
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

RESUMPTION

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

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. S.A. LASHLEY in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to join in wishing that all Honourable comrades had a pleasant Easter break and, certainly, on This Side, we are armed and back to continue the work of the people of Barbados.

Sir, the truth is that after a break like this for the season of Easter, we should be coming back joyful, full of glee about beautiful stories, not only about the rising of our Lord, but about contentment in the communities. But, Sir, I am afraid that is not the story.

Mr. Chairman, my weekend was spent absorbing more and more tales of woe and the need for urgency on This Side in terms of correcting a catastrophic position as regards to transport and road works in this country. You would have heard the pleas of the Heddings works and again, I have made sure that the Ministry has taken up the battle and make sure that those people are comfortable. Sir, it points to the need for all of us to be more vigilant.

We are not necessarily today speaking about Parliamentarians, but all of those who are in responsible positions throughout our community. If we can make this call from this House today, that we really have in Barbados to be committed to a much higher level of vigilance; a much higher level of promptness; a much higher level of anticipating and being proactive so as not to interfere with the lives of our citizens so much.

Mr. Chairman, I make the point all the time with my staff that we really need to listen to the voices of the people because on almost all occasions they are correct. They may be a little bit pushy; they may be a little bit repetitive; they may be a little bit insistent but, at the same time, if we do not listen to their voices and satisfy their needs, we really are not serving our purpose.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. George North was at pains, when we broke off last, to talk about initiatives which should be looked into to improve the traffic situation in Barbados. He talked about the handling of vehicles; he talked about the plastic licences; he talked about the Transport Authority and he talked about the works on our Highways with the 3S Project but the truth is that, again, there is evidence of the Barbados Labour Party Government not having its hands on the wheels of Government because these initiatives, though developed, we found them not in any state to be implemented. The new date we have set for the plastic licence initiative implementation in Barbados is now June 1 because when we put the operation to the test, it was clear that a number of shortcomings had to be addressed.

H/A5C/10:10

Sequence 1

Monday, March 25, 2008

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, when this initiative is rolled out, we want it to be a seamless initiative, and the

public is not further inconvenienced. Sir, there is a high level of dissatisfaction at the length of time one has to wait for the renewal of his licence, even as it stands. We do not want to make that situation worse. We are being careful, making sure that all the kinks are ironed out and we are truly ready to offer the plastic licence.

I am happy to report that the Licensing Authority has indicated that they now have their records, as much as possible, up to date, in terms of the issuing, and I am talking about basic licences, not permits or anything like that, for private sector vehicles. We are in a position to take off, and I am happy to report this to the Honourable Chamber.

Sir, I have spoken ad nauseam about the question of General Traffic Management. As I said, we are looking forward to working with the Transport Authority, in the very near future, to set up this symposium. I received positive response from persons who want to participate. We need to be prepared to put these experiments in place, in the City of Bridgetown. We need to look at different ideas. They are some who feel, for instance, that meter parking in Bridgetown should be premium, because if it were a premium it may offset the casual visitor, but at the same time, I think that nationally, the shortcomings by way of public transport, areas where you can allow for park and ride or just parking, are not there.

Too many services are still essentially carried out in Bridgetown. Maybe in some cases there is still a lack of confidence in doing things, without actually being face to face with the person we are dealing with. This confidence can only come, of course, with the building up of the infrastructure and the insistence on having it done.

Sir, we need to look at ways of getting vehicular traffic off the streets quicker in Bridgetown, because essentially that is where the problem lies. It is not, by any means, a simple solution. We, on This Side, are not for any moment understating the time it will take, or the level of investment that will be required. Suffice to say that these Estimates take care of the question of the plastic licence implementation, and the establishment of the Transport Authority, as a first step in this regard. Plastic licences can never be conceived as a solution to the traffic congestion, that is separate, less anyone misunderstands where I am coming from.

Sir, I want to address some of the questions that were raised by some speakers. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas, who is not now in her seat, gave us a litany of woes. Sir, when she was speaking I wondered if she and the Honourable Member for St. George North had no kind of relationship, because the extent of her needs demonstrates someone who has not been taken care of for a very long time. She named every road in St. Thomas in

need of service, and the Honourable Member for St. George North sat unmoved during her presentation.

Sir, as we said already, we are going to attempt to equitably distribute the resources of Government in serving the constituencies. The onus is on the Representatives to bring these issues to the fore, either at the level of our technical officers in the Ministry itself, or failing that, I am happy to receive a limited number of these requests. We need to develop an effective database for managing these road works, first of all, to let people know when work is going to happen so that they can prepare themselves, and also a system of measuring our outcomes and successes. That is the assurance that I can give.

The list of bridges to be attended to are in the Estimates. There is no need to repeat them. I think that they all have been agreed to by the technical staff. There are some areas which may not have come up. I have spoken about the Hayman's Bridge which is in serious condition, and off the cuff I can remember the Wilcox Road, the culvert again is in need of repair. I am sure that we can go through almost any area of Barbados and name bridges or roads that have narrowed because of wear and we will make sure that attention is paid to that.

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: In terms of the success of the Bitumen Programme, like everything else, the technical staff are indicating good results, so far. I have had private reports that in some cases they are not satisfied, but my technical staff indicates that they are satisfied, so far. Needless to say, there are ongoing discussions about cost, because every day with the oil prices moving, thankfully, this morning I woke up to the news that the oil prices are coming down. That news brought a great sigh of relief, but how long they would stay there, depends on a lot of factors outside of our control. However, at the same time, we have to manage these resources. There will be continuing negotiations with the providers to reach equitable and sensible pricing solutions, for these programmes to be effectively completed.

Sir, there is a high level of urgency, and I am acutely aware of the urgency, and we on This Side will work assiduously to make sure that the transport questions that are raised and the question of the road conditions, are dealt with in a sensible and timely fashion.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I imagine that we all had a peaceful and restful Easter weekend, filled with much constituency activity. During the course of the last few days, I was very happy to visit the people in Parks Road, Melvin's Hill, and other areas, to assure them that the current Administration, has continued the Barbados Labour Party's commitment to the Scotland District by making appropriate provision for the bridge works at Joe's River and Melvin's Hill. These two particular bridges have been very high on my agitating calendar with my own Administration. It underscores the complexity of doing work in the Scotland District.

Sir, for individuals who may spend all of their time in urban Barbados and peri-urban areas, diversions are things easily achieved. The bridge at Melvin's Hill has served the eastern part of Barbados and the Scotland District very well. Just like Joe's River Bridge, it was built many years ago, and did not contemplate in its design the heavy duty vehicles that are currently in use today.

Melvin's Hill Bridge, therefore, is really in a very bad condition. It is a bridge still actively used, and it is not visibly perilous, but if one were to go under Melvin's Hill Bridge, you would discover that some of the piles - I imagine that would be a good term for them - no longer make contact with the underside of the bridge. It is a wonder that bridge is still standing, taking the pressure of vehicles, huge flat bed trucks and so on, hauling quarry materials out of the Scotland District, pass over it.

A5C 10.20 a.m.

Sequence 2

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House A5C, Sequence 03, 10.20 a.m.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, that bridge is still standing. It is still able to have vehicles, the huge flatbed trucks pass over it, hauling horrible materials out of the Scotland District. Mr. Chairman, within the few weeks of the 2003 General Election, I took the Honourable Member for St. George North, the then Minister of Public Works, to see that particular bridge, and he was also horrified.

Sir, I believe, that the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport does not want my advice, but I feel it is important for him, as the new Minister to understand what we are dealing with, Sir. Melvin's Hill Bridge is currently the only artery taking you into the Scotland District, when you come east through Proute, Walk Spring and Clifton Hill.

Sir, at the western end of Melvin's Hill Bridge there are two roads, one going north, commonly call the Spa,

which is impassable, and when you go south-east, there is Mellow's, which is also impassable. Sir, in order to be able to work on Melvin's Hill Bridge, the bridge will have to be closed. Therefore, in order for the people of those entire communities to be able to move around with any degree of facility, we will have to re-open one of those roads. The plan that Public Works had agreed with me on, was that Mellow's would be re-opened. Mellows is easier to re-open than the Spa.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Therefore, Mellow's has to be opened. Sir, Mellows is an area which would take you right down into Joe=s River, but the crying shame is that the Spa and Mellow's were allowed to fall into a destitute state for many years. I am very happy that the current Administration has seen it fit to continue the work that I started with the Honourable Member for St. George North in relation to those areas.

Sir, based on the plan that I know the Ministry of Public Works has, they must first rehabilitate Mellows, so that road can be reopened. Then, they will be in a position to close Melvin's Hill Bridge and do the necessary repair work there. I am very happy to see it in the Estimates. The Honourable Member for St. George North made that commitment. I believe that the technical people still support it. I am also happy that the current Minister has given it his blessing.

Sir, the Joe=s River Bridge is 100 years old. It is a very strong bridge but that too, is very narrow and was not built for this kind of traffic. Sir, there was some talk of actually taking the bridge out of use, thereby bypassing it all together. The truth is, Sir, that I do not know if we can have a rural Barbados, a Scotland District, without some turns in the road. There have been some accidents, not on the bridge itself, but in the area probably 150 metres before the bridge.

Sir, the bottom-line is that the bridge is too narrow and it is only a matter of time before some tragedy strikes. I had suggested to the Ministry of Public Works that instead of widening the existing bridge, it would be better to build a parallel span. The new span that has been designed to be 16 feet wide, would take you one-way into Bathsheba and the existing bridge would bring you one-way out of Bathsheba. Sir, it is a plan to which they very happily agreed.

I am aware that the bridge was designed and was included in the last year's Estimates but we had come to particular challenges in the Scotland District. Cambridge broke away and the team had to deal with that. We had a lot of rainfall last year, which also made the start of Joe=s River Bridge impossible.

Sir, I am aware that as we speak, all of the metal girders, and so on, have been in the island for almost a year, and are currently stored at the St. Joseph Depot, which is in St. Andrew. I am happy to hear that work will hopefully soon start.

Sir, in relation to the general administration of the Ministry of Transport and Works, I believe the issues that presented themselves to the Honourable Member for St. George North when he served as the Minister of Public Works, are still the issues that exist today, and which will present themselves to the current Minister. I guess it is in the nature of large governmental institutions, that the rate of change is very slow.

I know that the Honourable Member for St. George North had a lot of good ideas and he, certainly, benefitted from a lot of suggestions from us on This Side and Members when they were in Opposition, but the same issues are going to present themselves. Sir, for me though, one particular issue is the size of the Joseph Depot.

The St. Joseph Depot in terms of its equipment allocation and staff, is simply too small, bearing in mind the task that they have to undertake. Sir, because of the difficulties, the Honourable Member for St. George North had agreed to strengthen the size of the Depot for me, he said by at least 50 per cent. Sir, I can trust the word of the Honourable Member for St. George North. I know that had he returned to that position, he would have honoured his commitment.

Sir, the fact of the matter is that the Scotland District is an area filled with challenges. It is difficult to be able to keep pace with the maintenance work, and the debushing work. Sir, debushing an area in St. Michael is very different from debushing an area in the Scotland District, because the rain falls in St. Joseph every day, so in six weeks' time, the bush is very tall again. Therefore, I would like to ask the current Minister to continue the plan that the Honourable Member for St. George North had of strengthening the St. Joseph Depot.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, in order to be able to keep pace with the maintenance work, it takes up all of the resources, so that it is very difficult to take them off maintenance work to do new work. Sir, if you put them to do new work, then the maintenance work suffers.

The realisation I think the Ministry of Works has come to accept is that they need a far more serious equipment allocation, and a larger manpower allocation, so that they cannot only carry out maintenance but also do new work. Sir, I would like to commend the Minister for

continuing the plan of the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Sir, we viewed the Scotland District as part of Barbados' patrimony and heritage. We have never seen it as a political area simply because the Scotland District is part of what would be our National Park. Sir, if Joe's River Bridge is allowed to go, then all of Barbados suffers, because getting to the East Coast would then become a challenge. The same with Melvin's Hill Bridge, because you would not be able to get down into Cambridge and see the panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: I am very glad that the Minister has carried through our commitment to these areas in the Scotland District. I would like to commend them for that work. My constituents are heartened that you will continue the good work that was started in St. Joseph and the Scotland District. I will speak again on the other Heads as we go through the morning's proceedings.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I want to make my contribution to this Head. I begin by saying that I am very pleased that the Government has not carried through on its initial statement, that it was going to abandon the issue of the expansion work being done on the ABC Highway. House A5C, Sequence 03, 10:30:15

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Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I want to go on to make the point that if you are going to engage in the sort of work, that Project would end up being...

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, you cannot allow the Honourable Member to make a statement like that. Nobody on This Side ever said that the work on the ABC Highway would be stopped. What we have said is that we are not comfortable with the arrangements, design, and financial arrangements for the ABC Highway.

The second phase, therefore, is being re-evaluated by this Government before any other decision is made. As I have stated already, this is a very high-cost exercise. We are spending a lot of public funds and we need to be sure that the solutions which we put in place are the ones which would bring about the results we are looking for.

The Honourable Member therefore cannot make those kinds of statements. Sir, I would love that the reference to any statements to stop the highway

construction would be removed from the record by the Honourable Member.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I am glad that they have decided not to abandon Phase 1 of the Highway Project.

Sir, when you get into a project of that magnitude, you have to go on to do some other things as well. Sir, I am not opposing the ABC Highway Project, I am supporting it. I am supporting their decision, Sir, to carry through with Phase 1 of the Project.

Sir, there was much talk after the Elections that the contractors had to supply certain information by the end of February or else. Sir, the end of February has come and gone, I have not heard any further reference to the "or else", so I am pleased that they are carrying through with Phase 1. I am supporting the decision of the Minister.

Sir, we do not want to end up with a highway that ends up not serving the purpose which it was intended initially to serve. Sir, what I am saying is that once you get into a project of that magnitude, you need to look at the issue of ensuring that you could get traffic and commuters from point A to point B along the Highway.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. If the Honourable Member continues to mislead the House, I am going to have to rise and put it right. How many ever times he decides to try to mislead this Parliament, I am going to get up and make it clear.

The object of their Administration in terms of the ABC Highway was termed AOperation Free Flow.@ Widening was the furthest thing from the discussion when that Project was contemplated, and I would like the Honourable Member to recognise that. The only widening that was contemplated would have been to accommodate the flyovers or the flyover. Sir, when the Honourable Member for St. George North introduced the Project, he did not even know how many flyovers he was contemplating. I was watching television that evening.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, it was always the intention to widen the Highway. The issue was whether by one additional lane or two lanes, as it has ended up being. That was always the intention. I do not know where he was living. Where was he living?

Sir, the intention must be to get movement on the Highway along as quickly as possible. Sir, I want to make that point what we have to do, and it is already working. Sir, I am in a position now where I can leave home on mornings at a quarter to eight and get my daughter to

school by a quarter past eight. That could not happen before. I had to leave home at ten past seven. The effects are already taking place along the Highway.

Sir, we have to ensure now that we do not end up with a mere access road as opposed to a highway. Sir, I want to see the Honourable Minister address certain issues to facilitate the flow, as was originally intended by this Party. Sir, I want the Minister to be bold enough to address the issue of a minimum speed limit on the Highway. There is no point having a situation where we are allowing a maximum speed limit of 50 miles per hour and then have those who would come along and flush up the Highway, so we have to address the issue of inconsiderate driving.

Sir, inconsiderate driving can manifest itself in a number of different ways. If I am driving along the Highway at the maximum speed limit of 50 miles per hour and someone comes behind me and starts to blow the horn wanting me to drive faster to break the speed limit, that is inconsiderate driving. Similarly, if I am driving along the Highway and I wish to get from Point A to Point B and two drivers decide that they are going to drive next to each other in two lanes each at 15 kilometres per hour, that is also inconsiderate driving.

Sir, I want to ask the Minister to be bold enough to take a stand and introduce a minimum speed limit as well as a maximum speed limit along the Highway, if not we are going to end up with an access road as opposed to a highway.

Sir, when we broaden highways, as we are doing now, we are primarily facilitating the flow of vehicles, but we also have to look at the issue of how we are going to protect the pedestrians who would have to use that Highway from time to time.

Sir, if you look at the ABC Highway, you can divide it into two different sections. There are a number of sections on the Highway which are not inhabited heavily by people on either side. If you look at the stretch between Warrens and the Bussa Roundabout you would find that the sides of that Highway are not heavily populated, but if you look at other stretches like the area between the lights at Hind's Hill at the top of the University Hill and by Reservoir Road in Lodge Hill, you would see that people inhabit both sides of that Highway and have to cross the Highway.

Sir, I am at the stage where I am actually tired of trying to get through to the heads of some people in the Ministry. There are some people there with some very hard heads, it seems to me. There is one in particular whose head it is difficult to get through to.

Sir, I do not know on whose hands the blood would be, but recently I had to assist, as far as I could, a certain family living in Reservoir Road; a child crossing the Highway going from her residence in Reservoir Road across the Highway to Eden Lodge Primary School who obviously has to get back home.

Sir, I have made the point in here repeatedly that people have to literally hold the children's hands and dash across the Highway and hope for the best. Sir, I cannot understand what is so hard about seeing that that is a very dangerous area. Similarly, Sir, I would know that the stretch there in the area of St. Barnabas would also be a very dangerous area. What is the difficulty with understanding that?

Sir, I have made this point many times in here. I went to a forum at Queen College School some two or so years ago where again the point was made that you need to have a walkover along that stretch of the road.

Sir, there is some obnoxious person, I would have to say, in the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport, who has determined that people do not use walkovers. I have never heard more foolishness. People would use what they have to use.

Sir, do you know that since the incident with that child at the beginning of February, there has been another incident again where somebody else was injured as well crossing that stretch of the Highway? Some time back, another person was killed. Sir, there are near misses on that stretch of road almost on a daily basis. Why cannot the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport respond to this case?

Sir, I want the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport to show that he could make a difference and show us that he can get through to this hardheaded person that nobody else seems to be able to get through to, and ensure that we make some progress in that particular area.

Sir, as the Parliamentary Representative, I happened to frequent that area almost on a daily basis and I heard the complaints and concerns and it is time that somebody brings an end to that very dangerous situation that exists along that stretch of the Highway.

House A5C Sequence 4

10.40 a.m.

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Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, in terms of the allocation to cure some of the ills in relation to Public

Works issues in this country, I want to see the issue of fairness continue. Sir, I say "continue" deliberately because on many occasions, I have sat in this Honourable Chamber on That Side and heard the Minister of Public Works and Transport outlining the work that was being done across Barbados. Sir, St. Philip West and St. Lucy also benefitted and, unknown to the Honourable Prime Minister, even St. John was benefitting from the programme carried out by this Honourable Minister. Sir, I want that fairness to continue because one thing that could never be denied is that under the Barbados Labour Party, Members of Parliament of the Democratic Labour Party have always flourished. Therefore, I want that fairness that we have exhibited to continue.

Sir, not that they could take any credit for what happened before March 31, but I am glad to see that, for example, the road works that I have asked for so consistently in the Hind's Hill area, that being the Arlie Tenantry Road, is in progress, and I want them to continue. Sir, the road in Well Gap, Cave Hill, is a very heavily used road and it is in a deplorable condition. Sir, I want to see that addressed as well.

Mr. Chairman, you know sometimes we pay the price for progress and when I became Representative for St. Michael North, in 1994, I inherited a situation where there were no Transport Board buses running through any parts of St. Michael North. Sir, now all the major areas have Transport Board buses.

Sir, in relation to what is a very small stretch of road between Piper's Avenue and Reservoir Road on the one hand and the Husbands' New Development, which now has two buses running through it, but it is not now wide enough to accommodate a bus and another vehicle.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I am willing to show him that stretch of road where it is now too narrow to accommodate both Transport Board buses and another vehicle and, therefore, it needs to be widened.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, this Barbados Labour Party Administration has paid the price. We were very fast to implement, in terms of getting the Transport Board buses running there, and we have now to pay a price.

Mr. Chairman, there is also the issue of speed humps. Again, I want the Minister to come alive and look at the issue of speed humps. Sir, we get complaints about vehicles speeding through certain areas, children playing in risk-prone areas, and you send off your letters to the Ministry of Transport and Works requesting speed humps and then you hear some time subsequently that ...

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: In fact, some of the letters received do not see the light of day. In fact, it was even said that some officer/officers sometimes tear the letters up because they believe that speed humps are a thing of the past.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, this is the second reference I am hearing from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North to public officers and I think we need to be careful in talking about what happens in our public sector. Sir, we have to understand these public officers play vital roles.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the Honourable Member referred to somebody as being hard-headed and proceeded to describe that person. The Honourable Member did not call a name but it is very clear as to where the Honourable Member is going. Sir, I believe the Honourable Member should desist from this personal attack and that he should try to couch his language in broader terms.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I made no personal reference to anyone and when my constituents are being knocked down, I am going to react very swiftly and vigorously. I almost said "viciously" but it is not in my nature to be vicious, but I am angry about a situation when a little child can be knocked down in an area, when someone else has been injured since that child has been knocked down, when a person has been killed before, then I must react because I want to see some action in that area. Mr. Chairman, if Honourable Members on That Side could be as interested as I am in their constituents, then I would be pleased but I am very concerned.

Mr. Chairman, I want to see the issue of speed humps being addressed because there are a number of areas in my constituency, whether in Arlie Tenantry, Lodge Terrace, certain parts of Grazettes, these are all areas that would, at least, warrant an investigation. I am aware that we do not just wake up one day and decide that we are going to install speed humps. I know there is a testing period one has to go through, but if that could be started, I still believe I would be able to convince my constituents that the Ministry of Public Works is serious about addressing their needs.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I do not know how much time I have left.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will give you three minutes more.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with a number of other areas, including that of LIAT and I would not be able to develop those points in three minutes, therefore, I would come back.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, it is interesting to listen to an Honourable Member who was part of a Government for 14 years, who embraced the Honourable Member for St. George North, who had the responsibility for the Ministry now carried by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. Sir, to listen to the lamentations of that Honourable Member, one is really surprised because the Honourable Member was talking earlier about fairness and justice and that he hopes that this fairness and justice would continue.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member seems to be contradicting himself when he moves into what he calls his assumed anger on behalf of his constituents. Sir, I would wonder where the Honourable Member for St. George North was, if that area is still plagued by the myriad of problems identified by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. There is an obvious contradiction and I am surprised that such a well-trained legal mind would so early, in about 12 minutes, contradict himself in speaking to the whole notion of fairness and justice in the distribution of resources across Barbados, to affect all Barbadians.

Mr. Chairman, the Democratic Labour Party has a record of being fair to every citizen of this country, and we do not see ourselves as dividing this country into any particular constituencies. That is only a political machination relative to the election of persons to this Honourable House.

We will guarantee the people of Barbados that wherever there are issues identified, either by the people of Barbados, or by their Representatives from both sides, we will equitably look at the resources and distribute those resources across Barbados, to impact on the lives of people. Therefore, I am going to dismiss, out of hand, the kind of rantings being undergone by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Sir, it is amazing that voices can be found only now. These persons were muted, they were either turned off or they turned themselves off. The Democratic Labour Party is not on trial or will never be on trial relative to the use of

resources to the people of Barbados, and that is already written, and can be seen by all.

Mr. Chairman, I agree with the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: You did not get up and object to the move to castigate public servants. These are persons who are well-trained in their own areas of activity. Sometimes you need to have a meeting of the minds and I always believe in the essence of compromise, in the essence of negotiations, because a technical person might have a view, while a politically-minded person might have another view, but you sit and discuss and come to a meeting of the mind because at the end of the day, the technical person has a professional standard to maintain and the political person has an agenda to carry forward. Therefore, there must be a meeting of the mind and therefore I do not support the castigation of public servants in Barbados.

10.46 a.m.

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Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, if that is the agenda of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, then that is his agenda, but it will not be the agenda of any Minister on This Side to castigate any public servant but to seek a meeting of the minds because when one takes that humanistic approach, one gets more things done rather than the adversarial approach, which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North wants to put into this debate. Mr. Chairman, I am finished with the Honourable Member. I understand his temerity and his pretended anger now, when we know that he is a mouse scared of the cats.

Mr. Chairman, what I want to speak about in more docile tones, is the whole issue of standards in the transportation sector in Barbados. I am referring to the public service vehicles which would be made up of the Transport Board vehicles, ZRs and those vehicles that move a large number of persons from one place to the other. Sir, I want to speak about standards in relation to the quality of their driving and to standards in relation to the care which should be enforced by themselves, because drivers of these vehicles should be self-disciplined.

Mr. Chairman, I came up at a time in Barbados when we had the Rocklyn Bus Company bringing persons out of the Scotland District Area, St. Andrew, St. Joseph, et cetera, bringing them to the City. Sir, the Elite Bus Company and The Transport Board brought people out of St. George and other areas and they almost appeared to be a seamless integration, at a time of less sophistication, in this

country as they moved persons across Barbados. Sir, there were less cars, although one could argue that there was a smaller population but today, what we have, can only be referred to as chaos in the transport sector of Barbados and, Sir, we have to return to a stage of seamless integration.

Mr. Chairman, there is no need for a private sector bus stand, and a public sector bus stand, and a bus stand thrown in a dark area. Sir, one does not organise transportation in that way because it does not make any sense. Sir, I am not going to prejudge any action on the transportation authority, the Minister, his technical staff or his professional staff, but a transportation system must be organised in a seamless way where, if there are 280 buses at the Transport Board, and another 400 ZRs and ZMs, and whatever moves people across the island, that there must be a seamless movement utilising all of them, integrated seamlessly, all utilising the same limited space.

Sir, if you have already spent millions of dollars in a bus stand down Jubilee Gardens, Cheapside, all must use that. If it is in Fairchild Street, even though that needs a lot of work on it, all must use that. If it is across the river, all must use that and there must be seamless movement; all of them integrated to movement of people across Barbados rather than this rabid, maniacal competition between these private sector led people providing transportation to the public and the Transport Board.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the Honourable Minister in his speech earlier referred to some of these points, so some of what I am saying might not necessarily be original, but we have to do it, and do it quickly, because it affects education and productivity.

Sir, there are persons who wait for particular ZRs and other vehicles because sometimes you shut your mind, which is unfortunate, to what is happening around you in order to protect your own sanity but, Sir, there is insanity out there because I see persons in the private sector vehicles dirty. We have to come face to face with these things and we cannot say we are going to change the society by turning our heads away from these kinds of reality.

Mr. Chairman, if you are moving people, there must be a level of cleanliness in relation to those who move them. Sir, we establish a standard in this society that persons must dress in a particular way and carry themselves in a particular way, and from the time we make the rule, the standard is broken down and everybody says that they cannot do anything about it. Sir, we have to pull and keep the standards up in relation to the movement of people. Sir, it frustrates the society when there is this level of behaviour.

Mr. Chairman, there are people who break the Law. People say a law is set up to be broken but, Sir, it might be set up to be tested but not to be broken. We test Laws to see if they are conforming to what we want, and those then who break Laws should be dealt with in the appropriate way. Mr. Chairman, as a Government, I know that we have to approach these matters with sensitivity, but also with commonsense to ensure that we protect the citizens of Barbados from recklessness and from some level of stupidity.

Mr. Chairman, there are some things we do not like to confront in Barbados. If you are moving large numbers of persons, 10, 17, 40, 60, according to the size of the buses, you should be tested not for HIV/AIDS but for the abuse or use of both alcohol and narcotics, and this should be randomly done.

Sir, I cannot pretend, we have to do that because we have to preserve and protect human life. Therefore, do not let us pretend. Those who know that they cannot pass when it is done randomly or whatever, they will create their own unemployment, and those who have sense and know that they are moving large numbers of people will create employment for themselves but, Sir, the society has to deal with these issues.

Mr. Chairman, there is too much rot and decay, people step back and, therefore, I am urging that the society stands up, takes note and take action on many of these issues.

Sir, I am a politician but as a politician sometimes you do not care if you get the X or not but you care for the survival of the specie. You care for the survival of the people. That is the position you have to take rather than take these convenient positions because you want an X. Therefore, the society keeps sliding further and somebody goes and lives on a hill and says that the rock cannot touch him.

Sir, we have to move away from these postures and this Democratic Labour Party which came in on the winds of change will carry that agenda forward, and those who cannot buy in, must buy out. Sir, that has to be the reality and I am sure that the majority of decent, sincere, loving Barbadians would all ascribe to this kind of agenda because they are watching their society slide and the morass eating away at the belly of the society. Sir, I speak to these issues with some level of passion. Sir, I was born at a time when the society was a lot gentler and it was a lot kinder even though there were greater levels of poverty.

