woe betide, if there is an event during the course of exploring that resource and we have an environmental disaster. Sir, the cost would be incalculable to Barbados. We still rely on our marine environment; we have a cruise-based marine industry; our land base industry still relies on the beaches and so on and we need to be careful. Sir, that is the only point I was making.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not sure why the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East had such difficulty with it because she made a ministerial statement in here, right after the fisheries dispute and the ruling from the international court. Sir, during her ministerial statement...

H/A5A/11:40

Sequence 89

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Continuation of

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Sir, under the United Nation Convention of Laws of the Sea, the Arbitral Tribunal, that was set up, the point was made then. Sir, remember that was about a fisheries dispute, but somewhere along the line it became something else.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member really cannot help but mislead himself and by extension the House. Whether he is doing it deliberately or whether that is part of his genetic DNA, only he can determine.

Sir, in the matter, when the Ministerial Statements were made and when we spoke to the public of Barbados, we made it clear on every occasion, that the matter pertained to the preservation of the Barbados maritime boundaries space, and within that maritime boundaries space what was at stake were fishing, energy resources and, indeed, other resources under the sea. So, if the Honourable Member now wants to play cute and refer only to fishing, simply to cover up the fact of what he said and forever condemns the pursuit of an offshore energy sector, by saying that it should remain down there for another 15 million more years, that it was there for 15 million years and it should remain down under the earth. If he wants now to use that as an excuse for his lack of vision and his myopia, that is a matter that he should not want to foist on other Members of this Chamber. He must accept responsibility for his statements.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Sir, I accept total responsibility for my statements, and I have explained already that the position I took was a responsible one, and it is a position I still hold. Let us go ahead and explore the resources, but let us do so in a responsible manner.

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

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Sir, I referred to the Ministerial Statement because the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said that future generations may benefit from the mineral exploration of the outer continental shelf. Even in the Honourable Member's Ministerial Statement, it was recognised that it may not be anything that we would benefit from immediately, but it was an investment for future generations. So I do not understand what is all the heavy weather over the statement that I made, let us proceed carefully and responsibly. It was the same thing contained in the Ministerial Statement for the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I really do not get too carried away on that.

Sir, I have been given responsibility for tourism. We are working hard to see that we can continue to enjoy the receipts that we have been getting from that sector. There have been some challenges. We are restructuring the Barbados Tourism Authority, and we appreciate the extra resources that we are getting. We also understand that BTI, the tourism investment side of it, we have to restructure that as well too, because a lot of these institutions were not functioning properly.

Sir, I mentioned the mess that Hotel and Resorts Limited is in. These are the challenges. The Barbados Conference Services Limited has yet to register a profit and has a mere monopoly on providing conferencing facilities in Barbados. We are determined to clean up that, and to have it functioning properly that we can have conferencing facilities offered not only to locals, but abroad.

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

Hon. H.L. SEALY: We have to work within the limited elbow space we have been given. Sir, BTI would love to have more than \$15 million to invest, but we cannot have it because we understand the situation with respect to the circumstances we have been left in.

In conclusion, I believe that the twin objective outlined by the Honourable Member for St. John, in presenting these Estimates, the initial step has been achieved. We have brought new energy to the provision of our social services, and at the same time we are shoring up and ensuring that our economic base would be strong and that we can see steady growth in our productive sectors. Barbados must become an attractive place in which to invest so that we can afford to have the social services and high quality of life that we have grown accustomed to. It is the reason the people voted for change. It is the reason that this Government is in office now, and we plan to do everything possible, to see that we achieve these objectives. I associate myself totally with these Estimates and I will be supporting the Appropriate Bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can you speak close to the microphone?

Mr. R.ST.C. TOPPIN: Thank you.

Mr. R.ST.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate. I want to by congratulating the Honourable Members for St. Michael North East and St. Peter for making the real presentations on these Estimates document.

Asides.

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

Mr. R.ST.C. TOPPIN: Sir, while I cannot congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister for the presentation of his contribution, I must congratulate him

for doing what he does best, namely reading very painstakingly that which he does not understand, and intermittently pausing to launch, in some cases, un-researched assaults on the character and integrity of a number of individuals in this country. Sir, that is all well and good with me. That is his style and he is distinguished for that.

Sir, I want to insist that this new Government starts to work. This new Government needs to start to work. It is unbelievable that in a space of two months, not one single Bill could have been brought to this Chamber, not one. Sir, not one single Resolution, except the one on the vacuous Throne Speech, was brought to the Honourable Chamber in two months. It is unacceptable and it is unbelievable. All that has been brought has been a number of Supplementaries prepared by technical officers and presented to ministers who took them to Cabinet, who then sent them on here. No work has yet been done by this new Government.

Sir, it is important that the Government starts to work, because there is no political Party in the history of Barbados that has ever excited the expectations of the electorate more than the Democratic Labour Party in the last general election. Sir, by some inducement, and we all know what that inducement was, the Democratic Labour Party frenzied the electorate of this country, especially the youth, into believing that once you voted for the Democratic Labour Party, they would have been assured of instant gratification, instant.

Sir, I congratulate the Democratic Labour Party on their victory, but I want to urge them to stop loitering in the corridors of power, stop believing that doing tours here, there and everywhere equate to work and get down to some serious business. They just applauded when I spoke about exciting expectations, but they should know that when those expectations, and I say when deliberately, primarily of young people are frustrated, those are the ones who will not forget the promise of instant gratification. Sir, when the Democratic Labour Party does not live up to the promises they have made, woe betide the said Democratic Labour Party. I am saying that these young people should not accept any excuses whatsoever, because I am going to give the Honourable Members on that side a piece of advice. You should not do or promise anything in Opposition that you cannot live with in Government, and they better come to realise that. Sir, by now some work should have been done by somebody on that side, some work, something, somewhere.

Sir, the problem is, we have a Prime Minister who is not leading by example.

11.50 a.m.

Sequence 90

Estimates - Wednesday, March 19, 2008

House A5A, Sequence 91, 11.50 a.m.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: ...

Sir, by now work should have been done by somebody on That Side, but the problem is that we have a Prime Minister who is not leading by example.

The Prime Minister should be working very hard, because he has three Ministers in his Ministry. Sir, by all means, by now, some work should be produced. Instead, the Prime Minister sees his job as a Monday to Friday, 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., when he is here.

Sir, we had to start this morning early, to accommodate him jetting off, yet again, with one of his sidekicks again...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Will the Honourable Member please withdraw that and I ask that it be struck from the record.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Yes, Sir, I withdraw.

Sir, the Prime Minister is jetting off again, with a Minister from his Ministry, I believe, on another flying expedition.

Sir, I agree with the Ministers on That Side wholeheartedly. If they see that their Prime Minister is not working, why should they bother themselves about getting down to any serious work on behalf of this country. Sir, I endorse that approach. The problem is that while that is being done, the country's development is being put on a pause. Sir, this is what concerns me.

Sir, our development over the years made this country the envy of perhaps every other country in the region, and most in the world. The truth is that contrary to what the Democratic Labour Party is now saying and trying to convince itself about, they have inherited an economy and a state of affairs that has far surpassed their expectations. Sir, that is the problem. They now have it too good.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have an economy firing on all cylinders, except I believe for a slight dip in international business, all of the other cylinders were firing. Sir, not only on the economic side they inherited some riches but the social programme was there. They inherited a rate of unemployment of 6.7 per cent, a fact that even the

Prime Minister, despite his protestation perhaps during the last election, which compelled him to make a pledge in the Manifesto to set up a special Ministry as the former Prime Minister pointed out, he abandoned that, Sir. There was no need any longer to see unemployment in Barbados as a real social problem. Sir, I would not expect the new Honourable Members on That Side, who would not have gone into their constituency offices in 1994, to see the numbers that were coming to us about jobs. On any given day in our constituency office as a representative, out of 100 persons seen, ninety of them came about jobs. Sir, they would not have lived to see that go down, because when you see 100 people six to eight months later, only 50 are coming about jobs. Then, another six months later, only 20 came about jobs, to the point where the issue of jobs faded into insignificance, and the issue became other matters that they came to raise with you. Sir, they are now starting, so they would now be encountering first time situations, but in any case, the fact is that you can see with the naked eye that unemployment in this country has decreased significantly.

Sir, they found a situation where Income Tax reform had taken place to the extent that some 26 000 people were taken off the Income Tax roll in this country so that more money was put in their pockets. In our Manifesto, a pledge for further Income Tax reform was made

They saw a plethora of houses built across this country and repaired by an Urban Development Commission, which may have had its flaws but it still delivered significantly, in relation to certain important social areas in this country.

They saw, Sir, an ever increasing Reverse Tax Credit for the working poor, again putting more money in people's pockets.

They saw a transfer of lots in urban tenancies to tenants at the price of \$2.50 per square foot, et cetera. Sir, the story could go on and on.

Therefore, this Government has inherited a wicket that anybody could bat on, even the Hon. Member for St. John and Prime Minister, who never played cricket or games that most boys played, could bat on this wicket and play shots all around the wicket, once you keep your eyes on the ball. Sir, people really should not come into this Parliament and speak without researching matters.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard a shockingly low-standard presentation by the Hon. Member for St. George South. I cannot believe that someone could come into this Chamber and does not understand what Project OASIS was doing, but could still speak about it and make the statement that they are going to not only give satisfaction to boys-on-the-block but they are going to expand it to girls as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how could somebody really not know that Project OASIS covers both men and women? How could somebody come in and in such a simplistic way, commend the Minister of Public Works for trying something because, in her words, "...after all nothing ventured, nothing gained."

Sir, could you imagine entrusting this country to that sort of simple-mindedness? Sir, it is really a gamble. I am not even going to get to the Member for Christ Church South, who did not even know what BOLT stands for. He thought it was one of those things you put on a screw and screw down something.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to urge these Ministers to take their jobs more seriously and get down to brass tacks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to share some issues, in relation to the Ministry of Tourism. Sir, the Minister who just spoke, I think he spent 2½ minutes saying something that in the future somewhere along the line, I believe that we would get to understand. Sir, the Minister of International Transport said even less.

Sir, I want to begin by seeking a clarification as to who is the Minister of International Transport? I heard the Prime Minister announce certain designations about who is the Minister of International Transport. Since then, I have not heard the Minister of International Transport make any comment prior to today on international transport.

Sir, I just want to be clear in my mind, so that I can continue to regard the Honourable Member for Christ Church South as the Minister of International Transport. Sir, I am going to give him the benefit of the doubt at this stage, so the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is the Minister of International Transport.

Sir, I want to say that the most successful year ever for the Ministry of Tourism in this country has been last year, 2007. This is not only in relation to the numbers of tourists that came to Barbados but in terms of the revenue earned in the tourism sector last year. Sir, \$2.4 billion were earned from tourism last year, and just under 1.2 million tourists visited this country.

Sir, the success story of the tourism ministry over the last several years, has not been by accident or happenstance. Sir, it was because of a number of initiatives that we put in place.

Firstly, we recognised that there was no sense whatsoever, in separating the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport. We tried that in our initial days as

a Government, and recognised that it did not work. Therefore, the Other Side ought to have benefited from that experience. Therefore, why would a new Government having the benefit of hindsight, do something as ludicrous as to separate the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of International Transport? International transport is the lifeblood of the Ministry of Tourism, and it ought to be unified and fused.

Sir, we also ensured that there was proper marketing and properly-planned development of the hotel sector. Sir, we recognised that we could not even think of competing, unless we invested in property development.

House A5A, Sequence 91, 12:00:14

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, we recognised that we could not even think of competing unless we invested in property development. Sir, in terms of addressing property development, in the hotel sector, we did not focus our efforts only on the up-market hotels, we ensured that we spent considerable sums upgrading the small hotel sector of Barbados. To that end, the last Government spent \$30 million ensuring that the small hotel sector was sufficiently upgraded to be able to compete adequately in the market. Fifty hotels benefited from that \$30 million. Of them, 22 of them were upgraded from one and two stars hotels to three stars hotels.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also ensured that there were a number of bed and breakfast rooms to satisfy the demand for tourism in this country. At the end of 2007 when we had left office, we had set that standard for tourism. The question now is: How is the Democratic Labour Party going to ensure that they keep us at that standard or in fact take us to the next higher level in relation to the tourist industry in Barbados?

Sir, we in the Barbados Labour Party, when in Government, had a number of challenges in relation to tourism. We had 911; two serious health crises, foot and mouth disease and the Avian Flu; and two wars. Despite that, Sir, we were able to take positions and deal with those situations and ensured that the tourist industry was still able to expand in this country. Is the Democratic Labour Party now going to roll over and play dead and make all sorts of excuses? They have the advantage, that we did not have, of knowing that some uncertain times are ahead. It is already being said by some players that a recession is already on in the United States of America. The Democratic Labour Party knows that, so they could prepare better than we had to prepare. We did not know about a 911, but we managed to recover from that in quick time. The Democratic Labour Party now has the advantage of being able to engage in all sorts of planning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought I would have heard something from the Minister about what the policies of the Democratic Labour Party would be to ensure that the tourism sector does not fall from grace, particularly since we have heard that there is a new role for the Barbados Tourism Authority. The subvention in the Estimates for the Barbados Tourism Authority is less than the amount that it received during the course of the last financial year. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the face of uncertain times and projected softening of markets, how is the country going to grapple with that when the Government has not provided in the Estimates even the same amount the Barbados Tourism Authority got last year? Sir, I want to hear the Minister.

Sir, one thing for sure is that the answer is not to be found in the two irrelevant and insignificant paragraphs in the vacuous Throne Speech. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all that we saw in the Throne Speech, already a document of this House, is that this new Government is going to be drawing up a tourism master plan which would diversify and enhance the tourism products of Barbados by linking tourism to agriculture and culture, which already happens.

In fact, Sir, I want to refer to one single dimension of our culture, which is Crop Over. Sir, anyone who would bother to do a little research, as I hope they would eventually start to do, would see that the month of July in any given year is one of our top performing months in terms of the number of tourists coming to Barbados because of Crop Over, so tourism and culture are already linked.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, linking tourism with sports is already in place. Barbados is already the envy of the region in terms of our sports tourism programme. Sir, it goes on to talk about the plan would include the development of the concept of community tourism. Sir, I have news for them. Community tourism is already the foundation of the tourist industry in Barbados. We move from the house guest to the guesthouse to the apartment hotel. Sir, that has already been the foundation of the Barbados tourism industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not even mentioning places like Oistins that some of the Honourable Members on that side opposed when we were spending money on it, or Moon Town. Sir, we already have these things in place. Therefore, this cannot be the solution to how this new Government plans to take tourism forward. I will wait anxiously to hear how they plan to take the sector forward.

Sir, I want also to come onto a scandalous issue in my view. Sir, this Government has professed that its major concern is squandermania. This government has argued that it should be a thing of the past, yet we could see in their Estimates, a plan to pay some \$600 000 over a two-year period, some \$300 000 per year, to have a tourism master plan prepared. Sir, I would call that highway

robbery because we already have a Green Paper on Tourism, which came to this Chamber already. Sir, all of the issues that you would want to see addressed in a tourism master plan are in this Green Paper. Sir, this Green Paper was prepared with input from 116 persons representing 73 organisations in Barbados.

Sir, the World Travel and Tourism Council, if they know what I am referring to when I mention that organisation, has done a lot of work already in relation to tourism master plans. They have endorsed the types of issues that should go into a tourism master plan. Sir, nearly all the points they have taken on board are already in here. I am not saying that this necessarily is the perfect document and certainly it would not constitute a tourism master plan but all the groundwork is in here.

In addition, at least one other country in the region has already engaged in the preparation of a tourism master plan and it may have already been finalised. They could get their hands on that, so there is no need to go reinventing the wheel and taking up \$600 000 of the taxpayers' money to lick it out on a consultancy or consultancies when the work that is left to be done can be done in-house to bring about the tourism master plan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a crying shame that a Government that has come into power - and I always say power when I speak about them, not office - on a plan that they are going to eradicate squandermania could now seek to take \$600 000 of the Barbados taxpayers money to engage the services of consultants, the very concept which they have outlawed in this country. Sir, in my view, that is highway robbery.

Sir, I am not going to go into the issue of Hartley Henry. I believe that the facts on him would come out in time, they always do. I just want to ask before I move on - squandermania again - what is the cost to the taxpayers of the newly appointed personal photographer to the Prime Minister. Sir, let us sort out these little niggling points.

Sir, I want to know how many Ministers and Members of Parliament went to the recent Intercession Heads of Government Meeting and what was the cost of that to the taxpayers of this country.

House A5A Sequence 92

12.10 p.m.

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to move onto the issue in relation to LIAT because I want to know the status of Government's commitment to providing financial resources to LIAT. Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, as Minister of International Transport, came to this Honourable Chamber yesterday and

this is what the Minister said: “The Government put large sums of money into LIAT and it needs to get returns.”

Sir, I would expect that after a man takes 35 years to get into this Honourable House and becomes a Minister, that he would have a little more to say than that. Sir, all the Honourable Member could say was that the Government has put large sums of money into LIAT and it needs to get returns. Sir, that was disappointing to me, I would like to think that the Minister of International Transport would have more to offer than just that to the issue of LIAT.

Asides.

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

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to LIAT, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Minister of Tourism, spoke about tough love between Barbados and LIAT. Sir, the Honourable Member did not amplify on that, and I want to know what that means. I want to know if that means that the contributions to LIAT by the Government of Barbados are going to cease.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard there was some talk between the Prime Minister of Barbados and the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago indicated he was thinking of adding a number of turbo props to Caribbean Airlines, and I know this Prime Minister is fascinated by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Sir, where Barbados used to lead, Barbados now intends to be a follower under this new Prime Minister, vis-a-vis, the Prime of Minister Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, the Honourable Member knows he is misleading this Honourable House. The Honourable Member knows that Barbados does not allow anybody to lead it.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to know if and when these new turbo props come on stream, if we are going to be shifting the financial contributions from LIAT to this new Trinidadian carrier. I want to know if we are going to be sharing it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to know if we are going to be shifting the finances away from LIAT; what regulatory framework would be put in place in Barbados and in the region, to ensure that framework would promote competition and would give other carriers incentives to set up operations in the region. I want to know if the tough love has turned out to be a withdrawal of financial support to LIAT.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no romantic attachment to any airline, I am only asking a number of questions to see if certain decisions are taken, what would be the consequences of those decisions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the three minutes left...

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

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, recently both the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of International Transport made some comments about the Barbados Port Authority. The

Minister of Tourism actually referred to it as an obsolete cargo port. Sir, I want to give some facts, the Barbados Port Authority recently spent over \$100 million in a physical expansion and institutional strengthening upgrade. It has won “Port of the Year Award” on many occasions, it has made huge millions of profits over the years, and it has been the envy of the Caribbean in terms of other ports.

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

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I want to get to the issue of Constituency Councils. Sir, the Honourable Member sought to give the impression that it is going to be most impartial...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member’s time has expired.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Yes, Sir, then I cannot say what Haynesley Benn said yesterday.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I rise to enter this debate, I first want to congratulate the former Prime Minister, because he stood in the political dock this morning and voluntarily confessed to the political charges that were laid by the Democratic Labour Party during the campaign and during the Estimates speeches. Sir, the fact that the former Prime Minister has pleaded guilty this morning should be congratulated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we both have practised at the Bar, we know that sometimes when a person in the dock pleads guilty they sometimes ask the court to take all further charges into consideration, and so I believe I have a number of other political charges that I would want to put to this august Chamber. Sir, based on the fact that there

was a voluntary confession by the former Prime Minister, I believe that confession would cover the charges that I would lay in this Honourable Chamber today.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, all it needs now is for this Honourable Chamber to impose a political sentence.

Sir, I sat and listened to the Honourable Member for St. George North, who made much headway and placed questions about rental units. Sir, I am saying to this Honourable Chamber that the Honourable Member for St. George North and Members of the former Cabinet have no moral grounding or no authority to question any issue about rental units. Sir, there is a reason I say that and as I said, I will lay further charges.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe this nation would be surprised to hear that for the past three years, all the rental units owned by Government have not been covered by insurance. Sir, I crave your indulgence to say that on July 27, 2006, the National Housing Corporation was sent a letter by the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. Sir, the contents of that letter stated that the policy of insurance had expired with effect from April 1, 2003.

Asides.