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

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, in a situation now where, supposedly, we have brighter people, people with greater knowledge, where the society is stronger economically, as argued by others, things must be better, but one is seeing this level of decay.

The Honourable Member has spoken to initiatives started before and, Sir, I do not take from a mouse his cheese. I would never do that. I would let him munch on it, so if plastic licences were initiated, it is a good idea and it will continue. We are not into mincing, penny-pinching, foolishness or one-upmanship nonsense.

Mr. Chairman, if the Transport Authority was initiated, and we debated it in the House before in the last term, it will continue and the Honourable Member will make sure it works well along with his staff in the Ministry of Transport and Works, so I am not into one-upmanship and this kind of thing because a Government is continuous. Sir, once there is a good idea, we will not do like them and never put it on the face, or the back on Sherbourne and let a hospital rot to the ground after millions of dollars have been spent.

H/A5C/11:00

Sequence 6

Monday, March 25, 2008

Hon. R.D. JONES: We are not in that kind of messy politics. That is foolishness. It is the taxpayers' money. It is the taxpayers' initiatives, and we will continue those projects which are essential for this country and will initiate other ideas which are also essential for this country.

Mr. Chairman, I will return.

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

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Sir, I think that it would be remiss of me not to enter this Debate at this stage, before we conclude this particular Head. First of all, allow me to congratulate the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central for a very spirited intervention in defence of the good public servants of Barbados.

Sir, we often make sly comments, some of us I should say, yours truly not included. We often make sly comments about public servants and their performances, but at the end of the day public servants act on instructions, and their job is to execute Government policy. In as much as the political directorate gives clear and specific instructions, those instructions will be carried out. They are often always constrained as well by inadequacy of

resources, or lack of resources, in some instances, and other issues.

That is not to say that there are not some public servants in the system who, frankly, behave as though they are a law unto their own selves. We know that happens. In every bunch there are a few bad apples, and we try to reposition their attitudes in terms of how they serve the public. Essentially, the taxpayers of the country, are the ones who work every day to ensure that this country has resources available to do things.

We know that the competing demands of the resources, which we have, will often outstrip those resources, because it is a small vulnerable economy with virtually no physical resources, no oil or gas, yet, from which we can draw to get millions of dollars, even billions, we have to do with what we have, within the context of our very small population, and the constrained business community and whatever overseas that we can get, and we know that has been declining.

Sir, it is a fairly difficult job, but nonetheless, I think that it is incumbent on every Honourable Member of the House, to speak on behalf of their constituent and to identify areas of need. Sir, it is on this point that I wish to say a few words and to be very brief.

Sir, only a few weeks ago I had reason to speak to the Minister of Transport, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, about an issue in my Constituency which has now appeared in the newspaper. It is really unfortunate. There is a road at 4th Avenue, Free Hill. It was intended to be done, started and completed, I suspect before the last Election, to perhaps have some influence on the electorate in that area.

Unfortunately, because of the competing demands of the Members of Parliament in St. Michael and Christ Church, the equipment was lent out of Free Hill, and sent to another part of St. Michael, I believe the Bay Land, to pave some of those roads.

The unfortunate circumstance has occurred where this road has been dug out completely, all of the top layer has been removed, all the flex pipe of the Barbados Water Authority is exposed, and a cover for a well has been displaced. When it rains or it is high tide, and the water level in that well rises to a particular height, it overflows into that road, leaving faeces and other sewerage floating around.

Sir, I spoke to the Minister about it, and I think he has attested to this fact, that we need to immediately return to that area and get that road finished. It is really in a deplorable and despicable condition. Sir, the Democratic Labour Party is not taking any responsibility for the

condition of the road, but I think this Government should take responsibility for ensuring that it is completed. I would like to call on the Ministry, as soon as is humanly possible, to ensure that road is done.

Sir, if we go further into the St. Stephen's area, there is currently - I am not sure if this is the Ministry of Public Works, or it falls under the Ministry of Social Care and Urban Development. I know that the Urban Development Commission had a tenantry road programme, the Concrete Road Programme.

There is an area called Miller's Tenantry, just a few blocks from where the Eight Ball Shop is. It is not a road. You cannot call it a road. I do not know what you call it, but it is in horrendous shape. I also would like to call on the Ministry to pay early attention to it. If it is the Urban Development Commission, look at it. I know that there was a previously agreed programme.

We are going into Golden Acre and complete those roads that were started under the Rehabilitation Programme by the last Administration. I feel that Miller's Tenantry Road needs to be placed on that list as a matter of urgency. Sir, we have to find a way to get that done. Sir, there are a number of houses there. Every possible square foot is taken up with houses, and we need to see that is done. I also spoke to the Minister about that, and I hope that they can get around to it quickly.

Sir, the issue of drainage is another major problem. The rainy season will be with us, as of May. We need to look at this issue. I have had a situation in my Constituency that predates me, going back to the days before the former Honourable Speaker of this House, the late Lawson Weekes, where in front of Inspector Hartley Reid's residence, there is a major problem with flooding and nobody seems to be able to get it solved. We need to get this issue resolved.

Sir, my understanding is, the water course and canal have been blocked by persons moving their back palings to stop the Bobcat, and whatever else that goes down in there and clears the area. We need to find a way to get those people to remove the palings so that the equipment can get down in there, because when it rains a lot, the conditions are really not comfortable for those residents. Sir, this water goes into their living rooms, so you could imagine.

This is something that has been going on for more than 10 years. It is something that seriously needs to be resolved. I would hate to think that another rainy season is going to come, and we are going to have the Nation go down there and taking pictures and all that kind of thing. That really is not good enough. We need to have that dealt with.

Sir, we need to get the canal behind Straker's Tenantry dealt with. That is a little bit more technically challenging, because the earth there is not stable enough for heavy equipment to go in. It would be unwise to suggest for that kind of equipment to go in there. Sir, the canal is blocked and collecting water. It is also being used as a drain for many houses breeding mosquitoes, and causing a whole set of confusion, apart from the awful smell that emanates from it. We need to, as a matter of urgency, and I think that we may have to send physical bodies down there to get that canal cleared.

The residents have been complaining repeatedly, and it is my duty and responsibility to speak on their behalf, and to ensure that it gets done. It really is a major watercourse coming out of St. Thomas, St. George and the higher elevations through there, and it is supposed to go down to the sea, but it not getting there. It is stopping at that canal, and we need to get that canal cleared as soon as possible.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North spoke about speed bumps, humps or sleeping policemen, as you call them, in the roads. I think that is a valid point, and I want to congratulate him for raising that issue. It is an issue that we must not take lightly, and I will tell you why. We have a situation, in Free Hill again, where, when the University of the West Indies was constructed, it had an eighth of the human population it has now, and of that population very few of them were driving vehicles.

A5C 11.10 a.m.

Sequence 7

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 08, 11.10 a.m.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I believe that you now have 8 000 students and then you have additional staff. The majority of these persons going to the University actually drive there, because they are part-time students who are working and come in the evening. One of the main arteries into the University of the West Indies entrance points, is the road leading up through the main Free Hill entrance into the back of the University.

Sir, we also have St. Stephen's Primary School at the bottom of that hill, and what is called St. Stephen's Hill to the east, and something needs to happen. I was almost struck, while canvassing in that area, by a vehicle speeding coming down from the University, because it is used as an access road to get on to Black Rock Main Road. We need to put in speed bumps, or some kind of traffic regulation. There is too much traffic passing through a major community of houses, children playing over there, and

minibuses using the area as a short cut because they do not want to come down or go up the hill, so they come through there and go through the road that leads to St. Stephen's School back on to St. Stephen's Hill. Sir, this is just not acceptable and we need to address this issue.

We are having a situation where on mornings a policeman has to be placed there to stop them from going through that gate. Sir, that is not a judicial use of the police resources. The Police could be somewhere else doing something else, maybe, regulating traffic, rather than having to stay there, to stop people from driving through there.

Sir, before somebody's child gets injured down there, or some other resident is caused injury, I think we need to regulate the traffic there. There is too much traffic flowing up and down in that area. I do not know if making it a one-way will solve the problem but it is something that needs to be done urgently.

Sir, there are many things but, I do not think you should do a shopping list in Parliament as a speech, even though I could do that, but I would raise these issues with the Minister repeated, as I often do.

In the area of Brandon's, the road was repaved again in a hurry for the Elections but they did not do it properly. There is flooding down in the bottom. It needs to be redone. Probably, a well has to be sunk. The land was not properly graded. Therefore, we have added to what was previously a problem of flooding down there and that needs to be corrected.

There are other areas that we can speak to, but I would want to draw to the attention of the Minister, and to speak publicly on this issue in Parliament, so that it goes into the record, that these are critical areas which need to be addressed urgently.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this Head. First, let me congratulate and thank the people and the public servants who work at the Prince Road Depot. Sir, during the last term I was able to work with the people at the Prince Road Depot, the then Supervisor and now the current one, to really get a lot of work done throughout the Constituency of Christ Church West.

I really think that they have done a tremendous job assisting in getting some roads and drainage situations improved throughout Christ Church West. I want to go

further and also thank those members in the Ministry of Transport & Works, who worked tremendously hard, often night and day, when we were in preparation for the Cricket World Cup 2007.

I was very happy to see that they were able to completely resurface the Rendezvous Hill Road, in a very short space of time. All the people who used Rendezvous Hill over the years, complained about its deplorable situation.

Sir, they were also able to complete Highway 7 in stages, from Bay Street up to Oistin's. I think it was tremendous work that the Ministry was able to do on a national aspect, as well as a focal point of view in the Depot.

The Depot has now started a tremendous task on its own of trying to resurface a road in my Constituency, Rendezvous Terrace. The constituents are complaining, to some extent, that they have been at it for a long time, but it needed to be done for a long time. Sir, they are not only going to resurface the road, but they are also putting in better drainage and sidewalks, so that people would be able to better traverse the area.

Again, I congratulate those hardworking members in the Ministry of Works, particularly in the Depot at Prince Road. I believe they take care of eight Constituencies in that area, and I am very happy that they were able to get so much done in Christ Church.

Mr. Chairman, at the end of the day, it is not about partisan politics, it is about getting things done for the constituents, the people who pay their Land Tax, Road Tax and VAT and make contributions to the society. They make those contributions to the society and they then get to benefit from those contributions with better drainage and better roads and better public services and that is really what it is all about, Sir, irrespective of the political directorate of the day.

Sir, I want to continue where the Honourable Member for St. Michael North left off, when he spoke about the road humps and, as the Honourable Member said, sleeping policemen. This is a result of the traffic situation, because if we did not have that so many cars are on the roads and that significant difficulty in areas where the traffic builds up to large numbers, then people would not have to look for alternative routes to get away from those traffic situations.

In a way it is a result of a larger problem which the Administration has tried to fix by enhancing or widening the ABC Highway. I understand that Phase 1 of the Project for the ABC Highway is part of the solution to the problem, but that is not the whole solution. In addition, I

understand that there was movement to synchronise traffic signals, park and rides, and we are now looking at different times for school children.

Sir, this is not the first time I am speaking in this House on the matter. My contention is that the numbers of schools and school children coming into greater Barbados, would be one of the main reasons for the problems of the traffic in this country.

Many years ago, when most people did not have cars as they do now, people would walk to the school in their neighbourhood, or they would take the bus to and from school. Now, every person, once their parents have a car, has to be dropped to school, and has to be picked up from school.

This is something we have to look at and change in the psyche of the Barbadian. Let us encourage people. I think to some extent we have been encouraging people but we need to encourage people more to use the public transport system, especially for schooling. Maybe, we should look at specific school buses, with a specific station to pick up the school buses and take people directly to a specific school.

Sir, today the private schools are essentially out, whereas the Government schools are still in service, and the traffic situation is reduced. Therefore, the schools and the need for people to take their child to school on a daily basis, is a major part of the problem of the traffic situation. Sir, because of that traffic situation, then people look for alternative routes.

I have a major problem in Garden Gap where there is traffic on Highway 7 all the time, with the ZRs going off route, and driving through Golf Club Road, through Garden Gap to get to Highway 7. It is a major problem because it is a residential area, on which the ZRs continue to traverse.

1 House A5C, Sequence 08, 1:20:14

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Speed humps can reduce the problem. They would not solve the problem. What we need to do is to look for the solution. I think the widening of the ABC Highway was part of the solution. It was not the whole solution. We have to be creative. This is nothing specific to Barbados. Traffic is a problem all over the developed world. As we as a nation continue to take on developed nations' characteristics, we would continue to get developed nations' problems, of which traffic is one of the major ones.

Mr. Chairman, we talk about how much money was being spent on the ABC Highway, but I will give you an example. A tank of gas per car is \$50. Let us say we have 80 000 cars. If we have half of that, 40 000 cars would use 10 or 20 per cent of their gas per week in traffic jams. That is \$800 000 a week or 30 per cent. In a year, we would have spent millions of dollars just in energy being used in traffic problems.

Sir, even if we have to pay \$100 million, \$150 million or \$200 million to improve the way in which we can traverse this country in comparison to the savings in foreign exchange by saving the fuel and, by extension, the savings in foreign exchange, it is worth it. That is obviously what it was based on, to be able to get people around the country to do their business not to mention the time wasted just from the fuel point of view. If 40 000, half of the cars, spend \$10 or \$20 a week in traffic jams, that is hundreds of thousands of dollars per week. When you multiply that by a year, it is millions of dollars.

Sir, that money used to enhance the way in which we get around this country, and the way in which traffic flows is money well-spent because it improves times, saves fuel and foreign exchange.

Mr. Chairman, I do not often borrow from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy but he often says that this country is about making foreign exchange, that it is not about making revenue. Sir, I see and understand what he is saying because without the foreign exchange to make our purchases, then we would have difficulty providing the services that we provide. So let us stop the leakage of foreign exchange in terms of energy flow at traffic jams by using that money to enhance the traffic situation in the country.

Mr. Chairman, I want to go on to two other issues. Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Well, I guess I could only get in one issue in that time. Mr. Chairman, I could not get up and speak on this Head without speaking about Golf Club Road. You would recall that I spoke about Highway 7 and Rendezvous Hill which have been done, but Golf Club Road is in a tremendously difficult state. It is so because when the South Coast Sewerage Project was being done all those years ago, that was the main bypass for the people who would normally use Highway 7.

Under the former Administration, Golf Club Road started to be resurfaced on two ends, the beginning and the end, but the people who live in the area and those who traverse it are really asking and pleading for the rest of Golf Club Road to be completed. It is really in a terribly difficult state, not only the surface of the road but, also,

drainage in the area. It would need some new infrastructure in terms of wells to be able to improve that stretch of road. It is an important road because it is an important bypass for Highway 7. If there is an accident or any difficulty on Highway 7, then Golf Club Road is absolutely important.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, Highway 7 is one of the main veins for bringing traffic into and out of the country in the southern coast. Therefore, I would ask that the Ministry look very carefully at having a programme to have the Golf Club Road completed.

I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am glad that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has spoken today because he made the point that it is the economic benefits to be gained from improving traffic in our country as, indeed, in most countries of the world.

I believe when the package was presented to the Ministry of Finance some two years ago, the benefits far outweighed the cost at the time because we looked at how the movement across the ABC Highway could help to release the build-up of traffic.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was right when he made the point that when SSS (Barbados) Limited came to Barbados, the initial intent was to help solve the gridlock on the ABC Highway.

The point the Honourable Member for St. Michael North made is also important, that it was always the intention of Government since 1985 to widen the ABC Highway, but the recommendations from 3S (Barbados) Limited was to help solve the gridlock. At the time, Cabinet believed that the way forward was to look at the overpasses over the intersections of the ABC Highway. Sir, one would recognise that is where the congestion lies.

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members spoke today about the fact that there is a need for a dedicated school bus system. Surely, a pilot project was put in place a year or two ago where the schools in the North were serviced. I am sure that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would get that information about the dedicated school bus system, which was put in place for the schools in the North, Coleridge and Parry, Alexandra and St. Lucy Secondary, which worked very well to get the children to school and so on.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central spoke a lot about standards and whether or not they are real or imaginary. Of course standards are important.

That is one of the reasons the Transport Authority was established in the first place. The Transport Authority was established in order to set standards in the country on the way how public sector workers dress in terms of the uniform, badges, and so on. The Transport Authority was also established to ensure that the routes are properly serviced.

Mr. Chairman, we recognise that the private sector buses do not service routes especially after hours and on bank holidays especially in Christ Church and the central St. Michael areas where we have found a number of problems. That is why the Transport Authority was established. That is why last evening I asked a question about what is happening because when I look at the Estimates under Personal Emoluments, I do not see any provisions for the Transport Inspectors.

Sir, that is why I said to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South that he is sitting on a good wicket because there is a need to employ a further 30 workers within the Transport sector. Sir, I hope that he would be fair to his colleagues in this regard because I know that the Transport recommendations were to get the transport sector working in such a way that the Inspectors would help to mobilise and keep the standards that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central spoke so eloquently of.

Mr. Chairman, I also asked a question in terms of the amendment to the Road Traffic Act. Again, the Estimates does not reflect this because in that Act there is also provision for a number of things in terms of how the Royal Barbados Police Force could interact with the Licensing Authority.

House A5C Sequence 9

11.30 a.m.

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Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I do not see any provision here, for example, in relation to the plastic licence. I am glad the Minister has said that the plastic licence will come on June 1, 2008. Mr. Chairman, the plastic licence is more than just that, it has a magnetic strip on the back where the officers could swipe that card, using the technology installed in their cars, to see if that person has a valid licence. Sir, the Amendment to the Road Traffic Regulations states that a person now has to carry his or her Driver's Licence and Insurance in their possession. Failure to do so, they are given a time in which to produce them.

Mr. Chairman, within that Act, the Police Force was supposed to have computers in their cars, so that an officer could swipe that magnetic card to check to see if that

person has a valid driver's licence, but I am not seeing these things in the provisions. As I said before, all the Minister has to do, and the Police Officers should ensure that it happens, is that the Regulations must be brought here where they are laid and are subject to negative resolution.

Sir, there can be no debate. The Resolution must come to Parliament in order for us to complete the process. That is what I was asking about last time and, therefore, I am saying that more work has to be done at the Licensing Authority, in order to ensure that they have the technical capacity to do the things they have to do.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister did make the point that the plastic licence will come on June 01, 2008, which I am happy for, but when you look at other countries...

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, I have made the point, over and over to the technical staff that we are going towards First World status and I do not see the need for the Licensing Authority to want to ensure that whenever a photograph is taken, that you should get back the licence the same time, or within hours. In a developed country like Toronto, a driver's licence is posted to that person within two to three weeks. A card is issued to show that person has paid his or her licence fees but they do not get back the licence immediately.

Sir, that is the difficulty I had with some of the technical staff. Of course, the Minister and other Honourable Members would soon find out that there is a difference between political reality and technical reality. All the information the Honourable Member for St. Michael North has asked about today was passed onto the staff.

Sir, I have made the point that when you have a group of professionals, you have to be able to satisfy those professionals and what they stand for, and sometimes a traffic engineer might feel that it is not worthwhile having zebra crossing on a particular street. Sir, this is the difficulty we had.

Sir, in terms of traffic humps, for example, it was believed by a former Attorney-General of this country that traffic humps were against the Law. We then set up a system where, on approaching a traffic hump, a sign had to be posted to warn drivers.

Mr. Chairman, there is a lot of work still to be done in the Ministry. As I said before, we have an excellent staff there. I am also aware of the various drawbacks in a small society like Barbados, but I believe that work is ongoing.

Sir, I heard the new Government saying that they are going to do a number of things within 100 days. Sir, to me it is nonsense to put a time limit on these things because even with the best intentions in the world, one cannot get these things done within 100 days. Sir, we were fighting with the Transport Authority for 10 years, yet the provisions have not come. Therefore, we still have a lot of work to do.

Mr. Chairman, as far as the bus terminals are concerned, it is agreed that both the private sector bus service and the public sector should work together, but when one looks at the historical context, it was the Democratic Labour Party that brought in the minibuses and the private sector concept. Sir, after 1976, when the whole service was going well...

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, as I have made the point before, the adversarial approach between the Transport Board and the private sector was predicated on the punitive measures taken by the Barbados Labour Party against the private sector vehicles. This is what we are speaking to, we are not speaking about who brought in private sector vehicles or anything like that. We know there are there but the point is, as we are saying on This Side, you have got to work with people, not like what they did. Sir, that is the point that has to be made and therefore the Honourable Member must not be allowed to get away with that.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am not speaking about who did what, I am saying that in 1976, when we took over the Elite Bus Service and some of the private bus concessionaires, we were moving towards a system of nationalised bus service in this country, but then the PSVs were brought in and there was no standardised way. For example, there is a difference in standards between the ZRs and minibuses. There is a difference in sizes. People are now being transported by very small vehicles. Sir, that was the culture of the day and we felt that something had to be done.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of taxation, it is true that other Governments put in the various taxes in order to keep the PSVs in control but the point is that a lot has been done over the years in order to control bus services, including PSVs.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that at some time in the future we must look at the amalgamation of both private sector and public sector vehicles. We must look at how we could put a system in place, so that they could both work together out of the same Terminal, and key to traffic management is the Transport Authority. Sir, the Transport Authority comprises of minibus persons as well as

Transport Board authorities, so that the Board itself comprises of a number of persons who are drawn from across society, who will help manage the process.

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members have complained about the road system and we have agreed that there is the need to separate the carriageway from the pedestrian walkway. That is why we have decided to build better sidewalks and wider streets. Sir, this must continue.

Sir, all across Barbados we have started the process of widening streets because we now have bigger and heavier vehicles, and I am happy that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has continued the programme. Sir, every Government has tried since Independence to carry the process faster, with some moving faster than others.

Mr. Chairman, when we talk about other things, for example, the bridges the Honourable Member for St. Joseph was talking about, I would want to say that I have asked the Ministry some time ago to set up a special unit to deal with bridges and culverts. Sir, that is the only way that something can be done because if you go back to the Estimates 10 or 15 years ago, you would see some of the things that appeared 15 years ago are still here. Sir, unless persons come to work to do a specific task, there would be problems and that is the reality of what we found.

Mr. Chairman, I mentioned, for example, a small road in Sargeant's Village, Christ Church, that had to be done. Sir, money had been earmarked for this road three years ago but that road has not yet been done, but I am sure the people in the Ministry are aware of it. Sir, we put money in the Estimates every year and a lot of it goes back into the Treasury because of the incapacity within the Ministry to do a number of projects.

Mr. Chairman, we have all agreed that the Depots are working well throughout these constituencies. I have also made the point that Depots should interface with all Members of Parliament in order to get the service done because, in the final analysis, the Members of Parliament are the persons who interface with the public and understand their various concerns.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy that a number of things continue to happen at the Ministry of Transport and Works. The Minister talked about the foam bitumen that would have expired in my time.

11.40 a.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, I hope that the technical staff continues not only to examine the feasibility of this

foam bitumen but to continue to go to the various meetings across Barbados and the Caribbean in order to see the latest designs and the capacity of the various oils being used. Sir, they have to be able to attend these seminars in order to get the best of what is being manufactured in the world. They have to look at what systems are being used throughout the world.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, even though you have a number of engineers at the Ministry, I am saying that in recent times a number of new things have come to the fore which the Ministry may not be aware of, and to say that I am a trained engineer, I may have been trained 20 years ago but that does not mean that you have 20 years' experience, so you have to be able to follow-up on what is happening in the world today.

Sir, sometimes people take the view that they could go on the Internet and see it but that it not necessarily true. You must be able to visit to see what is happening in the world today and what is happening to road building. For example, engineers in Barbados still believe that you must go down 20 feet to take out all the rock from the soil but that is not necessarily true because, in other parts of the world, you build on the surface and the roads are less expensive. Sir, these are things that I hope could be inspired by the new Minister.

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

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for allowing me to join this Debate. First, I want to make two observations in relation to the Road Traffic Act. I do recall on the Other Side I made an observation and I will continue to make that call, if one takes a look at Section 37 of the Act. I must say that the new Amendments that the Honourable Member for St. George North spoke about I must state that the Amendment to the Act has not been proclaimed to date.

Mr. Chairman, it is a known fact that if one drives without insurance on the roads of Barbados and you are caught by the Law that the penalty is a fine, imprisonment for six months, sometimes both, or you are disqualified for 12 months. Sir, it is treated as a summary offence and, when we look at the Statute Book, a summary offence is not deemed, based on the penalty, as a serious offence. Sir, if you drive without insurance and someone is knocked down on the roads of Barbados and the person is severely injured, the only recourse that person has basically would be to sue the driver personally because he is driving without insurance but, Sir, suppose the driver is a man of the straw. If the driver is a man of the straw, he is in trouble

because, obviously, the person injured might have dependants, young children to take care of, but the person has an injury that lasts for a lifetime.

Mr. Chairman, there is no provision in the Law where the State would come in to really carry the cost in relation to that injured person and his dependants particularly in the absence of a victim's compensation scheme. Mr. Chairman, it leaves that person, as I have said before, in the neck of the woods and so, I wonder if we are not going to have to go back to the Road Traffic Act and seriously look at Section 37 because a man driving a car without insurance is like a man walking around with an unlicensed firearm.

Mr. Chairman, it is my respectful opinion that these penalties which are placed, a fine of \$1 000 or imprisonment of six months is not a deterrent as such and, Sir, we will have to confront those issues as the Government.

I have heard the Honourable Member for St. George North mentioned plastic licences, but the stark reality is that an international criminal who happens to get into Barbados, can now get a car, go to any person, get license plates, put them on that vehicle and travel throughout Barbados. In fact, if tomorrow I want to set up a side business selling licence plates, I could simply put a sign and people can get licence plates because we do not have any standards or regulations in place.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because the new Amendment to the Act states that the Licensing Authority must first register those persons who are manufacturing licence plates. Sir, the Police have been speaking about this and we are saying that unless the Amendment is proclaimed, and unless the Minister brings it here, because I know it is ready, then we cannot go forward. Sir, the Licensing Authority is the entity that is responsible for ensuring that persons who manufacture licence plates are registered and that they are bona fide people.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I spoke to that and I have said that there is no proclamation as yet, that it just needs to be proclaimed, but I am saying that at this particular moment, someone can go to any person in Barbados and get licence plates and cause the authorities to run all over Barbados to find that particular person. Sir, those two issues we need to confront.

Mr. Chairman, the fact is, there is no strong penalty to deter a person from driving without insurance and the consequences that would follow thereafter if a person is injured as a result of those actions.

H/A5C/11:50

Sequence 11

Monday, March 25, 2008

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, I want to go to some parochial issues. Some time ago, the Honourable Member for St. George North said in this Honourable House, that he was amazed at the condition of the roads in St. Philip North. In fact, I am wondering if he still has in his possession the list sent by residents of surrounding districts who were affected by the condition of the road, from Wellhouse corner to Eastbourne, which has been in bad shape for many years. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West, obviously has to pass that road to get to other areas in my Constituency to sing a few karaoke tunes.

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister also has to pass that road to get to that lovely place called "Choice". The Honourable Member for St. Philip South should know that area well. Sir, the road at River Land started some years ago, and stopped. I do not know if that caused the demise of the former Honourable Member for St. Philip North. The residents in that area, especially when we have heavy rainfall are extremely affected. I have confidence in the Honourable Minister that he will hear my request, and come to the rescue of those residents as soon as possible. There are also the Bushy Park and Blades Hill areas.

Sir, I would ask the Honourable Member for Christ Church South and the Honourable Minister to tour with me soon, those critical areas. Mr. Chairman, also, the area where you reside is in my Constituency, and I have to make sure that those residents there are well looked after, in Mount Pleasant. Sir, there are areas in Sandford we still have to deal with. In the fullness of time, I know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would accede to my request.

Mr. Chairman, during the Elections, I realised that the Rural Development Commission would go into an area, and out of the blue start cutting roads, without following the full legal procedures of the Land Acquisition Act. As a result, the Ministry of Housing and Lands now has to take up the slack. I believe that the Rural Development Commission, the Ministry of Transport and Works, and the Ministry of Housing and Lands need to work hand in hand to confront this problem, assuring residents that they would be fully compensated for any trespassing or breaches of their rights.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, first I would like to congratulate the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central for having the courage to speak frankly with regard to our concerns in terms of the lack of discipline in the minibus and ZR sector. I would like to go further in this regard, as a regular user of this service, to highlight some concerns which I have as well.

For example, I am very concerned of what they often call in that sector, the "rabbling", where there is this hustle and bustle while speeding along the Highways as competing vehicles seeking to carry the maximum number of passengers on a given day. I am asking the society to seriously look at addressing this behaviour.