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Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, the National Housing Corporation was sent a letter by the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and the contents of that letter stated that the policy of insurance expired with effect from April 1, 2003. Sir, the nation should be surprised and shocked because we had 4 000 people living in units without any insurance coverage. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to you that is a political charge that cannot be denied. Sir, I also say to you that it is gross negligence, it is recklessness and it is ineptitude. Sir, I cannot believe that a former administration could do this because the former administration articulated in this country that it was a caring Government, that no one should be left behind, that every Bajan is a winner and, Sir, we have pensioners and we have children living in houses owned by this administration not insured since 2003.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying to you that the former administration owes a duty of care to those tenants.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North is misleading the House. He knows and he will come to find

out as Minister of Housing and Lands that the majority of Government's properties are under-insured and that some of them are not insured. He will also find out that insurance is not compulsory for Government properties. Sir, more to the point, if there is a fire, Government rebuilds the home and what Government has is more like self-insurance. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will find out that even this Parliament is under-insured. Sir, Government cannot pay the full insurance for Parliament, otherwise, it will break the Treasury.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you cannot insure Warrens Building because Government would have to break the Treasury. Sir, insurance is not a compulsory thing because it is understood that government will rebuild the entity. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North will get to find that out.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: I just want to thank the Honourable Member for St. George North again for accepting responsibility and indirectly accepting the gross negligence of the former administration.

DR. W.F. DUGID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. If the Honourable Member is suggesting that it is gross negligence not to have had all the units insured, is he then giving an understanding to this House that his administration will insure them and to let us know when they insure them fully.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you put charges to members on the other side, they rattle them. Sir, I will move on to my second charge.

Aside.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order.

DR. W.F. DUGID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have asked for a ruling on my point of order. The Honourable Member came and laid a charge that the units were not insured. If it is obviously negligent on behalf of a previous administration, is he now giving an undertaking that his administration will insure all units.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West is my good friend so I will move on to the second charge, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sir, there was a meeting held on January 9, 2008, at 2.35 p.m. by the former Board of the National Housing Corporation and I want to state the law clearly. Sir, we speak about fiscal prudence and I say to you that we are all aware of Section 1.2.7 of the Financial Rules, 1971. It says:

"Where the expenditure in respect of the supply of goods or the undertaking of works or services is in the

excess of 100 000, tenders shall be invited by the department concerned and a contract drawn up in a form of approval by the Solicitor-General or another legal officer in the public service, nominated by him shall be entered into between the accounting officer or the officer authorised to act on his behalf and the successful tender”.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on January 14, 2008, the day before the elections...

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: I want to say to Honourable Members on the other side. I wonder if the former Minister of Housing at the time, because he was in his office on January 10th when he was allocating at Bath, I wonder if he had notice or knowledge of this. Sir, on January 14, 2008,...

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. When he says the former Minister of Housing, he should state which Minister of Housing.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member from St. Andrew were ordered to be expunged from the record by MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot call names but based on facts, I was Minister of Housing in 1994 and I saw the document with respect to the allocation by the former Minister of Housing....

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member from St. Andrew were ordered to be expunged from the record by MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER

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Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Honourable Member for St. Andrew, I am absolving you from any liability.

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is again misleading the House, and I want to know which former Minister of Housing he is referring to, otherwise I will have to repeat the comments that I made earlier.

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew was in full flight yesterday and he is trying to put a defence...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West, I will speak to you for the last time in these Chambers about your behaviour. This Chair is not biased and I would want you to withdraw those remarks and apologise to this Chair.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West, your conduct is unsatisfactory.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West, I heard the remarks when you said that the Chair is biased. I want you to apologise to this Chair.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Sir, I will withdraw the remarks which indicated that the Deputy Speaker was conducting the proceedings in a biased manner. I am sure that the Deputy Speaker will continue to lead this debate in a way that would not be biased either to the minority side or the majority side. I withdraw those remarks, not that there were in the record, but I certainly withdraw them.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West, can you withdraw those remarks without qualifying anything, or making any reference to the question of the Chair being biased. Thank you.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: I withdraw.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, I was saying that on January 14, 2008, the former Minister of Housing, the then Honourable Member for Christ Church East. I never said the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, so I do not understand why you are rising. Sir, the former member, this is what was going on in his ministry. I have to state to Parliament what came to light. Sir, on January 14, 2008, the Board of Directors agreed that a contract will be awarded to a company call Ajax Construction for \$2 million; then on January 15, 2008, election day, a letter was returned accepting the offer of \$2 million for the contract.

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Attorney General is in his seat, and I believe that he should advise the Honourable Member before he speaks in those tones. He mentioned the relevant regulation with respect to the award of contracts. What he has not done is to state that there are certain exceptions, in cases where work has to be undertaken urgently, or where there are situations, because I was Minister of Housing and I

know of those occasions, where there are cases where there is work of a specialised nature. I must say that, unless he goes into details, that this was work of a specialised nature.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: It is Section 137(a), and the Cabinet has to make that decision. Sir, there is no evidence or any information that would show that it fell into the category or categories under Section 137(a). There is no evidence. I am saying that it was in breach of Section 137(a)

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is again misleading the House. He cannot say, because he had the opportunity to investigate the nature of the work. So, he cannot come and say that any rules were broken. He has not done any investigation. I believe, and it is a little too early, it was work of a special nature, and the company that he is speaking about, Ajax Construction, they do specialised work.

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, the Queens Council on the other side is trying to put up a defence. Sir, you know he is eagerly defending, and I believe that I have a lot of respect for the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, as a member of the Bar. I am moving on.

Sir, the two charges would now have to be accepted by the other side because we have heard talk about collective responsibility, ministerial responsibility, and you know that actions...

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: On a point of order. When you are speaking about collective responsibility, that only applies where these matters go to Cabinet. When you are dealing with contracts of Statutory Boards, they do not have to go to Cabinet. So, I do not know what the Honourable Member is speaking about. I told him to move on.

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew wants me to go to the Warrens project. I will go on to the Warrens project. Thank, you, Honourable Member for St. Andrew for telling me to go on. I will now go to the Warrens project, thank you.

12.40 p.m.

Sequence 95

Estimates - Wednesday, March 19, 2008

House A5A, Sequence 96, 12.40 p.m.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is one charge that you must plead guilty to, because there is no way that a project in which the original estimate for the construction of the Warren Building was \$35 million and at March 2008 the cost is now \$91 million and climbing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know how many low and medium income houses, could have been built from the wastage of the millions of dollars. I say, respectfully, that what has happened over time is that the National Housing Corporation has been moved away from its original mandate and social mandate, which is to provide housing for the less fortunate and the vulnerable group in the society, because that is the social responsibility of the State. Sir, the charge is that the Members on That Side, the former administration, by the wastage of the monies on this project, prevented the National Housing Corporation from providing thousands of houses for Barbadians.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, low income groups have been excluded, but prominent Barbadians can benefit from the programmes of the National Housing Corporation to the detriment of those vulnerable groups, and persons who depend on the State, to provide houses and land for them.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact is that the National Housing Corporation is indebted to the National Insurance. In fact, it is now for the non payment of statutory obligations in relation to NIS, and I must say that it is now outstanding close to about \$7 million. Sir, what happened is that the National Housing Corporation had to transfer property to liquidate some of the monies owed to the National Insurance. Sir, we are now faced with the task of redirecting and refocusing the National Housing Corporation back to its original position.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I do not really want to interrupt the Honourable Member but the Honourable Member is suggesting that when Government decided to build the property at Warrens that this shifted the focus of the National Housing Corporation, from building houses.

Sir, what happened is that the Government had decided to build that property at Warrens, and the National Housing Corporation was just used as the agency. Sir, that is all but it had nothing to do with the focus of the National Housing Corporation.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there seems to be some inconsistencies over on the Other Side,

because I congratulated the Rt. Hon. Member for St. Peter in his opening speech for his voluntary confession of any squandermania or whatever. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew now is either cutting away from the former Prime Minister or he is trying to put up the flimsiest of defence. Sir, Barbados knows that the \$91 million could have been spent building houses. Sir, from \$35 million to \$91 million is inexcusable, and it is not acceptable.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say that the Democratic Labour Party administration will be focusing on access to decent housing to ensure that every Barbadian will have a right to own a piece of this rock and to ensure that we have affordable housing for those persons in the vulnerable group. Sir, an allegation was made in here that the Minister of Housing called people back for their deposits, who had paid down on house lots.

Sir, I have in my possession documentation dated 13th November 2007, indicating that the former Minister of Housing, the Hon. Member for Christ Church East, gave directions to the general manager at the time, to call in the rental accounts, tell the people to come back because we have to take back those lots at Bagatelle, St. Thomas.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Thank you, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member's time has expired.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

The question that the House be now suspended until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

House A5A, Sequence 96, 12:49:04

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER No. 1 (RESUMED)

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Deputy Speaker, last Tuesday, pursuant to the provisions of Section 108 of the Constitution of this island, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 2008-2009 were laid in this Honourable House and the Appropriation Bill attaching thereto was read for a first time. Two days ago, the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance led off the debate on that Bill, and I should like to begin by congratulating him on the commendable lucidity and the exemplary erudition with which he discharged his responsibilities not only to this House but to the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Appropriation Bill, has to be seen in its context. The present Government came to office on the 15th day of January 2008, a mere two and a half months ago. It is the first Government to have come to office for the first time just two and a half months before the end of a financial year. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has particular significance for what is contained in these Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I listened to the speeches from the other side, I formed the impression that the Government was in office for the last ten years and that these Estimates were being judged on that basis. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the first Government since Independence to have come to office two and a half months before the end of the financial year succeeding a Government that has just completed three terms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Barbados Labour Party came to Government in 1976, it came to office seven full months before the end of the financial year. Sir, even in those circumstances the programmes of the Government did not begin to take shape until about two years later. Except for abolishing a sale tax which had been imposed by the previous Democratic Labour Party Government, the policies of the Democratic Labour Party Government which the Barbados Labour Party had inherited were continued until about 1978.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we came back to power in 1986, we came back to power ten months before the end of the financial year and thereby hangs a tale. Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though we came back to power ten months before the end of the financial year, by the time we got to power on the 29th of May 1986, I seem to recall that the vote for the National Assistance Board had already been exhausted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of the Democratic Labour Party at this time took the position that before it ventures too far out to sea it had to be sure what it came and found. The Minister of Finance, quite sensibly, quite wisely and quite rightly made that clear to the

country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the context within which these Estimates have to be seen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are not the Estimates for 2008-2013. The speeches coming from the other side gave the impression that these Estimates were constructed to cover the period 2008-2013, and as long as a particular item or a particular policy was not to be found in these Estimates, the Government stood indicted and condemned. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are the Estimates for one financial year, 2008-2009 and have to be seen against that background.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the case against the Government, as stated by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, is that the Estimates disclosed no vision for Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is true that in his speech to this Honourable Chamber, the Minister of Finance did not use the word vision. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said that these Estimates disclosed no vision, I believe that what she had in mind was what her former leader said six weeks after he came to office in 1994. At that time when he was asked what his vision was for Barbados, he said it was to see a car parked outside of every house.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very glad that this Government is not led by anyone with a vision so foreshortened because we are now as a country feeling the consequences of having a car parked outside of every house. In fact, as I have had to say elsewhere, the demand of the country now is to have a house parked outside every car. That is why the Minister of Housing and Lands has his work cut out over the next five years because the performance of the previous Government has been so woeful in the area of low income housing that the masses of the people of Barbados have had, so far as their dealings with the National Housing Corporation have been concerned, to navigate between frustration, despondency and despair. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it now falls to this regime to try to correct the failings of the previous Government in that regard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not plead guilty to the issue or to the claim that the Estimates disclose no vision. The Estimates certainly does not disclose so foreshortened a vision as that of saying that we look forward to seeing a car parked outside of every house.

House A5A Sequence 97

2.00 p.m.

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Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East recited a shopping list of achievements of the previous Government. Sir, as the Honourable Member recited the list, I was forced to ask myself, if a Government in office has achieved all of these objectives, if a Government in office has registered all of these achievements, why was it that the people of Barbados, for about the last seven years, have been so angry, have been so disillusioned, have been so disenchanted with what was going on in the corridors of power. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the people of Barbados went to vote in January, 2008, an angry, frustrated and disillusioned population was voting in the election, and the results demonstrated a thunderous rebuff for the Barbados Labour Party and an endorsement of a more credible politics for Barbados.

Sir, here we are today focusing on a set of Estimates which have had to be cautiously introduced because as the Minister of Finance quite correctly said, we do not yet know what lies hidden under the rocks of Government. We do not know what forms of life lie hidden there because if in 1986, two months into the financial year, a whole vote could have been exhausted, it is important that we make sure when we launch out on the putting of our programme into effect, we know there can be no turning back and that we are on solid ground.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, two-and-one-half months into Government, the Opposition is trying to give the impression that we should have achieved all of the objectives which we set for ourselves in a Manifesto that is supposed to be relevant for the next five years. We will not be bullied, blackmailed or blustered into meeting the agenda of an Opposition that was rejected two-and-one-half months ago. We are going to set the pace at which the events should happen in Barbados. We are going to ensure that the people of this country are not disappointed by what we have to do or by what we have to say as a Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the shopping list recited by Leader of the Opposition, she made the point that the Barbados Labour Party Government had a more successful programme in relation to land and getting land into the hands of poor people than the Democratic Labour Party had. In fact, the Honourable Member said that the Barbados Labour Party was the most successful party in Government, so far as the issue of land was concerned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member said that the ingenuity of the Barbados Labour Party had brought into being the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, and she condemned the Democratic Labour Party for the amendments which the Party made to that Act, some time around 1989.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have had to say, over and over again, that I am not entranced or enthralled by the politics of mythology. The first point I want to make is that it is not true that the Barbados Labour Party came up with the idea that plantation tenancies should be handled in such a way that the tenants in those tenancies should have their lots transferred to them. I have had to make this point, over and over again. Sir, page 5 of the Democratic Labour Party Manifest, 1961, makes clear the intentions of the then Government to acquire all plantation tenancies in Barbados and to transfer the land to the tenants in those tenancies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Party actually embarked on the programme but discovered what the Minister of Housing and Lands is discovering now, 47 years later, which is that the shortage of land surveyors in Barbados was going to make the job difficult. In addition, problems developed in the urban tenancies of Barbados where landlords, out of whim, fancy and caprice, were just ejecting tenants without rhyme or reason and were raising rents, out of whim and caprice, also.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is when the Party had to divert its attention to dealing with urban tenancies and when it passed, I believe the Tenancies Development Act, 1965, which is still on the statute books and which is still effective to deal with problems confronted by tenants both in urban and rural Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was not that the Democratic Labour Party did not know of the problems relating to plantation tenancies, the Government of the day actually embarked on the process and a shortage of land surveyors, coupled with the problem that developed in urban tenancies, diverted it from that course.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if 20 years later the Barbados Labour Party came and introduced the policy, we have nothing to quarrel about, so far as that is concerned. It is true that the Barbados Labour Party did not introduce the policy we had in mind, because we did not contemplate a piece of legislation that would also be taking lands from poor people, to convey to poor people as well.

Sir, that is precisely what the legislation introduced by the Barbados Labour Party in 1980 did. It not only tackled plantation tenancies but also tackled private landowners who own small lots, sometimes one-quarter of an acre, who were just renting the lands out, until such time they were ready to reclaim them, to perhaps pass on to their children. Sir, that is why we amended the Act, in 1989, to increase the number of lots that would constitute a tenancy. It was increased from two lots to more than five lots and to bring it in line with the concept of tenancy in the Tenancies Control Act, which we had passed in 1965.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the background to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, I heard the Barbados Labour Party proudly and glibly boasting about, over and over again.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would not get into arguments about who did anything first, those arguments should only be conducted with Adam and Eve, but when I hear history being distorted, I have to jump in and set the record clear. Sir, that achievement is of limited value when viewed in the context of its history and of its evolution.

2.10 p.m.

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Hon. F.J. STUART: Of course, I could also say that in 1965, when we had to deal with urban tenancies, Barbados had a local Government system at that time, which had been introduced since 1958 and the 1958 Local Government Act defined St. Michael and the City Council was then controlled by the only conservative Party of Barbados at the time, the Barbados National Party, which had been led by a distinguished former member of this House, the late Ernest Deighton Mottley. But since he was not concerned with dealing with tenants or with tenancies, but more concerned with pursuing the interests of the conservatives in this society, is why the Democratic Labour Party had to step in and deal with the problem of urban tenants and urban tenancies in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us get the history right. I hear a lot of myths being trumpeted around this place. I do not boast about how long I was in this House but I boast about how long I was following politics in Barbados from the age of 8 and I, therefore, know what has happened around here for a long time. Sir, fortune placed me just 100 yards away from the dwelling house of the late Reynolds Weekes and I saw all the politicians of Barbados come up there and my interest in politics was excited from the age of 8 and I have followed what was going on around this country from then until now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot be misled or duped by these distortions of history and I would not want to hear again any talk about the ingenuity, creativity or originality of the Barbados Labour Party so far as the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act is concerned because at page 5 of the Democratic Labour Party's 61 Manifesto the policy is there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the second point I want to make is this. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, who regrettably is not in her seat but she did explain why

she could not be here, talked about the economy that we came to office on January 15th and found. She said we had a good inheritance and that the Barbados Labour Party was proud of what it was passing on to this Government. The former Government cannot have it both ways. When the former Government came to office in 1994, they said they were inheriting an economic catastrophe, that economic catastrophe had to do with an economy that was growing at upwards of 3 per cent per year and an inflation rate that was less than 1 per cent; a fiscal deficit that was about 2.5 per cent; a national debt that was half of what it is now; a current account that was in surplus and an unemployment rate that was falling at a rate of 3 per cent per annum. Sir, that is what they came to office and found.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the year 2008, we have inherited an economy that is growing no faster; the inflation rate is much higher than we left it in 1994; the current account that we left in surplus is now in deficit; the national debt has doubled since 1994 and the unemployment rate, the Government says, is 6.7 per cent. Well, of course, it was falling at the rate of 3 per cent in 1994, if it did not get to 6 at some time, something would have been wrong. Sir, even so, I do not get into argument over unemployment figures for the simple reason that if the unemployment rate in Barbados were down to 1 per cent and there were 15 young men in this country who wanted work and could not find any, all the people who are working would have to try and get home by 6.00 p.m. and lock themselves in their houses. So getting into an argument over unemployment figures is to thread on very treacherous terrain because, the truth is, that it is not who is working that is important, it is who is not working and wants to find work and cannot find anything that is the threat to the society. Therefore, if the unemployment rate at the present time is just over 6 per cent, all I can say is that the jobs created in Barbados carefully bypassed the constituency of St. Michael South because ever since I was elected to that constituency, every clinic I have the constant and unceasing refrain is jobs, jobs, jobs. Those are the keys upon which the doleful melody of life is played out in the constituency of St. Michael South, which I represent. Sir, if it is down to 6 per cent, some how the people of St. Michael South were excluded from that bounty.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to get past this one-upmanship on these issues and come face with the real challenges facing this society. Sir, that is precisely where the problem was with the Barbados Labour Party over the last 13 years. This country was deafened by the white noise of statistics, percentages and fractions as though behind these statistics; behind these fractions; behind these percentages could not be found ordinary human beings of flesh and blood and the people got sufficiently tired of all this that they rejected it. Sir, that is why at the core of Democratic Labour Party policy for the next five years is the concept of social care because all we have heard about

for the last 13 years is the economy, which is what this country heard from the planters, when they had control of Barbados; from the imperialists, when they had control of Barbados and from the neo-colonialists in the Barbados Labour Party when they got control of Barbados. Sir, all we have heard about is the economy as though ordinary human being of flesh and blood are just atoms, floating around in the atmosphere and they have no particular interest in how their dreams are realised.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the concept of social care is now intended to counter-balance this economic view. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not to be taken as saying that the economy is not important; it always was important but economies exist to serve people and as long as the people's needs; the people's dreams are not being satisfied, no matter how long you boast about how well an economy is performing, you are not discharging the basic responsibility required of an enlightened politics. Sir, we saw the consequences of this in Britain under the conservative Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher, who went public on one occasion and said that she did not believe there was anything called the society, that Britain was inhabited by individuals...

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Hon. F.J. STUART: There was nothing called a society. Therefore, the focus there was on the economy, ordinary men and women, children, boys and girls, were left to drift until such time, as the society could not take it anymore. The Conservative Party was rejected, and, of course, to this very day, many years later, the society has not yet caught itself.

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

Hon. F.J. STUART: We in the Democratic Labour Party are committed to the concept of a society and believe that social care, looking after the interest of human beings, a humanistic approach to politics, is the answer to the serious problems that now face the people of Barbados: the problems of disillusionment, the problems of despair, the problems of frustration, the problem of anger.

Sir, it is not to be argued, as was argued by the learned Leader of the Opposition that these Estimates reflect no vision. These are the Estimates for one financial year. There are other financial years to come and it will become evident to the people of Barbados what this Government is about as time goes on, and as we are able to access what it is we came and found.

I have fullest confidence that this Government will be able over the next five years, to meet the needs and to satisfy the aspirations of the people of Barbados.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Sir, let me begin by wishing my

good friend, the Speaker well. I was distressed to hear that he was not in the pink of health, and I wish him a speedy recovery.

Sir, I am happy to start where the Honourable Member for St. Michael South ended his presentation. He ended with a lovely alliterative phrase, disillusionment, despair, and I apologise for forgetting the other one. I well remember the disillusionment and despair that Barbadians were not only talking about, but they were living when the Democratic Labour Party was last in office. However, I do not propose to spend time talking about that dark period of this country's history, I would like instead to start where he ended, social care.

Sir, the Honourable Member has indicated that is the focus, the priority, the linchpin of this new model of governance and of this new administration. It has been asked repeatedly, and I do not think that we have ever got a satisfactory answer, how is it you are saying to the public of this country that your focus is going to be on social care, but at the same time you have cut the two pillars on which your social care programme would be founded? It bears repetition. It bears repeating, because at this time there has been no answer. I wish I could say that at this time there has been no satisfactory answer, but this time there is no answer. The only offering that the Honourable Member has put on the table is, this is just the first year of what will be a series of Estimates, therefore, we should give the Democratic Labour Party time, so that their programme will unfold like a flower in the morning.

Sir, the difficulty I have with that is, at a time when the Democratic Labour Party was not in Government, but was in Opposition, at a time when they did not have the reins of the finances of this country in their hands, they were able to say that they were going to give duty free cars, and I will repeat it, to the police, teachers and nurses. There was no issue then of waiting to see how the economy would unfold. There was no issue that they needed to be concerned about the kind of economy that we would leave them. There was no issue of any caution resting in their bosom. Sir, when they were in Opposition they said that they would take that step. When they were in Opposition they boldly said, that they would deliver this programme

within 500 days and that programme within 100 days, and they promised, as my Dear Aunt used to say, "the end and the yard and seven stars."

Sir, today, we are being ask to take a journey with them as they

Asides.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Where I come from it was the end and the yard. I come from Lower Estate, St. George. We had the factory yard. It was the end and the yard and the seven stars. Sir, the world was too big then and we would not talk about the end of the world. We used to talk about the N and yard and the seven stars. Our vision then under the Democratic Labour Party, when I was a boy, stretched no farther than the galvanise, Sir. Now we can talk about the end of the world and beyond.

Sir, we are asked to be patient. The Honourable Members of this House...

Asides.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: We have been told that there is no need for us to give you a honeymoon, may be the people of Barbados will. I hope for your sake that they are convinced by that argument, but I say to you that we on this side are not, because the only indicator we can go on is the Estimates that you, with your officers, have prepared.

The Honourable Member said that they do no know what things lie beneath that may come up. I do not know who prepared their Estimates. I have heard who prepared the Estimates, but the Estimates have been prepared by the hardworking public officers of this country. Unless the system of governance has changed since January 15th, the Estimates process that I know, and that the Leader of the Opposition knows well, is that the officers in the ministry will prepare the programme, taking into account the commitments that have been made over the years, and taking into account the strategic direction that the Government wants to go in.

Asides.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: That is the point I am making.

Sir, strategic direction would not have been dictated by the Barbados Labour Party. We left Government on January 15th, and we have said repeatedly that we did not commit the Estimates. If the Honourable Member speaks to the Parliamentary Secretary, in the Honourable Attorney General's Office, he would be told that this former minister indicated to his Parliamentary Secretary, that I would not meet with her to discuss the Estimates at that time. So, that

all the Honourable Members in Cabinet had a clear slate. We took a position.

Sir, the Honourable Members in Cabinet, on that side, had a clean slate. They had an opportunity to present to their officers what their strategic direction would be, and have Estimates crafted along those lines.

Sir, I am especially fascinated by this Ministry of Social Care. It has a lovely title. It speaks to a sort of benevolence. I suppose it warms the heart, but leaves the belly empty. That it what it does, warms the heart, but leaves the belly empty.

Sir, I cannot understand how little regard, Honourable Members on that side could have for their constituents, that they would be prepared to allow a cut of \$21 million from the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, and replaced those agencies work with a mess of pottage, \$4.5 million they have added.

Sir, the Honourable Member spoke about balancing. As he said balancing, it occurred to be that I do not how \$4.5 million...

HA5A 14.30 p.m. Sequence 100

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House A5A, Sequence 101, 4.30 p.m.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: ...

The Honourable Member spoke about balancing and as he said balancing, it occurred to me that I did not see how \$4.5 million, stretched across 30 constituencies could in any way balance out the cut that has been despatched to the Rural Development Commission and Urban Development Commission.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know my constituency well, like the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. I know the issues that my constituents have to contend with. I know that I am in the House of Assembly and not Mr. Rouse.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my constituency requires a significant amount of assistance from the Rural Development Commission. I did some checking. Sir, to build a one-bedroom chattel house, will cost at least \$45 000. A well and water toilet will get you into the region of \$15 000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot even begin to talk about drainage issues in St. Joseph. When I looked at the

Democratic Labour Party Manifesto, it says that these Councils will comprise of representatives from the Church, and then it talks about perennial problems of street lighting, sporting and recreational facilities.

Sir, I pause there because in my constituency in Proute, a pavilion was under construction, at least up until January 15. It has been stopped by the Minister of Education, but I am being asked to accept, in turn, \$150 000 to satisfy the varied serious needs of my constituents.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: They stopped the pavilion in the Glebe, too.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it goes on to talk about drainage. I do not know what I could do in my constituency of the Scotland District, with drainage. I simply have little understanding how the Honourable Members on That Side, could agree to replace a serious programme for urban rehabilitation, and a serious programme for transforming the lives of people in rural Barbados with an offering of \$150 000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are so many troublesome things about this that I, like all Members of This Side, reserve our positions on this issue. We are anxious to hear, but we have heard 18 Members speak on That Side, and not a single one of them has been able to say what the programme is, Sir. The only concrete thing is that we have been told that a study will be done and consultations will be had. Sir, I was prepared to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know what caused me to worry? I heard just yesterday, in the precincts of this place, the Minister of Agriculture said - he is not in here now but I wish he was - that he had his Constituency Council ready.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that worries me because in the Manifesto it is said that these councils will comprise representatives of the Church, Civil Society and the Political Administration. I was generous enough to think that the Members of the Opposition would have, in some broad definition, been seen as part of the political administration. When the losing candidate for St. Peter could say that he has his council ready, this makes it clear to me and all the Members on This Side, that this is designed to be an effort to cement the position of Members of the Democratic Labour Party in their constituencies, and to destabilise Members of the Opposition in their constituencies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is said that the MP is going to be the focal point in this, but when last I checked - and I checked just now - the Hon. Member for St. Peter was sitting on This Side of the House, and he did not set up any community council. However, the Minister of Agriculture could go and set up one, and boast of it, because he expects somehow to get \$150 000 to spend in St. Peter, without the mandate of the people.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: It is true. He told the Hon. Member for St Michael South East, so speak to him about that, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me put that one side because I want to move on to the issue of the Scotland District. I am expected to alleviate the serious burdens of people who reside in the Scotland District through this Fund. I have said that I do not know how we can do it but I could see why I would be expected to do so, because the Scotland District makes up one-seventh of this country's landmass hardly gets a mention in these Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was watching TV the other night and I heard the same Minister of Agriculture who did a tour in my constituency say that the Scotland District needs a lot of help and there was going to be \$35 million in this year's Estimates and he felt that he would be able to defend it.

Sir, I had to do a double take because that was last Wednesday night's news and these Estimates were laid in the House last Tuesday. I know that when I checked, I did not see any \$35 million in it for the Soil Conservation Commission. Sir, he said that it was in there and he was in a position to defend it. Perhaps, the Minister of Agriculture did not see the Estimates. Perhaps, he did not know that they had been laid in the House the previous day. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Barbados Labour Party developed a programme for the rehabilitation of the Scotland District and we made a determination in a Planning and Priorities Committee Meeting last year that \$35 million would be spent on the Scotland District over a period of five years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to remind the Honourable Member on the Other side that apart from the significance of the Scotland District as a part of Barbados' heritage, that our Physical Development Plan for the Scotland District has three heritage villages. They are Boscobelle, Belleplaine and Bathsheba. All of them happen to be in constituencies held by Barbados Labour Party candidates, but that is a coincidence. These heritage areas, as significant villages in the Scotland District have important roles to play.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, equally, on the area of housing alone, the Scotland District cries out for rehabilitation. Sir, individuals have family lands in the Scotland District that they have not been able to utilise for housing, so they have to bombard the NHC and other agencies to try to find other housing.

House A5A, Sequence 101, 14:40:14

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Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: They have to bombard the National Housing Corporation and other agencies to try to find housing outside of the Scotland District. They have to come to St. Michael and Christ Church, when in truth and in fact what they really want to do is to continue to reside where their navel string is buried.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party Administration heard that call and put a programme in place. Sir, it is a great pity that we are not going to be... Well, we may yet do it, because I fear that the Democratic Labour Party Administration has not even looked at the Scotland District with a view to doing it.

The Scotland District is part of Barbados' entire heritage and must not be seen as the Barbados Labour Party territory, but as an area that stretches from...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the House the impression that the Democratic Labour Party did not move in \$35 million in these Estimates for the Scotland District when in truth and in fact some time last year the Honourable Member came to this House and said that his Government will spend \$35 million in five years time. Sir, I want to know if it is \$35 million multiply by five or if it is \$35 million divided by five.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the difficulty in Mathematics is not with me, it is with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, so I leave him to go back to his primer book and work that out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to continue, I believe that the matter of law enforcement calls for some attention as well. Again, the Honourable Member who preceded me, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, rested on the fact that this is just year one and that there should be another one to follow. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in their Manifesto, they promised great things for the police. They promised better remunerations for officers, improvements to and the building of new police stations in designated areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we came to Government in 1994, we found a police force that was operating in

deplorable conditions with the worst of equipment and morale was low. Sir, this Government has made certain commitments to the Royal Barbados Police Force but they seem to have made them without considering the kind of foundation that we laid as a Government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look at this year's Estimates, I see that under every significant Head for the Royal Barbados Police Force, the figures are significantly down. Under purchase of vehicles, there is not a cent. Last year, it was \$3.7 million. The year before, it was \$2.675 million. The year before that, it was \$2.44 million.

Asides.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: These are my notes but I am happy to make them whatever they want them. .

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House by reading estimates and not actual figures to this House.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on all areas, expenditure on the police force is down. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force are also very similar to the Fire Service. In fact, the kinds of representations that were made to me by the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Barbados Fire Service were almost identical.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will point out to you that in the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto the proposals that we were putting in place in terms of early retirement and so on for the Police Department, we were also putting in place for the Fire Department. Sir, not a mention is made of the Fire Department by the Democratic Labour Party in these Estimates.

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

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was very happy when the Honourable Member who preceded me took us into the history of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and explained why a Government in the distant and misty past was diverted from its course of action and went on to pass instead the Tenancies Development and Control Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fruits of our labour will not be denied us. We passed the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, and if the Honourable Member wants to take credit for the germ of an idea - by germ I only mean minuscule - that they had in 1961, he could feel free to do so. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people all across this nation are not benefiting from the germ of an idea that was put in a Manifesto in 1961, they have been benefiting from the legislation that we passed.

Sir, I really do not think that the Honourable Members in Government should gloat about anything in relation to housing that they think they may have found. Sir, I well remember that when I became the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation in 1994, the Democratic Labour Party had not built a terrace unit in about four years, that the numbers of people who were awaiting loans numbered not only in the tens of thousands, but in fact some of them had not got replies to their applications as far back as 1984. Mr. Deputy Speaker, an individual applying for a loan in 1984...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the House the impression that the Democratic Labour Party was in Government in 1984. He has to be speaking about the Barbados Labour Party.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the situation that we found back then in 1994 was a very difficult situation. Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have the benefit of at least one significant housing community in St. Joseph and another one is on the way, unless they stopped that too like they stopped the pavilion in Proute. Other Honourable Members have been able to see springing up in their constituencies housing communities not just provided by Government but by private sector entities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Honourable Members want to judge developments in this country based only on a single agency, they are free to do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party Administration created such an enabling environment that the private sector had sufficient confidence that they could invest in real estate and put up housing developments all across Six Roads and St. Peter. I believe that there must be approximately 300 houses in Six Roads that have been put up so far by Eastern Land Development. Sir, when we talk about housing solutions, this Barbados Labour Party when we were in Government, created an environment where housing solutions for Barbadians have been provided and where Barbadians have flourished, and on that we stand.

House A5A Sequence 102

2.50 p.m.

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we go into the many Heads, I certainly want to thank you for your indulgence and I look forward for the return of the Speaker, only from the point of view that I wish him a speedy recovery.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to bring this Second Reading debate on the Appropriation Bill to a close. Sir, perhaps I should begin by joining the Honourable Member in wishing the Speaker, who is returning to Barbados today, a safe trip back home. Sir, more than that, I miss very much the Honourable Member for St. James North, who is not well and whose contribution to these debates certainly would have raised the general standard, were he here, of the debate from that side of this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have heard the debate and I do not have any lengthy responses. Sir, it is not business as usual, a new Government has been elected by the people of Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not have to set out any vision in the Estimates debate, the vision is contained in this document for which the people of this country have voted. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I went on public television two months ago and set out our vision, and it was resoundingly endorsed by the electorate in this country. The electorate did not tell us we have to do everything within 100 days. There were things we said we would do within 100 days and those things do not cost \$40 million, neither do they cost \$30 million.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not giving you \$150 000 simply to fete' people every Thursday night, that much I can tell you. Sir, the problem with this group of Opposition Members is, first of all, they say the Estimates are nothing new, then they complain about the new things that are in the Estimates, which they say cannot be done.

Sir, we came to office and found Estimates already prepared. We were given a week to send them back to Ministers to make adjustments to include their programmes. Therefore, this idea that they have never met with anybody....

What is an Estimates meeting? Sir, let us start with the basics. Mr. Deputy Speaker, an Estimate is exactly that, where you try to get as close as possible and give an outline of the programme of Government. Somebody came here in this debate and said that under the Barbados Labour Party there was a year in which there were 33 Supplementaries, and they were led by a brilliant economist, a financial guru in Barbados, a man who had worked in the Budget department.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Let us say there was a year in which there were 26 Supplementaries, the year after the statement was made that Supplementaries would have been a thing of the past. Sir, the very year after that, there were 26 Supplementaries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an estimate of what Government thinks achievable in this year, both in terms of raising revenue and getting part of its programme delivered. That is all it is.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter, and I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central that the Honourable Member was giving some kind of lecture. Sir, other Honourable Members over there were giving a lecture as if they were the first and only persons who ever served in Government in the history of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was a Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and a Minister of Community Development and Culture and I accepted whatever verdict the people passed on me. I do not have to be a Minister, I do not have to be anything, except to serve. Sir, therefore, a little humility on that side would probably be a good thing. I cannot say a little education because if a school teacher told you, walking down the street, that if you voted for another party that the man who leads the party, who is not the Prime Minister of the party you voted for might still be Prime Minister and you accepted that and came in this Honourable Chamber, the third oldest Parliament in Westminster and proclaimed that as a sensible statement, then something has to be wrong with our democracy in Barbados, and on that hangs a tale, a little humility and a little thoughtfulness. Sir, the people's mandate must be given a chance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nobody is saying you should not criticise. Three Opposition Members have said they support the Constituency Councils. One has come out the blocks so fast that he could not be here for the Estimates debate, because he was forming his own Constituency Council, to be ready for whatever is coming forward. Another one tells us he does not want a Constituency Council, that he wants all the money for himself. Sir, more than that, he wants \$150 000.

Sir, that Honourable Member has not done anything in the last eight years in this Parliament. That Honourable Member has neglected to turn up to Parliament and has refused to engage in Budget debates, yet that Honourable Member wants \$150 000, to do what with? You have to learn to represent people first.

Sir, I am sorry that I have to give the Honourable Member that tutelage at this stage of his life. I am younger than the Honourable Member and I may respect him but I am saying that as a Parliamentary representative, it is an abomination for the Honourable Member to have been so neglectful of his duties and still come here, passing around a budget saying that he has to make more telephone calls than anybody else, that he is connected to the internet, that he sends out postcards.... Sir, is that what the Honourable Member considers to be representation?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us get serious about where we are going. As I said, this is our programme, we have the mandate of the people of this country to implement it and we are going to be prudent and efficient managers. In some cases where we have cut programmes, I can assure the people of Barbados that they will get the benefits back directly, through a series of creative policies that will ensure that they could survive the impact of the cost of living. Sir, we are not in this for handouts, we are in for meaningful processes that help people improve their standard of living.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to single out any individual in this debate for anything, I believe we have put our programme before us. I compliment the Ministers on this side and the Back Benchers. I compliment the entire team for doing their job. I also compliment the Honourable Members on that side for trying to do their job, under difficult circumstances. They must be wondering how it is that within two months this administration has hit the ground running and has been able to put these Estimates together. Sir, that is a very confusing prospect, because there is an old British saying:

“The King is dead, long live the King.”

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Let us get on with the people business in this country, and I again commend these Estimates to this Honourable House of Assembly.

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

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

The question was put and agreed to in the affirmative.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply on the Bill. Mr. S. A. LASHLEY in the Chair.

3.00 p.m.

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On the motion of Hon. R.D. JONES, seconded by Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, the House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. S.A. LASHLEY, Chairman of Committee, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

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

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, it is indeed my pleasure to speak on behalf of the Ministry of Health and to present the various areas of expenditure under Head 53.

I would want to say at the outset that I want to thank the Minister of Finance for graciously understanding the importance of helping the healthcare system out of the financial stricture it was in over the last financial year and over the last 8 to 10 years. Sir, at the outset, this administration recognising the importance of health in Barbados, and trying to stay to the mission statement of the Ministry of Health, that is, that the mission of the Ministry is to promote health, provide comprehensive healthcare and ensure environment concerns are considered in all aspects of national development.

Mr. Chairman, as a result of that charge, the Ministry of Health has had a significant increase in its allocation under Head 53. I will start, Sir, by looking more specifically at the Estimates of Expenditure for 2008/2009. I will break this down, specifically looking at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Sanitation Services Authority and Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Chairman, these Estimates of the Ministry of Health, is set within the context of reform of the healthcare sector of Barbados. Sir, the reform of the healthcare sector is encapsulated after several large-scale studies had been done in Barbados going back as far as 1970. There were other studies in 1979; studies in 1990; studies in 1995 and the two most recent studies, the health care rationalisation study in 1992 and 1995. What has happened since that time is that the health care system in this country was severely under-capitalised and systematically so over the last 14 years under the last administration. Sir, I will explain this not only with respect to the difficulties that were then posed by the lack of capital by difficulties that prevented the health care system from truly carrying out its mandate within a modern Barbados.

Sir, let us first look at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Under the last administration, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital received an allocation of \$120 million and there was a Supplementary of \$18 million and we recently had another Supplementary of about \$7 million. What those monies were unable to do was to carry the hospital's capital programmes and also carry the hospital's recurrent expenditure. Mr. Chairman, as a result of that, we have had a facility that could not carry out its mandate to the people of Barbados. What the Democratic Labour Party has done is that instead of allocating the Queen Elizabeth Hospital a paltry sum of \$110 million, we have now allocated the Queen Elizabeth Hospital the sum of \$150 million in the first tranche. Sir, that significant increase will now have to attempt to deal with a lot of the problems that have so developed at the hospital. Sir, because of the financial constraints over the last 14 years, the facility has not been able hire the level of staff it needs within the nursing care: that is, registered nurses, that is, with respect to nursing assistants; with respect to health aides; it has not been able to become adequately staffed with respect to orderlies; it has not been able to be adequately staffed with respect to maintenance personnel and, as a result of this, we have had, Therefore, what most persons in Barbados already know, serious problems within Accident & Emergency. There were serious problems with respect to the ambulance service as well and serious problems with respect to continuing break down of major pieces of equipment.

Mr. Chairman, what is even more distressing is that even though the administration recognised that the hospital was in dire straits and it would have taken a very long time to execute a recapitalisation programme, the last administration did not allocate a capital budget to the hospital for the last financial year. What is even more distressing with respect to that, it meant that the sort of upgrades that were necessary, we now have to find a way to execute those upgrades, for example, upgrades to the electrical systems. Sir, many of the pieces of the equipment that are lying around at the hospital, that are in storage in various areas in Barbados, cannot be brought on line because the hospital's electrical systems are almost at full capacity. What is even more distressing here is that these are activities that are critical to the only acute facility that we have in Barbados to function optimally. Sir, to think that we had a last administration with millions of dollars in VAT monies to spend and what they would have done with it would have been to leave the hospital in a financial cash strapped position to carry out its recurrent expenditure and so on.