One solution that comes to mind is to, perhaps, look at implementing a situation in which there is a fixed salary and wages structure for crews in this sector because, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central mentioned, I am old enough to just barely remember the days, when we had the Rocklyn and Elite private companies, where this fixed salary and wages structure was in place, and I do not remember this rabbling and speeding along the Highways to that extent.

Certainly, in the cases where the ZRs and minibuses are not operated by the owners, then if those crews are given a satisfactory wage or salary - I am not saying to give them inadequate wages - that would drastically reduce the need to hustle and bustle, with overcrowded vehicles, winding through off route areas, thickly populated areas such as New Orleans and Bridgetown, to such an extent that, as other Honourable Members mentioned, there is serious risk to life and limb of residents in these areas. In fact, residents of the New Orleans have been petitioning for the construction of sleeping policemen to reduce the risk of injury to persons, children included, who heavily populate these areas. Sir, we have a lot of ZRs and minibuses that cut through New Orleans and other areas of Bridgetown, to avoid the traffic along the legal route.

Sir, if we seriously look at making it mandatory that within the sector there is a standard fixed salary or wage, then you would not need to have this indiscipline on the Highways. As I understand it, in its present structure of remuneration, there is a sort of commission basis in which the more passengers the crews can carry on a given day, the more money they make. Some of them complain that they have to hustle and bustle in order to make a decent wage. I am saying that some owners of these private sector vehicles are supportive of my proposal, because the status quo cannot remain the same. How many more people must die?

Sir, I remember as a young student at the University, there was a situation in which one of these ZRs, I think it was called the "Midnight Assassin", sped along the Black Rock Road, around a corner and crashed into an oncoming

bus, people died and one man was decapitated. I was in the van behind that one. It would have been me that could have expired at that time. I am saying this is a serious issue for thousands of Barbadians and visitors who rely, on a daily basis, on this public transportation system, the ZRs and minibuses.

Sir, I go further to frown upon the unprofessional behaviour of some, not all, crew members, who openly drink beer, stout or other alcoholic beverages while operating these vehicles, risking the lives and safety of themselves, the occupants of the vehicles and other road users.

A5C 12:00 noon.

Sequence 12

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 13, 12.00 p.m.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: We are not here trying to turn a blind eye to this because all of us have to live on this little rock and we must stamp out these risks to life and limb.

I am saying also we must stamp out the indiscriminate use of music on these same vehicles, which promote illicit sexual behaviour, violence and the use of drugs, all within the earshot of our school children, who are our future leaders.

Sir, in closing let me make this point, that when there is overcrowding, resulting in some young females being asked to sit on the laps of others, just to get more people in the van, if a passenger dares to voice any disapproval of this overcrowding or bad lyrics, you are often told to take your bus fare and catch the next van. They put you off. I am saying that this fear is in the hearts of many users of these ZRs and minibuses and it is not fair to them. Sir, I would really like to place on record my disapproval of such practices.

Mr. Chairman, the Government also has a responsibility to ensure that the persons who rely on this private transportation, in terms of ZRs and minibuses, are able to get the same amenities that those who take the publicly- owned Transport Board service enjoy.

For example, I notice that at the River Van Stand the public convenience area, the toilets and the covered waiting area, are actually closed on Sundays for the entire day. Therefore, if a person using the ZRs or minibuses in that Terminal has a call of nature, they have to go in the bush or walk to the messy one in the Fairchild Street Bus Terminal.

Sir, even during the week, as early as 10.00 p.m., the toilet at the River Bus Stand is closed, whereas the public convenience at the Fairchild Street Bus Stand is opened up to midnight. Sir, I am saying that this is not satisfactory and I look forward to the Government in its planned redevelopment of that ZR and Minibus Terminal at the River, that these issues are addressed in a timely manner.

Mr. Chairman, the last Government in its three terms of office, was unable to solve a simple situation with the Silver Hill van. I taught at the Deighton Griffith School for a few years, and on mornings I would have to be running, helter-skelter, between three locations, in order to get to that school. Sir, there were mini buses going to Silver Hill, operating from Probyn Street, although for years, the Government had planned to move them over to the River Van Stand, to the extent where I remember that mould was placed in their way, and there was much controversy, yet that situation prevailed, and it still exists.

Then, those who want to go to the same Silver Hill area, if they do not get a van there, they have to walk all over to the River Van Stand, where the ZRs operate. Clearly, there is a need to consolidate that service for the convenience of the travelling public.

Sir, just on Easter Sunday, I went into the Fairchild Street Bus Stand to take a bus to Christ Church and I nearly fell over, literally, because as I moved passed the main entrance to the Terminal and went towards the waiting area, there was a massive crater, which part of it had to be cordoned off. Commuters have told me that many people have actually been hurt because of this crater which has resulted from the sinking of that structure.

I think it is a shame that the last Government clearly did something wrong. Sir, you will see plaques there indicating that this Terminal was opened by this Minister and this Member of Parliament, yet it seems that whereas the offices and the toilet area at the entrance may have been built with proper piling, in the other part of the Terminal, a waiting area is collapsing as we speak, due to not being properly constructed.

I am calling upon the Ministry responsible to investigate this, because this is not satisfactory, and to seriously pay attention to it to see if there is any risk of that building collapsing, because that would involve thousands of people. Therefore, I urge the Minister to investigate that matter, urgently.

Mr. Chairman, let me go on further to talk about the roads. I was shocked last Thursday when I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North say in one presentation, that the roads in Bridgetown were done by the last Government. Sir, before I could rise on a point of order, he corrected himself later in his speech to admit that

there are still many roads left to be done. Therefore, I would like that to be clearly understood by the Honourable Members.

Sir, the last Government in a frenzy, attempted to satisfy the requirements to host the Cricket World Cup 2007 events in Barbados because the ICC required that certain roads had to be done, so they quickly did a few roads in Bridgetown. They cannot claim much credit for the Bridgetown Bypass Road because that was conceptualised by the previous Democratic Labour Party Government. Yet, even that Baxter's Road, millions of dollars were spent to rehabilitate that Road, yet today, with a heavy downpour at the junction of Mason Hall Street, there is still heavy flooding. Sir, what went wrong there?

Sir, I can call all the roads in Town, and most of them still have not been done. We are talking about the entire New Orleans area, Man's Gap, and Hunte's Street. The people complained about the shoddy work done there, where you just put on a little barbergreen, all of the sidewalks out of place and a lot of stagnant water gathering. They felt neglected by the last Government. It goes further down into Sober's Lane, Light Foot Lane and Kensington New Road, where the drains have to be covered so children and other road users would not fall into the gutters. Therefore, I look forward to comprehensive work being done in that area.

Sir, in the uptown area of Nelson Street, a young businessman just bought some property there and he asked me to highlight the fact that it is a legitimate area, which should be given special development area status. Sir, in my regard, that is a key attraction, in terms of the tourist product to wholesome, legal entertainment in the nation's capital. The road structure has to be properly upgraded and those streets need to be washed down more regularly.

Sir, the same applies to Amen's Alley, which was highlighted in the Newspaper, where the stench from the urine and faeces is unbearable. I know that within the Ministry, there is a programme in which roads are sprayed with water from the hydrants, but I am saying that this has to be expanded, and done consistently. It is a shame in this modern era that the nation's capital stinks literally along these alleys and roadways, Sir, when just a little wash-down will solve that problem.

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

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you, Sir. I may have to rise again to deal with other issues.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the hundreds of students who go to St. Patrick's Roman Catholic School, I urge the Ministry to look urgently at providing a traffic warden

service there, to help those children to cross the road. Sir, parents have expressed disgust that with the current traffic situation there with that being a very heavily used main area, the Jemmott's Lane/Bay Street area. A little child was actually seriously hurt in an accident being knocked down by a vehicle there, so I urge the Ministry to address that area seriously.

Mr. Chairman, lighting is another area of concern. I would just end with that, and maybe if I have time, I will get up again on other issues such as drainage.

House A5C, Sequence 13, 12:10:14

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, street lighting is urgently required. When the last Government rehabilitated Tudor Street and Baxter's Road, they did not replace any of the existing streetlights along Tudor Street, so apart from a few security lights on a few businesses down there, that area is filled with darkness, including the bottom of Sober's Lane.

Street lighting is also a problem when you go up into the Bay Land, Dunlowe Lane, Mansion Place and Magazine Lane. There are several dark spots within Bridgetown and other parts of Barbados which are totally unacceptable because even the Royal Barbados Police Force has publicly, on at least two occasions, condemned the last Government for that situation because with poor street lighting you have increases in robberies in those areas highlighted, so I urge the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport to urgently put in those streetlights. It is not expensive. It just calls for the Government to care, and I know that our Government cares, and I look forward to streetlights being erected at these locations and others urgently.

I thank you.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this Head. I shall not detain the House for very long but there are a few matters which relate to my Constituency that I would wish to speak to this morning. However, before I do so, may I say that I think it is fair to say that a tremendous amount of work has been done by the Ministry of Public Works in relation to the road network, and the rehabilitation of the work network over the last few years.

Indeed, this was supplemented by us in the last decade by a deliberate policy that the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission would take responsibility for tenantry roads. Mr. Chairman,

I recall being in this Chamber, not as a Member, but as a guest in the Gallery in 1990. The then Minister of Public Works was Mr. Don Blackman and the then Leader of the Opposition was Mr. Henry Forde, now Sir Henry Forde, and there was a long debate as to what should be the focus of the Ministry of Public Works in terms of the rehabilitation of the roads. The then Dr. Blackman said that, given the resources which they were given, they were unable to meet the demands of the rehabilitation of tenantry roads in Barbados and that the Ministry of Public Works was only capable of focussing on the Highways.

Mr. Chairman, it was really for that reason that we therefore took a decision, as a Government, to have dedicated entities managing the development of tenantry roads.

Mr. Chairman, all of us in here have tenancies in our Constituencies, whether urban or rural. All of us in here also know of the more recent development of Terraces and Heights, especially in your Constituency, Mr. Chairman. One of the down-sides is that invariably there is no dedicated effort in those residential neighbourhoods for the rehabilitation of the roads on an ongoing basis, and they have tended to fall between the cracks.

In recent years, the Ministry of Public Works started to focus on it in a more assiduous way. Indeed, I think I am correct in saying that certainly the Rayside contract which was awarded last year speaks to the paving of a number of roads in those types of residential developments. In my own Constituency, I speak to the developments at Friendship Terrace and Hothersal Heights and Terrace just off Hothersal Turning.

In the early 1970's when the development at Friendship Terrace started, I think that Mr. Philip Greaves was Minister of Housing. In both instances, these communities faced the same problems. Sir, because they were not tenantry roads or indeed highways, they tended to fall within the cracks. Mr. Chairman, while it is accepted that they do not have the same traffic count as perhaps a tenantry and, certainly, not a highway, the truth is that over 20-25 years, the wear and tear and, indeed, the attrition caused by water, has led to havoc in many of these residential developments.

I therefore believe, Sir, that we made the right decision in terms of having a dedicated focus on these residential developments. In the case of Friendship Terrace, you are talking about over 200 houses. The residents of that area have had the benefit of potholes being fixed on occasions, but the truth is that it really needs to be scarified and repaved because of the level of traffic going in and out.

About 10 years ago, we were able, as a Government, to create an alternative entrance and exit into that

development by bringing a road just below the Warren's Polyclinic such that you do not only enter and come out by the Manor Lodge Complex. That has made a significant difference to the safety and security of those residents, and they are justified in wanting urgently the completion.

Mr. Chairman, I have assured them, and the Minister, I believe, can assure me in his wrap-up, that the road was included in the Rayside contract. As I understand it, those sets of roads in Friendship Terrace are scheduled to be done this year. I can assure the Minister that the residents are looking forward to the Rayside contract completing their concerns in relation to that road. Similarly, in Lower Estate Heights and Hothersal Terrace, the same situation again.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make a broader point to the Minister of Public Works. I am sorry the Minister of Housing is not here because I think it is not only my Constituency that has this problem. Mr. Chairman, I have discovered this situation both in Friendship Terrace and Piedmont Park which are National Housing Corporation developments. The Government, I believe, particularly in its Transfer of Units Programme would face it again.

Mr. Chairman, invariably when the National Housing Corporation was the landlord, before conveying titles to the individual householders, there was no issue in relation to the maintenance of the drainage and sewerage. Mr. Chairman, what has happened, and we are now seeing it, particularly so with Friendship Terrace and Piedmont Park, where owners bought their properties as far back as 20, 25 and 30 years ago, there was no specific programme to bring the tenants together in an association to manage it, nor was there an acceptance of the responsibility by the National Housing Corporation over the years to maintain it. So that the residents in Piedmont Park and Friendship Terrace fall between the cracks in relation to having issues pertaining to the wells, drainage and the handling of sewerage managed in those developments.

Mr. Chairman, I am calling on the Minister of Public Works to work with the Minister of Housing to see how best a dedicated system could be put in place. Mr. Chairman, I can tell you that when we were looking at the issue of the transfer of the housing units to individuals, it was certainly one of the issues that I raised with both of the last two Ministers of Housing, Senator Thompson just before she demitted office and the Honourable Reginald Farley while he was in office.

Mr. Chairman, much has been said about why those units have taken as long as they have to be transferred, but there are complex issues in relation to the maintenance of drainage, party walls and breaches of Town Planning Regulations where people built on without permission. There is a whole range of issues and because you are

dealing with 8 or 10 or 12 units together as one with party walls and fire walls, they have caused issues. Therefore, the Government has to take a fundamental position. Will it retain responsibility at a user fee or some other kind of fee, or will it subsidise instead of charging a fee, but somebody has to be responsible. It is either going to be the Government or you have to let the tenants know that they are going to have to do it themselves.

Mr. Chairman, in the case of the housing estates, I support the Government doing it.

House A5C Sequence 14

12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Government could decide, once it looks at its financials, how it wants to proceed, but in very many instances, while it may be possible in some types of developments to have the landowners take responsibility, I think that the complex nature of how it is developed, probably would suggest that the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Housing ought to come to a consensus as to how they should deal with it.

Sir, the Ministry of Public Works, for example, deals with wells and drainage in districts, and in very many instances it is just a question of extending the remit. Therefore, This Side would support that, to remove the difficulties currently faced by those former tenants, now landowners, in what originally were National Housing Corporation developments.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to refer to the fact that these Estimates speak to a reduction in the provision of funds to the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. Sir, I am not being contentious or controversial but I simply want to make the point that if we continue to reduce the funds made available to those agencies, such that they are unable to carry out the programme of tenantry roads...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: It is not wastage. You will see that in the case of the Urban Development Commission. Last year they would have spent approximately \$9 or \$10 million on road improvement programmes.

Mr. Chairman, the point is that if you cut out that work from them, or diminish the volume of tenantry roads done by them, it stands to reason that there is going to be additional pressure on the Ministry of Public Works. Sir,

the truth is, because of the increase in the ownership of cars, Barbadians want and deserve to have the Highways done and properly kept. They also want where they live properly paved.

Mr. Chairman, what we have tried to resolve is a very simple phenomenon of which Honourable Members are aware. Sir, where there are people living on unpaved tenantry roads, not only do you have difficulty and access for emergency vehicles, which is really the worst problem they can face, but there are also problems when it rains. Sir, the days of people leaving their homes with a plastic bag containing another pair of shoes, because they do not want those shoes to get dirty or mashed up, must become a thing of the past. Therefore, it is those simple phenomena that we feel that a Government in the 21st Century ought to make a thing of the past.

Sir, I am simply saying to you that if you do not have an institution that comes to work every day to work on those tenantry roads, if you have to rely on persons who are also dealing with bridges, highways and highway maintenance, it therefore becomes difficult.

Therefore, I trust and hope that Government would see the wisdom of ensuring and understanding that the roles and missions of both the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission do, in fact, have merit in improving the living conditions of persons in tenancies.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South might appreciate the fact that most of our communities did not develop as planned communities. They were ad hoc developments by reason of people trying to catch a spot to live on - cheek by jowl. In fact, if you were to do an analysis of the Magistrates' Court workload, certainly up until the early 1990s, a lot of it was as a result of difficulties between neighbours, for example, water coming on to somebody's line, et cetera.

Sir, a situation would then develop where conflict became ever present, as a result of the failure to have appropriately planned communities, security of tenure and the amenities that naturally go with communities, such as paved roads, access to electricity, proper drainage and recreational facilities.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think there is any divide between the two political Parties and indeed any other political party that has come and gone, or is still trying to exist in this country since Independence and before, that these are the basic things we should provide our citizens

with, such that they should not be the subject of partisan argument.

Mr. Chairman, before I sit, I simply want to say that there is one road that seems to be falling between the Rural Development Commission and the Ministry of Public Works and I will ask the Minister to check it out for me because I have been unable to get an answer on it.

Sir, it is a long tenantry road that has developed on the corner of Skeete's Road, Jackman's. I am not sure that the development has been planned, but it has developed nevertheless and the circumstances are really bad. It was in the Capital Works Programme of the Rural Development Commission. Whether or not it is still there, I am not sure and I would be grateful if the Minister of Public Works would indicate, at some point, if not today, over the next few weeks, whether it is to be located in the Programme of the Ministry of Public Works or in the Programme of the Rural Development Commission.

I am not asking anymore than that because I understand the time of day, but I would suspect that if Honourable Members on the Other Side were to see the circumstances, they would agree with me that I would be duty bound to raise it on the Floor of this Honourable Chamber and to ask the Minister of Public Transport, Works and International Transport to, at least, help me in locating whether the road is going to be done by the Ministry of Public Works or whether it remains in the Capital Works Programme of the Rural Development Commission.

Sir, Skeete's Road, Jackman's, is a very long road, and unfortunately, I may have to ask him to help me, as I did in the past, with some names for roads, since they have not named the number of smaller roads coming off that main road and, therefore, it is a nightmare for any new postman - the old ones got to know where people lived - who does not know where people live, would have to guess which one of these arteries off the main road of Skeete's Road, is, in fact, the one he or she is going to.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that is basically what I want to address. If we have time further in the Debate, I would come back and address the issue of traffic and the need for fiscal incentives for cars using alternative fuels and electric cars, as I feel strongly about it, particularly in the current international environment. Indeed, last year was the first phase of the Green Economy in our Budget, but I do feel that a Government of Barbados needs to go further, if we are to protect ourselves or, at least, to minimise the challenges we would face from international economies in relation to energy.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you now report progress to His Honour, the DEPUTY SPEAKER and ask for leave to sit again.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative,

without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER assumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 1.35 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.35 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

RESUMPTION

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

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, and Mr. CHAIRMAN assumed the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much and I appreciate your recognition. Sir, I wish to make a few comments and one query, which I consider to be extremely pertinent to the whole discussion. I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church South this morning speak about the request I made, and the litany of woes as though there was no communication with the then Minister of Public Works and Transport, the Honourable Member

for St. George North, but the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has been trying for five consecutive times to become a member of Parliament and I am glad he has become successful, but I would just want him to be aware that because of the neglect of the parish of St. Thomas over a 10-year period, it really left a lot of roads and other road works suffering and, therefore, the efforts made by the Honourable Member for St. George North and that of the Rural Development Commission made a tremendous difference in that wonderful parish, St. Thomas.

Sir, I have raised a few issues. I could have gone on and on but I felt that I must refer to some parochial issues, if I have been sent here to speak on behalf of the people. Therefore, I could have talked about Jack-in-the-Box, Chapman's Village Bridge, Shop Hill Bridge that really needs work but, as I have said earlier in this Debate, I heavily rely on the excellent works of the Depot on Bagatelle and, therefore, once we get the resources and the equipment, we will be able to weather that particular storm.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make reference to a few areas that I have recognised over the past 14 years. Indeed, it was over the past two decades or so that there have been tremendous challenges in every community in this country and, I believe, there is need for attention. I have spoken about it on the Other Side and I will speak about it today.

Mr. Chairman, the first one is for there to be better communication, more dialogue between those who are the employees of the Minister of Public Works, particularly the experts and those who are local people. Sir, I have found that over the year people in Barbados seem to think that unless you have a degree in engineering, architecture or whatever area that your comments are not of any worth.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak to the experience I recognised in Holetown in 1995 and all the local residents were saying when they came to pave the area that they were living there for more than 50 years and that they knew what the drainage systems were like but that nobody in the Ministry listened to them and, Sir, that is reverberated across Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, it would be a useful thing if the members and staff of the Ministry of Public Works had dialogue with the local persons in the communities so that when roads are being upgraded; when drains are being put in place; when wells are being dug; that they use that local knowledge. It is not everything that local persons say that we would expect them to take on board but at least it is showing that those persons who live there know where the water courses are and they know a number of challenges that exist and, therefore, whatever two cents worth they would offer would be of importance. Sir, I would like to

see that happening as we continue to expand in the various road works project and in the Highways as well.

H/A5C/13:40

Sequence 17

Monday, March 25, 2008

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James Central is not now in his seat, but I have a special relationship with the folk of Bagatelle and Redman's Village, and I believe that over time he will, or the past Honourable Member will. I know that, with reference to what was said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, that the Redman's Village road needs some serious attention by the Ministry of Public Works. Every year there is some lost of life, serious injury or maiming of persons trying to cross that road.

Last year there were deaths again, on that road. I believe that if we continue to expand our road works, especially in traditional villages where there were narrow roads, that people could skip across, if we are going to do that kind of work, we need better education programmes. We need other systems in place to ensure that residents, workers and others who use that road, particularly the pedestrians, at least some attention is paid to safeguard them and their children in the school area and so on.

Sir, the query I would like to make through you is to the Honourable Minister of Public Works, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, relative to comments I heard, recently, by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Indeed, I read in the Newspaper late last week that the Rural Development Commission will no longer focus on working with tenantry roads and the upgrading of these roads.

Sir, there was a policy in the last Administration, and I believe that it is one of the best policies ever, where the Ministry of Public Works undertook work on the general Highways, while the Rural Development Commission maintained most of the tenantry roads.

The Honourable Member did assure the public that works started on roads will continue and will be completed, but the Honourable Member has not indicated what will happen to the 100-odd, across the length and breadth of the rural communities that would have been in dire need of upgrade or construction.

I would wish to find out from the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South where, in these Estimates, we will find the amount, because we recognise that the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission's Votes have been cut by

millions. I believe the plans that were in place through the Rural Development Commission for the construction of roads should continue, because we in the rural communities, including you, understand the difficulties that residents have getting in and out, parking their vehicles, and so on and so forth. They really need to have the roads done.

The Barbados Labour Party was extremely instrumental in bringing a measure of comfort to persons living in rural communities, particularly in the tenancies. Therefore, I would like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South to indicate to us, so that we can rest assured that roads across the length and breadth of Barbados in the rural communities would be addressed over the next year, or indeed the next five years.

Sir, the other concern I have is signage. It is one of the poorest areas in the Ministry of Public Works. A lot of the signs that we see across Barbados are either termite-eaten and collapsing, and many others are corroding, if they are made of metal. I believe that if we are looking at the large volume of vehicles in this country, and indeed, ourselves as a tourism destination, where the bulk of our resources are from the tourism sector, we must ensure that signage is available for locals first, but also for the thousands of visitors who are on the island.

I know there was an effort during 2006-2007 and, indeed, 2007-2008, for new signage to be in place. I must confess that it is not as adequate as I would have expected. Sir, you can see some of it at night, but the print is so fine, therefore, we need to have a special designation of teams to ensure that signage across Barbados is upgraded.

Sir, we have steep gullies, not only in St. Thomas, but in St. Joseph, St. John and St. Andrew in particular. There are steep bends and winding roads. There are a lot of challenges, and if the signage is properly done and put in place, I believe that it would ease some of the challenges experienced by visitors and locals who are not very familiar with roads, who would now be able to understand and manoeuvre to suit.

Sir, that is not all, the signage and road works also leave a lot to be desired. There are times when you see road works with a sign that says "detour", but a detour sign is used because they do not have a sign that says Road Works in Progress. Sometimes people innocently take a different route, only to discover that sign was the only one available at that point in time.

Sir, at night it is even worse, when motorists want to travel on roads that are under construction. We know that there used to be what looked like lanterns that would flash all the time. I understand that persons were stealing them. I do not know if the private sector agencies were removing

them from the cans or whatever, but if they are being stolen, then we need to replace them to safeguard the pedestrians and motorists, and, indeed, all road users who would be travelling on roads that are under construction.

Sir, as I said before, the cost to Government is tremendous when persons are injured, because of the lack of proper signages on our roads, whether they are under construction or ordinary roads where people are not familiar with the twists and turns that will create a measure of confusion.

Sir, there are mirrors which are part of the signage destroyed by some lawless individuals or groups throwing stones. We have a number of roads across the length and breadth of Barbados where, unless you have a mirror, one has to creep out with a vehicle. It is senseless for persons to throw stones to destroy them. That is the part that I really cannot understand. When they are destroyed, sometimes it takes more than a year for them to be replaced.

I know that money is not coming out of a bottomless pit, but I believe that areas such as those that are dangerous should have the mirrors replaced as a matter of urgency. That is another area that bothers me.

Sir, I recognise that every day we see manholes. Sometimes a year goes by, yet you can still find the same manhole with a big blue can or a big old tar can, with grass growing, causing persons to step into the road, and then on to the sidewalk. To my mind, there is need for a dedicated team to ensure that these manholes are properly replaced or covered, to avoid the dangers that we know emanate from such an occurrence.

Sir, in the Newspaper, about two weeks ago, a lady had to be compensated by Government with large sums of money because she had fallen into a manhole. It is a matter that ought to be addressed urgently.

Sir, another concern is the collaboration of the utility agencies with the Ministry of Public Works, as well as the Rural Development Commission. We want the well constructed roads, the upgraded roads, or the roads that are expanding because of the rock cutting process, but what is the point if the utility poles remain in the middle of the road, so you have to manoeuvre around them. Even two vehicles cannot enter.

I can speak of those in Rock Hall and Lion's Castle. I have written down the numbers and sent correspondence to the utility companies, but yet nothing has happened to address that issue, which for me, the residents and other users is extremely dangerous. I believe that there is need for further communication and better synchronisation during the discussions with those utility companies, to ensure that when a road is upgraded or built, the utility

poles are removed in a timely manner to facilitate the proper completion of the road and eliminate the danger if it remains in that particular location.

Sir, I wish to comment on the reckless driving of a number of our residents, and, of course, some of our visitors, whom, to me, do not seem to know any better, or are copycats along the way.

Sir, three weeks ago, near the University, the traffic light, street lamp and the road sign were all knocked down, and this is replicated across Barbados wherever these facilities are in place. I believe that we have reached the stage in Barbados where taxpayers should not end up every time paying for such road signs that are destroyed by reckless drivers.

Sir, we will have accidents, cars will skid off the road, but the kind of driving that I see sometimes makes me wonder if some of our people are as educated as we want them to be, or as we profess they are, because of their silly actions. Therefore, I would ask the Honourable Minister, as I indicated previously to these discussions here, four years ago, for some special aspect of the legislation to be included, where the person's insurance pays for a traffic light.

13.50 p.m.

Sequence 18

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 19, 1.50 p.m.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Sir, it is an expensive cost of the Government to replace the street lamps, the traffic lights and other aspects of the street signage that have been destroyed as a result of reckless driving. Sir, we have to reach some kind of conclusion on that, because almost every area you pass now, you see it and I believe that someone has to pay for the foolishness they do.

I do not want to speak to some of the public service vehicles, because I would never stop today and I know that I only have a limited time

Sir, I am not even going to call the number of the ZR van this morning, that almost moved me off my props by the Westbury Road junction. We wanted to come across Westbury Road over to New Orleans, Passage Road, and a ZR van came to the junction on our right. The light was on green for us but red for the ZR driver, but he zoomed through with a load of people, which just left my hair standing on end. Mr. Chairman, the road rage is going to get worse as a result of some foolishness that some of our

citizens are doing. Sir, I believe that there must be further policing, and better training.

A lot of them need training, because the silly things that some of them do that we read about in the Newspapers, leave a lot to be desired. Sir, at times it is not only for the joy of them doing the milkshake and so on, and having fun, but it causes other individuals and families to grieve because of the foolishness that we see happening on our roads.

I believe that the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and other agencies, need to do what happened in the past. They should bring them in and help them with formal training; such as how to be courteous with their passengers, the travelling public, the lights and the other road signs that are in place for them to obey.

Sir, I had my driver's licence more than 35 years ago and I have never really met an accident, because I like to conform with the Law. Therefore, more of these motorists need to adhere to the Rules and Regulations and pay respect to police officers, and others.