Mr. Chairman, at last there is foresight and the allocation of this \$150 million will allow the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to do much improvement with respect to its human resource development. Sir, we intend to spend money hiring register nurses; we intend to spend money dealing with enhancing the number of nurses being trained

as well as nursing assistants and health aides and we intend to rectify many of the problems that the hospital now has with respect to its human resource ability.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to single out the fact that the financing of the hospital has been so much encumbered that we have a situation where the hospital now does not even have the staff required to input financial data into its computer system so as to evaluate its own finances. Sir, it has not been able to carry out audits because they do not have the basis staff, not even middle management in terms of the accounting systems.

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Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: The trial balance cannot be balanced, because there is no staff to input the information. That is the state of affairs that the previous administration left us. Sir, with this increase in money, we can now adequately staff the hospital with respect to those financial departments, we can now adequately staff the Human Resource Department, we can now adequately staff, especially so, create within the hospital a position where we can now enhance the medical services in particular. I want to stress that because one of the fundamental problems occurred from the serious brain drain this country is experiencing, where we are losing our doctors and nurses, as they go to other parts of the world looking for greener pastures. That has left the Accident and Emergency Department with a significant shortage of staff. It has left the majority of the medical departments with a significant shortage of staff, and we are now going to be in a position to enhance the number of persons in the area of Ophthalmology.

Sir, we now have a serious backlog with respect to Barbadians who require cataract surgery, a problem that has been developing for many years. The last estimate of this backlog is probably close to 500 persons. If the department sees on average 20 000 persons a year, can you imagine how many persons of those seen, would probably require cataract surgery? So you have an increase in the number of persons with that problem. Sir, we now have to look to staff the Ophthalmology Department properly, hire new doctors. I understand that there are about 11 surgeons in the system. We now need the specialist nursing staff that these monies, so well deserved, would now be able to bring into the system.

Sir, one of the other important elements is the fundamental expansion of the Emergency Department. That is the area where we interface with the public. The interface becomes tenuous at times. It is so, not only because of the confinement, in terms of space, but it is so because of a lack of fundamental equipment that is required

within the Emergency Department. What should obtain, and I want to congratulate the doctors and nurses for working under extremely trying circumstance, because without the personnel or equipment, they have been doing a fantastic job. I want to say to them this evening that this administration understands their plight, and we intend to not only increase the number of nurses, we intend also to increase the number of doctors. We also intend to expand the Emergency Department, to ensure that there is adequate space. We to make sure we have a general practice unit in place, and a holding bay, that we can put all of the diagnostic equipment at the level of Emergency Department, so that you now can go into that area and have all of your evaluations done. That will make a significant change and improvement to the Emergency Department.

Sir, one of the other things that becomes critical here with this additional expenditure, is to be able to take the Emergency Department as the interface. The previous problems with respect to the lack of trolleys and so on, we intend to go to Cabinet very soon to advance a Cabinet Paper, where we will be looking for funding, to ensure that we can execute many of these capital development, et cetera.

Sir, one of the other aspects of the plans for our budget, would be to ensure that the Cardiac Unit is brought up to speed. There was a plan in place, by the previous administration, to have a development of the Cardiac Unit at the hospital. Monies have been allocated through the European Development Fund, and approximately \$5 million have been allocated already and is being utilised for the development of that particular Unit within the Lions Eye Care Centre.

I want to say to Barbadians that it is going to be a priority of this administration as it comes on line to provide Barbadians with one of the most sophisticated Cardiac and Angiographic Suites within the region, so that we can provide not only the state of the art services to Barbadians, but also to persons throughout the region. Sir, this becomes important to us, because that facility has been lying idle for almost 10 years. It is sad that the funding to execute that project has been allocated for another five years, or so, and nothing has been done with respect to that particular project. As a result, we were left with a cardiac facility where the equipment would have been breaking down every week, and so on, and Barbadians would have been left with basic cardiac cauterisations and other aspects of cardiac vascular threat.

Sir, another aspect of the development is the human resource development at the hospital. It is a fundamental problem. The hospital currently has a staff of 2300 persons. It has a unique staff mix. We intend to review that staff mix in every department with respect to all of the various programmes. We intend to rationalise and create new

categories of human resources to satisfy the demand for new services. Those new services come on line, largely because of the demographic changes that Barbados has undergone over the last 40 years, where we are now seeing older patients and patients with a broader range of chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and so on. We are also going to be committed to increase investment in training and development, and in particular within the area of management development. I intend to do everything in my power, to ensure that we have a proper and effective working of a Human Resource Unit at the hospital, as I said earlier, it is significantly under staffed and is not adequately financed.

Sir, one of the plans for the new financial year, with respect to this department, is to implement a Human Resource Data Base System, and a continuation of the Human Management Resource Strategy Programme at the hospital. We also intend to continue training for the implementation of the Performance Management System, as well as to establish Internal Reform Committees, and to establish a Reward and Recognition Scheme, as well as conduct training in Data Management. Sir, what is critical here, is how we can enhance not only the internal mechanics of the hospital, but how the hospital interfaces with the unions, suppliers, patients, as well as the community.

Sir, I turn now to our plans for the budget for the year 2008-2009, with respect to the Health Promotion Units and Supports. The Health Promotion Unit is a critical element of the hospital's interaction with the public, and the health promotion framework is at the heart of the Ministry's reform agenda, and undergirds planning and implementation of all of the Ministry of Health's programmes.

In December, the Cabinet approved the Minister's Health Promotion Policy, which is now disseminated to all stakeholders. I have looked at that particular policy and there are many positives within that policy. For example, the development of the Chronic Non Communicable Disease Commission in Barbados, as an umbrella framework under which one can look at the legislative, regulatory and administrative framework, to deal with chronic diseases in Barbados. One of the positive aspects of that is, this administration, in its Manifesto has already given its commitment to looking at fiscal measures, that projects enhancing healthy lifestyles in Barbados, where we will be giving incentives to persons to join gyms and so on and to ...

15.20 p.m.

Sequence 105

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House A5A, Sequence 106, 3.20 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: ...This administration in its Manifesto, has already given its commitment to looking at fiscal measures, which would enhance healthy lifestyles in Barbados. We will be giving incentives to people to join gyms and to bring healthy lifestyle equipment into Barbados, as well as looking at fiscal measures to ensure that the importation of the right quality type of nutrition, is brought into Barbados.

Sir, as a result, one of the things that we intend to do in the Health Promotion Unit would be to develop a Workplace Wellness Programme, and to continue to promote healthy lifestyles through community outreach, school-based programmes and public education. We hope to continue to improve the management of non communicable diseases, improve the surveillance for chronic non communicable diseases, and continue to facilitate the reduction of the social and economic impact of chronic non communicable diseases in Barbados.

Sir, one of the things we also want to embark on, is to facilitate the reorientation that health care services provide, specifically with a primary health care focus. We want to seek to reduce the incidence of chronic non communicable disease in Barbados, with emphasis on prevention, screening, and early detection of these particular diseases. We are now working on the development of a strategic plan for chronic non - communicable diseases.

Sir, as a result, I want to go to the Technical Management Services aspects of the Ministry, which now look at a broader set of the overall management within the Ministry, as I outline the project for that service. The Technical Management Service provide for the planning and supervision of maintenance programmes for the entire plant within the Ministry, and equipment within the Ministry of Health, with the exception of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Psychiatric Hospital. Sir, most of the health care plants are very old, pre 1960s facility and as a result, there is a significant cost, with respect to maintenance.

This is one of the reasons this administration has agreed that we would be coming to Cabinet shortly with the development of a Capital Redevelopment Programme, where we would address many of the aging plants' requirements, via ways of either PPP arrangements or via supplementary arrangements.

Sir, we also would like to mention and thank the good work of the European Development Fund personnel because they provide us with much financial assistance with respect to our technical assistance programmes and requirements.

Sir, one of the other things we want to do in that same light, is to construct a new Leptospira Lab in the 2008-2009 period. As I said, we will be completing the St. John Polyclinic, as a matter of priority. There will be a relocation of the Animal Control Centre or the Environmental Sanitation Unit, and the Vector Control Unit to Vacluse, St. Thomas. We will relocate the Elroy Phillips Centre, and we will replace the roof at the Aileen Scantlebury Centre.

Sir, also in the area of maintenance, we intend to utilise the funds to fence and secure the St. Lucy District Hospital and to execute the removal of the asbestos roof. We will replace the roof of the St. Thomas Outpatients' Clinic. Sir, what is also important in this programme, is to execute the removal of asbestos roof from the St. Andrew Outpatients Clinic.

Mr. Chairman, the Dental Health Programme provides for oral health care rendered to the school children, pregnant women and geriatric patients. Special provisions for limited oral care, wherever feasible are given to people with disabilities and institutionalised persons in Barbados.

Sir, for this financial year, we intend to continue the establishment of a continuous quality improvement programme, in all dental clinics in Barbados. We also intend to continue to monitor and evaluate the current infection control guidelines - also within Barbados - within our dental programme, and to start to implement a rapid assessment programme in the remaining primary schools that have not been so touched as yet.

Sir, in the area of prevention, we intend to emphasise, the aspect of nutrition, with respect to its impact on health care in this country. In the Budget for 2008-2009, we intend to monitor nutrition in Barbados, especially in younger age groups, and those persons under five years old.

Sir, as a result, we will continue nutrition promotions in general in Barbados and continue to coordinate activities for Nutrition Week and World Food Day, as well as enhance the school-based nutrition programmes. Sir, we also want to engage in a number of far reaching outpatient educational training programmes.

Sir, all of this will mean very little, if this is not brought into a broader primary health framework. As a result, we have had many problems within our primary health services in Barbados. I now speak specifically to the polyclinic systems in this country.

The major problem that faces the polyclinic systems in this country, is that of staff constraint. There are constraints also of material and supplies and general

diagnostic equipment. Sir, we intend to ensure that there is an upgrade of the human resource capability of our polyclinics in Barbados. We intend to explore the introduction of health aids within the polyclinics, so as to take the pressure off many of our staff nurses, who are now doing certain tasks that somebody of lesser training could execute.

Sir, as we go into trying to upgrade the capabilities of our polyclinics, we intend to enhance the number of hours the polyclinics are opened. We now have three pilot projects going on in Barbados, where some polyclinics are opened to 6.00 p.m. and some until 7.00 p.m. We have much longer opening hours at the Sir Winston Scott polyclinic. Sir, ultimately, what this administration is looking to achieve, is to be able to reduce the number of persons going to the Accident and Emergency, by upgrading our polyclinics with diagnostic capabilities.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, those diagnostic capabilities would ensure that they have x-ray capabilities and have the capacity to do ultra-sounds, basic blood test work, and to have an ambulance service, with respect to that particular polyclinic. The St. John Polyclinic is going to be a perfect pilot for that, because the plan is to equip it with x-rays, give it ultrasound, a laboratory, and station an ambulance up there. Sir, we will want to see that becomes the norm with respect to our polyclinics in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want to also make this point that we appreciate the difficulties that are now encountered by persons living in St. Lucy, St. Andrew and St. James. One of the things we are going to be looking to do is to evaluate the possibility of enhancing or developing a facility, to service that particular catchment area. Sir, that area is now serviced largely by the Maurice Byer Polyclinic.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has five more minutes.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the reverse migration patterns where people are now building their homes in St. Lucy, and hoping to live in St. Lucy, as well as to build their homes in parts of St. Andrew and St. James, it is necessary that this administration is forward looking, and would look to establish a facility in that area, because we do not believe that by expanding the Morris Byer Polyclinic presents us with the final set of solutions. Mr. Chairman, as a result, we will be looking very closely at developing a facility in that particular.

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Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, in the few minutes that I have I would want to speak to the Psychiatric Hospital. Mr. Chairman, mental health reform is going to be a priority of this Administration. Without a doubt, we are going to ensure that there is a movement on integration of community-based mental health treatment capability along with institutional capability. Sir, that is a more modern approach. It would be able to take a lot of stress off of the Psychiatric Hospital's present services.

In addition to that, it would also allow us to integrate those institutions already within the community, like Teen Challenge and Verdun House, into a more holistic way in dealing with mental health problems in Barbados. As a result of that, we would give our full support to the development of a national mental health commission. Mr. Chairman, we are looking at having legislation evaluated so as to create that framework that would allow for this new thrust with respect to mental health to be established.

Mr. Chairman, we want to give our full support to the Psychiatric Hospital's move to establish its own medical day care unit to carry out certain continuing medical services, as that in itself would take a tremendous amount of pressure off the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. Chairman, we also want to commend this Administration for supporting the move to construct a new kitchen at the Psychiatric Hospital. That previous facility has been condemned for about 14 years and has not been certified by the Environmental Health Unit. Therefore, we saw it necessary to use the power of Cabinet to ensure that we provide the funding necessary to provide for that particular system to be put in place.

Mr. Chairman, for this financial year, we would continue to strengthen our programme for residential and community care as indicated, as well as community education and forensic services. To this end, we would seek to strengthen the sheltered workshop programme in Barbados, the occupational therapy programme and the social work programme. Additionally, we would like to develop a proposal for the use of the Richmond Fellowship Everton House as an alternative group home to the proposed Black Bess facility.

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned earlier, we would also undertake the refurbishment of the kitchen at the Psychiatric Hospital and continue planning on the Psycho-Geriatric Unit. We also want to look very closely at facilitating the expansion of the non-governmental organisation substance abuse programme to cater to females because at this present time that is not being done.

Mr. Chairman, we want to continue the community outreach programme. We also want to have minimum standards for residential treatment passed into law. That is why it is so important to have this national mental health commission in place that would help to craft and create the legislative, regulatory and administrative framework to allow this to be done. We would also draft minimal standards for non-residential treatment services.

Mr. Chairman, I want to bring to the attention of the Committee that the total amount for the Ministry of Health, National Insurance and Social Security has been amended from \$381 057 823 to \$383 972 064. Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 53 as amended stand part.

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

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to make my contribution to the debate on this Head. First of all, to have the responsibility to be the spokesman on a particular ministry is a new dispensation for me. As you would appreciate, in the last Government, I spent all my time on the Backbench.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I would not try to suppose as to why. Therefore, it would be quite new for me to speak to a specific head in these Estimates as the chief spokesman for the Barbados Labour Party in Opposition on the Ministry of Health, National Insurance and Social Security. Mr. Chairman, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for having confidence in me that I would be able to manage that portfolio, and so I would like to give her the assurance that I would do and manage that portfolio to the best of my ability.

Similarly, I suppose that this was the Honourable Member for St. Philip West's first speech in this Parliament to represent that particular Head. However, I guess that he is not thanking his leader for giving him that particular portfolio. I do not know if he had thoughts of a different portfolio, because many times when he was on the Opposition side, he spoke very eloquently on matters related to finance. I do not know if there was some dream that maybe he would be the Minister of Finance come these new Estimates under a new Government. However, I am sure that like me, he too would take on the job and would do it to the best of his ability.

Mr. Chairman, it is with all of those thoughts in mind that I would like to launch into what is quite a large Ministry. It gets the largest vote. I believe it has the largest number of people employed, so therefore the largest number of people depend on that Ministry to function well. Mr. Chairman, we only need to look around to see the number of people that Ministry employs.

Mr. Chairman, I want to use the numbers the Honourable Member for St. Philip West gave before he sat. He said that \$120 million was in the last Estimates and then they had a supplementary for \$18 million and then another for \$7 million, so that brings the total to the hospital to \$145 million.

House A5A Sequence 107

3.40 p.m.

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Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, this puzzles me and I will tell you why. Sir, In the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party, there is this concept of a rescue the Queen Elizabeth Hospital plan. Sir, I applaud it and I will support anything that the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party could do to enhance the delivery of health services to the people in this country. Sir, why is it then that the Democratic Labour Party has said in their Manifesto that they will implement a rescue the Queen Elizabeth Hospital plan and under the last administration, according to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, they received a total of \$145 million and now in the Estimates, it is \$5 million more, from \$145 million to \$150 million?

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: On a point of elucidation. The first allocation that was given in the first Financial Year would have been \$110 million. Therefore, there would have to be one or two Supplementaries to arrive at \$140 million figure, but we have given the hospital, in its first pass, \$150 million. Sir, that is the fundamental difference and if we require the Supplementary, as we probably would require one, we would be significantly ahead in the capacity to be able to solve some of the pressing cash flow problems.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, I understand the Honourable Member for St. Philip West to be now saying that he is committing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to ask for a Supplementary. The Honourable Member has just said the first tranche was \$150 million when, as far as I am told, the hospital asked for \$168 million to meet its normal expenses. Sir, even if the hospital is given \$150 million instead of the \$168 million they wanted to meet their normal expenses, it would mean that you have committed yourself to a Supplementary to the hospital. Then, where do you leave in there, any room to do a rescue plan? Mr. Chairman, as much as we all come here and talk, you still need cash to care. Therefore, if you are going to rescue the hospital, you would have to be able to put more cash at its disposal for it to be able to meet those deficiencies it has to endure.

Mr. Chairman, even although the concept of rescuing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is something I would want to agree with, in principle, clearly the sum in these Estimates is not enough to be able to implement a rescue plan. Sir, in addition to the \$168 million the hospital would need, it is obvious it would need substantially more to be able to achieve that much more on top of what they do now.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West gave a very measured speech today and I appreciated it.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, I too will follow his lead and also give a very measured speech today. Sir, I want to say a few words. Sir, it is also clear, and nobody could disagree, that the people who work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital give tremendous care and service to the people of this country. Sir, my research has shown that over a one-year period, 21 000 admissions were made to the hospital. In the Accident and Emergency Department there were 39 000 persons, and the Out-Patient Department saw 95 000 persons.

Sir, that means it is an institution which sees approximately 400 non-admissions, together with 600 persons admitted. Sir, therefore this is an institution that is taking care of 1 000 Barbadians on a daily basis. Mr. Chairman, both that institution and the people who work there have to be lauded for providing care of the highest quality and of a standard that is the envy of many hospitals throughout this region.

Mr. Chairman, I listened to the Minister very clearly and tried to understand everything he has put forward. Sir, in many instances, I agree and understand what the Honourable Member wants to do, but there has been one glaring omission coming out of his presentation. Sir, I would like him to come back and give us some undertaking as to what is the decision of the Honourable Members on that side, whether they are going forward with a completely rehabilitated Queen Elizabeth Hospital or whether this Government commits itself to building a new hospital.

Mr. Chairman, I think this is fundamentally important to the population of this country, to the hundreds of persons who use the facilities of the public hospital on a daily basis. Sir, I will explain. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital was built in 1964 when the population in this country was about 250 000. It was built with 600 beds. Since then, the population of this country has increased, certainly from 250 000 to approximately 275 000 persons. Sir, even though the population has increased, there has been no substantial increase in the number of beds. Secondly, medicine has changed. Medicine is now more

technologically driven than it was in 1964. Sir, because of that, it means there is a greater need and a greater drain on the electrical infrastructure of the hospital. The Honourable Member made mention of it and said that the hospital had to be rewired.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, I apologise for misquoting the Honourable Member, the electrical system has to be upgraded.

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DR. W.F. DUGUID: Sir, one of the reasons why it has to be upgraded is because in 1964, those who planned the hospital could not see into the future how technological-driven medicine and medical care would have got by 2008. The reasons are that in a technologically-driven environment, with an increased population, and also with modern hospitals, there is a need for increased space to carry out more invasive procedures. Sir, there are other reasons why there is a need to have an enhanced air-conditioned facility. Mr. Chairman, this Government should have put and made it clear to the people of Barbados whether they intend to do a rehabilitation of this hospital at a time when it is being used as a hospital facility or to bite the bullet and make a decision to build a new hospital.

Mr. Chairman, you would have obviously come to a conclusion based on the kinds of points put forward. I would not be so foolhardy to speak for the whole Opposition but I can tell you that my personal belief is that a new hospital would be the better way to go. Sir, I am happy to see that \$1 million has been voted in these Estimates towards further studies for the re-development of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. So obviously, the investigations will continue, but the Minister owes a courtesy to this Parliament.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

DR. W.F. DUGUID: The Minister will owe a courtesy to this Parliament to give some indication as to which side of this issue he will be prepared to come down on because it is clear that the people of Barbados are due that courtesy.

Sir, I look forward to coming back and I thank you.