Sir, that is another challenge, because I see a lot of police officers chatting and smiling with them. They are rude and disrespectful to the police officers. If I were a police officer there is no way, any of them could stand in front of me and throwing off their hands in my face. Therefore, we need to give them proper guidance and training. Of course, the owners are the ones whom, I believe, need a lot of communication and assistance in regulating whatever is happening.

Therefore, I support the Honourable Member for the City, when he speaks about the decay that is taking place on our roads as a result of a lot of ragamuffins, who are coming into the system and because they want to make an additional dollar, they hustle. Sometimes more than 75 school children are in a minibus, sitting on each other, rocking all through Arthur Seat and Jackson and going off route and coming through by the Day Nursery in Wellington Street. Sir, that is not a bus route. There is the London Bourne Day Nursery there, but when those drivers come through, some of them do not care. I usually write down the van numbers. Sir, I wrote to MTW and the various agencies and expressed my concern.

Sir, this brings me to the pirates. Nobody wants to stop anybody from living but you know that pirates are working in communities - if I may name the communities - particularly Hothersal Turning and Bibby's Lane. I have written to the Transport Board on numerous occasions, asking for a bus to service those individuals.

Mr. Chairman, you would appreciate that the Sugar Hill bus and other buses coming from the general areas, when they reach the Bibby's Lane exchange communities, they are already full and the passengers cannot get in to get to work, school, business and recreation. I believe that the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport needs to assist by giving, at least, two minibuses or four ZR vans, the opportunity to ply that route and eliminate some of the piracy that is going on. Sir, if there is an accident, the people who are involved will get no compensation because those vehicles are not allowed to carry those large numbers of people.

Finally, Sir, I would wish to commend the Government because it has been the case with the Barbados Labour Party as a Government to compensate property owners, whose properties have been acquired for the public good, to expand roads, put in culverts and so on. I trust that those persons who have been waiting to get their compensation, the funding would soon be made available so that they could do their necessary personal work.

Sir, some people are just waiting to expand the house, pay for their children's education, buy a little car and do certain things with the money. The long wait is inhibiting them from pursuing their goals. Therefore, I wish the Government, as a matter of urgency, would have that money extended to those persons whose properties have been acquired, in order for the road works of this country to be expanded to facilitate all of us, who on our daily businesses are using different roads to be able to meet our targets.

I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to enter this Debate for the first time for the week. Since we last met, we also had some rough seas, so it is very important to enter this Debate at this point in time. I would like to request of the Minister that in light of the weather that we had during the last weekend, it is very important for him to consider, at some point in his Budget, a crew to be able to be available when rough seas, where the sand was displaced from the sea on to the public roads of Barbados, so that measures could be corrected. Sir, it can be very dangerous to be driving in an area where you expect to be driving on the road and then find yourself in a situation where you are driving on sand. This can be a very dangerous occurrence.

Sir, my request does not mean that a crew has to be at every Depot. As you would know, you would not have that problem across Barbados. It is very important to have a crew, so that when you have a situation like that, it can be

easily and quickly cleared. At the same time, it might be better if the Ministry of Works could enter into discussions with the Coastal Zone Management Unit, so that these problem areas could be rectified, and rough seas would not create these problems.

For the simple reason, when you take an area like Sherman's, and the bottom of Clinkett's, if you have to pass there now, you would want to know where to find the road. This has nothing to do with the Depot because when it occurred, the Depot would have been closed, and this would not have been an expectation. I am saying that considering what has occurred, we need to have these problems corrected promptly.

Sir, as I said previously regarding this problem at Sherman's, from the time I would have been in Parliament, it has always been in the Estimates, yet, we have not seen the corrective work done to rectify the problem. As somebody said previously, it seems that the Estimates is something where you list things, and every year you list them and list them, and they become a recurring decimal.

Sir, it is time that these things stop, and we recognise that the officials make the request for these things to come into the Estimates, because the technocrats believe they are important to solve problems. Sir, it does not make sense every year to just place them in the Estimates, without any action taken. I am asking that we get some action.

Sir, earlier while listening to the Debate, I heard the Minister make the point that his Ministry will be one for giving fairness and that the Budget will be divided equally. I want the Minister to stick a pin there, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, the only way you can divide the Estimates equally, is after you have corrected certain problems. It is clear that there are three Constituencies that are very much lagging. If the Minister is saying that he is going to correct the problems within those three Constituencies, and then he is going to divide the cake, I will support that, because that has always been a request from This Side.

Sir, at the same time, I cannot see why there are some Constituencies that you can see work going on on some roads, and when you look at the roads, you sometimes have to ask what is wrong with them, while in other Constituencies, there are real cart roads and no work going on.

I have said in this House already, that I have more than 115 roads to be done. Sir, St. Lucy is such that you can build 10 roads tomorrow and I will guarantee you that by the end of the month, you would still have 115 roads to be done, because, it is a place where people own land and

you cannot stop people from building houses where they own land.

House A5C, Sequence 19, 14:00:14

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: People have to recognise that is the problem you would find in rural Barbados. I was in here long enough to hear the Honourable Member for St. George South making the point that he has 55 roads to be done, which means that the current Honourable Member would also have that problem.

I have also heard the Honourable Member for St. John lamenting the point that St. Lucy and St. John were not getting any roads done. Sir, if you have St. Lucy and St. John to be done, it means that the problem still has to be in St. George South because up to the last time we were in here I am not aware that the Honourable Member for St. George North would have corrected the error that the Honourable Member who was next to him was always complaining about.

Sir, we have to see some serious work being done about bus stops in Barbados. The old system has worked well but we have to recognise that there is a new redistribution of where people live and we would have to put bus stops where people live in rural Barbados especially in a place called St. Lucy, the only female parish.

Sir, mirrors are also very important. I am watching a trend going on in Barbados that needs to be corrected. For example, we had a very good road at Foster's, but it is now what you would call a dirt track. That road was neglected because the Charles Duncan O'Neale Highway was built. Sir, that is a very important artery, because if you have major problems on the Highway, you would need that road to be able to divert.

Sir, on top of that, if that road is in place all the bus problems that the people of Hannay's, Trent's and Swampy Town have will be solved because all the Transport Board would have to do when the bus gets to Bourbon is just turn across and go across Foster's Road, go to Swampy Town and come up the School Hill. Mr. Chairman, it does not make sense the bus going up Church Road when there are no houses on Church Road when it could easily make a left turn and go through Foster's where the people live.

Mr. Chairman, the problems that the people living at Alleynedale and Oxford have, as it relates to transport, could easily be solved by the Pie Corner bus because when it comes through Bentham's, it could make the right turn, go through Alleynedale, up Oxford Hill and come down Church Hill and go on to where it has to go.

Mr. Chairman, since 1999, I wrote to the Transport Board and they have always been making the point that as soon as they get buses. I have seen them getting nearly 200 buses and the people living at Greenidges, Cluff and Jordans still have the problem they always have. They told me to get the road expanded. The road has been expanded, it has been repaired and everything has been done, yet those people have to get off at Greenidge's Corner and walk a long distance to get home. I am saying that it has to stop. They are people too.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of Bishop's, Coconut Hall and Rockfield, some work has been done, and if the Transport Board has a problem in that particular area, that road could easily be made into a one-way road. Sir, once you make Coconut Hall, Bishop's and Rockfield one-way roads, a Transport Board bus could easily go through there and that would solve all the problems, and there would be no need for a St. Clement's bus. All you need to have is a proper Pie Corner service where some of the buses could go by the Depot or away from the Depot. They could be alternated and the problems those persons have with transportation in that particular area could easily be solved.

There is no need for any additional buses running one behind the other. All you need is proper planning, as has been stated in the letter written by me to the Transport Board. Once they do that, there would not be any problems but there needs to be some help from the Minister of Public Works as it relates to road works.

Sir, we need to understand that we need to cut down the Supplementary. People have to understand that politicians who understand their Constituencies do not just pick up a pen and some paper and write just because they could, but because they understand the problems of the Constituency and they need to see efficiency.

Mr. Chairman, I am not one who believes that the Transport Board should accommodate any political bus or anything like that. I believe that the deficit at the Transport Board is big enough already and it should not be increased unnecessarily just because of people seeking to get political votes. I am not in this House for this foolishness. I believe that efficiency is the thing and if I have given you some advice, and it is advice that can save you some money you should act on it and not be political on these issues.

Mr. Chairman, I have kept my cool on these issues, but I will not continue to accept foolishness from anybody for the simple reason that I have been given a mandate for the fourth time in a constituency, and people cannot just sit in an office and decide that they are going to run a service because of political means. I am the politician and I do not behave like the politician so I do not see why technocrats should behave like politicians.

I am saying that we are supposed to be in here representing the interest of the masses. I am not a vindictive politician, Sir, neither do I want people to be vindictive with me. However, Sir, if you trap a cat in a room and you start to flog that cat, you know what would happen. Sir, what we would expect is to see some efficiency. Sir, those persons who want to play politics with politicians must be very careful.

Sir, Barbadians have to understand that when the Ministry of Public Works puts up these mirrors that they are not toys, that they are there because they want to save the lives of persons. Sir, something needs to be done about those lawless people who believe that they could walk around and just break them. Sir, while they are breaking them, I have a need in many areas in my Constituency for some of them. The most needed one is for a 90o angle in Broomfield, which has been requested for a long time and we have not yet received it.

Sir, people believe that they could just walk around and throw stones at these mirrors and I am saying it is wrong because all they are doing are frustrating the officials working within the Ministry because they cannot feel happy to be putting them up and every minute they have to be repairing them.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that my time would be short, Sir. I know that I represent a female constituency and I am not a female.

I thank you very much.

Hon. Dr. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Chairman, I rise to add a few points to this debate on this Head for the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport. Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few points before I go into constituency matters.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate the Honourable Member for Christ Church South for the ideas that he is willing to experiment. Mr. Chairman, I said in an earlier presentation that nothing venture, nothing gained. Certainly, that is a stance that would get some criticism from the Other Side, but I do believe that right now with the state of our traffic in this country, that we really do need to try any means possible to reduce the traffic congestion that we are experiencing now in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, somebody said today that they could leave their home after 8:00 o'clock and get to their child=s school in 20 minutes or 40 minutes. Mr. Chairman, I do not know how close that person lives to the school, but I know that in St. George South, you have to leave home by about a quarter to seven if you want to get into town and spend less than an hour in traffic, so certainly we need to do something about that situation.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member also mentioned about putting parking in town at a premium. That is something I think has to be looked at by this Administration very shortly because parking in town is quite scarce. That is another reason folks have to leave home very early and suffer the congestion to get into town because there is very little parking space in town.

I think the time has come to create not open spaces for parking but more high-rise areas for parking because of the number of cars we see on our streets in town. There is also a lot of lawlessness with people parking where they should not park and so on, so we need to support our policemen as they attempt to control the traffic situation.

House A5C Sequence 20

2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Chairman, as I said, I want to congratulate him and I certainly get the impression that he intends to do what the last Government only talked about. We have heard that we are putting measures in place which they had on the Statute Book for however long, but I think the point that has to be made here is that we are finally doing the things that have to be done, things that only so far have been talked about.

Mr. Chairman, the point was raised earlier about the traffic congestion which we face and the environmental concerns, which is also one of my concerns. Earlier some figures were guesstimated about how much it would cost our country when each car sits in traffic over a period of time, and how many dollars would be spent over the week. It was then extrapolated that you would spend a certain amount of money in fuel over the course of a year. I am not sure how accurate the figures are but the point was well made that certainly a lot of money was used, just sitting in traffic.

Mr. Chairman, the issue is not only money, the fuel that is used is a non-renewable energy source and we know the state of energy today. We know that gas prices are already up, we know that oil came down a little bit today but we do not know how long that would stay down, but we have to use these non-renewable sources of energy very sparingly. Certainly the time has come to explore other sources of energy, including sources of energy for operating motor vehicles.

Sir, the figures that you would see for how much fuel, such as gasoline or diesel, is used to drive one=s car for a certain distance, we might see figures such as highway miles per gallon, but that figure increases significantly when you talk about sitting in traffic, as you

would be using even more fuel just sitting in traffic. Furthermore, because of the state of many of our roads in Barbados, we are using more fuel because we are driving on bumpy roads, as opposed to driving on smooth Highways, which we all know we really do not have in Barbados. Sir, we really do need to look at it, if only from an economic point of view, in terms of the money that is spent in fuel.

Mr. Chairman, I am also concerned about gas emissions when our cars sit idle in traffic for very long periods. We know that sometimes we could be sitting in traffic on mornings for well over one hour. These emissions damage our ozone layer and are responsible for climate change. Everybody is talking about climate change. It is so significant and Barbados has ratified several Charters.

We have signed on to several Agreements. For example, we have ratified the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change, 1994, and the Kyoto Protocol, 2000. We also signed on to the Vienna Convention and on to the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone Layer.

Sir, we are the Chair on the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and so we do a lot of talking. We go to Conferences, we sit and write things down, we say that we would do this and that we would do that in terms of addressing our climate change situation in this country, but the time has come for us to put rhetoric into action. We must stop talking about it, we must start to enforce Laws that would cause a turnaround in the climate change situation, as it relates to these gaseous emissions.

Sir, the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change sets out a framework for action that is aimed at stabilising the atmospheric concentrations of these green house gases, with which persons are probably very familiar, in order to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference.

Mr. Chairman, the increases that we see in these green house gases are predicted to cost an increase in the earth's atmospheric temperature of about 0.2 Celsius per decade over the next ten decades. Sir, it might not sound like a lot but that is 2 degrees centigrade in 100 year=s time. That means that future hurricanes would become more intense, with larger peak winds and heavier rains. Therefore, if we understand nothing else about climate change, we should understand hurricanes because of where we sit.

Sir, so far we have been blessed. We say that God is a Bajan and so far hurricanes have veered off Barbados but as the climate change situation gets worse, we might not be

so lucky, so we really do need to address the situation of climate change.

Sir, small islands are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change and that includes sea level rise. That 2 per cent increase in temperature, even though we would not see that in our lifetime, gradually we are seeing the effects of that. It would also cause a deterioration of our coastlines, which is something we are already seeing. We are seeing beach erosion and coral bleaching that will certainly affect our fishing industry, and our tourism industry. Sir, our tourism package is heavily based on our beaches, and I do have to address this.

Sir, I am saying all this under this Head because I think this would come under the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport, but we have to deal with these emissions. Sir, in dealing with the traffic congestion, I believe that contributes significantly to the emissions of dangerous gases.

Mr. Chairman, sea level rise is expected to exacerbate coastal inundation, storm surges, erosion and other coastal hazards. Climate change is also expected to cause a decline in crop yields. Sir, as Small Island States, we are very vulnerable to these things. We already know that our food import bill is high. Sir, we are talking about increasing agriculture, but if we do not do something to stop the climate change, to stop the emission of these gases in our atmosphere, we could be looking at declining crop yields.

Mr. Chairman, last week on World Water Day we spoke a lot about water and about Barbados being a water-scarce country, but another effect of climate change is a decrease in water availability, especially during the dry season where you could anticipate that we would have insufficient water to meet the demands for our population. Certainly, that is not a situation we would want to see in Barbados, as it could have ramifications on our tourism industry. Sir, what are we without water?

Sir, I am encouraging the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport, even though it is not right now stated here but, certainly, as a spinoff from dealing with traffic of the urgency in dealing with traffic situation.

Mr. Chairman, I think too that in dealing with these emissions, we need to be at a stage where we are checking cars and PSVs for the kinds of emissions we see coming from their vehicles. This could be even a part of their annual roadworthy assessment. We also need to encourage more Barbadians. We need to educate them about this climate change. We need to do serious public education. The Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport, along with other Ministries, need to be doing

more public education and, certainly, helping with the legislation that would help to reduce these emissions in our atmosphere.

Mr. Chairman, the time has come to encourage more Barbadians to car pool. Barbadians love to have their own cars and everybody wants to drive his or her own car, but the time has come to encourage car pooling, or even giving some sort of incentive for car pooling. Sir, this would not only be in terms of the number of cars on the streets but in terms of those gaseous emissions to which I have referred.

Sir, there is certainly a place for enhancing our bus service to the point where it is reliable enough, so that people could confidentially leave their vehicles at home, or in a central area, and take a bus to work or to school, while knowing that they would get there on time. That has to be one of the aims as we look to develop the bus service, so that persons could have confidence in it.

Sir, at this present moment, we cannot encourage Barbadians to leave their vehicles anywhere and take the bus because that could only lead to trouble, because our service is not as reliable as we would want it to be.

Mr. Chairman, I have another reason for encouraging the Minister to look at the traffic situation in Barbados, we do have figures in the medical field that suggest that the longer one waits in traffic, the greater is that risk of increased blood pressure. In fact, it is well documented that persons who spend more than one hour commuting a day have a higher blood pressure. I know right now that to spend an hour in traffic is commonplace. A lot of people spend at least one hour on mornings and another hour on evenings in traffic, each time causing an increase in their blood pressure.

Mr. Chairman, we talk so much about chronic non-communicable diseases, which include hypertension and here we are, putting people in this situation that will only cause their blood pressures to rise.

2.20 p.m.

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Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: The risk of heart attacks and strokes is higher as you sit in traffic. I do not know that we have had anybody yet who suffered a stroke or heart attack while waiting in the traffic, but if their blood pressure rises, that is another thing that we might see one of these days. I would really like that we get this situation sorted out before we start to see this. It is certainly a cause of great stress for many people and the road rage that occurs.

Sir, even without the increase in blood pressure, we all know about the road rage. I have been cut off by vehicles in the left lane at roundabouts that there is no jam-busting and these are often public service vehicles in the left lane cutting me off to go straight. We need to support our Police Force as they attempt to control some of these individuals who take short cuts, who drive on the curb along the newly widened ABC Highway that now has two lanes in either direction. Certainly, between Warrens and the Norman Niles Roundabouts, there are two lanes and we have people making a third lane. On evenings when the traffic is heavy, we have people driving along the side.

Mr. Chairman, this is road rage; this is people being impatient and this is also people having a lack of respect for indiscipline; a lack of respect for the Law. Sir, we certainly do need to support the Police Force as they endeavour to do their job and bring it under control. I know it cannot be easy for them, but we certainly do need to support them.

Mr. Chairman, as we move to this plastic card, we are talking about a card that has the magnetic strip. Even as we say that drivers would be mandated to carry their cards with them, I hope that means that the Police will have with them the equipment for reading these magnetic strips.

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

Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: Sir, I was just making the case so as to make him aware of what the Honourable Member spoke of. I do not think I need to call on him to do this because we are all aware of the need for this now but, certainly, I hope that the Police would also have the devices, either hand-held or in their vehicles, that they can read the equipment so that no longer would you have to take your licence to the Police Station in order to present your documents.

Mr. Chairman, I think too that in terms of enforcing the Law if the Honourable Member was concerned, one of the Laws I would like to encourage is that of breathalyser testing, both the legislation for introducing the breathalyser testing and for being able to introduce the results of those tests for, and the form of punishment to be able to use the breathalyser test. I think we have reached that stage where we have to use the breathalyzer, Sir, not only testing for alcohol but testing for other substances like marijuana and so on.

I wonder sometimes if some of the road rage and dangerous driving we see, are not as a result of driving under the influence of either alcohol, or some other mind-altering substance. We certainly need our Police to have the wherewithal to stop persons, test them with the

breathalyzer, or similar equipment, and then be able to prosecute them based on the finding there and then.

Sir, the last point I will make is that of licence plates. I am seeing too many occurrences of fake licence plates, two or more vehicles carrying the same licence plates. I know that the Ministry is aware of the problem and I am sure that the technical staff is working on solutions to the problem and so, I eagerly anticipate some solution to dealing with that problem of illegal or duplicate licence plates that we are seeing.

Mr. Chairman, before I sit, I would like to thank the Minister as well. I have seen where road works in St. George have been promised and I hope that the relationship I have with the Ministry would be better than the relationship my predecessor had with the Ministry. I am sure that even though it does not have to do with the Ministry as promised, we are told that everybody is getting their share of the pie, and I will hold him to his word, but I am glad to see that we are finally getting those road works in St. George South where that roundabout at Boarded Hall and the roundabout at the Turnpike would be attended to. That road from Brighton to Halton also need to be addressed. I see that is on the list.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up.

Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Chairman, lastly, I want to address speed humps which I have asked for along the Waveney Cot Road. I hope that we can get those soon. Sir, even as the road works are being done, I would like to see more cooperation between the various departments of Government like the Barbados Water Authority and MTW so that roads are not resurfaced and then dug up another day; or that roads are resurfaced and then somebody else comes to widen the road and there is no cooperation, not only between various Government Departments, but between the Government Departments and the private contractors who are doing work on the road. I think that could only redound to improvement in our road conditions; better usage of our fuel and more comfort for all our road users.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Sir, we have spoken a great deal in this Debate about the ZR culture by Honourable Members. I really believe that there is a need for a new policy to regulate public service vehicles in Barbados. As I listen to Honourable Members, I get the distinct impression that some Members want to place all the blame of the problems on our road on ZR

drivers. We cannot reside over situations where Peter pays for Paul and Paul pays for all. Mr. Chairman, I must say that just as we have good and bad, there are good ZR drivers and there are bad ZR drivers. There are good Transport Board drivers and there are bad Transport Board drivers.

Mr. Chairman, speaking of the good and accentuating the positive aspects, let me say that I have seen on numerous occasions, ZR drivers across the length and breadth of this country actually when rain falls taking old people to their homes, dropping persons at their doors, providing yeoman service in the social context that the Transport Board in itself, under the Law, cannot provide. Sir, I want to say that rather than us painting one brush to wipe out all the ZR drivers that we re-examine and update the present public service vehicle legislation. Mr. Chairman, if you treat people like cattle, they will behave like cattle.

Sir, I visited Trinidad and I saw the system that regulates the ZR vehicles in the Terminal in Port-of-Spain. Why can we not have a similar system for the ZR drivers in the River Bus Stand? I am saying that in Barbados, we have a system that is regulated at the Terminal in the Fairchild Street bus stand that we should also apply it to the ZRs at the Terminal at the point of exit and the point of entry.

H/A5C/14:30

Sequence 22

Monday, March 25, 2008

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, I am saying that a great number of ZR concerns include pirating. We have a system, and I like to look at models. When I speak, I like to speak from practical experiences. I am saying that in order to deal with this problem, we could introduce into Barbados a system of colour decoding. If you are going to the Pine, for easy identity, you could use the colour red for the Pine, Silver Hill, yellow, St. Peter, black, et cetera. This is not a fabrication or a figment of one's imagination.

I am talking about a practical system that exists in the Caribbean, Grenada, Trinidad and Jamaica, which should be applicable here. Why do we have to butt our heads against a wall when we can adopt best practices. Until we have a new policy that regulates public service vehicles, we are always going to be quarrelling, comparing and contrasting the ZR drivers with that of the Transport Board.

Sir, the Transport Board drivers overload the buses too, but I do not see the Police reporting them. I see the Police reporting the ZRs.

Asides.

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: How frequently, as opposed to the ZRs?

Sir, we cannot have a system that discriminates against one for the other. It cannot be. I am saying that, until we amend the system, let us create the environment that enables the ZR drivers and conductors to become part of the transport system.

Sir, we have developed in Barbados, and no fault of yours Honourable Minister, a ZR culture that is rampant, that has gone out of control. However, we must compliment the good drivers, because I know, they offer a service to a lot of old and other people across Barbados, a service that the Transport Board does not offer.

However, at the same time, I have to compliment the new General Manager of the Transport Board, who sought to upgrade the service the Transport Board offers, while offering to the public a more modern machinery of transportation.

However, I would like, at the same time, for him to note that we still do not have a bus that travels along Government Hill from the Pine to transport old people, particularly the children, to Springer Memorial School. That is a critical problem that has to be addressed.

Sir, this Debate, as serious as the Ministry of Public Works is, would address more parochial or community issues. I am saying that with the merger of the Constituency Councils across Barbados, a lot of the parochial issues could be addressed by the Councils, issues of street lighting, flooding and drainage. These issues could be addressed by the Constituency Councils across Barbados. This is what I call an effort of an all inclusive social policy that speaks to the fact of empowerment, while working very closely with the Ministry of Public Works.

Sir, as we get into other Heads, we are going to realise that this system of local governance is now critical in Barbados. Do you know why? Every time the politicians face the Electorate, they are going to be blamed for roads not getting done, or street lights not getting fixed, when in fact, the politicians, most of them, are true community practitioners, who make their appeal to the technocrats and bureaucrats within the Service, and have to wait years, sometimes, to get a response, which brings me to the fact that the Ministry of Public Works is nicely located in the heart of St. Michael South East.

I do not want to prejudice the Honourable Minister at this particular point in time, but there are some people who would believe that the Pine and Wildey do not exist,

that they reside on another planet, with human beings residing elsewhere in Barbados.

Sir, there was once a famous magistrate in Barbados who prejudiced the persons from where your office is, the Pine. He was a man named Perry, who said “P” for Pine, “P” for Prison. I am saying that those Ministers who did nothing for the Pine, should also be facing Perry.

Asides.

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, this is a serious matter. Here you have every year coming up to the rainy season, an issue with the tall grass in the area. The area needs debushing, so a lot of people come over from the Urban Development Commission. All I need is to have that area along the Highway debushed, and those workers continuing to beautify the area.

Sir, the area of Lower Burney continues to be a problem. It still floods. Even if one raindrop falls, Lower Burney floods. Sir, on a few occasions I accompanied members of the Ministry of Public Works who have promised us help. This help is urgent. A lady’s car was damaged. She is seeking compensation for the damage done to her car.

I am saying that there is need for an area to be cleared properly, and a proper drainage system established in Lower Burney, if not we are going to treat it like a recurring decimal. Every time the stormy season comes, we try to address the problem. Sir, also in Parkinson Field, off the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the water flows into the well. There is a blind man’s house there. Sometimes that house is flooded.

Sir, there is another area I would like to address. I apologise that I was unable to make the visit, because of a problem with my back.

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

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I have said in this Honourable Chamber, that most of us are in the departure lounge, that means you too.

Sir, coming off the main Highway, there was a proposal to run traffic from Mapp’s Hill and from the main Highway through Fort George. I told the former Minister that I will oppose any such move with every vigour and energy left in my body. I do not believe that when persons invest their money that they work so hard for, to properly develop a property, that any Government has the right to depreciate their property, rather than have it appreciated. If

this is done, it means that every property in Fort George will be depreciated.

Sir, the current Highway with the roundabout above Parkinson Field is one that will solve a lot of the problems. There is no need by any of the technocrats, or the civil engineers, to allow any traffic at all to go through Fort George.

Sir, with the merger of the Constituency Councils, I must tell you that since we are nearest to you in terms of geographical proximity, you will bet that a 26-member council will come and pay you a very serious visit, so that we could address some of these parochial matters.

A5C 14.40 p.m.

Sequence 23

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 24, 2.40 p.m.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I am saying that every Member in this Honourable Chamber should really, if they do not have a council, have a serious social impact agenda, as part of their constituency relations programme.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would the Honourable Member please wind up?

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, in winding up all I want to say is that in these matters, more or less, you will find that almost every single Member of this Honourable Assembly has issues as it relates to flooding, drainage, debushing, and street lighting. Sir, these are matters that could be addressed through a well-orchestrated constituency council.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with matters in relation to St. Michael West Central, but even before going there, I want to talk about the whole question of standards, as it comes to public transportation in Barbados. Sir, in talking about the whole question of the public sector compared with the private sector involvement in transportation, we do not seem to recognise that the issue is really the extent to which we propose that standards generally within the public transportation be raised.

Sir, one of the things we should not fail to do, is to compliment those actors who demonstrate the principles of

good standards, good discipline, and seek to actually idealise them, rather than what we have in practice today of trying to define actors in public transportation, who sometimes breach the Rules and Laws. Sir, when you have a situation of persons involved in public transportation who breach those Rules and Laws, what they actually do is to undermine the very element upon which the society is built.

In that regard, Sir, I want first, to compliment those persons within the Transport Board, the drivers and those persons involved in public transportation, who actually demonstrate those good principles, upon which our public transportation should be based.

Sir, outside that, in terms of the persons within the private sector who are involved in the transportation sector, I would also want to applaud those persons, who actually demonstrate the kinds of practices that, I think, would engender a healthy, social climate within this country.

Sir, we cannot ignore the fact that there are some persons involved in the public transportation system, which need to be dealt with in a more serious manner by the authorities. I have had many conversations with minibuss owners and private operators. One of the things that they have said constantly is that they do not have a problem sticking to the Rules, and where a person has transgressed, that the full weight of the Law should be brought to bear on those persons.