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

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am happy to see that in less than two months that the Opposition, which previously would have been the Government, have not admitted that they were wrong in closing St. Joseph Hospital and that they now recognise that there is a need for a second hospital so that you could refurbish the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Mr. Chairman, the argument and the age is nothing new to this Parliament because at one time, I thought I was hearing myself speaking because the same point the Honourable Member made, I made when I was on that side. I did not get any support from that Honourable Member while making the point that after having a hospital for over 40 years that you needed to ensure you have an alternative so that you could refurbish the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and create capacity so that health care could be better in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I find it passing strange that two months after the change of a Government that the Opposition is now agreeing to the importance of creating capacity so that health care in this country can be better.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. It think it is important to state as a matter of record that the Barbados Labour Party's position while in Government and now, is that there is need for increased capacity and that is one of the reasons we agree to the construction of a new hospital. When I speak in this debate, I will speak further as to the other compelling reason why you could not redevelop or refurbish the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Government does not have to accept the advice, the Government is free to make its own decision but I will share with Parliament our perspective.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, there is nothing wrong with it. The Honourable Member is quite right because the Honourable Member knows that I also said on the Floor of this House that the Government of the day was holding a report that substantiated every charge I made against the Government at the time. The former Minister of Health always repeated the point made by me that because of the condition of the hospital that the hospital was making people sick. Sir, had they not ignored the good planning of the Democratic Labour Party, when we purchased the St. Joseph Hospital, we would have been able to correct those problems.

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that the same way you live in a house and you know you have to refurbish that house, just think about a health institution, dealing with so many diseases and so many other medical conditions. It follows that the same thing has to apply.

Mr. Chairman, I want to move to a bigger point. If we are going to plan for a second hospital, we also have to ensure that we marry that with tourism. Sir, if we are going to have capacity, then we must use that capacity to ensure

that not only will we develop the foreign exchange of the country but that we have an avenue where we can now marry tourism and health together and help market our tourism product.

Mr. Chairman, this is why I continue to make the point that if we are going to invest in a new hospital, we have to be very careful where we locate. We have to ensure that we locate it somewhere where we you can have capacity, where you can have hotel rooms, where relatives and so on can come and stay to look after the patients.

Mr. Chairman, we are clear on this side in our health policy. We are also clear in our tourism policy and we are also clear in how we want to develop rural Barbados. Sir, the last Minister of Health came here and said that he was going to build a 700-room hospital at the Enmore location when everybody in Barbados knows that the space there was not large enough for that to occur. Sir, on top of that, it was the same Minister of Health that spoke about environmental problems as it relates to noise and so on, at the present location, but yet cited Enmore to put a new hospital.

Mr. Chairman, they were not tricking me. They only did that because they recognised that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was going to be an issue at the time of elections; they also knew that the people of Barbados recognised because of the relationship between the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the undertakers of Barbados that they had to come with something new and that they had to put something on the table. Sir, that is why they mentioned building a second hospital of 700 rooms at the Enmore site. Sir, we do not need that advice because as far back as 1986, we knew what we had to do as a Government. We understood quite well that health in Barbados cannot only be for too-few but it has to be in the interest of the masses of people in Barbados. We recognised that if we did not put in place provisions for a second hospital that the masses of people in Barbados would suffer. We recognised that up to the last time they were in Government. We saw a situation where people went to the hospital and the shortages were so great that we, as politicians, had to increase our visits to the church because the number of people who died was so great that we had to attend more funerals than normal.

Mr. Chairman, this Government has to recognise that healthcare is important, that the masses of people cannot pay to travel overseas to go and get healthcare, that the masses of people must have a proper place to go so that healthcare can be received in this country because it is the poor people who suffer.

Mr. Chairman, I support my comrade because he understands it quite well. He spoke about it before and I know he understands exactly what has to occur.

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Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: I know he knows exactly what has to occur. Any other good advice from the Other Side, we will accept, but they too should have accepted the good advice that came from This Side, and we would not have had this headache today.

Sir, we, as politicians, have suffered because of the Other Side not taking good advice, and find ourselves with friends and relatives who have departed to eternal rest, when they should have been here to help produce and develop this country. I am saying that we have to be serious about what is happening in this country and understand that the productive forces can only help, if we have living people.

Sir, I was in this Honourable House pleading with the other side, that instead of capping the number of nurses and doctors, we should have increased the number of doctors and nurses who were studying. There was a policy to cut back. I am saying that policy caused people to go to the hospital complaining that they could not understand what was being said to them. That is true. The attendants cannot relate to the people, and the people cannot relate to them.

Sir, if you go to a doctor and he cannot understand you or you cannot understand the doctor, there is a possibility that something might happen and something else happens. I am saying we have to change that.

Sir, many people in Barbados would love to be nurses in this country, but they have been deprived of that opportunity in their own country. They have to watch other persons come into Barbados and take their jobs. I am saying, that is not fair, because this country was built by their fore-parents and we have a right to ensure that our brothers and sisters have the first call. Sir, we as a Government have to change that. We have to ensure that we put policies in place for our people to regard the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as it used to be.

Sir, there was a time when royalty had a problem they came to that hospital, and you understood the name. It was not Queen Elizabeth Hospital by accident, it was because the royal family also came there, too. No matter where they were, they used to come on their private planes, helicopters, et cetera for treatment. Now you have situations in this country where Barbadian patients, when they are sick, and you want to take them there, they tell you not to take them to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, they say, no, not there. I am saying that the staff must not be blamed,

but it is the way we funded that hospital and treated that hospital, that has placed it in that state.

I am saying that we, the representative of the people of Barbados, must ensure that we return the hospital to its original state. I will ensure that I fight on behalf of the people of Barbados, to make sure that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital becomes the best hospital in the Caribbean again, and there will be a relationship between health and tourism in this country once more.

I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in speaking on this Head, first, I would like to support the Honourable Member for S. Lucy, when he made the point that it is a crying shame, the Barbados Labour Party Government abandoned the St. Joseph Hospital, as we would have seen in the media, when the Minister of Health, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, toured the dilapidated ruins at that location. I really cannot understand the Honourable Member for Christ Church West when he said, and supported by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, that their Party supported the concept of increased capacity, and accepted that there was a shortage of bed space at the current hospital, yet, inconsistent with that philosophy that, Government allowed the St. Joseph Hospital to run to ruin. A crying shame, Sir, it is a serious threat to the health and safety of the northern corridor of our country.

Sir, I taught at the Alleyne School, and working there, if there was a medical emergency, we would have been at risk. If one had an asthma attack, or what have you, one could die on the way to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is a very serious issue and a serious blemish on the record of the Barbados Labour Party Government, and they would have to live with their conscience.

I do not know, why, for political expediency, they would like to confuse the issue, to suggest that they really cared about increased capacity. The public of the country were not fooled, that is why they voted them out of office, and will keep them out if they continue to be confused in terms of their way forward for the country.

Sir, I also would like to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Health, for in effect executing one of our Manifesto's pledges to promote healthy lifestyles. I am sure the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and all of us, would agree that there is too much obesity in our country, and it is something that happens as we get older, our metabolism decreases. I speak with sincerity because I have to watch my weight as well, so I am not casting any

aspersions on anyone, because I want us all to live long. That is why I think it is a very visionary approach of the Government and Ministry of Health, in terms of being proactive. Sir, with the chronic non-communicable diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes, which are often related to our lifestyle, poor diet, a lot of our advertising agencies around the world, sometimes disguise the concept of fat-free foods, by actually promoting the foods rich in sugar, because they are tasty and appealing to the consumer, both children and adults. Therefore, by promoting greater exercise and healthy diets, I think this would go a long way in reducing the country's medical bill to treat those diseases, and also to promote longevity and higher levels of productivity in our population.

Sir, I congratulate the Government for taking this initiative, and, therefore, encourage the Government Information Service, and other agencies to undertake an aggressive promotion within our culture. The fact that we eat many foods filled with sugar, and may think that because it is a tradition it is okay, but it is not okay to be fat. We have to cut the fat from our bodies literally.

Sir, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is within the constituency of the City of Bridgetown. I have already pointed out to the Minister of Health the fact that, under the last Government, because of the downwind from the hospital, the residents suffered serious threats to their health in terms of the effluent and fumes coming out of the chimneys from the incinerators burning the medical and other waste from the hospital. The chimneys are too low. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West talked about technology, and the technology of those incinerators is outdated. If you go across to King William Street, San Domingo Alley, Vine Street, Spruce Street, Dukes Alley, Nelson Street and Beckwith Street, within the houses of these residents, the actual solid effluent deposit can be seen on the homes, furniture and clothing of these people.

Sir, I got the assurance of the Minister of Health that this is being looked at seriously, and I congratulate the Government for seeking to ease this serious threat to the health and safety of the residents of Bridgetown, and indeed those persons who...

16.10 p.m.

Sequence 110

Estimates - Wednesday, March 19, 2008

House A5A, Sequence 111, 4.10 p.m.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: ...

I congratulate the Government for seeking to ease this serious threat to the health and safety to the residents

of Bridgetown and, indeed, those persons who traverse the area on a daily basis.

Sir, in terms of the Bridgetown sewerage treatment plant, which is within this Ministry under the Barbados Water Authority, I would support a comprehensive analysis of the operation of this plant, so that we can determine the way forward. The last Government in a knee jerk reaction, after the residents complained for years - as well as your humble servant - about the stench emanating from that plant, where people developed rashes and respiratory problems. Sir, people who were previously fit, became very ill to the extent where they were hoarse and had difficulty breathing.

Sir, the last Government engaged in cosmetic approaches. They conducted a small study which was merely a questionnaire but there was no in-depth analysis of the air quality and medical tests of the residents. This should be done. Furthermore, I am suggesting that as I said we look at the operation of that plant. Sir, if the plant has to be overhauled or replace, so be it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: The last Government was forced to resite some of these residents. I am saying that at the height of flare-ups and the stench emanating from this plant, even where I live at Reed Street, New Orleans, and Chapman Lane, one could smell that awful stench. I am saying that some people have been removed but hundreds of us remain in that area. Sir, we need to get to the bottom of this, to make sure that you have a long term solution to this serious health problem.

Sir, the issue of rodent infestation in the City and throughout urban Barbados is very important. We know the serious ill effects of leptospirosis and jaundice. The build-up of garbage has to be addressed, in terms of supporting the sustainable removal of garbage, derelict buildings, derelict vehicles, and the removal of basic litter on a rapid basis, so that we do not feed these rats to the extent where, as exist now, they are as big as small dogs and cats.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would again condemn the last Government for allowing the situation of the public bath at Concrete Alley, which is managed by the Sanitation Service Authority to reach the stage where all the plumbing and toilets were out of order, faeces all over the place and doors removed. All the last Government did, was to board up the place, promise to repair it in seven weeks but elections came ten months later, and nothing was done. Sir, I condemn that Government and I look forward to our Government repairing that bath.

Furthermore, that was not even the whole story because, subsequently, I went down to the public bath at the corner of Green Park Lane and Lightfoot Cross Lane and saw it in the same condition. Faeces all over the place, toilets not working, and this is in the middle of a thickly populated area. Sir, that is the awful track record of the Barbados Labour Party Government. Therefore, I breathe a breath of fresh air that relief is here in the form of the Democratic Labour Party.

I thank you very much, Sir.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, this Ministry of Health is a very wide Head, and I hope to be able to get to discuss certain aspects of care of the elderly as well as Barbados Water Authority and the Sanitation Service Authority. I believe it is necessary for me to explain to Barbadians what the previous administration did, in terms of creating a condition at the hospital where the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was unable to pay its bills.

Sir, we have a situation where a Government boasts, and the Hon. Member for Christ Church West, who should sit down and do his research before he gets up to speak. He should appreciate that if he gives the Queen Elizabeth Hospital \$120 million and then with two Supplementary, come close to \$140 million, Sir, and your recurrent expenditure alone, comes up to \$139 million, then you leave the hospital with no capital expenditure capability.

Mr. Chairman, as a result, the hospital was left in a situation where it could not service the air-conditioners, and it could not retrofit the room to put the autoclave in place that they bought. There were stock shortages morning, noon and night, and the elevators not functioning. Therefore, when this administration votes \$150 million, this is a significant improvement and we should be commended for that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, when I bring the recapitalisation programme to Cabinet, I can assure Barbadians that I will get the majority of the funding necessary to do the types of upgrades needed at the hospital.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, let me speak for a minute to this whole notion of a new hospital. Sir, before we should move to that position, there are certain upgrades that are necessary at the QEH, to get it functioning effectively.

Sir, those upgrades that should be undertaken are centered around removing the Primary Care Services from

the QEH, which should not be there. This administration and I, strongly support the view that we should not have the hospital being used as a hospice for terminally ill patients. We will find a new facility or build one for that purpose.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: There are patients who are now in the hospital getting dressings on wounds every day, some of them will stay there for three months to six months. When I was a doctor there, some of them would have stayed there for more than a year. Sir, we will find some place to move those patients out of the hospital, therefore creating space.

Mr. Chairman, we will ensure that we find some usage for the Villa Marie facility down in St. Joseph and also for that facility, which now houses the ambulance service, next door to the hospital. I must find somewhere to put those elderly patients that are blocking up the Accident and Emergency Unit and the wards, because they cannot stay there. Sir, that is my responsibility.

Sir, once we get those primary care services out of the hospital, we can then tackle the hospital with respect to certain upgrades of its service capability. For example, Mr. Chairman, once we relocate The Artificial Kidney Unit (AKU), from next-door to the Medical Intensive Care Unit - if we could find a location, and I am working on it - for those terminally-ill persons. Sir, the hospital will have an opportunity for the first time to expand its Medical Intensive Care services to Barbados, away from six beds, and we want to take it to twelve beds.

Mr. Chairman, ultimately, we want to create a facility that allows one to do what we call a step-down-type treatment approach. This basically means that you do not need monitoring as intense as you would need in the Medical Intensive Care. Sir, what we would automatically be able to do, as we are creating the space requirements, in order to expand the services and therefore bring the services up to international standards. Sir, this is what we must do first, in order to start thinking about spending \$700 million on a new facility.

Sir, I do not know what relationship the Members on That Side had with the private sector in Barbados, but I have had very good input from the Barbados Light and Power, and I can rest assured that very soon, I will be touring the hospital with members of the Barbados Light and power, and we are going to look for a way to upgrade the electrical installations at the hospital, something that they could not get done.

Asides.

House A5A, Sequence 111, 16:20:14

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: There are already persons in the private sector who have come on board to assist with the upgrade of the Accident and Emergency Department and the Psychiatric Hospital. Sir, we are going to build private sectorpublic sector partnerships all across Barbados to make sure that we get the hospital where we want it. Sir, this is not the PPP arrangement, this is friendships. A partnership must not be always economic.

Mr. Chairman, I want to spend a few minutes on care of the elderly in Barbados. I think that all Barbadians know that we have an aging population. Sir, as a result of that, we are now going to be faced with an increase in the number of disease conditions that are more prevalent in the elderly population. Sir, what that means is that the impact on our critical care capabilities must be enhanced and our capability to deal with the degenerative neurological conditions must also be looked at. Specifically, I mean things like Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson disease and so on that are more prevalent in the older population.

Sir, we also have to deal with other degenerative conditions like arthritis. As a result of that, I would be giving my wholehearted support to the creation of a generalised pain management unit in Barbados that would deal with all aspects of chronic pain. That would be very important within the older population even though they would be younger persons who would fall into the category especially those geriatric patients with severe and chronic arthritic conditions and the spasmic conditions that produce great pain. Mr. Chairman, this Administration will support the development of such a facility.

Sir, we understand the plight of the Geriatric Hospital in terms of its infrastructure. It is an old plant. We understand the problems that exist with respect to the boilers, the kitchen and its generalised infrastructure. We also understand its staffing constraints. Mr. Chairman, we have to solve it systematically. I know that the manager has plans to do some upgrades within the next financial year. I have already said to the manager that he would have my full support and that of the ministry in general to make sure that we could improve those infrastructural elements.

Mr. Chairman, what is of importance is that I have to find ways of getting the staff requirements correct. Therefore, we intend to go on an aggressive recruitment programme for nurses within the region and to encourage those registered nurses and specialist nurses in Barbados who are now working half day and a quarter day, scotching here and scotching there, to seriously consider coming back to work. Sir, those who want to apply to the hospital under my watch could do so to the hospital board.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I believe the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Last year in 2007, 24 posts were created by the Ministry of Civil Service to be able to accommodate all those nurses who wanted to work who were no longer at the hospital because of the transition to the board.

Sir, for him to give the impression that there are nurses out there who wanted to work who have not come back into the system, is incorrect. If he wants to dispute it, then he could go and show where the posts were not created and show us how the posts were not created. Twenty-four posts were created and all have been absorbed both in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the polyclinic system.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, the 24 posts are a drop in the bucket. It cannot even begin to address the problems that the Geriatric Hospital now has.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is speaking as if those were the only posts that were created. Over 100 nursing posts were created since the Board was established such that there are now 818 posts of which more than 520 are registered nurses in the hospital. When the Honourable Member is speaking, he is giving you the impression that they are not there. Sir, if he continues, I would also give him the breakdowns too.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I stand by my statement that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Geriatric Hospital, the Psychiatric Hospital and the polyclinics all need nursing staff. They also need additional middle level nursing staff, health aides and nursing assistants. That is the critical point, I do not care about the numbers.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of elucidation. I wonder if the Honourable Member, since he has given way, could explain to me where in these Estimates or in the Schedule of Personal Emoluments, these additional staff have been budgeted for.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: With respect to the hospital, in the \$150 million.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East loves to have fun but we are not at any amusement park, this is serious business we are in.

Sir, what we have planned for this financial year for the Geriatric Hospital is the maintenance of the physical plant. As I said, there is a plan already in place for that. We

intend to complete the repairs to the doors and windows on Unit 1 and the repairs to the roof of the bathrooms and the staff changing rooms, which are now leaking as a result of poor maintenance because the hospital was always short of money. We intend to execute the refurbishment of Wards 11A and 12A to facilitate the transfer of day care and rehabilitation unit facility,

We intend to refurbish the solar water heating system for units 3 and 4 and complete the refurbishment of the entire hot water system that has not worked under the last Administration for 14 years. This situation has put the hospital at risk in terms of its capacity to ensure that certain critical point care elements that deal with reducing infectious diseases were not put in place.

Mr. Chairman, they could talk over there now about these plans that the hospital has to try to upgrade and sort problems out that were there lingering for 14 years.

Mr. Chairman, also in this financial year, money is voted for upgrading the laundry which has many pieces of equipment that cannot work. This has arisen because there is no steam at the hospital. The boilers have not been working for 14 years under that Administration, and they have the gall and audacity to talk in here today.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to guarantee you that this Head is going to go long. I am going to wear all of them down before they leave in here.

Sir, we intend in this financial year to buy washers and dryers for the Geriatric Hospital. We also intend to repair and install the piping system in this financial year. What did that Administration do for the last five years other than talk?

Mr. Chairman, I have already spoken about the upgrades with respect to the kitchen facilities.

House A5A Sequence 112

4.30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I remember distinctly we also looked at the fire alarm system at the Geriatric Hospital. This is an old fire alarm system which was installed some 15 years ago and is therefore rather obsolete. Sir, that is going to be looked at within this Financial Year. Sir, you could rest assured that we are going to look at how we could assist the other District Hospitals.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, I will be asking each of these entities to come up with a capital works programme

because this Cabinet has given me the assurance that once we bring the capital works programme, we would find the money to upgrade those facilities in the interest of Barbadians. Sir, I can say without fear that there has been a mandate given to me and one that we will carry out, in the interest of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to switch to the Barbados Water Authority, an authority that was savaged under that administration, an authority that has been having financial difficulties for the last 14 or 15 years, while there has been nothing but talk by the last administration. Sir, we now have a situation where when one adds up the recurrent expenditure deficit, as well as capital works, we would be looking at a total of \$25 million to be spent every year.

Sir, what is sad is that the Barbados Water Authority gets about 96 per cent of its revenue from the sale of water, which amounts to between \$86 to \$88 million but alone this recurring expenditure is about \$96 million, which does not include about \$19 to \$20 million every year in capital works that the Government has to finance. Sir, there are then accounts receivables to the tune of approximately \$21 million a year. Therefore the Barbados Water Authority, under that administration, was not technically a growing concern, and this administration has now to clean up that.

Sir, the reality is that for the last 14 years, with 60 per cent of the water that is pumped into the distribution system going back into the ground....They cannot tell you where the mains are, where the leaks are, which reservoirs are overflowing, which reservoirs are going to go dry, when or how. Sir, we are now forced to bring the Barbados Water Authority into a modern world by looking to see how we could address the issues in relation to burst mains. We are going to do that capitalisation work through a bond. Sir, that \$65 million bond, I accept would have been contemplated in the recapitalisation programme last Financial Year, is but a drop in the bucket because it would take about \$500 million, over a period of 25 years, to be able to address that problem.

Mr. Chairman, I can say this, the \$150 million was a retired debt, the majority of the money went to retired debt.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issue is we now have to address the problems with the mains. We now have to find where the leaks are and how to fix them. We now have to determine what technologies to put in place to determine how building a new housing environment would affect water in the main. We now have to determine how that is going to affect the aquifers, either at 10.00 a.m. or at 10.00 p.m. We now have to determine how to monitor those stations electronically.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, what is important is that we now have to do those things, when they were languishing under the last administration.

Asides.

Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Sir, I have allowed the Honourable Member to talk because the more the Honourable Member gets on like that, the more I believe he would hang himself and so I allowed him to do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, to begin with, the Cabinet of Barbados would have reviewed a programme for the systems to be able to monitor leakages, and I believe all of that was in train. My difficulty is not that the work is being done, my difficulty is that the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber by making it seem as though he is now coming here, as the person who knows all, and is trying to put these things in place.

Sir, if the Honourable Member would have a little more humility and acknowledge that these plans are in place, even though there may be challenges, then he would not draw our condemnation. Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber in making it seem as though those ideas are his. Sir, this debate is going to be a long and interesting one and we might not get to the Head in relation to the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, the point the Honourable Member seems deliberately not to have raised is the fact that you cannot put down a SCADA System, without first fixing the mains. How are you going to put down a SCADA System, if you do not know where the leaks are, or where the faulty mains are buried...

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. Chairman.

Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member cannot impute improper motives to, or cannot describe in a pejorative way another Honourable Member...

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North-East were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I take your point of order. Could the Honourable Member for St. Philip West please rephrase that statement.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I will rephrase that statement but I know the rules of this Honourable Chamber and I know what Rules 28(5) and 28(7) say. Sir, I will follow your ruling.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has five minutes more.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I will go back to the point made. Sir, when you are looking to bring technology into the Barbados Water Authority operations, that technology has to be applied on a sound infrastructure. Therefore, those electronic monitoring systems cannot be brought when there is an unsound distribution structure. Therefore, one has to deal first with the infrastructural problems and that is the thinking of this administration. We will look to those systems at a later stage but we have now to deal as a matter of urgency, with respect to the leakages of the mains in Barbados. It does not make sense continuing losing 60 per cent of what goes into the distribution system back into the aquifers.

Mr. Chairman, what is also of importance is that we now have to look at the whole notion of reused water in Barbados because of the fact that Barbados is a water-scarce island. Sir, one of the areas to which we would be looking, would be to see how we could take our sewerage treatment systems, to have them upgraded to produce a water effluent that could then be utilised in a practical way, or where we could have that water going back into the aquifers, through the limestone, to replenish the water supply.

Mr. Chairman, we have a problem with large volumes of water, which would have been used for primary usage, being sent back out into the sea. That water could be further utilised. H:No. A5A (113)4.40 p.m.

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Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Sir, we feel we have a problem with large volumes of water that would have been primarily heated being sent far out to the sea that could be further utilised.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Sir, what I want to say has to do with the Belle reverse osmosis plant as well the Belle Feasibility Study and the importance of those in the whole system of managing our water resources in Barbados. Sir, I will deal with that on the next pass.

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

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I will await the engagement of the Minister on the reversed osmosis plant and those aspects of the Barbados Water Authority to speak to them.

Mr. Chairman, it is easy to get up in here and say that you are going to do this and that you have done this. In fairness, the Honourable Member will also come to realise that Barbados' infrastructure and water mains are one century old. He will also come to recognise and even if he does not want to share it with the rest of Parliament or the rest of the region, that Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica and The Bahamas all share the same problem. One of the last conversations and aspects that I had as Ministry of Economic Affairs is the recognition that the replacement of 100-year-old mains in the Caribbean is a major problem. The cost of so replacing it is going to be prohibitive and if he were to study and pause, he would recognise that, in effect, what you are talking about in relation to the Barbados Water Authority in this country may lead to expenditure of over \$1.5 billion over the next 15 years.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because she is giving Barbadians the impression that because a main is old that it is necessarily bad. Sir, because the mains are cast iron, in most case, they may be 150 years and in excellent condition.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member forgot that he reinforced the point that as much as 60 per cent of the water that comes out of the ground may be lost through the mains that we have. The reality is that the problem is not unique to Barbados. Sir, if he understood the point that I was making, that the cost of so doing, along with the reversed osmosis plants that have to be built to deal with chemical problems because, as I said in here yesterday, in 1963 when the issue was set in relation to the zoning of Barbados, for which they have now moved the money for the ground water study to be able to review that, that the major concern in this country was biological contamination.

Mr. Chairman, over the years, it has now become chemical contamination and 40 per cent of our wells have difficulties, Codrington, the Belle, Waterford and Ashton Hall.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Can we have some order and allow the Honourable Member to continue.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, you know why I am going to laugh because the reality is that I had responsibility for Government's overall public sector programme and I know for a fact that part of the difficulty that this country will confront and the Minister will not want to confront it because it is too soon after an election. All the talk in here about promising this staff and that staff and that new equipment, in the context of Estimates that are shown already with revenue that can be suspect, a deficit of 1.9 per cent in the current international economic environment is that the Barbados Water Authority alone will call for almost \$1.5 billion in expenditure over the next 15 years, not only in mains but the reality also is that reverse osmosis is only a form of desalination. When you have desalination apply to water, you lose 25 per cent at least of your volume of water so that a water scarce country will run the risk of becoming even more water scarce, so that you have to look also at water augmentation.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister does not have to listen because the reality is, that I know from him already, that he believes his view is the only view and he believes no one can teach him anything or that no one can share anything with him.

Mr. Chairman, I would never engage in a futile effort to try and teach him anything because it would be a waste of time, but I am saying to this Chamber that this country faces a problem. It is not a problem of this Government's making; it is a problem that has endured for some time. Sir, my only comment was that when I met with Government's representatives at the World Bank, that the Government of Barbados last year put forward to them that we felt they could be economies of scale as well as mitigation of risk if Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and The Bahamas address the issue of the replacement of mains as one entity. As you know, Sir, if you have greater volume, you can benefit from the economies of scale in terms of the reduction of materials you have to buy and the services you have to rely on. Secondly, Mr. Chairman, apart from that, you can also ensure that you reduce the risk that is involved in the project.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member does not have to take the recommendation. In fact, the truth is he says he will not take any recommendation of mine and I accept that but perhaps when he read from pages 50, 51, 52 and 53 of the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto in his opening remarks, all of a sudden he talked about a chronic non-communicable disease programme - not a word from him before - when he talked. All of a sudden he told you about the polyclinic but one thing he left out was the integration of the modern IT systems linking the polyclinics to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which we felt was critical because it would also augment the capacity for the diagnostic capacity of the polyclinics.

Mr. Chairman, the care of the elderly and the extension of the Accident & Emergency. Sir, let us be real, if the Honourable Member was being full and frank with this Chamber, he would tell you when he talks about the cardiac unit that the designs are completed and that some of the equipment is already ordered. For those who know anything about funding, the mere fact that part of the funding is coming from the European Development Fund would tell you that the process to engage and have those funds committed would have had to commence a significant time ago. Sir, I go further. If he was being full and frank he would have told you that in relation to the Accident and Emergency Department, the board would have already taken the decision to build the extension next to it. I am interested in telling you about this friendship programme because I do not believe a Minister can come here and simply leave it under the rubric of friendship as to how it will be expended.

Mr. Chairman, I know about public/private partnership and I suspect that you do too from your legal training. Sir, I am going to give the Minister a free reign because fortunately, at least, I have the power of review under the Public Accounts Committee and I will say that and that alone. Sir, when you look at the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party, a page and a half and, in fact, the page and a half taken up with a photograph of the hospital. Sir, there is absolutely nothing in the Manifesto. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to tell you or remind you of the fact that on solid waste there is not even a mention of the phrase solid waste in this Manifesto.

Mr. Chairman, if he had come like other Ministers, who are now trying to encourage him, at least, other Ministers have come with a little more humility and recognised that Government, according to the Prime Minister on Monday did not start on January 16, 2008, that Government is a continuum and we acknowledge the right of them to be elected the Government of Barbados and that is why we are here. But, Sir, what they cannot do is to give the impression to this Parliament because, in fact, it would be misleading Parliament and Ministers have had to resign for that and less.

H/A5A/16:50

Sequence 114

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Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: ... is to give the impression to this Parliament, because, in fact, it would be misleading the Parliament, and ministers would have to resign for that. It would be misleading the Parliament for him, now, to come in here and suggest that all of this is done. Sir, what is more, not only... Sir, two polyclinics had extended opening hours from September 2007, he did not say that.

He did not want to tell you that they were the Maurice Byer Polyclinic and the Randall Phillip Polyclinic. He did not want to tell you, that we committed to more per year, but that would not suit his purpose, because he wanted to create the impression, as usual, that he knows all and that nobody knows anything, but it cannot work so.

Sir, he did not want to tell you that if he were to be asked to produce the Minutes of the Boards of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, that you would see consideration for the recruitment of nurses from St. Vincent. He did not want to tell you that. He did not want to tell you that over 180 vacancies have been filled at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in relation to nurses. He did not want to tell you that. He did not want to tell you, that the majority of vacancies of those 520 registered nurses are filled. He did not want to tell you that. He did not want to tell you that 50 health aides were created.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has risen on a point of order. What is your point of order?

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: Sir, I did not want to interrupt the Honourable Member in flight, but the landing gear needs to be pulled up, Sir. If the Honourable Member has evidence that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board created more than 100 posts since the installation of that Board, I would ask the Honourable Member to produce the proof. I would say categorically that is not the case. If the Honourable Member wants to refute that, let her make the document with that information a document of the Honourable House.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I said earlier, in a point of order, and I say now again, that 100 posts were created. I go further, that... Sir, he may not know the difference between posts being created and vacancies being filled, because in the public service, a post is a completely different thing from a vacancy. Sir, in addition to the 100 posts that were created, since the Board was created...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Can we have some order, please.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: In addition to the 100 posts that were created, 180 vacancies were filled. If he goes back and look for the hospital's Minutes for December 2007, he would see it listed there.

Sir, let me come to the capital programme. We as a Government provided \$25 million via off-budget financing for the hospital for a Capital Programme, and I have not heard him say anything about it yet. Sir, In this year 2008, \$33 million of a \$38 million Capital Programme would be provided for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and the second tranche of \$25 million will come in 2009-2010. Sir, that

programme, very clearly established by us as a Government, was to continue the process of building up the equipment needs of the hospital.

Sir, we talk about why this Government must take a position on a new hospital or not. Sir, the situation is very clear. When the study was done in relation to the suitability of the hospital for either expansion or whether we would have to build a new one, a number of determinations were made clear. Sir, you are dealing with a 50-year-old plant. You are dealing with a plant without any concept of functional suitability for the 21st century. So the Physiotherapy Department is away from where people who have to come in and use it, have to enter; you have departments next to one another, that might have been okay 20 or 30 years ago, but is not suited today.

Sir, I have not yet started to talk about the suitability of the roof.

Sir, the Honourable Members on the front bench may not know these things, but you should ask the Minister to produce it. You will then see why you will be spending bad money after good. I am telling you that it is alright to want to be partisan in this Chamber, because you feel that you are in the shadow of an election, but this country's interest will not be served by putting off the development of a new hospital any further in this country. The report showed that 38 per cent of the hospital is acceptable, while the other 62 per cent of the building is unacceptable for functioning, and being used as a hospital. It showed that it was not built in a way to protect it in a serious way against fire. It also showed that it had serious problems to withstand natural disasters, and when confronted with all of that information, the Cabinet of Barbados, last year, took a decision that we needed to investigate and to plan for the new construction of a hospital. As I said, they do not have to go that way, but I have a duty as Leader of the Opposition, to share that information, which is available to me, to the public since they may well be a policy change imminent, in relation to the construction of the hospital.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has five more minutes.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir.

I do not gain anything by playing politics at this stage, in relation to the hospital. There are serious issues, and I believe that in relation to the money that you are now putting into the hospital, in the absence of a new hospital... The Honourable Member spoke about the electrical rewiring of the hospital. Sir, you are going to rewire a hospital that cannot withstand a hurricane, and you are going to rewire a hospital that cannot withstand a fire from spreading throughout the entire building because of how it was built.

Sir, in the 1950s, if you look at the Government Headquarters as well, the architecture used in those days was more concerned with ventilation, because of the absence of air conditioning and other systems, therefore, as a result of those ventilation flows, it means that a fire would move through quicker.

Sir, I am simply saying to you, that it is my deliberate judgement and view, that the decision taken by us as Cabinet, late last year, as a result of a study done by professionals over the course of 18 months, where they interviewed people throughout the entire hospital, it was not the judgement of a political Party, it was not even the judgement of the Ministry of Health officials alone. Those who work there, who would also have presented to us, would have told you that their preference was for a new hospital. Sir, when you saw that it would cost almost \$500 million, to rehabilitate on the same site without touching anything, after 14 years of experience in Government, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central will find this out, that you would plan to fix a school and when you start to take off the roof, the supports of the roof are rotten. Therefore the estimates which were given to you have now to be revised, and all of those are considerations, that caused us to recognise that if prior to any detailed work being done, you were already at an estimate of over \$500 million to rehabilitate the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, that it made more sense, as we did with the Hilton Hotel, to build a new hospital from scratch. Sir, it may be debatable, and I am prepared to review and look at it as to whether we ought not to have two hospitals, but that is a question of fiscal resources, and for different reasons.

Sir, if the Honourable Minister was being frank with this Chamber he would tell you, and I hope that his public officials advised him, that every additional hour that a polyclinic is open, requires staff, supplies, utilities, additional expenditure, and it is not just a case of having a wish list and saying that I want X,Y,Z.

Sir, the Honourable Member wants to fix the hospital on the old site, the Geriatric Hospital, the old District Hospitals, the Psychiatric Hospital, all of the polyclinics, and expand all at the same time, and guess what, not a cent in here for any one of those things, far less one of them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I say to you, simply, that I believe that there are fundamental issues in the healthcare sector, that are affecting not just this country, but all countries. I said that the increase in people's knowledge means that people expect the highest standard of care, because they see what is happening in other jurisdictions. They go on the internet and they believe that

all efforts have to be made, which is a reasonable expectation, but a developing country that is trying to provide all of the other social welfare benefits and free education, will have challenges. That is why the...

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House A5A, Sequence 116, 5.00 p.m.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: ...They believe that all efforts have to be made, which is a reasonable expectation, but a developing country that is trying to provide all of the other social welfare benefits and free education will have challenges. Sir, that is why the Number one issue in the American presidential election - and that is not a developing country - is the question of the affordability of health care.

Sir, we have and the Opposition is prepared to have a serious and sensible debate, on the funding of health care in this country, because we recognise that there will be challenges to meet the needs of the population, purely on the basis of the road that we have been travelling, over the course of our time since Independence.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Minister's time has expired.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, to the extent that the Minister wants that, he will find us, but if he continues to quote wrongfully then, Sir, he will have to go on his own.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I can also quote from the Report of the Master Plan for the Rationalisation and Redevelopment of the QEH . . . and I can tell you about the chronic lack of materials and supplies. It does not matter to me whether or not it is made a document of the House, because facts are facts. Sir, the reality is that there was a chronic lack of equipment, and a backlog of maintenance over the last 14 years, to the tune of \$19 million. What does that say in the retort from the Honourable Member for Michael North East?

Sir, the fact of the matter is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East cannot advise this Minister about anything. The problem with the Members on That Side is that they do not understand they are not the Government. I will therefore, through my advisers, determine the policy and the way forward for the Ministry

of Health. Sir, we will do what we have to do, but do not mind the talk. Sir, those Members on That Side could not get the job done, so it is incredible for them to think that we can get it done, and that is the problem with the Members on Other Side. Sir, it is a hurt and a painful thing to be in Opposition. Therefore, do not ascribe your weaknesses and intellectual inferiorities to This Side.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member's statement should be withdrawn. I will encourage him to do so now.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I will withdraw it, Sir, and ask that it is struck from the record.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Let us move on, and it is struck from the record.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, I will go right back and I will spend a few minutes finishing up, with respect to the Barbados Water Authority and then touch on sanitation.

Sir, the point I was making before I sat, related to the fact that it would make no sense to start to introduce sophisticated monitoring technologies, if you did not have the basic infrastructure and the human resource problems at that institution sorted out.

The important point for me, Sir, is that we have to protect the quality of water in Barbados. The Hon. Member for St. Michael North East, who spoke to the Reverse Osmosis Plant, confused herself, without understanding that reverse osmosis is a process that could be used as, or to execute desalination, but they are not one and the same.

Sir, the importance of that event is that after 14 years, the last financial year, is when I would have seen a Cabinet Paper on that particular situation, and be it so, Sir, my interest is what we have to do to go forward. I am convinced that in order to protect the water resources in Barbados, we must do something to reduce the nitrite levels in our water.

I will accept, Mr. Chairman, that part of the problem is not one simply of organic breakdown products, but it has to do with a lot of other contaminants that are washed into the Belle area. Sir, what is also important, we have to do something about it. Therefore, this Administration stands firmly behind the development of that plant because it is in the interest of protecting the environment and the environmental resources of this country for the people of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, we will also say that we will look at the type of plant and the magnitude of the plant. Sir, we accept that with the growing number of housing projects

developing in St. John, and parts of St. George, we accept that when we look at what may be required, in terms of continuing agricultural development in Barbados, we simply have to look to build a plant that may be modular in nature. Sir, we may make the corrections now, to reduce effluent concentration of nitrates by a particular factor, and then we may have to reduce it again, at another point in time, in ten or fifteen years. Therefore, what we intend to do, is to ensure that any facility we put there is a modular capability so that it can be upgraded, as one would require.

Sir, the issue of sewerage the Belle, has been a long problem in Barbados, and the squatters in the Belle have been put under significant pressure in Barbados. Sir, for many years, I remember the former Honourable Member for St. Michael East, was at pains in this Honourable Chamber, speaking to developing a sewerage system in this area.

This administration again, Sir, because of our interest in protecting our water resources and our general environment, will support any project, which has that as its ultimate objective. As a result of that, we will continue to evaluate the type of facility that we want to introduce. I am not simply going to accept anything because it is on a Cabinet paper, and brought there by the former administration. Sir, we are going to evaluate and come to our own decisions, as to the type of plant, and whether or not it suits what we want to achieve.

Mr. Chairman, what is also important for me is that the time has come in Barbados, when we must find out where the meters are in Barbados that are not working. Sir, significant loss of revenue occurs because the Barbados Water Authority may have between 8 000 to 10 000 water meters that are not functioning. Sir, that problem has to be sorted out.

Mr. Chairman, we are going to ensure that the fragmented nature of Barbados Water Authority administrative capability is addressed. I looked at the rents that are now paid by the Barbados Water Authority for certain private sector properties in Barbados and it does not make sense. I will do everything in my power to ensure that we can look to have the Barbados Water Authority administrative interest housed in one area.

In addition, in the interest of efficiency of collection, and I am referring in terms of payment of water bills, et cetera, I want to look very closely at how we can utilise our community resource centres to see how more effectively we can decentralise and move the payments away from certain select points of congestion.

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Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: That becomes important because it is not only user-friendly, it allows for efficiencies.

Mr. Chairman, my main concern with the Barbados Water Authority is the fact that we have to find a way to reduce its electricity cost. Again, I am well aware of projects that were looked at to help in that regard. I would have the necessary personnel to look at the project again in light of the continuing escalation of oil prices. Mr. Chairman, I know that if we do not do something, the Barbados Water Authority would not be a going concern much longer because by any financial measurement it is almost tottering on that reality right now.

Mr. Chairman, the former Administration cannot advise this new Administration on any aspects of that matter because they had 14 years to sort the problem out and it is worse than it ever was when they took office, so I really do not want to hear anything from that side. We would determine for ourselves where we want to go and where we want to carry the situation.

Mr. Chairman, I want to spend a few minutes on our solid waste management systems in Barbados. Sir, this is the same Administration that has allowed a situation to develop in Barbados that I call crisis management with respect to solid waste in this country.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. Speaker.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, if it is that you want to rule that way, I will respect your ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I have ruled that way.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: The reality is that the landfill is a beautiful place to be. You are highly elevated, you have a panoramic view and it is picturesque.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would encourage the Honourable Member to move on.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: The point of the matter here, Mr. Chairman, is that they do not want to hear the truth. After 14 years, we have a situation at the Mangrove Landfill that is a crisis that we have to address that was left by that side. We have over 200 000 tyres up there now. That is creating not only a breeding spot for mosquitoes but a potential significant fire hazard in this country, and they have the audacity to talk.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, that is so because the equipment that shreds the tyres is broken down and cannot be fixed, and the number of tyres is mounting every day. We have a situation where there is almost no space at all at the Mangrove Landfill in this country. If the Democratic Labour Party does not come up with and execute a solution to that problem, Barbados could be in serious problems. That side cannot tell this side anything.