Sir, if we fail to do that, we are actually holding up bad examples to our young people. In that regard, it can explain the kind of behaviour that you see emanating from young persons today. Sir, we have to recognise the fact that all of us individually are role models in this country for our young people, to the extent that some of these persons are actually involved in the transportation of students going to schools, and then you put them in an environment in which they are exposed to negative forms of behaviour. I think this is something which we need to seriously deal with, Sir.

In order to facilitate that, I think that the whole notion we had of having greater access by students to transportation that helps them to get to their schools in an orderly way, is something I would want to encourage the Ministry of Works to move ahead with, Sir.

Again, on the question of raising standards, I really think that one of the things we also need to do is to try to ensure that we have good standards of dress, when it comes to the whole question of public transportation. I think that to have a situation in our public transportation system where we have two different worlds, one in which we expect certain persons to uphold to certain standards, and the others we do not. Sir, this is sending mixed messages to our people.

I really think that we need to have a Transport Board that applies to every single individual who is actually involved in the public transportation system. We should not give the impression to those persons who are actually involved in the transportation system that it is okay for them to break the Law, and others must uphold that Law. Sir, I think we have to be very careful about those kinds of double standards that we are sending at the same time in the society.

Sir, I also want to move on to the area of physical development in our individual Constituencies. Sir, by and large, I heard the argument in relation to the whole question of the necessity of moving the roads from agencies, such as the Rural Development Commission, and the Urban Development Commission and placing them where they actually belong, in the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport.

Sir, if you have a proper Physical Development Plan in a country, the kind of ad hoc development, in terms of where houses are being sited, would not occur. Sir, you would also have a situation where the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport would be better able to anticipate what the needs are, in terms of roads in different areas.

Sir, because of the fact that we have engaged in poor physical development planning in the past, what has happened is that it has actually complicated the work of the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport. I think that we need to focus more on proper physical development planning, which in itself will allow the Ministry of Transport and Works to more adequately anticipate the need for certain road services in different areas. Therefore, they will be able to mobilise the resources that are required for the provision of these roads at the same time.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to take a parochial view, in respect of St. Michael West Central. One of the issues I want to move to very quickly is in relation to the area of Seclusion Gardens. I know and I want to express my appreciation to the Ministry of Transport and Works because they have actually started work within Belfield and also Seclusion Road, an area which has not been touched for more than 14 years. There is also the area of Seclusion Gardens which, again, is a road that has not been touched for more than 15 years.

Sir, I think it is unfortunate that you had a situation where the roads and all kinds of areas have been touched, and an area like Seclusion Gardens that actually resembles a cart road in the heart of St. Michael, the residents are experiencing extreme difficulty. Sir, I would want to appeal to the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport to look at this road and see the extent to which

they could engage in works that would, at least, alleviate the kinds of difficulties the residents are experiencing in that particular area.

Sir, moving from Seclusion Gardens, I want to just go across the road to Third Avenue, Grazettes, where one half of the road was actually repaired, and the other half of the road was left in a substandard state, in this day and age. Can you imagine that? When all you had to do at the same time was to decide to properly repair Third Avenue, Grazettes. I would like to invite the Members of this House to drive up Third Avenue, Grazettes to see this situation.

Sir, I heard the former Minister of Transport and Public Works bragging about the fact that the Ministry previously executed many Projects, in a very beautiful way. I really want to ask the present Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport to look at Third Avenue, Grazettes, where one half of the road was actually attempted to be resurfaced - because the surface is not smooth - and on the other half, the old road exists. Therefore, you had two levels of development.

House A5C, Sequence 24, 14:50:12

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Mr. J. D. PAUL: The reason I am mentioning that is because the Ministry of Transport and Works in future has to take a very serious look at the manner in which it engages in Projects because when you do these things it does not add anything. Sir, when you look at the situation at Third Avenue, Grazettes, it does not do the previous Minister of Public Works and Transport's record any good, and he cannot be proud of it.

In that regard, I would like to appeal to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South to look at the situation and see the extent to which we could alleviate the concerns of the residents of Third Avenue Grazettes and go back to that road and make sure it is done well to correct the mistakes of the previous Minister of Public Works and Transport.

Sir, I also want to bring to your attention another issue in relation to the whole issue of all-terrain vehicles. Sir, I heard about the concerns in relation to the whole question of these vehicles but I really think that we need to arrive at a policy in Barbados in which we control the types of vehicles that are coming into this country. Sir, we should not adopt a stand-off approach anymore where we seem to think that any kind of vehicle could come into this country without any specific regulations by the State.

Sir, we have to consider the personal safety of persons in this country. We cannot ignore it. To adopt a laissez-faire approach of coming into Parliament and

saying that there are these vehicles coming in and we are not doing anything about them, we would not be fulfilling our responsibility to those persons who put us here to look and ensure that we put Laws and Programmes in place to protect them.

Sir, we have situations where ATVs are being actually driven all over playing fields. There could be an accident one of these days. I really think in respect of that, that we need to look at the whole issue of the kinds of vehicles which are allowed in this country, and the issue of noise pollution, because we should at least bring in vehicles that are consistent with our aims and objectives of trying to reduce noise in this country.

Sir, I want to thank you very much for the opportunity to make this very short presentation. I would want to appeal to the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, to give the concerns of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central some consideration in terms of alleviating the noise level.

I thank you very much.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for recognising me. Sir, before I go into a new dimension in this Debate, I just want to say that I have heard the comments of those who would have said that the minibus and ZR drivers are, perhaps, over-taxed, or over-licensed in relation to other vehicles.

Sir, I do not think that we have to spend a lot of time defending the minibus and ZR drivers because they always seem to land on their feet. They manage somehow to go off routes, give people special drops and somehow only one in every dozen times they are detected. They also manage not to stop at bus stops like the other Transport Board buses, and most of the time, they seem to get away with it.

Sir, by their conduct, I am sure that they earn more than, perhaps, the slightly higher charges that they have to pay. In fact, I believe that if you were to get down to brass tacks and look at the figures, if we could ever do that, you might see that, in fact, they are at a competitive advantage in relation to the Transport Board buses.

Mr. Chairman, I am not going to belabour that point but just to say that I do, however, believe more seriously that perhaps what we could look at doing is to impose certain conditions in their licences. We heard the point repeatedly made about the minibus and ZR men seeming to get to service only the short haul routes.

I believe that you could have a stipulation to ensure that if you grant an owner a short-haul licence he also, at the same time, has to work a long-haul route and share some of that responsibility. Similarly, if you are going to agree that the minibus operators could have all the short-haul routes, then they cannot only work at prime times and come off at non-prime times when the Transport Board buses have to work and shoulder that responsibility. Sir, I believe there are ways and means that we can look at ensuring that the Transport Board operators in fact conform a lot more than they do.

Mr. Chairman, before I move on to the other point I want to make, I also believe in that same vein that those who benefit considerably more than other road users ought to pay higher licence fees and taxes. Sir, if you look at the situation now across Barbados, you would see that a number of heavy-duty vehicles are using the roads. In fact, a lot of them are using the road with the intention of going to work on sites.

Sir, it is because of the large contracts that they are getting that they are, in fact, traversing the streets and damaging the streets. Therefore, I believe that those are the ones that should also be made to pay far more disproportionately a higher level of road taxes, licence and other fees for the tremendous benefits that they are, in fact, receiving. Sir, I wanted to make those points before I go to this other dimension.

Mr. Chairman, I find that there seems to be a belief on the part of the Minister that his portfolio is simply local, but he also has responsibility for international transport. Sir, no matter how I try and raise certain issues, the Minister does not seem to want to come forward with a wholesome or fullsome statement, but I can only keep trying until I get the answers that I believe should be forthcoming.

Sir, I want to revert to the issue of LIAT because I raised this matter in here some time last week and I felt that the explanation given by the Minister, even before I spoke on LIAT, was really very substandard and insubstantial. Sir, in his comments in his introduction to this Head, he again made some comments that really have not sought to address the issue at all.

Sir, what I am getting at is that we in Barbados want to know what is the Government's intentions in relation to LIAT. Sir, I do not speak on this point or belabour this point because I have any concern about LIAT per se. My angle is the consumer of airline services in the Region. Sir, we have seen a situation where, during the course of last year, LIAT has acquired five additional aircrafts. Sir, it is now therefore a relatively large regional airline and a number of issues arise from this because the question would come to mind: Do they now have the crew to service

these additional airlines because if you have more airlines, you intend to use them and you have to put them on routes if you want to make money. Does LIAT now have the crew to service these additional airlines?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. We have a very untenable situation in here at this stage. There are only four Honourable Members on the Government Benches at this stage.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There is still a quorum.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Where are the Government Members? Have they flown the coop?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: A quorum consists of nine Members of the House. It does not distinguish them as Members of the Opposition, or the Government.

Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: That is a very good point of order. Where are the Honourable Members of the Government? There are only four single members of the Government, but I will move on.

Mr. Chairman, does LIAT now have the crew to service this expanded fleet? Do they have the managerial competence to service this additional fleet? What plans are they actually making?

House A5C Sequence 25

3.00 p.m.

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Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, what about the issue of these high fares within the Region? As I said, my angle is the consumer. I am concerned about the high fares being charged to get from point AA@ to point AB@ within the region, and all we are hearing LIAT to be saying is that the fares are based on their true airline cost.

I would like to know that an examination is made of that statement, to ensure that LIAT is not just saying that but that they are, in fact, charging fees to ensure that they make a profit. Sir, over the years LIAT has not been known to be a very efficient carrier and I want to know what plans the Government has.

Mr. Chairman, I also note that LIAT persists in bringing into its operation a number of foreign senior executives in places, when arguably they do not have to do so. Certainly the question arises, are these foreign expatriates competent enough to do the job? Sir, I make that point because one thing we know for sure is that as

LIAT has managed to become a monopoly in the Region, the number of tourist arrivals to Barbados in particular - and that is my concern - has fallen.

Therefore, what I want to ask: "What regulatory structures are being put in place to ensure that LIAT does not engage in price-gouging to the detriment of the consumer? What arrangements are being put in place to ensure that we are facilitating investment in the airline industry and ensuring that we can, in fact, attract additional carriers in the Region? Those are questions I would want answered in relation to LIAT. Sir, it is impossible for me to go further until I get the answers to those questions, and I would therefore like the Minister to answer them.

Mr. Chairman, another question which I would like to ask the Minister is, has a new Airport Board been appointed? I certainly have not heard it announced, and therefore, I would want to know if a new board is in place, or if the Airport is on autopilot. I would also like to know - I am aware as best as my memory serves me, that the contract of the current CEO of the Airport is coming to an end this year. Therefore, I would like to know what plans the new Minister would have for the appointment of a new CEO and, more important, what role is this new CEO going to be playing in relation to the Airport's development?

I think we have reached the stage where we simply have to accept that Airport management now is not desk-bound, and the Airport, certainly, needs to look at the operations of the Bridgetown Port to see how the CEO and management should be structured, particularly in the new competitive environment. Is the new CEO going to be mandated to go to attract new business for Barbados, or is it going to be new wines in old wine skins?

Mr. Chairman, I have heard the very unfortunate pronouncement on the physical structure of the Barbados Port Authority by the Minister of Tourism and, to a lesser extent, by the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport. I could almost say two hard-headed people, but I would not say that. Mr. Chairman, one Minister went as far as to say that the Port was an obsolete cargo port and, I believe, that the Minister of Tourism, who made that statement, should apologise for it.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The statement that has been made consistently on This Side is that we need now to go in and improve the Port, to reflect a Port that wants to improve our cruise tourism business. That is the simple position of This Side. We need not have the kind of exaggerations that are being reached by the Honourable Member.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I am saying categorically that the Minister of Tourism used the expression that the Bridgetown Port is an obsolete cargo port, and I am saying that the Honourable Member should be made to apologise for those remarks.

Sir, over the years, one of the institutions that is far better run in this country is that of the Barbados Port Authority. They have won "Port of the Year Awards" on many occasions, and are the envy of many Ports in the Region. Sir, if they would wish to say now that it is time that more be done for cruise tourism...

Sir, last year Barbados accommodated well over 600 000 cruise passengers and without even, as at now, looking at the issue of the carrying capacity of the Port in terms of cruise passengers, they are now saying that they would wish to add additional cruise facilities.

Sir, it is not unusual for the Democratic Labour Party to capitulate to the cruise lines. Sir, for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who made a statement about Barbados making them get cursed for going somewhere and not making some trade arrangement in relation to COTED, on which he was corrected by the Leader of the Opposition who clarified that statement and said it was not true. Sir, what I can tell you is true, and it comes from my personal experience.

Sir, it is not unusual for the Democratic Labour Party to capitulate, because when I became Minister with responsibility for cruise tourism in 1995, on my very first visit I made overseas, I sought to make the point, as I was being taken to the hotel, that before we met with the FCCA, we should have a caucus of regional ministers to put a unified position to the FCCA.

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

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, the Trinidadian Minister turned to me and said: "That is Barbados talking. Man, you all should be ashamed." He pointed out that some years before, there had been an agreement reached by all the countries in the Region in relation to the level of head tax that was going to be charged, some \$10 per person, in every Port, and that it was the Democratic Labour Party Government of the day that reneged on that agreement. They sucked up. They capitulated to the cruise lines and left all of the Region stranded. Sir, I had to spend years trying to rebuild Barbados's image amongst its regional partners.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I want to say that one always has to be aware of what would be the

return on one's investment. Sir, there is something called viral newness and I believe it is afflicting the two new Honourable Members. Sir, since becoming Ministers, they would have made a trip or two to one or two Cruise Conferences. They would have met with a few investors, shown one or two model Ports and now, suddenly, they would want all the cruise facilities in the world.

Sir, I want to let them know that it is not as simple as that. I recognise that cruise tourism has a role to play, but that does not mean... In fact, they may not know this but do you know that if we were to increase our infrastructure, in relation to long-stay tourism, and had an increase of about 20 per cent, in terms of long-stay tourists to Barbados, Barbados may well earn more revenue than all it gets from cruise tourism all together? We may well do that.

3.10 p.m.

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Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I am saying that you do not just talk about forking out money because a cruise line or some potential partner comes to tell you to do so. Sir, cruise lines have a way of telling you that they want you to do everything on earth.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you should wind up.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I am only saying that before they jump off, I urge that they be some caution and reasonableness in relation to the amount that Barbados is prepared to put into an industry from which we are already getting satisfactory returns.

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

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to the presentation by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. I must say that I did not equate his silence in the past years with lack of knowledge. I thought he was silent because he did not want to say anything. I did not know he was silent because he did not know any better. Therefore, I am totally alarmed and it is an ironic situation to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, a member of the previous Barbados Labour Party Government making a call in here for more carriers within the Region when the position of the previous leader of the Barbados Labour Party very clearly set out to CARICOM Heads in the most simple of language, language that, perhaps, the Honourable Member himself has tried to adopt in here, in coming to what we might call the lowest common denominator, rather than exercising his brain in such a way as would add to this Debate.

Mr. Chairman, the former Prime Minister of this country indicated, quite clearly, that the introduction of any new carriers to compete with LIAT would be viewed by him as an act of war.

Asides.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, that is the official position and that is why when I visited Trinidad the position of the Trinidadian Prime Minister, despite pleas from his other CARICOM Heads to assist with the challenges in relation to LIAT, was that Caribbean Airways would not introduce a Turbo Prop Service in the Caribbean unless there was consensus and basically agreement by Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: If you do not know, ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. At least, I am certain the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would be decent enough and honest enough to clarify the issue, but the position taken by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is ludicrous and smacks of both parliamentary ignorance, in the sense that he should know better, and also smacks of Party ignorance because his Party's position, and the position of the Leader he once served under, was made abundantly clear, so that Barbados finds itself in a position where it has made a significant investment in LIAT, not under the Democratic Labour Party, but under the Barbados Labour Party.

It is, I believe, a 49 per cent shareholder in LIAT as a result of decisions taken by his colleagues, and he sat in silence as those decisions were being made, despite all of his pretense in here to be so knowledgeable in relation to civil aviation, and that he alone saved the whole Caribbean.

Mr. Chairman, I would not want when my time comes to try to write myself into history where I do not belong or to spend the rest of my life in politics trying to remind people that I was once somebody who made decisions or was in the Caribbean.

Asides.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: No, I have to focus on that because the Honourable Member should know better, because this is the second speech I have heard in this Estimates Debate. I have done a little research in relation to previous presentations by the Honourable Member. A lot of very jejune presentations were made in here about the size of delegations and about expenditure in matters, as if the Barbados Labour Party, spending that money, it would be socially acceptable.

Sir, they are the brand names politicians, but when Honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party seek to go and represent Barbados, it is a junket. It is some kind of expenditure that people like us should not incur. We do not represent Barbados. We are second-class leaders and they are the brand name leaders in this country. Sir, I am going to defend this Democratic Labour Party against those kinds of petty assaults and insinuations. Sir, I can go for the record,

Mr. Chairman. Sir, I can go for the record...

Asides.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Do not sidetrack me. You want to sidetrack me because you want to jump up and try and soften the impact from the irrelevancies.

Mr. Chairman, he is asking a Minister who has been in office for two months, who has only now seen LIAT's Business Plan, which this House was promised by the previous Minister of Civil Aviation and never got. It took me nearly three weeks to get a copy of that Business Plan. In the intervening time, almost every single Head of Government - and you are so interested in defending the Caribbean. Let me explain to you then, since you have taken up that crusade now, or want to be written into history, I am going to give you a chance to be written into the history books again.

Sir, Grenada has been having a major problem in relation to service on its route. St. Lucia has indicated what its issues are. St. Kitts has indicated what its concerns are. We all know what Antigua's position is in relation to LIAT, and we need to be frank about the future of it. Sir, if the existence of a monopoly operation in the Caribbean compromises the tourism industry of all of our other Eastern Caribbean brothers and sisters, then we cannot adopt ignorant, inflexible positions.

Mr. Chairman, the problem is that Barbados has invested significant money in LIAT and, therefore, the potential loss to us again would be great.

Sir, I have heard all that talk about people being stranded. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North said he had to save people from being stranded in the Region...

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I was talking about the things they left for us that I had to rebuild. That is what I was speaking about, Sir, not about LIAT.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Well, I am glad you rebuilt it and somebody else might get up and agree with

you, but I had never heard that before. I must say this Debate is characterised by new information:

(1) a member who does not know that his own Party said that it would be an act of war if other carriers came into the Region and competed with LIAT. He did not know that, so he is asking you what your position is on it

(2) that Barbados has invested significant amounts of monies. I do not have the relevant information here but, I believe, the taxpayers would be surprised to know the level of investment by this country and the obligations that we have undertaken

(3) that despite being promised in this two years ago to see the Business Plan on LIAT, we had to wait until we came into Government to see the Business Plan in relation to LIAT.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member should know that prior to LIAT taking over Caribbean Star and Caribbean Sun, there were pilots servicing those airplanes in the Region. The idea that there is suddenly some shortage of pilots since January 16, 2008 does not make sense.

H/A5C/15:20

Sequence 27

Monday, March 25, 2008

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I am saying to the Honourable Member that if he was concerned about people being stranded in the Region, then he would have spent the then days of the Barbados Labour Party Government, even when they brought legislation in here with the Opposition absent, if he was afraid of the Opposition, he could have got up then and spoken, and said that fares were at the highest level in November and December 2007, when the Democratic Labour Party was not in office, and that fares started to climb under that Government.

We have sought to ensure that those fares would be stabilised, and will give support to LIAT, to ensure that it can provide an efficient service in this Region, but it is hampering the development of the Region as a whole where you have an airline that is not able to meet its obligations, and where the cost of travel rises to such a level that it becomes prohibited.

Sir, not just to professionals, because part of the complaint is the higglers between Grenada and Trinidad and other persons who travel in the Region, small traders who are affected by the lack of the quality service in relation to LIAT.

Sir, I listened. I was flabbergasted by it. I had to make a note of it. I also had to make a note, as I said, of the Member's former contribution. I want to go on now to the issue of the Port. It is a concern, not just to people operating the cruise sector. The world does not revolve around international transport. Maybe there are some people who felt that the world revolved around it, when they were the Minister responsible, but the world does not revolve around international transport.

There are security concerns for a country like Barbados having five or six massive cruise liners in one port. There are other related concerns, but I am also saying that if we are interested in the development of Barbados as a whole, a lot of our natural attractions are in the North of Barbados, and there is absolutely no reason why Barbados should not be looking to developing an additional cruise facility off Speightstown, or off some part of St. Lucy in the North, so that people in those areas can benefit more significantly from the development of cruise tourism, because that is the way it is going and we cannot doubt it is going in that direction. If we can find the resources, and if it is feasible economically and in terms of our physical environment and environmentally, that is what we should be looking at doing, so that we can move some of that traffic congestion from the Port, and let Speightstown become even more alive than it is supposed to be, or they say it is. Even though I have heard many complaints about it in recent times, not being as alive and active as it should be. We want to see the total development of Barbados.

Therefore, if there are other options that will ensure that more Barbadians can be brought into the economic mainstream of this country, and if we can address security concerns, and if we can also impact on bringing down the price of importing goods into this country, because when the Port is full of cruise ships, it has an impact.

Sir, the Honourable Member like he does not know these things.

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

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON It has an impact on those boats that cannot be offloaded in a timely manner in our Port, and that adds to the cost of items on the supermarket shelves and to the cost of doing business in Barbados.

Sir, we are looking at solutions, not short-term nitpickings about how many pilots you have and trying to act as if the world began on January 16, 2008. We are looking at solutions that will help develop Barbados and the Caribbean region as a whole.

We expect that when we come to the country with those solutions, that right-thinking Barbadians, not those

who think that their position is threatened, or that the Democratic Labour Party is some kind of last class citizens, but people who are interested in the development of this country, will see us once again being able to transform the economy of Barbados, and have more people involved in economic activity and the tourism sector.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. R.ST.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I am aware that the Honourable Member has now returned to the country and wants to make the country aware of the fact that he is here, Sir, having returned from his several trips in recent times.

Sir, perhaps he should spend a little time listening to what people say. I was clear in my presentation that, first of all, you have to realise that responsible Governments have to take reasonable actions. It would have been irresponsible and it would have been amiss of any Government that allowed for the demise of LIAT.

Sir, this Government does not have any control of the privately owned carriers. They come and they go, just as fast as they come. Sir, Governments cannot control them but, at the same time, you cannot sit back and allow for the demise of a carrier that has served the country relatively well over many years. Sir, you cannot sit back, not only at the risk of the loss of jobs, but also of the consequences of your tourism industry as well, and the common movement of people between one country and the other. That is why the last Government would have taken the action that it did.

Sir, even so, I never said anything at all. In fact, I expressly said, that I have no romantic attachment to LIAT or any other carrier. I expressly said, that. Airlines are here to serve a purpose to get us from Point A to Point B safely, and any carrier that can do that, would have my support. I expressly said that.

Sir, the Honourable Member really should have used my contribution, as a springboard for what he wanted to say. I am saying that I have heard the new Government indicate clearly, through its Minister of Tourism, that there will now be some tough love with LIAT. I did not knock that statement.

Sir, there may well be a time, that the time has come for some tough love with LIAT. All I am asking the Government, perhaps, the Honourable Member for St. John cannot yet say, or his Minister of Tourism, or Minister of International Transport, what is the new approach that they are going to be taking, and I am entitled to ask that.

Sir, if it is that the Honourable Prime Minister because of his infatuation with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, is going to take the approach that the new carrier promised from Trinidad and Tobago will, in fact, receive financial support from Barbados, then he can come and say that, or he can say that is not the case. All I am saying...

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I am not going to let the Honourable Member bait me with those childish tactics. I never said that. What I did say is, that no decisions could be made relative to LIAT, because despite the promises of the previous Minister of Civil Aviation to make the Business Plan available to the Opposition, made nearly two years ago, that I first saw that Business Plan about a month ago, and the new Minister probably saw it after me. Therefore, no decisions can be made until that Business Plan is effectively studied. I am assuming the Honourable Member has seen the Business Plan, because he knows everything about civil aviation. I do not.

Mr. R.St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, if the Honourable Prime Minister had spent less time witch-hunting, he would have got the Business Plan earlier, but his focus was witch hunting. I do not intend to prolong this point. All I am saying is, I am asking as a consumer of airline services in the Region, if the decision is that they are going to do away with any relationship with LIAT, fine with me. All I am asking is what new regulatory framework you are going to put in place to facilitate the promotion of competition, and to facilitate new investment in the Region in new airline carrying capacity? Those are the few points I wanted to make.

A5C 15.30 p.m.

Sequence 28

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 29, 3.30 p.m.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN).

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to make a contribution to the Debate. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is in the mood for extracting apologies from Honourable Members for one reason or the other, but before he asks for these apologies, he should proffer an apology to the public servants he abused this morning, before he asks for any apologies from any Member on This Side.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN)

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Thank you, Sir. I withdraw.

He proceeded to comment on the Private Service Vehicles (PSVs) as most people want to do. Sir, most people who comment negatively on the PSVs are people who do not normally take the Public Service Vehicles. I have a soft spot for members of the Private Service Vehicles community, because I believe they provide a good service in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Members on the Other Side when in Government, inflicted some of the most punitive and onerous tax measures on that sector, almost stifling them. One of the first things we, as a Government did in 1986 when we assumed the reins of Government, was to free that sector of the onerous taxation that they placed on them. Sir, they set out on a witch hunt on that sector, every time they are in office, pushing them into the ground, almost.

Sir, let that sector withdraw their services for one day in Barbados, you would see that the public transportation system in Barbados will come to a grinding halt. I believe as a new Government, we ought to be positioning ourselves to bring some relief to this sector.

Mr. Chairman, they have inadequate Terminals. They get absolutely no subvention from central Government to help defray the cost for carrying school children and that, to my mind, is an unfair system that has been placed on them. I believe that we, as a Government, should move post haste with some alacrity to bring some alleviation when it comes to the onerous taxation that is placed on this particular sector.

Mr. Chairman, although I said I have a soft spot for them. I believe that the several infractions of the Law they commit, they should bring them to a halt and, also, some of the drinking I see some of the drivers engaged in, because they are putting the lives and safety of their passengers at risk. While we are on the question of drinking, I do not believe in the breathalyser tests that my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. George South touted. Barbados, by and large is a rum-drinking society. I personally do not drink excessively.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Yes. I am a social drinker.

Sir, if we were to introduce the breathalyser test in Barbados, I believe that we would bring the tourist industry

to a squeaking halt. Sir, tourists primarily come to Barbados to drink rum, among other things.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Certainly, if we were to implement some of those measures in Barbados, we would bring the tourist industry to a grinding halt. Therefore, we have to find some other way, other than breathalyser tests, to ensure that the drivers of our vehicles are curtailed in some way of engaging in excessive drinking and driving at the same time.

Mr. Chairman, I will just shift my focus on some parochial matters, as most Honourable Members do. The stretch of road leading from Hindsbury Road to Combermere sits squarely in my Constituency. I know that there are some plans. While perusing the Minister's Brief in that particular Ministry, I saw there is a plan to pave that road between Hindsbury Road and Combermere.

I am asking that this be done with some haste because the road is in dire need of repair. The road from the Globe to the Hindsbury intersection has been paved, leaving that section in a state of despair. I believe that some alleviation to the residents and travellers of that road ought to be done with some haste.

I want to publicly commend the staff at the Richmond Depot. I could not do it before, Mr. Chairman, before because I feared that most of the staff were extremely amenable to my request, of course, as a candidate, not even a Member of Parliament at that time, and I did not want to commend them or pay any bouquets to them, while I was very much in Opposition. I want to publicly commend them at this time because some of them went out of their way to accede to some of my requests in bringing about some alleviation to the problems that existed in St. Michael Central.

I want to ask also that we move with some haste to complete the roads that were started just prior to General Elections, five days before General Elections, in some cases. We all know it was an election gimmick, Mr. Chairman, but I wish that the roads, especially in Hill Road, Kew Road and Waterhall Land are completed to the satisfaction of the residents who live in those areas.

I also would like to implore the Ministry to conduct a widening of corners, especially in most of the avenues leading on to Bush Hall Main Road, and Bank Hall Main Road. Right now, they are real hazards to the motorists using those roads, such as corners like Park Road, Military Road, Review Road, Industry Road, First Avenue, Bank Hall and Second Avenue, Bank Hall. All of them are very narrow corners and, of course, vehicles using those junctions have to push the fronts of their vehicles almost

directly onto the Main Road, placing themselves in danger and also putting the drivers who are on the main road at some risk.

I would wish that those corners be widened. I believe there would be some compulsory acquisition of lands of the properties adjacent or sandwiching, really, those roads. I believe we should move with some haste to widen those corners, leading on Bank Hall Main Road and those other roads.

Sir, the entrance also from Station Hill on to Lyster Road in Waterford is also in need of widening. This road is heavily used by the ZRs and I believe that we ought to widen it to allow them to access and exit, in particular, Minx Road.

Sir, most of the residents of Dean's Village have asked me for speed bumps in that area, because the ZRs also pass there when they are coming from Combermere. They divert through Dean's Village to get back onto the road, beating the traffic between Paramount and the lights. Of course, they are putting the residents in that area at risk, so the Dean's Village residents are asking that, even if they divert, to slow them down as they traverse that particular area.

The wall at the back of District "A" Police Station is now becoming a real risk to people using the Park Road area. I do not know why the wall still exists, because it is a secondary wall. There is a wall inside already there protecting the property of the Police Station at District "A". I believe some road widening in that Park Road area could occur, if that wall is removed, of course, widening the area and allowing traffic to access that general area in Park Road with some ease and without any further hindrances.

House A5C, Sequence 29, 15:40:14

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Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, those are just some of the matters that confront us as residents of St. Michael Central. Therefore, I am asking the Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport to take a look at it and bring some ease to the people living in that Constituency as they set about doing their chores.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few remarks before the Honourable Member for Christ Church South winds up the Debate.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central was at pains to point out today that he has a number of parochial problems and that the Minister of Public

Works and Transport under my watch failed to address those things.

Mr. Chairman, when you look at the matter of St. Michael West Central, you would find that there were two former Members who were Ministers of Public Works and Transport. Mr. Chairman, when you look at all of the constituencies in St. Michael, you would find that the constituency of St. Michael West Central was the most fortunate of them all. In fact, the Honourable Member could only mention one road, which was asked for by his predecessor, which is being addressed.

Mr. Chairman, the point I am making is that from time to time we would have a number of roads that we would not be able to fix. The present Administration would not be able to fix all either because roads that were once good roads...

Mr. J. D. PAUL: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is not true that all of the other roads were addressed. Sir, I stated two specific roads, 3rd Avenue Grazettes and Seclusion Gardens. You cannot answer to that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you would have to refer to the Honourable Member as "Honourable Member" rather than you.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: I am sorry, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It might not have been done deliberately but I think he should correct himself on that and be honest about it.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am making out the point out that of all of the Constituencies in St. Michael, that the Constituency of Michael West Central is the most fortunate one of them all. That Constituency was represented by two Ministers of Public Works and a lot of work has been done in that area. Therefore, one or two roads...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by trying to give the House the impression that the former Minister of Public Works and Transport did all the roads in his Constituency and neglected all others.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I would just want to push on, but a lot of work was done in St. Michael.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central is of the view, and this is not the very first time he mentioned this, that punitive measures were imposed on the private sector transportation system in this country. Mr. Chairman,

one has to look at it from a different point of view. Sir, no new taxes were raised on the private sector vehicles over the last 10 years.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member knows that the Honourable Member was not speaking about the last ten years. The Honourable Member knows quite well when the war against the public service vehicles were created. He knows quite well that they were imposed by a particular Prime Minister who is now not alive. Therefore, the Honourable Member is trying to mislead the House that the Honourable Member is speaking current when in truth and in fact it is not current.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, no new taxes were imposed on the public service vehicles in this country over the last 10 years. Therefore, to suggest that the taxes are punitive is really unfair. I really want to make the point that a number of things were done for the private sector operators in this country.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot say that because if the taxes have been placed previously and they have not been removed, the Honourable Member is correct.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Again, Mr. Chairman, it is the word "punitive". I am sure that you, Mr. Chairman, are well aware of the language because I know from whence I am speaking. When one looks at the word "punitive", one cannot say that the measures are punitive. If the taxes are punitive, the sector would be shut down. Mr. Chairman, I am saying to you that the demand for licences is still very active and high under that sector, and they are making money.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is accusing the private service operators as lying to the public of Barbados. Mr. Chairman, you know, as a representative for the people, that they have complained to you, as they have done to all 30 Members of Parliament. If the Honourable Member has not heard them, he should say that, but he cannot say that.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, the new Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport would very soon encounter that the demand for licences to operate private sector vehicles is still very active.

Mr. Chairman, we have a situation in this country for the transfer of permits. One sees advertised within the Newspapers that people are offering to buy and sell their vehicles at all types of prices. We have a situation where one member paid as much as \$180 000 for a minibus, so the demand is still there. Mr. Chairman, there are some people who have 6, 7 and 8 vehicles and they are not

making any losses at all, so one cannot say that the taxes are punitive.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that it is a very lucrative business and people are still making a lot of money from it. Mr. Chairman, we have tried and we would continue to try. I think the Government would know that a lot of work still has to be done in terms of helping the sector. Mr. Chairman, we were able to encourage many of the small operators to form co-operatives. This is the way to go.

Mr. Chairman, when you look at this sector today, it is now moving better than it was 20 years ago. There is still a great demand for them.

Mr. Chairman, when you look at the concept of transportation and you marry it with traffic management... The Honourable Member for St. George South mentioned the fact that work has now begun on a roundabout, when the Cabinet of Barbados, since a year ago, approved 10 roundabouts because we recognise that there is a need for them. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport could not go and just put them anywhere.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that once Cabinet has approved something in a boardroom that actual work is being done on the work.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that the Cabinet of Barbados approved the citing, the erection and the design which went out to the public and that many of the engineering firms in Barbados were invited to design these roundabouts, and we had to get Cabinet approval for these before they started. They are now in the implementation stages.

We see that provision is made for some of them in the Estimates. Mr. Chairman, we have to acquire land and they have to be designed. These things have to be done early.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and the Honourable Member must tell this House if he is sticking to the words he is using now, or if he is sticking to what he said earlier about bridges. I heard the Honourable Member today saying that there are a number of bridges that every year you pick up the Estimates you could see where they have been approved for work to be done and no work has been done. Therefore, I want to know which statement the Honourable Member is going to stand by.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, if you look at the Estimates of Expenditure, you would find that a lot of work and programmes are cited here, which we are going to approve today. These programmes may not necessarily

be done in a financial year. They may be carried forward to another year.

House A5C Sequence 30

3.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that over the last 10 years or so we have been approving Votes in the Estimates. Sir, for example, if you would look at Collin's Bridge, St. Peter, work for that bridge has been appearing in the Estimates for over the last six to seven years, including the bridge at Joe's River. I am not seeing a vote in the Estimates for Lion Castle Bridge but that was one of the bridges that appeared as well.

Sir, the point I am making is that a lot of work is being done by the technical staff but that works need to be implemented. Therefore, unless a special unit is set up in order to push this work forward, it would not be done, and next year we would come back here for the same thing, which would appear over and over again.

Sir, some of the roundabouts approved in last year's Estimates are still here because of the acquisition process which takes a long time. That is the point Honourable Members need to understand. It is not that the workers at the Ministry of Public Works are not doing the work. I am very happy to hear that the Depots have responded not only to Members of Parliament but also to the candidates of the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, one of the things that Honourable Members must understand is that the Ministry of Public Works is one of those Ministries that services the public. Sir, they have been encouraged, certainly under my watch, to reach out to all Members of Parliament and persons in the community. I have also stressed the need for them to listen to the ideas of experienced persons within the communities, especially the older persons, some who know where drainage lies. Sir, that is what they have been doing and I am heartened that these Programmes are continuing.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of looking at how we could help those persons with new ideas, those persons who are coming forward with vehicles that are new to Barbados. Sir, for example, recently we were approached by a gentleman who wanted to bring a pedicab into Barbados. This is a cycle rickshaw, something like a three-wheeled bicycle. Sir, the application for such a licence has taken the Ministry a long time to process. There are several persons within the tourism industry who want to bring in new ideas and I am not sure that we are equipped with the necessary tools. I believe the Licensing Authority needs to look at

how it could help those persons with those ideas to move them from ideas to reality. Sir, sometimes we might have to amend certain clauses, but these are some of the things that more and more people are looking at how we could improve our tourism belt.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, we have a reliable bus service and I do not want Honourable Members to feel that we do not. The Transport Board has been providing a good service over the past 50 years. I am hearing Honourable Members to be saying that the Transport Board is unreliable and that a number of things have to be improved. Sir, of course, life is about improvement but I am saying that, presently, the Transport Board operates a scheduled bus service.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It is reliable to the extent that commuters can know that a bus will come at 5.00 p.m. or at 6.00 p.m. If a bus happens to break down because of an unforeseen problem, then you cannot say that it is unreliable. We are saying when we have a bus service in Barbados, which is the envy of the entire Caribbean, one that operates from 5.00 a.m. to 2.00 a.m. the following day, we have to understand....Sir, we have people who come here and say that it is a good bus service.

Mr. Chairman, we have to improve the bus terminals but again, money has been voted in these Estimates for the improvement of the bus terminals. Of course, we have seen work on the River Road Bus Terminal started since last year. We have money voted here for the Cheapside Bus Terminal. Sir, an approval was done by the Planning and Priority Committee to look at the integration of both the private sector and public sector bus service at Cheapside.

Sir, a lot of work has been done. I am glad that it is continuing, and I hope that more and more of this work to integrate the bus service would be looked at. Mr. Chairman, on the ABC Highway, we have bus lay-byes, so that the buses could move from Christ Church, through to the West Coast, without going into the City.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot agree there should be punitive measures being put on the PSVs, who are doing well and who want to get into the system, some of whom are paying as much as \$100 000 for a vehicle, which, to my mind, does not wash.

Sir, I have said to the Honourable Member that when we relaxed the permit on hired cars, the demand was there, but there was no problem with it and, therefore, I would want to see the day comes when we would relax all

permits, so that the forces of demand and supply could operate. That would be one way to go.

Sir, again we have to look at the financial arrangement and at those vehicles that now attract concessions. These are all things that have to be done. We know it takes time and is not a one-off situation. I believe they are doing the right thing in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I would not detain this Honourable House too long but I felt it was imperative to, at least, say a few words on some of the issues that were raised, equally by the Honourable Members for St. George North and St. Michael North.

Mr. Chairman, in relation to the PSVs, I do not think it is a matter of punitive measures even though, depending on which lens you are looking through, you might say it is punitive. I think the issue is that there is some level of inequality in relation to how these are applied.

Sir, it is amazing that we have a situation in Barbados where there are a lot of people who invest in this country, and are able to get concessions, irrespective of how many millions or billions they make or have, yet nobody speaks to their issue to say that they are being given concessions.

In fact, we encourage them to get incentives and concessions to carry on business. However, whenever the discussion seems to come to PSVs, people do not like to use the term but these small, black business people, there is always some view that they are the most discourteous lawbreakers the world ever created, that they are getting some special dispensation from Government and that they are making so much money, as the Honourable Member for St. George North has said. Therefore, because so many people are applying for these permits, then they do not deserve to have either an ease in the penalties being imposed on them, in terms of taxation, or, in fact, getting proper facilities.

Mr. Chairman, I am one of those who believe there is a lot of ill discipline in that sector and that it really needs to be set straight but we, too, as policymakers have to accept responsibility for quite a bit of what has been transpiring in that sector. Sir, if we put people out there and say to them that they have to fight against themselves, that they have to hustle to attract as much passengers as possible, so that they could get the highest level of returns, so that they too could make money once the owner takes what is his, then we would get that kind of approach.

Mr. Chairman, I think we have to find a better way of treating the issues of the PSVs. I believe too that the new Transport Authority has to look seriously at the question of the owners, because the owners cannot escape the responsibility and in some way be vicariously liable for the actions of their drivers.

Sir, owners of these vehicles oftentimes say it is not them but the driver, but they have to accept some responsibility. Sir, even as we do that, these PSVs are providing a vital service to the public of Barbados, and if you want to see how vital is that service, just let them take their PSVs off the road for a few hours during the working period and you would see exactly how vital that service is to the economy and to Barbados.

4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Therefore, I do not think that it can continue to be right that PSV operators are asked to carry school children at \$1 along with the Transport Board, and the Transport Board has the opportunity to make up the extra \$0.50 they would have lost. Sir, there is something not quite right about that and we have to address the issue. Of course, we have found ourselves in this situation because under a previous Barbados Labour Party Administration, a Minister of Transport determined, in a fit of ill-wisdom, that all of the short-haul routes, or the majority of the short-haul routes...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I have no recollection of that. The point is that we had a situation where that put a burden on the Transport Board to make money and, therefore, we had to find a way to ensure that the Transport Board remained viable.

Mr. Chairman, we also have to make the point that if we are going to subsidise the Transport Board to the tune of \$27 million this year, then we have to ensure that we do not pretend that we are getting the best service that we can from the Transport Board at present. I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North saying this is the envy of the Caribbean. The reality is that many Caribbean countries do not have public transport. They have entirely and exclusively private transport and they do reasonably well.

Mr. Chairman, whilst we want to have a public transport system in Barbados.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, more to the point, the Minibus Association was supposed to get back to the

Ministry about the level of subsidy as it relates to the children who now pay only \$1 to get to school.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I am not sure what was the on a point of order. He is not rebuking or refuting anything that I have said. No wonder the Honourable Member for St. George North reminded me that he is North and not South because of the non points he was making.

I am not saying that the Transport Board does not have these issues to contend with. Yes, but I was making the point that if they are going to put \$27 million into the Transport Board, we have to be guaranteed at least that the service is going to reach a certain standard, and that remote areas of Barbados are going to be serviced properly by the transport system, that we are going to have, for example, responsible drivers.

Mr. Chairman, I know, for example, that we have been having a situation where former minibus drivers have been leaked into the Transport Board and they are driving those buses as though they are driving minibuses and causing a lot of chaos on the road.

Sir, we need to ensure that a lot of these drivers undergo, in both sectors, in the public transport and in the PSVs, specific training to ensure that they not only respect the Road Traffic Rules, but that they also understand that they are carrying human lives and that it is a very serious situation.

Mr. Chairman, generally, we have to make the point that PSV operators for all the demonisation that has happened to them over the years, and some it much deserved, that they provide a vital service, and we have to find a more constructive collage, a symbiosis between the private service operators and the public system to ensure that we get people to and from work and play to ensure that this economy keeps going. Sir, that is one of the concerns that I have.

Sir, finally, in relation to this issue of LIAT. I think it is a very important issue that we have discussed here this afternoon. In my previous dispensation, I had reason to use regional carriers, LIAT included, and I can tell you that none of them was able to display any high level of efficiency. Caribbean Star, LIAT, all of them had issues. They were late, the service was generally below par and, in recent times, the cost certainly did not justify the level of service you had.

Mr. Chairman, we are mindful of the fact, as the Honourable Prime Minister made the point, that the previous Barbados Labour Party Administration virtually committed us to a single small carrier in LIAT, to the extent that Barbados has now become the largest shareholder in that institution.

Sir, it is almost as if you are asking the public of Barbados to carry this thing twice. One, as a shareholder, putting over \$40 million into it and secondly, having to pay exorbitant fares, so the taxpayers are paying twice and we have to find a way to correct that either by determining that we are going to introduce competition, which we have seen over the years has not worked because one cancels out the other or both cancel out each other, and then there are losses all over the place.

Sir Allan Sandford tried that with Caribbean Star. He said he would spend as much money as it takes to bring LIAT down. He folded up his operation because of massive losses, so we have to find a better way to transport people, particularly in this eastern part of the Caribbean, and we are beginning to see the effects on our tourism product.

Mr. Chairman, the Caribbean is one of our major markets for tourists. We always speak about Europe. We speak about the United States of America. We even speak about Canada, but there is a significant amount of business that comes from the Eastern Caribbean that we have to look at.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Therefore, this Government is going to use any opportunity it has to properly analyse what needs to be done in relation to LIAT, not to compromise its financial operational integrity but to ensure that we get value for money. If we are going to take \$40 million out of the taxpayers' money and invest it in anything, they have to be assured that they are going to get a good service for the most reasonable cost to ensure that we continue to communicate with our brothers and sisters across the Caribbean, and they with us.

Mr. Chairman, I feel this is a very serious issue that we have to contend with on Both Sides. I would really like to see a non partisan approach in dealing with this issue. Sir, we will follow a lead that the last Government did not follow. We will open up, be transparent.

The Minister has given this assurance that whatever we do with LIAT, and in relation to LIAT that the public of Barbados and, particularly, Members of the Opposition will have an early opportunity to input into whatever solutions we come up with, mindful of the fact that Barbados is just one of the shareholders in this particular enterprise.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

H/A5C/16:10

Sequence 32

Monday, March 25, 2008

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

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Sir, thank you for the opportunity to make a simple intervention in this Debate. It is interesting that we are debating one and the same time, the bus service as well as the airline service, because both are, in essence, about transporting people, one across the country and the other across the seas.

I made that comparison because in those kinds of services you will always have lucrative routes in both the airline service and the bus service. You will have lucrative routes because more people live in that area, or want to travel from one area to the next, so it would be heavily utilised.

At the same time you will have routes both in the airline service and the bus service that are not lucrative but still are necessary, because they provide a social good, but do not necessarily provide an economic good, but certainly a social good, both in terms of transportation in the buses when people have to go on the long hauls from Bridgetown and St. Joseph, and the outer and rural parishes. In terms of the airline service, when people have to go to the islands, that will not necessarily have that number of people using the air services, like Dominica and certain other islands that do not have the large populations that the Southern Caribbean would enjoy. Sir, the Government has to understand and appreciate two aspects of it, some providing an economic good and others a social good.

Sir, with respect to the Transport Board Service, it is unfortunate that the Transport Board had, in essence, to give up its short routes, which were the lucrative routes, but only provide the social good, which are the long routes, while the short routes were taken over by the public service vehicles.

Sir, let us not kid ourselves. Both entities provide a valuable service to this country. They back up one another. They provide a service. When one is not available, the other is available. They are people who would prefer to travel on a Transport Board bus from the point of view that it is spacious, wider, and the old aged pensioners get to travel on the Transport Board buses free of cost, while they do not enjoy that luxury on the public service vehicles, so they would prefer the Transport Board buses.

The public service vehicles are used as what I call "peak shaving methods". Sir, "peak shaving methods" take the bulk of the people to be transported, especially at peak hours. That is the benefit of the public service vehicles, because they fill the void left which the Transport Board

cannot fill at peak times. That is why they have been so successful.

Unfortunately, what has happened, when they came in, they took up all of the short routes and left all of the long routes to the Transport Board, which completely committed the country to subsidising the long routes. That is essentially what has happened.

Sir, now, I am happy to say, the Transport Board is returning to the short routes, as well. Let me commend the people at the Transport Board for putting back a route on the Britton's Cross Road area, which goes into Bonnett's, Simmon's Land and all of those areas. I am very happy with it. The people of Christ Church West and St. Michael South, who have both benefitted from that new route are extremely happy. I am seeing more and more people using that route, and long may it continue. Sir, that is essentially the first part of the presentation.

Sir, I want to go a little bit further into the renewable energy aspect of it. Honourable Members would be aware that for the first time in Barbados, we have vehicles that are powered by natural gas. The Barbados National Oil Company Limited and NPC, have taken the decision to lead the way by importing two vehicles powered totally by natural gas. This is new and innovative to Barbados, but it is not new and innovative to the rest of the world.

In India, for example, there are many buses powered by natural gas. In Canada many buses are powered by natural gas. I would urge and encourage the Minister and the members of the Transport Board, to continue to look into the use of natural gas to power the Transport Board fleet. It is not only something that would improve the damage to the environment that these vehicles cause by using fossil fuels, but it is also a renewal energy that we actually have here in Barbados.

In addition to the damage to the environment, as well as the fact that we have natural gas available here in Barbados, we have also looked at the amount of maintenance that would significantly reduce the cost to the Transport Board, once we start to use buses powered by natural gas. I think that it has certainly been proven by the NPC and the Barbados National Oil Company Limited, as well as many places across the world, that it is a viable alternative and something that we should certainly look into.

Asides.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: I am hearing about natural gas.

Sir, there is a need for natural gas in the country, that is true, but natural gas will be acquired once the Barbados National Oil Company Limited restarts its drilling

programme. The gas that we use in Barbados is called “associated gas”. That means that you get the gas when you are drilling for oil, so oil and gas come up simultaneously. So, you take the gas off and use the oil.

Sir, we found ourselves in difficulty for natural gas because the Barbados National Oil Company Limited reduced its drilling programme.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I hope we are not going to start a debate on the Barbados National Oil Company Limited and natural gas. Please stick to the relevance of the Head.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: I will move on. Just for the point, natural gas is something we need to look at. It would certainly be a benefit to the environment, a benefit to the community, a reduction in cost in terms of the maintenance of the vehicles, and a reduction in terms of the cost of the fuel to power the vehicles.

I thank you.

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, I am grateful to you. I want to express my gratitude to the Honourable Members on Both Sides who have contributed to this discussion on Transport and Works and International Transport. We need to start at the beginning and repeat the position of the Democratic Labour Party Government. I continue to be amazed that the Honourable Members on That Side have now found their tongues when it comes to the question of problems with either transport, the redesign of roads and the introduction of roundabouts. All of these things that they have spoken of, have been on the cards to be completed by a Barbados Labour Party regime, which boasted of huge amounts of money to carry out these projects.

Sir, between 1994 and today, the only thing that they have boasted about on That Side is that money was no problem. That is what they have been saying. In truth and in fact, they have demonstrated to us today, by their contributions, the way in which they have failed to deliver to the people of Barbados, in so many regards.

Sir, if for the life of me, all these projects and road repairs, all these projects on transport solutions, all these projects on alternative energy as a transport fuel alternative were out there to be implemented, why has it not been done? So, we are just talking about these things, and that is their boast.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North, as I said in a previous debate that he does not have to take

this Debate on Transport and Works personally, but I am beginning to feel he has to.

A5C 16.20 p.m.

Sequence 33

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 34, 4.20 p.m.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, he has to recognise his contribution to the failure of the Barbados Labour Party's policies, and he comes in to make a non point about where is the money for the Transport Authority. Sir, the problem is that the Honourable Member is not reading his documentation.

Sir, we have been presented with Amendment 4, which indicates that \$336 029 are being provided for the Transport Authority. Sir, he comes in here and says there is no money in the Estimates. Sir, the Honourable Member is not reading his documentation but I am not surprised.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is misleading the House. The point I made is that there are many provisions in the Transport Authority Act and the Road Traffic Act that speak to many changes that must come within this financial year. I am saying that these things are not in the Estimates. I am not talking about the money to pay a Board. I talking about the provisions of the Transport Authority Act, which came into being in December.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to call on Hansard but, I am going to just make it a record that there is a provision of \$336 009 for the operation of the Transport Authority. Sir, it was handed to us in Amendment 4, which the Honourable Member should have in his possession.

Sir, we have spent a long time because everyone has a transport solution. Everyone has a road development need and we have said on This Side that we are going to treat the upgrade in Barbados, equitably. I did not say equally. There are areas which have to be brought on par first, thereafter the question of equally, maybe a consideration.

There are areas which have been deprived for a long time and have to be brought up to scratch. There are areas where, as Honourable Members on That Side have pointed out, the roads are so bad that they have to be treated as priorities. Therefore, we understand our mandate.

Sir, we are grateful for the contributions, but we really do not have to be preached to by the Members on

That Side, who have now been replaced. They need to contribute, of course, to the Debate but they must not pretend to this Chamber that they are the panacea of all solutions.

In truth and in fact, they are regurgitating

the solutions which were in front of them for 14 years, and which they were unable to implement. I think everybody has been at pains to point out that there are really no new ideas. The point is that they tried absolutely nothing.

Sir, talking about little experiments, there is an experiment at what used to be called, King Corner, with a little roundabout. Everybody talks about that, and describes it as the "boundabout" and things like that. In truth and in fact, we need to look at areas like this where we can design small roundabouts in order to bring about cheaper and adequate solutions to traffic handling. Sir, the roundabout is sometimes a better solution than traffic lights. It is a lesser cost solution and we need to implement it.

In the couple of weeks that I have been Minister, I had persons either calling in, dropping me faxes or bringing documents to me with suggestions of roundabouts at many places where we have traffic lights. At the bottom of Rendezvous for instance there is a suggestion for a roundabout there, rather than traffic lights, but then there are people who support the synchronisation of traffic lights and believe that is the best solution.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Of course, the Ministry is looking at speed bumps and sleeping policemen as we call them. We are going to make sure that where they can be applied, they are applied.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, there is a process which we have to follow. We want to make sure that when somebody applies for a sleeping policeman in an area, we need to get the public involved. Obviously, we have to look at how it may affect the general transport in the area, even though we know we are essentially dealing with residential areas. It is a project that we support.

Certainly, as a Minister, I support the introduction of sleeping policemen and wherever the Honourable Members in this Assembly find them necessary, they should bring them to the attention of the Ministry, so that the implementation will follow.

Sir, the question of flooding will be addressed. We have indicated that the Ministry has already issued

directives that the areas where there has been a history of flooding, they are to be tackled now, even as we are in the dry season. The funds have been allocated for this activity. Therefore, when we come to the rainy season, we will not be faced with the catastrophes.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, one cannot predict. I do not want to say what would be and what would not be but, hopefully, we would mitigate most of these situations by being proactive and effective, and as indicated by Members on Both Sides, we will listen to, and take note of the local knowledge.

Sir, we are going to make sure that the repairs to the Fairchild Street Bus Stand are started with haste. I am already in discussion with the Transport Board and the Ministry itself, about getting the work started in the Fairchild Street Bus Stand. The point being that if we can save that property, and the Honourable Member for the City can be assured of this, that action will be taken urgently because it is an investment which is worth maintaining.

Mr. Chairman, as we complete the Constitution River Improvement Project, and the new private sector vehicle and Transport Authority building, which they promised since 1996, and as we complete this facility, one should be able to integrate this into a completely renovated Fairchild Street Bus Terminal. Sir, we know these things. We are going to be putting these things at the forefront of the work of the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport.

Mr. Chairman, the Members on That Side have to accept that they have brought this country to the position that it is in today. All the challenges, misfits, inadequacies, rag tag buildings and the facilities where we have our public servants working in, are as a result of neglect on That Side, and they have to put it in their respective pipes and deal with it - it is that simple - and do not come in here and pretend to be some kind of born-again former Ministers. They did not say a word, when the Honourable Member for St. Peter walked around this country and just did as he pleased. They did not challenge him. I did not hear any challenges on LIAT.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Sir, to suggest that the Honourable Member for St. Peter did as he pleased, is to impute that he also did so whether or not it was consistent with the Law. Therefore, the Honourable Member should withdraw that, Sir,

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Not a point of order. Please continue.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member did as he pleased within the Law and with the concurrence of That Side, and as they pleased too, because none of them got up like the Honourable Member did just now, and talked about LIAT. None of them argued about any of the investments, the non investments or the points that were made by the Honourable Member for St. John, in respect to the Caribbean=s impression of Barbados and LIAT. None of them got up then, but I saw the Honourable Member for St. Michael North changed from a man to a mouse, after the contribution from the Honourable Member for St. John, because he was faced with the facts.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you suggesting he is a mouse? I think you should rephrase that comment.

House A5C, Sequence 34, 16:30:14

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: He changed to less than a man.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair will rule on these matters.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: He changed to less than a man when faced with the reality of the actions of the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, we are going to make the public of Barbados acutely aware of what we found in these respective Ministries.

Mr. Chairman, the Board of the Grantley Adams International Airport has been appointed and tomorrow evening at 2.00 p.m. myself, the Permanent Secretary, the Chairman of that Board and the Chief Executive Officer will be touring the Airport. We do not know what we will find.

When I go to the people at the Airport, I go out through the Departure Lounge and come in through the Arrivals Hall and go along about my business, I do not detain myself. Tomorrow afternoon, for your information, we will be at the Airport at 2:00 o'clock to go through the Airport. I do not know what we are going to find, but I would not be surprised at anything at all that I find.

Mr. Chairman, I am going there with an open mind and we will see exactly what transpires at the Airport and we will bring to this Parliament any changes that have to be made to bring into effect a more satisfying environment for passengers and operators, and we will make sure they are implemented. We will make sure that the shops are operating correctly and legally. We will make sure that those who want to do business at the Airport, they have been given an opportunity in the past, are assured of the

same treatment in the future. That is all I could promise the Honourable Member at this time.