Mr. Chairman, I will come back to speak to the Vaucluse Project and Greenland because some misquoting was done earlier today by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Mr. Chairman, Barbadians must understand what the reality is. Mr. Chairman, I will not speak emotionally, I will speak as a scientist and bring the facts to Barbadians so that they understand what the issues are and why it is that we must take certain decisions, which were not taken for the last 14 years by that Administration. It has left us with a set of solutions and a time-frame to implement those solutions that are narrowing very quickly.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to sit and ask to speak again.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.40 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.40 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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5.23 p.m.

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RESUMPTION

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair. Mr. CHAIRMAN assumed the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I want to join this debate on health and try to add some balance to the consideration which is being put forward. Sir, let me start by saying how heartened I am by the presentation made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and the recognition on this side that we need to put more money into health.

Mr. Chairman, I am heartened not only that we will put more money in health - and the Honourable Member did make such an erudite presentation - but because I am hearing things from the Minister, which make me comfortable that we are in good hands in relation to health in Barbados at the present time.

Mr. Chairman, I find it disturbing that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East could try to pretend for any moment that she, in any way, is the repository of all knowledge and that her organisation or those Honourable Members over there could lecture this Government about anything to do with health.

Mr. Chairman, this morning the Honourable Member for St. Peter took comfort in the same approach, full in the face of the facts of the wild and uncontrolled spending which we are now trying to bring under control in this Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party came to Government in 1994, and one of their pivotal criticisms of the day was the condition of our water supply, the leakages, loss of water, the fact that no one could firmly place a finger on the quantity of water losses. Yet today, 14 years later, they would like to pretend to Barbados that they could present, from the Opposition Benches, a better solution to a problem which they basically left untouched.

Mr. Chairman, to pretend that it would have taken 14 years to discuss or to negotiate with the Inter-American Development Bank or with any other bank about a loan, a study or an implementation, is ridiculous. They stand condemned but I do not have to go to that stage because the country has already spoken on that matter.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to hear the kind of projects which the Minister spoke about, in terms of water recovery, water recycling, the use of either reverse osmosis plants or membrane filtration where it applies, the application of micro or mini sewerage plants to give us

savings in a scarce commodity like that of water in our communities.

Sir, I want to recommend that as we continue this term of office, we look at the implementation of these kinds of mini and micro projects wherever feasible, so that villages in Barbados with high populations could look forward to participating in a programme, which would ensure us that we have water for the future. This is a commodity which a number of pundits say may be the substance on which the next war is waged in the world. Therefore, we need to tackle these ideas frontally. Sir, from what I am hearing, the Ministry of Health is well seized with the technology, the foresight, the staffing and most important, with the leadership that will bring these solutions into effect. Sir, that is very important.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Health, along with its responsibility for water, was not created on January 15, 2008. The amazing thing is that added to that portfolio has been the responsibility for National Insurance.

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Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, they on that side preferred to malign people in Barbados whenever they would put forward an opposite idea, whenever they said that the hospital was dilapidated, did not present the kind of care that Barbadians could be satisfied with, they preferred to be naysayers and called Barbadians schizophrenics.

Mr. Chairman, I want to work with the Ministry of Health with the Oistins solutions and indeed, the Ministry of Transport will look forward to that opportunity. Sir, for many years we have talked in Barbados about the acquisition of the old Oistins Esso Petrol Station so as to move the operation of the bus terminal on the land side, freeing up a lot of valuable parking. This action will release the space either to expand the investment by the Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation in our Bay Garden or to develop a single resource like parking and recreation for Barbadians and visitors alike and they have difficulty with that. They have difficulty with simple, cost-effective projects because they sat on these challenges and pretended that the only important thing in Barbados and Government was to look busy and do nothing.

Mr. Chairman, I have already spoken about the question of functional dilapidation. I do not believe it is quite the term used by my advisor but it means the same thing. We have encountered in 90 per cent of the cases, in the buildings that house the Ministries of Government in this country functional dilapidation. Sir, that is the first challenge because you cannot expect to ask public servants to work in that environment. Similarly, at the Queen

Elizabeth Hospital it is clear from the presentation and the investigation of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West that the same situation applies, functional dilapidation. Sir, then we are going to come in here and pretend that we are going to argue about whether you are going to rewire, renovate or build new, and that all these activities can happen together. Sir, what is a fact is that the Barbados Labour Party destroyed health service in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Peter this morning said that he accepted full responsibility for everything that occurred and he personally oversaw the single-handed destruction of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in one of his first move as Prime Minister of this country. Sir, then it was followed by the actuality of two Ministers that I can recall who were more about public relations than about doing anything. Sir, they would get on the back of a dump truck and drive around for one hour. They would go into the car park at J.B.'s Supermarket, put three drums in the way, paint one blue, one green and one yellow, say they are sorting garbage, put it back in the same dump truck, get on it, take it to Mangrove and at Mangrove mix it all back together and create the stench that is so challenging to control not only by the Honourable Member on the other side when they were in Government but by us.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has three more minutes.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, we have an opportunity to develop in our communities mini sorting programmes, which can then interface beautifully with the sorting station at Vauclose. Sir, it makes sense. We are going to oversee the implementation, note the word I am using, Sir. When I say implementation, it means taking effect, to carrying out, physically participating in the actualisation, making it happen and doing it, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, we are going to do it and we will be challenged on our record.

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: You do not have to tell me that we will be challenged on our record, that two years into it, it is going to be tougher because everybody out here understands that. So we ignore those kinds of side comments.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please address the Chair.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, I prefer to look at you any day and for the few minutes of my time left, I am going to focus on the Chair and its occupant. Sir, I promise you that this Democratic Labour Party and in the case of health, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, will lead a charge on the health services of this country aimed at creating

solutions; creating comfort; creating an environment both physical and human environment, that can work.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the time you have allowed me, Sir, and reserve the time to come back.

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

DR. W.F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Under normal circumstances, I would have given way to my senior member, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph because, Sir, he is senior both in age and in experience. Sir, I thought it was imperative for me to add a few additional words to my original presentation.

Mr. Chairman, as you would recall, when I first stood on this Head, I asked the Honourable Member for St. Philip West to state his position on whether he believes that his administration would commit the Government and, by extension, the people of Barbados to a new hospital or whether he would rehabilitate the existing Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Honourable Member came back, I believe, on three occasions and at no time did he make his position clear at all as to whether his administration was going to have a new hospital or rehabilitate the existing hospital. He came and spoke about beds; he spoke about taking terminally-ill people and putting them in a hospice; he spoke about taking the elderly people out of the hospital but a new hospital is not only about beds; it is also about enhancing and improving the diagnostic capabilities of the institution. It is also about designing a better institution that can give a better level of care to the people of this country. It is also about giving better and improved radiologist services; it is also about incorporating new technologies that we may not now have in this country into the facilities of the hospital. Sir, I would ask again, on the Floor of this House that the Honourable Member states his position or...

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Dr. W.F. DUGUID: ... state his position or the position of the administration. If it may be different, be man enough to say so. In your words you said, "I have no fear." Sir, "I have no fear to say" are his words. If you have no fear to say, get up and say. I do not understand what is the problem. He has skirted over the issue time and time again. If you do not have a position, tell the people so too, but you came three times and not once has he made it clear what his position is, or the position of his administration. I will go further.

Sir, the Honourable Member stood up and talked about solid waste management. I have looked through this Manifesto, sent over from St. James South, and I thank him for it. I looked all through and nowhere in this Manifesto is any mention given to solid waste management. If the Honourable Member for St. Philip West could point me to solid waste management in his Manifesto, I encourage him to do so.

Asides.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: The Honourable Member for St. John got up in here today and said this is the programme of the Democratic Labour Party. Nowhere in it is anything about solid waste management. Are you varying your programme? Are you changing from what your Leader said is the programme? If you are changing from it, get up and say that, but you obviously have not mentioned any where in here, solid waste management.

Asides.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: I am not giving way, Mr. Chairman. I am not giving way.

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Sir, the reason for not placing everything in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party is not the one offered by him, but it was to avoid a constitutional crisis by way of winning all 30 seats for the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is no point of order.

Honourable Member for Christ Church West, please continue.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Sir, that is a point of interruption.

Sir, it is obvious that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has come in here to play games. This is not a game. In the words of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, this is serious business, and you come in here with a point of interruption, get serious man.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, address the Chair.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South come in here with a point of interruption. He needs to be serious. This is about serious business about the people of this country, about his 7000-odd constituents, and for him to come and suggest that

point of interruption is a waste of time. Let us get on with the business. I am going to come back.

Sir, solid waste management is not in here, yet the Honourable Member talks about solid waste management. I understand, because it is necessary. The Honourable Member also made mention that at the new solid waste location, which I am sure they would oversee at the opening, and again I would say it is poetic justice, that they would be doing that, because they selected the site to begin with. The Democratic Labour Party administration, of past, selected the Greenland landfill site to begin with, pre 1994, and they will now oversee the first set of toxic waste going there. I say toxic waste, because in these Estimates there is a provision of \$9 million to build a leachate plant. I am going to make it clear what leachate is, because I researched the definition: "The generation of leachate is caused principally, by precipitation percolating through toxic waste deposited in a land fill. Once in contact with decomposing toxic solid waste, the percolating water becomes contaminated, and it then flows through, it is termed leachate. Leachate through this decomposition produces a wide range of other materials, like methanes, aldehydes, alcohols and others."

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member please tell us the source of that definition?

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: It was Wikipedia, I believe it was from Wikipedia.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, continue.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Sir, if the Honourable Member has committed himself not to take any toxic waste to Greenland, then why is it in the Estimates to build a leachate plant to take care of the said toxic waste? That is the point. The Estimates show that there is obvious intent that money will be voted to build the leachate plant. Let us not try to 'Mamaguy' the people of this country. Let us not try to confuse the electorate. Let us not try to change what we know is inevitable. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West needs to get up and make the position clear, that Greenland at some point will have to become the solid waste receiving point for this country.

Sir, I want to go to one other point. It deals with the Barbados Water Authority, and in specific terms the discussions about SCADA. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West tried to make the point that you could not institute a SCADA system, on an operation that was experiencing leaking problems. This could not be further from the truth. Let me first state that my experience with the SCADA system is not from being told about them. I had the opportunity to be the Chairman of the National Petroleum Corporation. During that time, the National Petroleum Corporation gave gas to over 6000 additional

people. I live in Rockley New Road, and we do not have natural gas there. Let me go further. Mr. Chairman, I can barely hear myself.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, go ahead.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: The National Petroleum Corporation was instituting a SCADA system, and was the second utility in this country to do so. The instituting of a SCADA system is to better manage the resources, to find the leaks and how it works. Essentially, you put at various points of your grid sensors that are all linked to one location, and those sensors measure volume and pressure constantly. When there is a spike in pressure or volume, in particular volume, it means that you have a leak. That is what a SCADA system is designed to do, to help you to manage your resources and to reduce the losses in those resources.

I am very happy to report that at one point, the lost gas for the National Petroleum Corporation used to be 15 and 17 per cent, and through the introduction of the SCADA system, it went down, in some months, to 5 per cent. That is what a SCADA system is for, to give you a central location to manage your whole grid, based on putting sensors all through the grid. Of course, the Barbados Water Authority would benefit from a SCADA system, because in a similar year, rather than having stations, and people, all over the country to measure those systems on a constant 24/7 basis as they normally do, by instituting a SCADA system with a remote control access at a specific location, you can monitor your whole grid while searching for spikes. It has an alarm system. So when there is a spike in volume, for instance, it means that you are losing resources, that is why it has an alarm. It can even send messages to your cellphone, or your home, and inform people that there is this situation going on.

Sir, I would agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, that the SCADA system design was already in place, and would urge the Honourable Member to look forward to its implementation.

I thank you.

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

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I want to offer two broader explanations for the benefit of Christ Church West. The first explanation relates to...

18.00 p.m.

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House A5A, Sequence 121, 6.00 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I want to offer two broader explanations for the benefit of the Hon. Member for Christ Church West. The first explanation relates to the SCADA System. I really do not want to get involved in too much detail, but what the SCADA System would essentially allow one to do, is to evaluate the fact that there are leaks, and the magnitude of the leaks. Sir, what is needed in order to specifically detect leaks, would be ultrasound technology that can determine, what one calls turbulent flow, out of linear flow. Therefore, I would suggest to the Honourable Member that I would still hold the position that I held previously.

Sir, let me go to the matter of LEACHATE, and before I get there, it would be necessary for me to go into some other elements of the solid waste management. Mr. Chairman, over the past few years in Barbados, we have relied, almost exclusively on sanitary landfills, as our main solid waste disposal capability. Sir, because of the topography in Barbados, and the availability of land in Barbados, this administration believes that land filling is not a sustainable solution to solid waste management in Barbados.

We also believe by extension that, as are the technocrats in Barbados, with respect to solid waste management, the integration of re-usage, recycling and waste reduction in general. When applied to the treatment of that waste and to consider the waste to be a resource, you can either generate new products from it, as a recyclable, or you may reuse it in some particular way.

Mr. Chairman, we believe very strongly that we need to go to the next level, to see solid waste as a means of generating employment, and as a means of generating energy in Barbados.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, as a result, we had to look at the waste streams in the country, and that has been done quite effectively by the Solid Waste Management Unit. It is important that we recognise a very bad practice, under that Administration, of taking vegetable oils, blood and offal and dumping them in a big hole, up on a hill. Sir, this is an unsavoury practice that we will bring to an end.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, we are not only going to bring it to an end, because it is a toxin to the environment, but it is a practice that is not sustainable. We intend to incorporate some of that processing within the LEACHATE Treatment Plant. I will get to that a little later

to educate the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, as to how we intend to use the LEACHATE Treatment Plant in Barbados.

Sir, it is of the first importance that we understand the current practices for major waste management in Barbados, and finding appropriate locations, are major challenges in this country, given our space. Therefore, we must look to implement alternative positions.

Sir, the challenges that we believe we have to deal with, is that we have to create an enabling environment to provide confidence to potential investors in this sector. There are many investors right now who recycle plastics, bumpers, and bottles. They take large volumes of waste that would usually have gone to the landfill. Those are processed and now exported out of Barbados.

I want to commend those private sector persons for that work. Sir, they can rest assured that this administration will look very closely at amending the Recyclable Containers Act, so as to ensure that some of the encumbrances that now exist in that Act are dealt with, with respect to the types of products to be recycled with a cost.

Presently, you have those returnables that are defined in terms of a beverage, which are those that you can recycle and get a financial return, but that excludes a lot of plastics. For example, the squeeze bottle, those that are used for detergents and so on, that are now littering Barbados, as well as plastics like water bottles.

Sir, we need to amend that Act and expand it, so that it includes other types of plastics and other containers like aluminum and some other aspects of glass. Sir, this is something that we are committed to do in the very near future, so as to provide the infrastructural framework to help develop that particular industry in this country.

Sir, we will also look very closely at adjusting the cost for the returnable, and not have it so much as a ceiling but have it as a floor, so that you allow the market forces and the businesses to drive the cost of returning a particular item. Therefore, you will now have an incentive to pick up all the plastics that are now in our house and have them returned to a particular depot.

Mr. Chairman, in doing that, we also need to create another set of opportunities for further local investment. I want to look very seriously at international funding that could very well be achieved, using the Cotonou Agreements, especially examining the opportunities for grants and loans from the European Commission and the European Investment Bank. Sir, there are many opportunities for what one may call, renewable energy opportunities, carbon credit capabilities, et cetera. Sir, these

are the directions that we will go to, in terms of looking at the broad framework.

Mr. Chairman, let me get a bit more specific. As part of the Solid Waste Management approach that this administration will adopt, some of the framework has been established in the past, by the work of the Solid Waste Project Unit. We will continue with some of it and some of it we will make adjustments.

Sir, this administration supports, the establishment of the Vacluse Station, especially with respect to its chemical waste station, its composting station, and its transfer capability. The reason this becomes important in the context of our solid waste management, is because if you want to promote a culture where you are going to reduce your garbage, and promote recycling, et cetera, what we want to be able to take to Vacluse and to process there, we should be able to use, either as an end product towards energy production, or can be resold in some other practical way.

Therefore, the whole aspect of Vacluse would be to institute some separation of the garbage, where you create a compost from your organics. This compost can then be used to be sold to agricultural players, whether it is the BADMC or the private sector interest. Sir, we may very well have to create a legislative framework for that as well, because that would now be a product that has an income generating capability.

Mr. Chairman, we can now take that compost and carry it through to energy production, via another system that we are looking very closely of having tacked onto the Vacluse Station at this stage. Sir, from the compost, we can now carry that to energy production in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, that is not a Barbados Labour Party position, that is the thinking of the Democratic Labour Party. In addition, we intend to ensure that the system we will consider putting at Vacluse, can also burn your tyres that are now up there in mounds. We want to make sure that the same system can take your vegetable oils and even use your old oils, even though there is some recycling that goes on in Barbados, if the magnitude of the amounts cannot be dealt with effectively by those approaches.

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Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, the facility that we would develop up there can also take those and burn and create energy in Barbados. That is forward thinking.

In addition to that, the Greenland Leachate Plant would allow for a volume and mix of the blood and septage

within the treatment plant so that it could now be moulded and once and for all be treated effectively so that they could not be passed into the aquifer in Barbados. That is forward thinking. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West does not have a clue what he is talking about.

Mr. Chairman, what is even more fundamental here with the process that we intend to put in place coming out of Vacluse is not only to have a product that can be sold to upgrade our solids in Barbados but to make sure that when we go to the energy components, we will produce a carbon-based product that has little or no toxic capacity. The objective therefore of the leachate treatment plant is just a precautionary measure to help us deal with the septage and the blood that is now dumped in a big hole at Lonesome Hill. Do you want to go and see, Sir? I can carry you up there now.

Mr. Chairman, that now brings me to another problem that we have to solve that relates to how we deal with bulk waste. Mr. Chairman, I understand the challenge that the Solid Waste Project Unit and the Sanitation Service Authority had with respect to this bulk waste.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has three more minutes.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: With the Mangrove Landfill ending its term of life, the bulk waste had to be taken somewhere else and as a result the construction and demolition waste are now being taken to Edgumbe Quarry and Parsons Quarry.

Mr. Chairman, we have to do significantly better with respect to the way we dump white metal, fridges and stoves, motor cars and trucks in Barbados. I do not like the idea of these things just being dumped into a hole. I think that we must move to a more modern way of dealing with this. If there must be a CARICOM approach to it, so be it, but we have to start somewhere. Mr. Chairman, if the start is here, we must set up a facility to process these products. If we have to enter joint venture arrangements with the other players in the region that is what we are going to do.

Mr. Chairman, 14 years ago in Barbados we had about 30 000 or 40 000 vehicles on the road and now we have 130 000 vehicles. If we continue like this, very soon we would need to create a facility to deal with that problem. Mr. Chairman, we are going to sit and put our heads together and find a solution to that particular problem.

Mr. Chairman, we have to find ways to ensure that the operations are financially viable and that the mechanisms used to finance these operations are such that they are income generating elements to it. Chairman, this is something that I would spend some time working through

with the people in the Ministry especially with those at the Sanitation Service Authority and the Solid Waste Project Unit.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up. I will give you one minute to wind up.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I will wind up, Sir.

Sir, we are not going to finance those projects by the old BOLT system that was used by the previous Administration. We are going to make sure that any publicprivate partnership that we engage in automatically generates a revenue to help pay for itself as well as to execute a savings in the general science of administrative cost. That is the difference between how it was implemented with the previous Administration and how we intend to implement our private sector partnerships agreements with respect to solid waste management in Barbados.

I thank you.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I enter this debate to place on record the fundamental that I believe needs to be explained today. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West has inherited a ministry that has grown over the past 14 years since we took over in 1994. In fact, in 1993, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital received \$93 million and by 1994 the Democratic Labour Party had reduced it to \$58 million. Over the last 13 or so years we saw to it that the hospital got increased revenue every year. Sir, I do not want it to be said that the hospital was starved of resources. It must be stated in this House that every year, over the past 14 years, resources were given to the hospital. Mr. Chairman, if that amount was adequate or not, that is something else.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Health, National Insurance and Social Security is on record of saying today that the hospital would need even more money than it is presently getting, so that regardless of whatever you give the hospital or the Ministry of Health, they would spend the money. The same thing goes for the other ministries. Resources are given based on what governments in a small economy collect.

Mr. Chairman, based on our revenue, we have to look at our priorities. Mr. Chairman, the health service in this country has always been a priority. I have made the point that health continues to receive the largest chunk of the economy in any one year. Sir, we come in here and beat up ourselves but the truth of the matter is that both political parties have spent considerable sums of money on health services.

Mr. Chairman, the issue has to do with management. I believe that is where we need to spend some time. I believe that we need to put an effective management service in place at the hospital. I believe that the present minister is well au fait with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the health system because he has been in that system for a long time. I am sure that if he had taken the information he received from his technocrats, from persons in that ministry, from his own side and from the documents that they have presented to the people and from our own document...

Sir, it is my understanding that whenever a political party wins an election and ministers go to their departments, they are asked to present their manifesto. Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that when the present Minister was asked for his manifesto, he said he had sent it to his technocrats. There were no fundamentals in the document. Therefore, the document that he is really using is the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto.

Mr. Chairman, if you look at the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto you have all the information that the Minister has pointed out. We have left a programme that the Minister can move forward on.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make the point that we have to look at the management. We have put effective management in place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that has to work. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is now under a board and if you give it time, I believe it would work.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make the point that when Honourable Members come in here to say that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is the worst hospital, that there are no resources, that we spent \$100 million on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital... This year we are spending over \$150 million, which works out to more than \$12 million per month, therefore there must be somebody to account for this money. We need to have accountability here. Money has been spent on the hospital and we continue to spend money on it.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West must know that they trained only 13 nurses in this country in 1994.

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Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, by 2007, we were training 120 nurses. Sir, more nurses are being trained at the Barbados Community College than before but we have to train more. Mr. Chairman, I am on record as saying

that we have to continue training nurses and policemen, especially for the export market.

Mr. Chairman, I understand the present Minister is going to take nurses out of the CARICOM market, for example, 37 nurses are coming from St. Vincent. Sir, I thought there was the understanding that we would not poach nurses out of the CARICOM market.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy making the point today that it seems to him that this is a new thing, that we were doing something bad. I know for sure that prior to 1994, the then Minister of Health was bringing nurses out of Britain and that he would have personally interviewed these nurses.

Mr. Chairman, we understand the shortage of nurses is a problem and that we therefore have to address that problem. Sir, we in the Barbados Labour Party do not want the Honourable Members on that side to think we are giving them any advice, we are not here to criticise but to compliment them when they do a good job. We are also here to assist and to make suggestions whenever possible.

Mr. Chairman, in our view and in the view of the technocrats at the Ministry of Health, there is a need for a new hospital. The Barbados Labour Party carried out a study which showed that there is the need for a new hospital, but the Democratic Labour Party could decide either to build a new hospital or to repair the present one.

Sir, I am sure that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South could indicate to his colleagues that sometimes when a building or a vehicle is repaired constantly, you do not get that good return on your investment because of the fact that the vehicle needs to be replaced, instead of being constantly repaired. Therefore, the Democratic Labour Party could put its head in the sand and deny that we need to have a new hospital.

We are not saying that the present hospital cannot last for a number of years, but for the future, I am saying there is need for a new health facility.

Sir, whether or not Government puts resources at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or at the Polyclinics, there must also be effective management of those resources. I think we need to train more hospital managers. Sir, this is a very specialised training, we had to go to Europe to look for persons to run our hospital and I think the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, should look at putting a system in place to have hospital management or management in the health service.

Mr. Chairman, regardless of whatever resources voted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, such as this \$150

million, the hospital would need more money. Mr. Chairman, I am saying that within the health service, if persons are not committed, we would find within a few months there would still be the need for more resources. Sir, I am calling on the new Minister to ensure that there is effective management. Sir, to be spending \$12 million per month is a lot of money to be spent within a small economy. Sir, we cannot waste this money.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, if people do not go to work to ensure there is a proper health service, if the engineers do not come to work, if there are not persons in the health service, either nurses, nurses aids, engineers, orderlies.... Sir you have to look at the level of persons taking uncertified sick leave. You have to look at the human resource management, and at the need to get value for money.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak briefly on another item under this Head, that being the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority is not a new entity and it has done a lot of good work over the past 14 years and before that. Sir, we need to understand that from 1895, when the Barbados Water Authority started to lay mains in this country, they would have done a lot of work, whether they need a new management system would be something different.

Mr. Chairman, I am of the view that the main replacement programme, started some years ago should continue. Sir, a recent study suggests that there would have to be an ongoing 10-year programme to replace all the old mains in Barbados. Sir, we started that programme but it became too capital intensive, as it is very expensive to continue. Sir, furthermore, when doing replacement of mains, the Minister of Transport and Works would see that he has to work hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Transport and Works and the Ministry of Health, in order to have these mains replaced.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make the point that Barbados is presently a water-scarce country. It has been for a long time and it will not go away overnight. Sir, the Barbados Labour Party has been looking at other ways of augmenting the water supply and it therefore becomes the duty of this Government to find ways of helping the Barbados Water Authority. Merely criticising them is not the answer, they need help in terms of finances. Sir, to replace mains for the Barbados Water Authority would take at least, in our view, \$100 million yearly.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, no one on this side has criticised the Barbados Water Authority, we have spoken about the

programmes of the last Government, the Barbados Labour Party, where they have failed to meet the needs of the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, the Honourable Member cannot understand that to mean that we are criticising anybody at the Barbados Water Authority, as the Honourable Member for St. George North was not the Minister in charge of the Barbados Water Authority at the time.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, my view is that the Barbados Water Authority has done a reasonably good job over the past years, in helping to provide water in what is already a water-scarce country. We know sometimes they dig up the roads and leave them, we know they spend a lot of money on their programmes, but they do not have that great amount of resources in order to do all the things they would want to do. Mr. Chairman, we have repeatedly said that the Barbados Water Authority needs a 24 man-hour system, which could then be broken down into a shift system. I believe that is something that new Minister should look at but surely the Barbados Water Authority has done a good job.

Mr. Chairman, the other point I would wish to make is this. The Minister has said there is a problem with the collection of bulky waste and that people are illegally and constantly dumping this waste. Sir, we have been speaking to this problem for a long time. We said that it causes environmental hazards and that it is a problem to our society, yet Barbadians continue to dump old fridges and old beds all over the place.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, we talk about educating the people and about putting these things into law, but there is already a law which sets out the fines that are to be imposed on persons who wilfully dump illegally.

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Mr. G. A. CLARKE: As someone said to me, and I believe we could be advised by the Honourable Attorney-General that laws are there for those persons who wilfully dump things. Sir, regardless of whatever you do in this country, you will find lawlessness and you have to be able to protect Barbados because it is our country.

Mr. Chairman, the health Ministry, as we have stated before, is not only the biggest Ministry but it is a tough Ministry. We know that more has to be done and we are calling on the Government to ensure that they do not only criticise but that they get on with the job and do the job. I want to ensure that we remain in this country for a long

time so get on with the job and regardless to whatever resources you give the hospital, the polyclinics and the health services, you have to manage it.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you.

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

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I enter this debate to correct a few errors made by the last Honourable Member who spoke. The Honourable Member gave the impression that the problem with the public roads in Barbados was created by the management of the Barbados Water Authority but I want the House to understand that it has nothing to do with the management of the Barbados Water Authority but that it was a decision of the Board to take away the repair of roads from the Ministry of Public Works and give it to private contractors. When one looks at what is occurring at present, I can tell you that the constituents, especially in the north of Barbados, especially in St. Lucy have suffered because of this bad decision by the board of the Barbados Water Authority. We have a particular road from Checker Hall to Crab Hill on which the Board made a decision to allow a private contractor to lay a main now for three years and, Sir, if you had to pass that road, you would not believe that it is a public road.

I honestly believe that it is the job of the Minister of Public Works to repair roads and not the job of any private contractor. Sir, for the simple reason, every time the Barbados Water Authority has to do work, that private contractor has to accumulate work in the particular area before they move in to repair the road. I am saying that previously when that mandate fell to the Ministry of Public Works the depot would go and repair the road and you were not faced with the particular problem.

Mr. Chairman, if you drive across Barbados today, you will see many pot holes that have occurred because of a bad Board decision, where the Minister of Public Works is blamed for the pot holes. In truth and in fact, when you check, you would recognise that a mandate has gone out telling the depot that they cannot touch or repair the pot holes because the Board of the Barbados Water Authority has issued a contract to a private contractor, who cannot find it possible to repair the pot holes like how the depots used to repair them.

I am asking the new Minister of Health to recognise the particular problem that Members of Parliament are facing in Barbados and to ensure that the mandate is now given back to the Minister of Public Works so that, once again, we can see the repairs being done at sensible times instead of a pot hole having to wait six months or longer. I do not think it is fair to the public of Barbados because there is a road now called the Husbands Road which has

been impassable for more than a year because of this bad decision.

Mr. Chairman, I can also make the point that when the management of the Barbados Water Authority was responsible for laying mains, I never had the problem that is occurring in my constituency, where it is now taking someone over three years to lay one pipe main and the road has not been repaired. I am asking the new Minister either to find contractors who are prepared to lay mains like how they are done in urban Barbados and stop treating the people in rural Barbados as if they are second class citizens where they feel they can move in and three years later the road works have not been completed.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that we have taken it for too long. We accepted the excuse when the prison was there. The prison is no longer there so the road should be fixed, and soon, because my constituents have suffered for over three years. I have watched the same contractor, after the change of Government, was able to do the same type of work from Colleton to Six Men's without any problem like what occurred prior to the elections. Sir, I am all in support of helping people, but at the same time, people have to understand that the constituents of St. Lucy are people too. Sir, I am not accepting this behaviour and I am calling on the Minister of Public Works to recognise that the Honourable Member has a role to play because the Minister of Public Works is responsible for the public roads of Barbados and you can get a situation where his Ministry can be blamed wrongly for a bad decision by the Board of the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Chairman, I am also asking members who sit on boards to recognise that they are not technocrats. The technocrats understand their jobs and members should stop moving into boardrooms and behaving as if they understand everything and not taking good advice from the technocrats and then other people coming here, after making bad decisions and blaming the technocrats. Sir, I do not think it is fair for the technocrats at the Barbados Water Authority to be blamed by the Other Side as I heard in this House this afternoon.

Sir, I thank you.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, greetings in the name of the most high. I understand the time constraints at the moment so this will be a brief intervention. I was listening very carefully to the Honourable Minister of the Health when he spoke about the care of the elderly. Sir, you will carefully see that I am no longer in the arrival lounge, I am virtually in the departure lounge and most of us, when I look around, are

also in the departure lounge. We are at a time in our lifetime when vital organs sometimes malfunction and all of us, at points in time, have our own

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, please save me from the Honourable Members in here. Sir, I know that you have not yet got to that stage of old age and being in the departure lounge but the fact is, that once you have got to that stage, there are a number of health-related peculiarities that you are not accustomed to that step in. Sir, healthy aging has to be a priority for most persons, who are 49 years and over.

Mr. Chairman, Barbadians have to congratulate themselves because it is a strange paradox that outside of Sweden, Korea, and Japan that Barbados per square mile has the highest number of centenarians existing on planet earth. Yet, when I listen to doctors carefully you find that Barbadians have high levels of hypertension...

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Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: Yet when I listen to the doctors carefully, you find that a great number of Barbadians have high blood pressure and diabetes. It is a strange paradox, yet Barbadians are living longer. On average, you will find that our average life span speaks to 77 years for men and 79 years for women. Women are still living longer than men. I really believe that if we are talking in the context of a healthy lifestyle and the care of the elderly, we have to take the community care approach. I seriously believe that too many elderly people are bunking at the hospital, and too many families across Barbados are abandoning their elderly. At times ailments such as Alzheimer's, or dementia step in, but the fact is, if we are a caring society, our families and by extension the communities in Barbados should take that holistic responsibility for the elderly within the community. I am sure that our health care bill could drop.

I think, significantly enough, too much emphasis in relation to health care is placed solely on Government. I really believe that community organisations and families themselves, should also take the responsibility for this aspect of health care, particularly at the community level.

Sir, the care of the elderly also, in a sense, falls under the Ministry of Social Care, particularly under the National Assistance Board. In actual fact, I hope the time comes, when the washing and cooking are removed from the daily responsibility of the home helpers across

Barbados. I really believe that the washing aspect, should be committed to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's laundry, and the cooking could be assisted through the NGOs, the Red Cross, The Pinelands Creative Workshop, and the Israel Lovell Foundation, and a number of other organisations that do this work on a daily basis.

Sir, in England, for instance, you have the Red Cross and a number of other organisations that provide daily meals-on-wheels. In fact, if that aspect is taken out of the home helpers' responsibility, they would be able to be more hands on, cleaning and reading to the elderly. I believe that every home helper in Barbados, now, should have at least a First Aid Certificate. I know they did the Care of the Elderly Course, but now I really believe that the community aspect of it, the more loving aspect of it, should really kick in.

In addition, aging. There are a number of activities that communities should undertake, to promote healthy lifestyle and healthy aging. This could remove that responsibility from the State. For instance, each community, particularly when the Constituency Councils really get activated, should be able to do a lot of this voluntary work, in terms of helping our seniors live a longer life. One of the ways they can do that is certainly through drama programmes and aerobics. There are a number of activities that could help persons to live longer.

I notice in Barbados that too many of our seniors, in terms of recreational activity, are found in the gambling houses, particularly playing the one-arm bandits. The one arm-bandits seem to have become a part-time sport, or an activity for our seniors.

Sir, yesterday I said in the debate that too many of our senior men are dropping out. They are not really involved in activity. You thought that was something left for the young people, but it is also stepping in among our senior men. Therefore, in my final analysis, I really believe that we now have to formulate new programmes at the community level, to have our seniors live active aged lives. I also believe that each and every community in Barbados should create that Hall of Fame and Wall of Fame, to serve those persons that lived a hundred years, to have those people in a memorial.

Sir, our seniors are the repositories of the old traditions. These are the people who are the pillar bearers of our society. Sir, why should I have to read a history book about the 1937 Riot, Hurricane Janet, and the kind of events that occurred in Barbados, when among us are persons who are living, who we can tap into their knowledge. The tragedy of all this is that in Barbados we wait until people die and then speak in glowing terms about them. We should have tapped into these persons' knowledge when they were alive, but now they have

departed, we then remember that we should have tapped in on their knowledge and memory for posterity. This brings me to the point that is critically essential. We should create a memory bank in Barbados, and this memory bank would be available to students, persons who are doing research to pursue various studies. Our seniors are a repository, a treasure of knowledge. Sir, I believe that is part of our heritage that we as a people have inherited, our knowledge, our valuable resource.

Sir, this debate is going to continue tomorrow, and when we get further into the Head, I would really like to expand on this aspect of care for the elderly. I trust the Honourable Member for St. Philip West when we talk about aging. I remember at a time, in my lifetime, I was about to depart. I did not know if it was heaven or hell, but the fact of the matter is, I trust him because he came to my rescue and gave me a health plan that turned around my life, if not I would be singing Near My God To Thee.

Asides.

Sir, I look forward to the debate tomorrow and would really want to come back tomorrow, because of the constraints of time this evening.

Thank you.

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

On the motion of Hon. R.D. JONES, seconded by, Mr. Chairman reported progress to Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to give notice of the recommitment of notices.

RECOMMITAL

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, I want to give notice of the following:

1. Resolution to grant the sum of \$25 528 804 from the Consolidated Fund and be placed at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2007-2008 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 15 2007-2008 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

HA5A 18:50 p:m

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House A5A, Sequence 126, 6.50 p.m.

ORDER NO. 2

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$25 528 804 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2007-2008 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 15 2007-2008 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I move the motion for suspension, I just want to indicate that we will debate this Resolution first tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock, and then we will recommence debate on the appropriate Head 53, Ministry of Health.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until Thursday, March 20, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House be now suspended until Thursday, March 20 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Chamber. The source file is filed with the Senate debates, but the text is a sitting of the House of Assembly (Mr. Speaker presiding), so it is printed as the House. Please confirm.

Q2. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q3. Opening. The source opens without the convening sentence (Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at ...). The date is taken from the heading of the source.

Q4. Date. The source file is named 'ESTIMATES, THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2008'; March 19, 2008 was a Wednesday, as the take-slips state. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Suspension about 9.50 a.m.. Hon. R. D. Jones moves that the House be suspended 'until 10.03 p.m.', the question is recorded as suspending the House 'until 4.45 p.m.', and the next take-slip reads '10:03'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Take-slips. One take-slip reads 'Tuesday, March 19, 2008', and 'House A5A, Sequence 101, 4.30 p.m.' falls between take-slips timed 14:30 and 14:40. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Throughout. Several speeches open with '...' only (for example Hon. R. D. Jones about 10.10 a.m., Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur about 11.00 a.m., Mr. R. St.C. Toppin and Mr. D. D. Marshall), which may mark gaps in the typed record. Printed as in the source.

Q8. After the second reading. Two motions to go into Committee of Supply are recorded one after the other, the first seconded by Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick and the second by Hon. C. P. Sinckler. Printed as in the source.

Q9. Speech labels. Hon. R. L. Sealy's speech ends under the label 'Hon. H.L. SEALY', and Dr. W. F. Duguid appears several times as 'DR. W.F. DUGID'. Printed as in the source.

Q10. Committee of Supply, Head 53. The procedural note says remarks by the Member for St. Philip West were ordered expunged 'by Mr. Speaker', though the House was in Committee with Mr. Chairman presiding; and the motion

to report progress at the end of the day reads 'seconded by' with no name. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Wednesday, 19th March, 2008, with Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair, on Order No. 1, the second reading of the Appropriation Bill on the Estimates for 2008–2009. Hon. R. D. Jones, Member for Christ Church East Central, wished the Deputy Speaker a happy birthday and said the Democratic Labour Party would widen access to tertiary education. He said some \$495 million would be spent on education that year, which was not enough, and that the Education Sector Enhancement Programme, a seven-year project, had been extended by two years with the Caribbean Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, Member for St. Lucy, defended the Prime Minister's political adviser and called for a relationship between workers, Government and the private sector, and Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur rose on a point of order.

Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, Member for St. Peter, congratulated the Government on its mandate and accepted full responsibility for everything done in his three terms as leader. He said that reducing VAT on utilities, as the Manifesto promised, would cost at least \$60 million, that the Prime Minister had already broken a promise on a Ministry of Innovation and Economic Empowerment, and that the Government should look for waste in a \$28 million Ministry. Hon. R. L. Sealy, Member for St. Michael South Central, supported the Appropriation Bill, citing over \$200 million owed by Hotel and Resorts Limited and the Auditor-General's reports. Miss M. A. Mottley, Dr. W. F. Duguid and Mr. G. W. Payne raised points of order, and the Deputy Speaker ordered some of Mr. Sealy's remarks struck from the record.

Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, Member for St. Michael North, said that not one Bill had been brought in two months, defended the previous Government's investment in hotels, and asked about LIAT and the Barbados Port; he was asked to withdraw one remark. Hon. M. A. Lashley said the former Prime Minister had 'voluntarily confessed', that the National Housing Corporation's insurance had lapsed from April 1, 2003, leaving 4 000 people uninsured, that the Warrens building had risen from \$35 million to \$91 million, and that the Corporation owed close to \$7 million to the NIS. He drew repeated points of order from Mr. Payne, Mr. G. A. Clarke and Dr. Duguid, and Dr. Duguid withdrew a remark that the Chair was biased. The House was suspended until 1.45 p.m.

After lunch Hon. F. J. Stuart said the Government had taken office on 15th January, 2008, only two and a half months before the end of the financial year, and gave a history of tenancies and local government since 1958. Mr. D. D. Marshall, Member for St. Joseph, criticised the Constituency Councils and cuts affecting the Police and Fire Services. The Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, closed the debate, saying the vision was in the Manifesto the electorate had endorsed, that he was 'not giving you \$150 000 simply to fete' people', and that Estimates were only estimates. He moved the second reading, which was agreed to.

In Committee of Supply, Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, Member for St. Philip West, presented Head 53, Ministry of Health. He spoke of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's accounts, a cataract backlog of about 500, a Workplace Wellness Programme, mental

health reform, and an allocation of \$150 million for the hospital. Dr. Duguid said the hospital had asked for \$168 million. Miss Mottley said over 100 nursing posts had been created and 180 vacancies filled, and that 40 per cent of wells had contamination problems. Mr. Kellman and Hon. P. M. T. Todd criticised the closure of St. Joseph Hospital. Dr. Estwick withdrew a remark at the Chairman's request.

After a further suspension, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Dr. Duguid, Dr. Estwick, on the SCADA system, leachate and the Mangrove Landfill, Mr. G. A. Clarke, who said 120 nurses were being trained by 2007, Mr. Kellman and Mr. H. F. Lashley continued on the Head. Progress was reported, and Mr. Jones gave notice of a Resolution to grant \$25 528 804 under Supplementary Estimates No. 15, 2007-2008, to be debated first the next morning. On his motion, seconded by Mr. Stuart, the House was suspended until Thursday, March 20, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.