Mr. Chairman, the Airport is in good hands. Later on in the week, or early next week we will be doing the same thing at the Port. Mr. Chairman, I could tell you about what happens at the Port. I could tell you that every day I get calls from the taximen at the Port who are operating in an environment of intimidation by Members of the Barbados Labour Party, and we are going to see to it that it comes to a halt.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is making allegations in here without attesting and bringing proof to it. If he wants to go down this line, we could continue going down this line. Talking about members of the Barbados Labour Party intimidating people at the Port is wrong, I am warning him, and also does not relate to the fact that there may also be members of the Democratic Labour Party who are intimidating people too, so if he wants to go there I could say that too. Mr. Chairman, there must be a standard to which he must reach in order to prove the allegations speculative, pejorative and prejudicial.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South, please continue.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, we are going to the Port afterwards and all the allegations that have been brought to my attention would be dealt with. We are going to make sure that any discriminations and any bad treatments that have been perpetrated up until now come to a halt as quickly as possible, so that operators at the Port and indeed the Airport, could look forward to a smooth environment in which to operate.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to detain this Chamber much longer in respect to this Head, because we still have some other Items which we want to discuss.

Mr. Chairman, I want to assure Barbados and this Parliament, as promised in my opening presentation, that the Democratic Labour Party, with the better use of the human resource capital of this country; with the better use of technology, which is now so widely available worldwide, specifically in Barbados; with the better use of our infrastructure; our developed infrastructure; preservation; repairs and retrofitting of our buildings, an area significantly neglected by That Side; we will make sure...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is grossly misleading the House. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member must watch what he is saying. We came, Mr. Chairman, and found that this Parliament was not in the shape it was in before. This

Parliament is a building that we all occupy and public workers work here.

The Ministry of Public Works renovated this building. The Honourable Member found the new building at Warrens. The Honourable Member found a number of buildings across Barbados that were renovated.

The National Housing Corporation has a new building. We found a rat-infested building in 1994. I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that we have a better building stock in this country today than it was when we found it in 1994, so the Honourable Member must desist from that.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, The truth is that the Honourable Member for St. George North is trying to write his political epitaph as a postscript of my presentations in here but I am not going to allow him to get away with that. He has to face the reality.

Mr. Chairman, I would not be sidetracked. As I said, with the better use of our human resources, with the better use of our technologies, and with the better use of our infrastructure, we are sure that the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport will deliver to this country a better, stronger and more reliable sustainable service.

Sir, wherever there may be shortcomings, we need to know urgently so that we could jump in and fix them. We are not going to sit for 14 years and then come in here and try to badger some Administration about what we would have done or what we did not do.

Sir, we will be working constantly. We have started since January 21st. I started work on the 21st of January. We will work to make sure that all these objectives are rightly obtained.

Sir, with those few words, I beg to move that Head 57, as amended, stand part.

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

The question that Head 57, as amended, stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported 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. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for five minutes today.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend for five minutes was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

House A5C Sequence 35

4.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

RESUMPTION

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

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Sitting is resumed.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (resumed)

HEAD 60

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL CARE, CONSTITUENCY EMPOWERMENT, AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$73 498 105

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to present to this Honourable House, and to the public in general, the matters contained in the Estimates under Head 60: the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development.

Mr. Chairman, before I get into my presentation, I should like to thank the members of the staff of the Ministry and those hardworking public servants who have shown a tremendous amount of support and dedication to the transition and, of course, to the forward movement of this new Ministry.

I should also like to give full expression of support for the Honourable Members and Ministers on This Side, who have presented so very ably on the various portfolios they manage and have given us a sense of where the country wants to go, and where this Government proposes to take the country.

Mr. Chairman, the last time I spoke in this Honourable Chamber in this particular Debate, I sought to

make the point that national development is a process that requires very keen and progressive thinking, as it relates to both the economic and social sides of development. I made the point then that the Estimates, in my view, is an opportunity for Government to lay before the full view of this Honourable Chamber and this nation, where it proposes to take the country and how it proposes to achieve its national objectives in that regard.

I am still of the view that as we proceed in these deliberations, that this Government has a moral mandate to outline to the public, in clear, definable terms, where we stand on our National Social Development Plan; where we stand as it relates to the movement of the country forward, not only in economic terms that seek to have economic returns but, also, in terms of the social development of the country, since I believe the hallmark of measurement that defines how well a country is doing is driven by how people live, and move, and have their being in a society.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to say that all Governments contribute to national development in some way, shape or form, but the history of this nation's development seems to point towards a concerted effort on the part of the Democratic Labour Party, who is now the Government of the day, as it relates to moving people from one stage of development to another, and a higher stage of development, and that we measure national progress, not exclusively in terms of monuments, buildings, or the size of the Gross Domestic Product, but in terms of how our people are able to grapple with their own terms of living and where they are able to achieve through the programmes of Government, a higher stage of socio-economic development.

Mr. Chairman, the Government's central instrument for achieving its social mandate becomes, therefore, its commitment to a philosophical platform that puts social development at the heart of why we are the Government and are in Government. The reality is that at the end of the day, I would want, as I would have said before, to leave this great country at a stage of development or at a stage of evolution, that is far greater ahead than where it was bequeathed to us by the previous generation.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to be bold enough to make the suggestion that all of us in this Honourable Chamber feel similarly because if we would, in fact, make our contributions to the development of Barbados, we would have to look back and see how we have impacted the lives of ordinary people. We would have to look back and see how we have used our economic fortunes to achieve a social good that has truly transformed the lives of all our citizens, regardless of where our citizens may rest on the social landscape of this great country.

Mr. Chairman, therefore, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Urban Development, was so conceived and crafted by our Honourable Prime Minister, that he sought to bring a Ministry to the fore, one that would take full cognisance of the importance of empowering our people at all levels.

Sir, years ago we talked about enfranchisement and that is still an important social endeavour, but we believe that at the heart of people being able to move from a state of dependency, to one of interdependent living, has to do with the State's capacity and vision to perpetuate a theory of development and a practice of making that theory become reality, through integrated social care service, one which sees people when they are at their most earnest points of need, to be able to be reached by the systems of Government that allow us to inject into their lives the opportunity to restart their journey.

That integrated social care service should also be one that allows people an opportunity to break the vicious cycle of poverty, an opportunity to become self-sufficient, an opportunity to see all of the needs met at their various levels of human development. Indeed, an opportunity to see our people pursue a path of living that allows them to be the chief architects of their own destiny.

Sir, that is how we in this Government proceed. That is where we take up this challenge from where the baton was left. We now pick it up and move forward. We move forward with a very clear vision of where we need to go and where we will take the country. Mr. Chairman, this Ministry fully embraces Government's guiding philosophy on national development, one that identifies both the economic and social sides of development as being critical to the maturation of our society.

Mr. Chairman, I heard, over the last few days, how Honourable Members reflected on days back then, where we did things a certain way, where we thought through our processes and our challenges in a certain way.

5.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Dr. the Hon D.S. LOWE: Now with the advent of the proliferation of technology, research and the like, we now see our world through difficult prisms and we are now beginning to challenge our own thinking to revisit our own position, to even revisit our own philosophy and see where we now stand within a modern Barbados; a modern Barbados that sits on a global stage that has so many implications for how we live, how we move and how we experience living in the society.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry sees the development of our human capital as the most critical undertaking of any Government. It is absolutely necessary that we understand that the wealth of this nation is not bounded up in tradable or non-tradable sectors; it is not bounded up in tourism, that the real wealth of our country is bounded up in the lives of our people in allowing those people to pursue maximum social achievements and maximum human potential.

Mr. Chairman, I am of the view that if we keep on that track, if we continue to allow our gaze to be fixed in that direction, that we will be able to see our society move from one level of development to where it is now and we will be able to perpetuate it into the future, to drive it into the future, if you will, where our people will be able to experience a kind of living in this country that is far beyond what they would have experienced before.

Mr. Chairman, we believe in democratic socialism and we believe that at the heart of that philosophy is a bounding moral duty to ensure that the society is guided by the principles of social and equal justice. We are bounded by a philosophy that tells us that we must use the returns of the State to achieve the best possible opportunities for our people. We are bounded by a philosophy that says it does not matter into what circumstances a man or woman is born, but that it matters that the State provides an environment where that individual, through the assistance of the State is able to achieve the highest level of his or her human capacity. Sir, we are bounded by those.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that in order for us to be able to achieve this, we must also look at the humanistic way of achieving our endeavours.

Sir, I like to draw the distinction between humanism and humanistic theory because we believe what must happen in a small society like ours is that somehow we have to find a way to move people through the variety of services that we have to make sure that we get maximum return for our investment in human capital development, and that is why we have sought to lay out for the public that the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development has, as its chief cornerstone, four very critical pillars in this society.

1. We believe that education must be at the centrefold of national development.
2. We believe that a healthy society is a wealthy society and, therefore, we must give all the support that is necessary to our Ministry of Health and our Minister=s endeavours.
3. We also believe that we must house our people. The day must come when anyone who desires to have housing, finds housing in this society.
- The day must come when the lines that are so

protracted, where people have been waiting for 14 years and 15 years to get a place of their own, a piece of the rock, if you will, the day must come when that line becomes annihilated, when people are able to achieve the level of self-satisfaction in housing.

4. We believe in social protection, in the rights of our citizens and our workers. We believe in the protection of our citizens against crime and we believe that as a society, we must be able to move in a direction where we reinvest in the development of our people and where we take some of those dollars that we have spent on different endeavours and bring them into the lives of those persons who matter the most.

Mr. Chairman, it must grieve your heart, as it does mine, and other Members of this august Chamber, that there are still people out there today who, even though they work harder in this society, they get less and the grind of simply surviving is now an extraordinary endeavour for so many people in this society.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry has three essential components...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. We have just had three days of preaching over the Easter holiday. The Honourable Member is in a Second Reading speech. He must tell us how he is going to spend the money in the Estimates.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, that does not sound like a point of order. Honourable Member for Christ Church East, please continue.

Dr. the Hon D.S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, any man who sees progress in bringing a tricycle as part of the transportation Resolution could only say what was just said by the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, do not be diverted.

Dr. the Hon D.S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development has established three essential components of services. Firstly, we have the social care and services component that includes the National Assistance Board, the National Disabilities Unit, the Welfare Department, the Poverty Alleviation Bureau, the Council for the Disabled, the HIV/AIDS Prevention Programme and the like.

Mr. Chairman, we have as a second component the Constituency Empowerment Component which deals with bringing power back to the people, allowing citizens to

participate in their Government and shoring up the process of governance in our society.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I would want to suggest that for those who have begged us to put the money in their pockets, what we want to do is put the money in the hands of our people so that the constituency empowerment component has to do with social renewal and enablement, working with civics groups, sports groups and entrepreneurs, who involve themselves in micro business ideas, PTAs and the like.

Then, of course, the Constituency Councils, which is another component of constituency empowerment, which we have committed to the people of Barbados through our Manifesto that we will give them an opportunity to participate in national discussion on how the Councils will be designed; how they will work and what their expectations will be of the Councils.

Sir, we stand firm on our position that there is no way that you could have a programme that at the heart of which is the empowerment of people and then design and roll out a programme without the participation of the same people that programme is intended to empower.

We have a moral mandate to ensure that the people across this country will be engaged at all levels of discussion so that they would be able to participate, and that the final product will be a product that allows not only people to participate at the discussion level, but people to participate in the designing and rolling out of the Constituency Councils.

It is one of the most leading edge pieces of Government process that this country would have seen in a long time. It is a process that we believe, if we allow our people to become a part of it that it will work best for the country and that all 30 Constituencies, perhaps with the exception of the one the Honourable Member of Parliament says he does not want to be a part of it, for now, we will ensure that every single Member of Parliament is allowed the opportunity to participate in the selection of Council members. They will be allowed to have full access to all the issues that we have identified in there.

H/A5C/17:10

Sequence 38

Monday, March 25, 2008

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Sir, the third component is the Urban Development Commission.

Sir, we know that this institution was so designed to look at the disposal of the urban corridor services, and

endeavours to reach those who hurt the most. Those who, perhaps, would be left outside of the corridor of opportunity, those who, even with the formal governmental systems in place have still struggled to have their needs met.

I know that we do not have the kind of time we would have preferred to deal at a greater level with some of these issues, but truth be told, the Urban Development Commission has now been arrested by a kind of political virus that has sapped the life, the courage, the ingenuity of good men and women, and has left an institution that has now been resuscitated, so that it can continue to achieve its national mandate.

I believe that as this new Government goes forward, it will work with those good men and women to ensure that we bring back some purpose, that we re-invest the kind of vision that caused the Urban Development Commission to emerge in the first place. It is our purpose to ensure that the good work and the good intention of good public servants be given the opportunity to fly and fly high, so that those persons who need it the most, would find it there when they search for it.

I do not mind the chatter on That Side. Besides, I understand the unease that might overtake some Honourable Members on the Other Side, because I know that many of them would agree, that the Urban Development Commission lost its way a while ago, and perhaps its good purpose was subverted to become a political tool, to achieve objectives that did not have the soul of those persons who feel the hurt the most at heart.

Sir, I speak only what I believe, and I share only what I know. I want to say this today...

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: I say this today, that before all is said, and is done, this Minister will come to this Honourable Chamber in a statement, to let Parliament and the country know the true state of the Urban Development Commission.

Sir, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development, is a Ministry that promotes leading edge policies that are progressive, people centred and are principled centered. One of the problems, as you talk to people around this country, even as I have gone into the urban corridors and spoken to persons who have been waiting for years to get help, I have seen houses of persons who applied for help 10 years ago.

Sir, do you want to hear about the Urban Development Commission? Sir, when you walk into those houses, if you have a heart at all, it strips you of your very

sense of balance, psychological and otherwise. Sir, when you could simply understand that in the last 10 years an agency spent over \$108 million, and that is just part of it, yet you can still walk in areas that you should be able to see and recognise that persons are hurting, and yet still nothing.

Sir, I am not ever going to stand here and say that some good things did not happen, because I have a conscience. I would say this. When you are in social engineering, where the purpose of your effort is to reach to the very bottom and pick those people up, who cannot pick themselves up, and after 10 years you could still see the kind of impoverished conditions not fit for human living. I am saying that is a system that lost its way, lost its purpose and has been crabbed in the clutches whose intentions may be otherwise.

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

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Our Social Care Ministry believes in not only principle centred work, but work that is driven by opinions that are researched oriented, that are driven by operations that are guided by transparency, accountability, standards and the ability to replicate service modalities that work for people across the country. We also promote efficiency in service delivery.

I made a point here a few days ago that the Ministry of Social Care is committed to providing high quality service and maximum return for its investment in our human capital. By maximum returns, I am not talking in economic terms. I am talking about maximum returns, as we are able to close the gap between those who have and those who have not, returns that speak to the improvement in the quality of life for people; returns that speak to the increase in life chances for individuals who may be gripped in cyclical poverty. That is what we are talking about when we are talking about returns.

Sir, I have heard people say how could you be so forthright in your social development theory and yet still the programmes have been cut and so on. I will tell you this. We are driven by efficiency, and the things that happened in the National Assistance Board, that we will talk about, and the things that happened in other Departments under this Ministry will not happen again. They will not happen again, not because all of a sudden people in those departments are waking up, but they are not going to happen again because the members who lead those departments will be given the opportunity to lead their departments. That is the difference.

Sir, I have gone around the circuit, and I have met the honourable men and women of these departments who give yeomen service day in, day out, and sometimes at

night, and on the weekends and so on, and I am saying that these are persons who are convicted by their calling. These are people who believe in what they do. These are people who just simply want to be let loose, so that they can realise the maximum potential of their own professionalism, but also the maximum potential of the departments they lead. I am saying that under this Government and under this Minister, these honourable public servants who have done well for so many years, will be given the empowerment to be able to carry out their duties, without political interference.

Sir, I am not going to try to tell the experts how they should do their business. The only thing the experts need to know from this Minister is what the mandate of the Government is. I will lay that out, as we have been doing, and I will field any questions they may have, and we will work together to ensure that our commitment to the public is achieved, but they can talk about that.

A5C 17.20 p.m.

Sequence 39

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 40, 5.20 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, the Welfare Department in 2007-2008 received \$25 601 232. Sir, in this year=s Estimates, the Welfare Department has been allocated \$32 452 755.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: The National Assistance Board (NAB) received \$9 223 434, and in this year=s Estimates it has been allocated \$10 412 658. Sir, I can go down the line. The only area that we have fallen beneath the allocation for the last Estimates is the Urban Development Commission. Sir, for the same reason it went up the last time, it was not given the amount it asked for, but it got \$9 million in December.

Aside.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: The Honourable Member should ask where that money went, since the Honourable Member has so many questions.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying to you that we would put the Urban Development Commission back on track. The only shortfall is \$1 million and a little. Sir, once that Commission is back on track, they have the same opportunity as they had under the last Administration to

come back to this Parliament and we would vote for them what they need.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up.

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

Mr. Chairman, somebody accused me of preaching but this is one case where I am not preaching to the convertible.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that as we go through this Debate for the next few minutes, we will talk about how we will promote efficiency of service delivery. We will talk about the reduction in the duplication of services, making sure that several areas are not doing the same things. We are going to talk about streamlining of services and we are going to talk about creating a seamless social service delivery system, where agencies know what they are supposed to do; where agencies function within the ambit of their mandates but where the new apparatus will be, a referral system, so that when an individual is identified by an agency, the first thing after you have done the assessment, you look to see where that person can and will be served.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

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

One of the things that is happening is that we want to create a more effect way to get the maximum social benefit out of our investment in our people. That is our commitment.

I thank you, Sir.

I beg to move that Head 60 stand part.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to speak in circumstances where we only have less than a half an hour before the guillotine comes down.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, let me say at the outset that I have never seen a Minister present a Head and has waited until the last minute to come into

contact with the figures in his Ministry, which he is supposed to be defending.

Sir, if I were outside of this Parliament and listening to the radio, I would have sworn that he was just giving a second reading speech, as if he does not have any knowledge as to what his programmes and policies are for this year. Sir, he particularly since he professed to have started from the position that the Estimates is a reflection of the programmes of the Government to implement in the current year.

Sir, if that were indeed so, I could only come to the conclusion that the only programme which has been included by the Government in this year that is unique to the Government is the \$4.5 million being provided for the Constituency Empowerment Council, but I want to go further.

Sir, had he been faithful to the figures in here, he would have told this Honourable Chamber that in truth and in fact, he is representing a Government that is purporting to place social development at the centre of its mandate, but is not backing it up by what it has brought to this Chamber.

Sir, a very quick and careful analysis will show, as is outlined in the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue, that the amount of money being spent on social care, social services and the social sectors in this country in this year, as compared to the last financial year, in fact diminishes. Sir, this is not only in relation to the percentage of total Government revenue, but more important, to a percentage of GDP.

Indeed, Sir, if you look at it, we as a Government, without bringing to book the many Supplementaries that have come in here in the last two weeks - and I have not added those to the amounts for social expenditure - we would have been spending the equivalent of 18.9 per cent of GDP, in relation to the social sector Ministries in this country.

Sir, do you know what it is for next year? It has dropped to 17.6 per cent. The simple point is that the rate of growth even that they are expecting in the economy, they are not prepared to have the same rate of growth reflected in social expenditure in this country. I go further, Sir, perhaps in the 10 minutes I need to speak to the need for a higher calling.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I think the Minister made it clear that the Government has cut out a lot of the fat that obtained in programmes in previous years, and when agencies have been put back on

course, the Government will come back to this Chamber for additional funds.

It is not how much money you throw in at this time. It is getting the agencies on track so that the monies will be properly spent.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would refer to the facts that are here, as the Schedule to the Appropriation Bill. Sir, I have not gone into the minute Heads of UDC or Welfare. Indeed, when he quoted the welfare figures, he forgot to tell you that the increase is only \$3 million on this year and not \$9 million because he quoted the wrong figure. He quoted from the Approved Estimates instead of the Revised Estimates.

Sir, I want to make the broader point that I really feel that sometimes there is a need for us to recognise that there is a need for a higher calling. The Honourable Member spoke as if Barbadians are both uneducated and naive, and as if this Government will now deliver things within the social sector that no other Government, far less a Barbados Labour Party Government, has ever done.

House A5C, Sequence 40, 17:30:14

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is unfortunate, because if we are now going to get down to basics about the importance of social development to this country, let us recognise that even before Independence, one of the hallmarks of this country has been the extent to which both political parties have placed social development at the centre of their policies.

Mr. Chairman, for the purpose of those of the Other Side, if I may just even deal with the last 14 years, the reality is that one of the reasons we introduced institutions like the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission and the Poverty Alleviation Bureau was out of a commitment to have institutions dedicated to the fight against poverty.

Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons we introduced early childhood education as a matter of right to be applied to all 3-5 year olds in this country was a recognition that if children were given an opportunity to get that benefit particularly those whose parents could not afford it, that it would reduce any imbalance between themselves and those whose parents could afford it in this country.

Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons we introduced a Youth Affairs Programme was in recognition that unless you had dedicated programming to take young people, particularly those who were not finding themselves in the tertiary system, that you would be in trouble.

Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons we were committed to, and introduced a subsidisation programme for land in the urban corridors was to be able to give persons in the urban corridors a level of security and access to land in a way that those on plantation tenancies previously have been given.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Prime Minister has said that he is firmly of the view that Government did not begin on January 16, 2008, but you cannot now suggest, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has sought to do, that the emphasis on social development is a recent innovation. Mr. Chairman, I know that is part of the strategy that has been outlined for them and mostly articulated by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, but the truth is that in this country we have been fortunate.

Sir, I can outline other new programmes that were introduced within the 14 years that placed people at the centre of development. Sir, that is one of the reasons - the Honourable Member for St. James South would do well to go and read - that we continue to be regarded as leading in the fight against poverty, not just by our own measurement, but by others.

Sir, the simple point is that there can be no philosophical divide in this Chamber in relation to matters which we asserted as a Government, and which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East found and inherited within the context of the social council for which he now has responsibility.

Mr. Chairman, we articulated then, and remain committed today to the fact that our ultimate objective is to carry those Barbadians who continue to be dependent to a point of independence, and then to a point of interdependence, such that they could give back to the communities within which they live.

Sir, we articulated then that the mission of removing poverty from our landscape is not one that is going to be achieved in five years, 10 years, 15 years or 20 years, that it is a process that will require dedicated, sustained efforts by generations of Barbadians who recognise that the underdevelopment which clothed our landscape, rooted in centuries in slavery and more than a century of colonialism, cannot be wiped out simply by 10 years, 15 years or 20 years of activity.

Mr. Chairman, the Democratic Labour Party understood that in 1961 to 1976. We understand that. Mr. Chairman, to excite expectations among the public that you can remove it from the landscape, would cause you equally to be condemned in five years if you do not be careful.

I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that the reality of an expenditure of \$108 million in 10 years to create 1 000 new houses, to be able to do toilets and baths for people who had no access to them and to be able to give people access to subsidised land in relation to giving them a chance to own land for the first time, relate to a mission that cannot even be fully completed in 20 years, if 10 more years of sustained activity took place.

Mr. Chairman, if we are honest with the people of Barbados and if we want it to move to a higher purpose, we would speak with frankness, because the truth is that poverty in this country, more often than not, is not only as a result of a lack of economic opportunities, but also, as a result of a lack of focussed programming in relation to the social difficulties and problems faced by a number of families, whether it be as a result of disabilities, whether it be mental or physical, whether it be as a result of abuse, whether it be as a result of all kinds of other social phenomenon that we have to come to grips with as a society.

Mr. Chairman, if the Minister is serious about wanting to continue the transformation of the social landscape of Barbados, we will meet on equal terms on that. What we would not accept is that all of a sudden there is an emphasis on social development which does not square with the facts left on the ground; with new institutions to treat with poverty; with a new commitment or universal early childhood education; with making urban tenants capable of buying land at subsidised prices that, in effect, is less than 10 per cent of the real market value of land in the urban corridor; or with a welfare-to-work programme that recognises that even though a person may be on welfare deep down most people want to be able to provide for themselves. Therefore, a Government must have programmes that allow them to reach that point where they could provide for themselves. Mr. Chairman, it does not square with any of those things.

Mr. Chairman, when the Honourable Member said that he does not want to treat with political interference, I am glad to hear that, but I do not know that I have the same confidence, especially after yesterday, because yesterday the Minister for Community Development and Culture and myself attended a function in Hothersal Turning, and indeed happily so. Mr. Chairman, when I saw that there was an attempt, after they called my office on Thursday and told me that I would not be required to speak at a function in my Constituency which I helped to organise...

Aside

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I am not blaming other Honourable Members. In fact, I am not even blaming the Minister on this occasion but I am just showing you the

extent to which the notion of political interference becomes involved.

Sir, having been told that I would not be required to speak, when I arrived there I saw a programme with the person who was defeated at the polls in St. Michael North East down to speak. Mr. Chairman, I asked a simple question then, which I would repeat now, in what capacity was she down to speak?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is this matter pertaining to the Head we are talking about?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: It is pertaining to the Head because he said that there would not be political interference and I want to support him as a result of the experience I had yesterday.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I asked in what capacity the person was down to speak, having told me that I am not to speak, because you know you cannot tell me, as the Honourable Member for St. John has asserted all along, not to speak in my Constituency. Sir, they could not answer. Was she there as a candidate? She could not have been because there was no Election. Was she there as a Parliamentary Secretary? She could not have been because she has not been appointed. Was she there as the Minister? No, because the Minister came the morning and spoke. Was she there in what capacity?

Mercifully, Sir, all the persons there yesterday supported it and recognised that the voice they had given to their Representative was the one which would dominate, because you cannot disregard the will of the people in circumstances where they have legitimately done.

House A5C Sequence 41 5.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have not disregarded the fact that they are now the Government. Equally they cannot disregard the fact that tens of thousands of persons voted for Members of the Barbados Labour Party. Therefore, I say to you, I hope that I could hold the Minister to his word that there shall be no political interference on this matter, and that I have tried to do so in a way, and to speak in a way today that, hopefully, locates the debate in its broader context.

Neither the Opposition nor Government would be able to obliterate poverty from the landscape of Barbados within a ten-year period. It is not possible, given the scale of underdevelopment that we inherited as a country. Sir, the fact that we are both committed to continuing to do so

is what should please Barbadians, but it should not necessarily become a political footfall.

Sir, I am sorry and regret that we would not have the chance to come back but the truth is, this Head is too important.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, thank you. The Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I would not be too long. Sir, some years ago, I attended a lecture at the Central Bank, delivered by a South African cleric, Reverend Boesak.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, during that lecture, that African cleric pointed out that during the periods of the attempts of reconciliation and healing, one of the things he had to constantly point out to white South Africans and to the South African society as a whole, was that their greatest fear is that black South Africans would visit on them the same things that white South Africans for centuries had visited on black South Africans. Sir, I hope that tells a story because it is not our intention to visit on the Barbados Labour Party what they had visited on supporters of the Democratic Labour Party for the past 14 years.

Sir, the fact that you come from St. John, I do not want to involve you in this Debate at all because I know you are there in a special role, but I have only one dictum in respect of this new Government, that is, accountability is critical in relation to the expenditure of public funds in this country. Mr. Chairman, the fact that Government is a continuum does not mean that corruption is a continuum. It does not mean that paying non-existent contractors is a continuum. This is not a Government born of the same thing, therefore, if I have to stop to start over, I am quite willing to do that.

Mr. Chairman, I met with persons from Invest Barbados and I made the point to them that institutional reform is not new to Barbados. I was a Minister of Finance when they reformed the Tourist Board to make it the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Authority. We amalgamated the Agricultural Development Corporation and the Barbados Marketing Corporation, to become the Barbados Agricultural Development and Management Corporation (BADMC).

We amalgamated the Export Promotion Corporation (EPC) and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to become the Barbados Investment Development

Corporation, and in every instance, the amalgamation was unsatisfactory, in my view. Sir, I am not starting out on a new Democratic Labour Party term. I am not foisting a new entity, with all kinds of pretty objectives, mission statements and so on, on top of a superstructure that is already crumbling and unable to deliver. Therefore, I say to the Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Urban Development that he has my 100 per cent support.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If Supplementaries are necessary, that would not be anything new. The Honourable Members on the Other Side are "past masters" at Supplementaries. We have had a situation in Barbados where almost every year there was a supplementary for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There were Supplementaries every year for the University of the West Indies. There were Supplementaries every year and, especially, during election years for the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. Sir, I could go into chapter and verse how that occurred.

Mr. Chairman, we have a lot of cleaning up to do as well. Sir, when we have finished this Estimates Debate, and I do not want to anticipate the Honourable House, we have to bring to book expenditure of \$460 million for the Prison, for expenditure on roads in St. Philip that was never brought to book.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You did not know about that?

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not surprised that you did not know because the House did not know either. This Honourable House never knew.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There were contracts with Rayside Contractors and C.O. Williams Contractors.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Not in the Prison. I said in St. Philip. The Prison is not St. Philip. The Prison is only a small part of St. Philip, and fortunately so. The rest of us are law-abiding citizens in Barbados, including the Honourable Member for St. Philip West. We enjoy life, but we are law-abiding.

Mr. Chairman, there was almost \$30 million voted for roads, for both Rayside Contractors and C.O. Williams Contractors. All the roads are currently being done. That expenditure was money that those companies were borrowing and that Government, in two year=s time, was to bring to book. I am saying bring it to book now.

I am not starting with any dirty slate. I am cleaning the slate because in 1992, when we had to clean up the finances in this country, I went through the experience of a Government carrying a load because of the indiscriminate issuing of Letters of Comfort, in some cases, \$60 million here and \$20 millions there.

We had to clean up the Cement Plant, CARICARGO, Heywoods, the ADC. Sir, people have forgotten this, and a lot of those debts had been incurred by a Government, prior to 1986, that were being consistently rolled over and over.

Mr. Chairman, I have said from the outset, and I am not saying this for any public relations extravaganza, this will be a Government of accountability. Sir, I am saying there will be instances where public officers may make errors and the Auditor General may have to note errors in his Report, those things happen. There will be instances of corruption and theft. You have had it at the Psychiatric Hospital.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I see that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew seems to want information. Sir, there were instances where \$2 million was taken from the Psychiatric Hospital and \$4 million from the National Insurance Scheme. Sir, we will try to eliminate those things.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But CARCICOT was not a scenario of corruption.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, something seems to be agitating the Honourable Members on That Side, so let me put it in a positive context.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the word "corruption" seems to be agitating somebody, so let me put it in a more positive context. Sir, I will use the word "accountability". We will try to ensure there are processes in place in the Urban Development Commission, the Rural

Development Commission, the Poverty Alleviation Committee, the Social Investment Fund, the Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board, et cetera.

Sir, there is a plethora of activities stretching across the gamut of Government, with everybody tripping over everybody else. Sir, we are about to add a tier to all that but I am not going to add that tier of expenditure, unless we could rationalise the existing social service provisions in this country.

5.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: We will have Constituency Councils, and the Honourable Members on That Side will not stop us, but those are not going to be an addition on top of inefficient operations.

We are also going to clean up the existing social service provision in Barbados so that people who are genuinely in need will benefit, and to ensure that persons who do not exist will not get money or that, despite all the explanations I heard in here, vagrants, the unemployed, the unemployable, criminal deportees do not get contracts from the Urban Development Corporation under any circumstances. Sir, all of a sudden we have a scenario in Barbados.

I had in my Constituency, Mr. Chairman, fishermen, hawkers, who had never contributed to National Insurance, who could not draw a cent in pension in this country and who came to me. Sir, some of them said they were not going to Welfare because they were hardworking, honest Barbadians, but that Government changed the Law and took all of them off of the right of earning a non-contributory pension in this country. I said it was wrong, that they were putting those people on the welfare roll.

I came to office and found people being paid money in the Prime Minister=s office because their pension was not enough and I have some people in my Constituency who fish every day of their lives, who could not get a cent in pension, and still do not get a cent in pension, and I heard in this House of Assembly from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East that because somebody was homeless or a vagrant that they needed assistance, so they gave them a contract. Sir, Government cannot operate like that. There are other ways to help people.

Mr. Chairman, a contract is a serious matter because when you get that contract, there is somebody who has to benefit either because their housing is inadequate, or because the social welfare provision does not cover them. Sir, that is not the way to undertake social engineering in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, this idea that there are certain people who can dip into the Treasury when the month comes, while others who have contributed to the development of Barbados are being left out, has come to an end in this country on January 16, 2008.

Mr. Chairman, I give my full support to the Ministry to do the ground work. Do not be lax about it. Get it done quickly and let us get in place a structure for the efficiency of social services in this country, and do not follow the example that was left for you. Find new ways of helping people who really need in Barbados, not helping people who already have and who want to dip into the Treasury and impoverish this country.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a brief intervention and I wish at the outset to express my gratitude to those professionals in the various social agencies, who over the years have tied their time and resources to assist those persons in Barbados who are in need. Sir, I want to particularly single out the National Assistance Board, because they have been offering services in the Home Help area. They have been offering grants and so on and, of course, Bereavement Services.

Mr. Chairman, as Barbadians, some of us are not aware of the debt that Bereavement Services can offer to the people of Barbados who are grieving whether for the loss of a limb; loss of a relative; loss of a house or whichever area. Therefore, I want to single them out even though the Welfare Department and others have done exceptionally well over the years. The concept of the National Assistance Board came through a former Barbados Labour Party Government

I am happy that concept came to fruition and we have been able, over the last 20 years or so to offer a service to the people of Barbados to make a difference in their lives. Yes, like any other institution, any other profession, we do have a small percentage, perhaps 0.5 or whatever, of the whole who really are not cut out for offering services, but that should not detract us from expressing our gratitude as Barbadians to those various Departments.

Sir, what I would like the Honourable Minister to do is to prepare further training, or to wean out those who do not show the empathy or the compassion that is necessary when you are dealing with persons who are suffering from numerous challenges, helping them to be able to grapple.

Asides.

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: I am not speaking to the Honourable Member for St. James South right now. I will speak with him otherwise and I am not going to be sidetracked by him, Mr. Chairman.

I want to make a query of the Honourable Minister if I could be allowed through you. The National Assistance Board houses of the past, that was a policy decision by the Barbados Labour Party Government, were left for the Rural Development Commission to upgrade them. I know, Sir, that the Rural Development Commission's budget has been cut by a few millions, and even though I do not have many of them in the parish where I live, I would like to know of all Barbadians if the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development would undertake the repairs or upgrade of the houses.

Sir, many of them are run-down because the Rural Development Commission was so overwhelmed with new requests of housing that were in even worst condition that many of them were not upgraded at the time of request. I would wish to know, through the Honourable Member, whether these houses will come into that system.

Mr. Chairman, I know of senior citizens and families in Barbados who really need assistance. Sir, because people are living longer, we have a lot of relatives and friends, godparents and so on, who are coming down with Alzheimers. They may not look physically ill that they cannot walk but surely, Sir, when their minds are going, they are into senility, dementia and Alzheimers, they do need to get special care.

A lot of families, because they are the only working people in the household still have to go to work. Therefore, a lot of our seniors are left at home to fend for themselves. You leave them with a flask and sometimes they do not have the understanding to open it to eat a meal. Sir, many of them are wetting themselves and they have a lot of challenges.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that the care will continue and that the Government will continue to work in a partnership with private institutions that are looking after the care of senior citizens because they really do need the subventions and the necessary support to be able to carry that particular project forward.

Mr. Chairman, we do not want to leave our seniors at home for them to be able to light fires and to wander away. The worst thing in the world is to know that your father, grandfather or other relative wanders away for a day or two days and you cannot tell where they are.

Sir, sometimes you only understand it when the shoe is on the other foot. Therefore, to eliminate such, I would wish to know through you, from the Minister, whether this

partnership with the private sector will continue because it is a very necessary social service that we must continue to upgrade and to assist.

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

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the final one I would like to touch has to do with the Disabilities Unit and the Council. Again, I want to say that, despite whatever the doom and gloom talk on the Other Side, the Barbados Labour Party, as a Government, instituted measures that have helped to propel the needs of the disabled in this society. Sir, we know of time when persons kept the disabled at home. People in the neighbourhood called them all kinds of names, treated them unkindly and so on.

H/A5C/18:00

Sequence 43

Monday, March 25, 2008

Miss C.Y. FORDE: I am happy that the Government of the Barbados Labour Party started the whole process of helping to empower disabled persons, the mainstreaming of schools, the construction of ramps, indeed, the facility over by the Garrison, the Council, so that persons who are living with disabilities will have an opportunity to train, using the technology, and engaging in a number of other things that, in the past, they were unable to pursue.

Sir, I believe that ramps in households, the available bathrooms, the sidewalks and all the other accessories that come with the package must be continued, and the Barbados Labour Party's vision must be highly commended, but, of course, I would wish for this Government to continue, because at the end of the day, "Disability is not Inability". I really support that slogan very strongly. I believe that as a people we must continue to look after the disabled in our communities, and indeed the entire society.

Sir, today we could be walking down the steps of Parliament, miss a step or two, and become disabled tomorrow. We could be in a bus involving a bad accident, another disability; riding a horse, as some of the other Honourable Members would, going on their boats or swimming pools, we could all meet challenges.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member must wrap up.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Therefore, I support any effort by this Government, to look after the needs of the disabled, because they are people too.

I wish to thank you for your indulgence.

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

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Sir, sometimes you sit and wonder where people's conscience rests, and how in a fully conscious state, that anyone who would have had 14 years to do so much in this country, that in a situation where a Government has only been in office for two months, could want to sit down and lecture a Government on what it should do. Most of the things reflected on would have been things that could have been done, particularly, since the last Government came into the kind of economic sweetness that they paraded about, eight successive years of economic growth and the like.

Sir, the truth is, I wish we had time to get into the issues that we could talk about. Let me just wrap up with a few points. For example, the workers of the Welfare Department, that Administration left those persons, hardworking Barbadians, committed to the upliftment of the vulnerable, left them in work conditions not fit for people to work in. Go down and see.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: They never went down there. That is the problem.

Sir, a department that plays such a vital role, in the ability of the Government to achieve its social mandate, the Welfare Department is only one example.

Sir, the Disabilities Unit, I am happy to hear the Honourable Member for St. Thomas talk about the Disabilities Unit. Can you believe that you have to climb up stairs to access the services of the Disabilities Unit? That is what they left. We are now hunting for space to have that service removed, because it is an insult to disabled people in this country, and we intend to enable the disabled in this country, to the extent where they have free and fluent access, to the services that this Government will provide and continue to provide for them. So, do not come in here telling people about what they should do. How could you in all good faith, take disabled people and send them upstairs. Come on, and tell us that you are serious, and now coming to lecture the Government?

Asides.

(Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. James South were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN).

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Sir, I contend that even the increase in demand on the National Assistance Board is

another matter that requires urgent attention by this Government, because the increase in demand is now being met by a situation where we have to evaluate those persons who have to deliver the service. We have to increase our capacity to provide the service, and most important, we have to clean up the mess left by the previous Chairman of the Board. That is what we have to do, clean up, and the enormous pressure that individual put on the members of staff at the National Assistance Board. Sir, the fact is that the previous Government refused to enable the National Assistance Board to meet its demand and carry out its mandate.

Sir, you have a case where the equipment is obsolete. They are driving vehicles that are shameful to drive around this country, and they are delivering a service to uplift who needs upliftment. That previous Government left those conditions in place. That is why the Honourable Prime Minister made it clear that we are going to do what is necessary to ensure that we do a thorough assessment of every single service delivery system, and when we are satisfied that we have done our best, in conjunction with the support of the staff across the social services, then we will inject further resources, to ensure they are able to do what we have asked them to do.

Sir, therefore, I would rest, only to say that I am honoured to have the opportunity to lead this Ministry along with the wonderful members of staff who are going to assist us in achieving our mandate, and our Minister of State, because we know that our commitment is to ensure that the legacy of the Government is, to those persons who have languished in the corridors of want, will finally get their day in this country to occupy part of the sweets that Government ensured that other people occupied that did not need them. That is what we are going to do, and we will work, because we believe that our commitment is far stronger and far deeper than the hurdles that we will have to overcome. We are committed to the people's business and we will do the people's business, so help us God, we will do it.

Sir, I beg to move that Head 16 now stand part.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The guillotine has just fallen. Therefore, we will go into the Heads, as is customary, in terms of taking them one by one.

HEAD 10

GOVERNOR-GENERAL - \$917 684

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON I beg to move that Head 10 stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 10 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 12

PARLIAMENT - \$9 588 902

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 12 stand part, Sir.

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

The question that Head 12 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

18.10 p.m.

Sequence 44

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 45, 6.10 p.m.

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER OFFICE (AS AMENDED)

- \$81 528 313

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 13 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE (AS AMENDED) - \$10 586 791

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 15 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 17 - OMBUDSMAN - \$450 567

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 17 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 18 - AUDIT (AS AMENDED) - \$2 709 446

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 18 as amended stand part.

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

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

HEAD 19 - TREASURY (AS AMENDED)

OF \$99 807 851

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 19 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (AS AMENDED) - \$44 106 489

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 25 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 28 (AS AMENDED) MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

\$35 077 503

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to move that Head 28 as amended stand part.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 29 - DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

\$479 109

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to move that Head 29 stand part.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL - \$79 383 600

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 38 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LANDS \$69 114 879

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I beg to move that Head 38 as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 50 - POST OFFICE

\$14 481 814

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to move that Head 50 stand part.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 51 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND THE CIVIL SERVICE - \$28 511 645

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 51 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 52 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND ENERGY

\$130 860 265

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 52 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 54 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT - \$287 296 668

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to move that Head 54 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 55 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF TOURISM
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\$114 215 905

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to move that Head 55 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 56 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE - \$22 895 478

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: I beg to move that Head 56 (as amended) stand part.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 58 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF FAMILY, YOUTH, SPORTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT - OF \$113 227 985

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: I beg to move that Head 58 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 59 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE - \$35 428 938

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: I beg to move that Head 59 stand (as amended) stand part.

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

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

HEAD 61 (AS AMENDED) - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FOREIGN TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS - \$68 620 047

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I beg to move that Head 61 (as amended) stand part.

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

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

Clauses 1, 2 as amended were called and passed.

House A5C, Sequence 45, 18:20:14

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Clauses 3 -- 4, inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule, as amended, was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee of Supply, as amended, to His Honour the DEPUTY SPEAKER, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the Bill, as amended, was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2008.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES (Recommitted)

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

A Resolution to grant the sum of \$460 554 449 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. 16, 2007- 2008 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER No. 3

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

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

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

(a) RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$460 554 449 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. 16, 2007-2008 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION.

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER=S OFFICE

\$89 086 539

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, Section 22 of the Financial Management and Audit Act, 2007 requires the Accountant-General to prepare the annual financial statements in accordance with generally accepted financial and accounting practices.

As defined within that Act, generally accepted financial practices means the international public sector accounting standards issued by the International Federation of Accountants, or where no guidance is provided by those standards, the international accounting standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board, or where no guidance is provided by the standards accounting practice that is generally accepted within the accounting profession in Barbados as appropriate for reporting the entire public sector statutory bodies and Government entities.

Mr. Chairman, the IPSA Standards and the IPAS Standards require that all capital assets be reported in financial statements. In addition, it should be noted that the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the International Accounting Standards define a finance lease as a lease that transfers substantially all the risk and rewards incidental to ownership of an asset.

Based on this definition, the Prison facility at Dodds and the Coast Guard Headquarters at the Flour Mill site, Brandon's should be treated and accounted for as finance leases. All the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an asset are transferred substantially. That is their definition of a lease.

Mr. Chairman, on this basis, we are required to bring these to account as well as to record the integrated coastal surveillance system and the purchase of Coast Guard vessels as assets and associated liabilities for the 2007-2008 financial year. Mr. Chairman, we are going to record the Prison facility and the Coast Guard Headquarters as assets, and the respective lease payments as liabilities for 2007-2008.

Although these appropriations will not result in disbursement of cash, they are required to give effect to the necessary accounting transactions in accordance with the Financial Management Act, 2007.

Mr. Chairman, these are separate and distinct though from the loan repayment which had previously been appropriated, will continue to be stated in the Estimates. Sir, in respect of Head 13, we are speaking about the Coastal Surveillance System. We have an amount of US \$65 million...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is what you have here. I am talking about the total amount. For the purposes of what we are doing here, which I believe is exclusive of the loan repayment, we need supplementary funds to appropriate the Coast Guard vessels and the cost during the last financial year for the integrated surveillance system and the warranty Agreement and other operating expenses in the sum of \$87 927 138.

I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

House A5C Sequence 46 6.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, this really is a technical accounting issue but there is one matter which I will share with this Honourable Chamber, which I have already shared with the Honourable Prime Minister. I now share it for the benefit, in particular, of the Attorney-General.

Mr. Chairman, fortuitously I had the Articles Four Consultation, 2006, of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), because there was a fundamental disagreement between the Government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) two years ago, how to treat to the assets of public/private sector partnerships. I think it is one of those classic battles between attorneys and accountants. That is

why I had asked the Prime Minister to repeat the issue in relation to the definition, and if I recorded it correctly, it relates to risk and reward that are incidentals to the ownership.

Mr. Chairman, the reality is that the risk and reward incidentals to the ownership are not with Government, they are with the Special Purpose Vehicle that has been established, and Government would have to confront this as they go along too. Therefore, in the circumstances, I do not accept that the full cost ought to be brought to book at one point.

Mr. Chairman, let me give you another example. The amount that is required to be paid by Government on an annual basis is effectively a lease payment. It is no different as a fixed charge on current expenditure as is wages. It is not a debt. If it were a debt, we would have had to comply with the Guarantee of Government Debt legislation, with which Honourable Members are well familiar.

Mr. Chairman, there is no ability for us to go and leverage that asset, either at Dodds or at the Coast Guard, to raise anything. All of the obligations are, in fact, those of the owner. In this case, it is the Barbados Correctional Services, hence, I do not see why we should be bringing to book more than one year=s commitment.

Sir, I accept that under the accrual system, as opposed to the receipts and payments system, you have to bring to book your commitments but your commitment is in relation to this year, not as a capital expenditure but as a fixed charge on the current expenditure, so that the IMF Report, September, 2006, Article 4, which I believe is already a document of this Honourable House, at paragraph 18, page 10 says:

Going Forward: AInnovative public/private partnerships for the provision of infrastructure and other services could contribute to the containing of capital expenditures, although adding to current outlays in the future.@

Mr. Chairman, I quote that first part to make the point that they too, although disagreeing with us as a Government, recognised that it is a fixed charge on current expenditure.

The second point, as a footnote, they wrote, and this reflects the dispute that we had:

AAAt this stage, the mission followed current accounting practices of treating these projects as regular extra budgetary capital expenditures, until more detailed information on contractual obligations of Government=s promoters and lenders is provided by the authorities.@

Mr. Chairman, the point is, the obligations that exist, not the Integrated Coastal System, because I accept that is legitimate here, and you would find it with the Halls of Justice, are not obligations on the Government. They are obligations on the Special Purpose Vehicle. Therefore, they should not be brought to book in this way.

Mr. Chairman, the Coast Guard is in a slightly different position because, with the Coast Guard, the Government did, in fact, borrow money to execute that and there is no Special Purpose Vehicle, as far as my memory allows, that governs the Coast Guard. Sir, I accept that but in relation to the Prison and to the Halls of Justice, and you would find it with any other genuine PPCs that you do, where the Special Purpose Vehicle accepts the risk.

Mr. Chairman, when the company went to the capital markets to raise the money for the Prison, they did not ask the Government of Barbados for a guarantee because it had nothing to do with us, in terms of ownership. Sir, unlike a mortgage, where an equitable interest accrues, year after year, until the point of the expiry of the mortgage, I do not believe, and I am subject to correction on this, that it exists in this case because it is only at the point of transfer that Government=s obligations become real at the end of 25 years.

Sir, I heard what the Minister of Finance has said, in terms of the advice he has been rendered by the Accountant-General=s Office, although I think my memory would serve me correctly in suggesting there are diverging views between the Accountant-General and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance on these matters. Mr. Chairman, having said that, I make the point that the Attorney-General may want to treat to this as a special issue because it is going to come back to haunt us as a Government.

Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons why PPCs exist in the first place is to be able to give Government elbow room in relation to its capital programmes. Therefore, certain things were transferred off budget and the risk associated thereto.

Sir, do you know what makes it even more ludicrous, the prices they charge carry a premium for carrying the risk, so if they are charging us a premium for carrying risk, then how do we now have it to affect our books as opposed to theirs?

Mr. Chairman, I accept what is being done here this evening but I simply say to the Attorney-General, I believe this is a classic battle between accountants and lawyers but at the end of the day, Parliament knows only Laws and it is that we must follow.

Sir, I trust and hope that some kind of resolution could be brought to this issue. I know it is a new matter for Government and that it is combined with the newness of the accrual system as well, so that there is a double set of pressure.

Mr. Chairman, may I also say, and the Minister of Finance might want to answer this, where does this leave us with the debt undertaken by BACT some years ago in the early 1990s? I know some of that debt has been discharged by reason of the plantations being able to sell off some of the land and to minimise or to reduce their debts that they owe to the BACT, but if you go back to the Reports of the Auditor General for previous years, you would see that every year he referred to the fact that it had not been brought to book either.

Sir, now that we have shifted to the accrual system, where do we stand with this? Sir, there are a lot of unanswered issues, and I know that the Minister of Finance cannot do it today but I would hope that the Minister of Finance could let us know, at some future point, what happens to that. Mr. Chairman, there are other statutory corporations which have also taken up debts guaranteed by Government. Therefore, how do we stand with that.

Mr. Chairman, the final question I would have is what is the impact on the fiscal deficit? I would only say, as a matter of curiosity, that it is clear to me that this Government is trying to ensure that they wipe the slate clean on April 1, 2008, such that they have a free hand to move forward, if there is, in fact, an impact on the deficit.

Mr. Chairman, some of the sums here, because of the nature of the asset being balanced back out by the liability, will not have an impact. Therefore, I do not know whether the Minister of Finance is in a position to indicate to this Honourable House which ones, however, will not be balanced by the liability and, therefore, will not impact on the deficit. Furthermore, if it is so, is he in a position to say what that impact of the deficit would be at this stage?

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I recognise that all will not. Sir, I end by going back to the first point made, that they have to bring some clarity because I do not accept that if the definition used by accountants is used that there is any justification for bringing the Prison to book. Sir, at some point in the next year, I imagine that the Attorney-General would be asked to do the same thing, if this holds firm with the Halls of Justice.

6.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

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

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, this is a simple issue, the company that was set up to deal with an asset in progress. The asset has now been completed and Government has now taken full control of the asset.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Implementation Agreement clearly states that the ownership and control of the asset remains with the Special Purpose Vehicle and that is the real fundamental point I am making. It has not been transferred to Government and, in the circumstances, if it has not been transferred to Government, it means that the risk and the reward are not with Government. It is with the Special Purpose Vehicle. It will only come to us in 25 years' time.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Clearly, from the scenario I am seeing, this matter has to be treated as if it were a matter of work in progress and Government is now saying that they have taken full responsibility of the asset. If not, it would have to be a case where it has to be shown as a contingent liability.

Mr. Chairman, we could split hairs on this matter but the truth is, the special company cannot finance the asset. Government must be the one that would have to take full responsibility because the special company would not have revenue to service the asset.

Sir, all of us in here know that, at the end of the day, it would have to be the Government that would have to finance and service the debt. If the Government has to finance and service the debt, the Government would have to take full responsibility. Sir, technically with the contingent liability and there is no revenue coming to the company, it is obvious that the debt would belong to the Government at the end of the day.

Mr. Chairman, a matter as serious as this, I am saying that I have not seen the Agreement but I find it rather strange that you could have a situation where you could have \$348 million, you have a company that does not have revenue and that company has responsibility even though it has nothing to service the debt with.

Sir, one thing must happen. The Government must recognise that it has some liability here because Government is the person responsible for the services because the Government has guaranteed it. There is no way that anybody would outlay this type of money to a company hoping to get payment from the Government.

It reminds me a lot of the sugar industry bonds where these bonds are issued, everybody knows up front

that the sugar industry cannot redeem the bonds and that Government, at the end of the day, still has to finance the repayment of the bonds. I have argued that it is time Government stops delaying its debt, recognises that the debt has to be paid and that it accepts the responsibility of the debt. This can only delay the true deficit position of the Government and the true debt of the Government.

Mr. Chairman, at the end of the day the Prison belongs to the Government. The arrangements might be strange. It might be different, but if you go into the streets tomorrow and ask anybody who owes the money for the Prison, they will tell you the Government of Barbados. Mr. Chairman, I have not seen the agreement but I can only put a commonsense approach to the matter.

Mr. Chairman, one of the things I would say is that if what the Honourable Member is saying is true, the previous Government was very clever in delaying its commitments. Sir, when I was in Opposition, I said they should bring the books because they have to come to the books. Sir, for the simple reason that I do not care how they do it. I do not care how many BOLT arrangements they have. At the end of the day, the debt really belongs to the Government of Barbados. It does not make sense delaying it because if you delay it, there is a possibility when you are making provisions for services, you might make the wrong provision.

Mr. Chairman, as I have said, I have not seen anything, but it gives the Government the opportunity to be able to better budget to service its debts.

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

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Chairman, I would like to support the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy because of the fact that we expect within our own institutions a certain level of accountability. Certainly, Sir, one of the things we would probably need to look at in future in terms of this particular aspect is the extent of the way in which some of these arrangements are done. It does not tell the public exactly what are the true implications of some of these arrangements. It appears to me, as an ordinary layman that we are failing to reflect the actual debt of Government in respect of a particular undertaking.

Mr. Chairman, I note the point made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and I think it might be a good thing for Government to review these practices in future, to the extent that it gives a deceptive view of the extent of Government's liability at the same time.

Sir, in some quarters, in terms of accounting, it might be referred to as window dressing. Mr. Chairman, I think we have to be very careful when we go into these

new arrangements because, to the ordinary person, that is what matters.

Mr. Chairman, I want to support the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy when he says that if you ask an ordinary person in the public who owns these assets, essentially they understand that it is the Government of Barbados and not some other entity out there. Sir, if we go with other normal corporate practices where you have to consolidate accounts, at the end of the day, the asset is reflected as one.

Mr. Chairman, I want to support the move by the Honourable Member for St. John to rectify the situation and to say that we need to look carefully at any future arrangements.

Mr. Chairman, the other point I want to make is that we have to be careful about the level of scrutiny that should be exercised when we go into these projects. Sir, that is my brief contribution to this particular Head.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is perhaps unfortunate that I am really being required to speak again. The truth is, when a person is appointed to the Public Service at age 30, for example, they are entitled to remain appointed unless they breach something until age 65. It is a fixed charge on the Government's current expenditure for the next 35 years, but you do not reflect it in one financial year. The difference....

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Sir, it is not the same thing to say that because it is true that it is a recurring expenditure, but there is an option. The Honourable Member is making the assumption that the person will remain in the Civil Service throughout. With due respect, there are two different things.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am trying to be helpful and charitable to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, but I have learnt in this Chamber not to engage in things which I really do not know. I say this point in all honesty. It is a fixed charge on Government's current expenditure just like wages are; just like the rental payment you pay for offices, but you do not and have not brought to book the value of the offices that you are renting in circumstances where you may get the benefit of it.

H/A5C/18:50

Sequence 48

Monday, March 25, 2008

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: What I am saying is, in the instance of the Prison and the Halls of Justice, there is nothing that falls to the Government that allows the Government to determine ownership during the period of time that it is owned by the Special Purpose Vehicle. Therefore, it is not a question of hiding something.

It is simply a mechanism used in order to facilitate transactions being carried out, without necessarily affecting the overall debt position, and it is used by Governments across the world. Sir, my simple point is this. What it does, is, to constrain you in terms of your recurring expenditure.

Sir, these Estimates, and if I may, are broken down into not only Current Expenditure, but Capital Expenditure. The reality also is, in fact, just now when we voted, we did not vote the amounts that are provided for by Statute. We do not vote for the wages of public servants, because you do not have to, because the Statute provides for that. Just as we do not vote for debts owed under the Crown Proceedings Act, because the statute provides for that as a fixed charge on the Consolidated Fund.

All I am saying is, the annual amount which the Government has to pay for leasing the Prison, ought to be reflected as that, a recurring amount, but not as the capital value of the asset, because the asset does not belong to us.

I accept that this is not an issue that the Minister of Finance or myself, or any Honourable Member of this Chamber can resolve in here, because I have prefaced the discussion by indicating that this is the subject of an argument between accountants and lawyers, as to what is the definition. If in truth and in fact, and I say this for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, if we had to guarantee it then we would have to bring a Resolution in here, complying with the legislation that governs the guaranteeing of Government=s debt.

We never had to do that. If we had a responsibility, we would have gone to the market and helped guarantee the debt that they raised. We never had to do that. Sir, the reason why we did not do that, is because all of it stands at the instance of the Special Purpose Vehicle that owns the Prison.

Sir, I will not detain the Chamber much longer with it, but suffice to say that I believe that it is a problem that will continue to confront modern Government in this country from now on, simply because of the mechanisms that have been used. I say simply, because I accept that the accrual system has meant changes in relation to things being brought to book, and simply ask that not everything has been brought to book, and if so, what else remains to be brought to book. For instance the BACT=s debt still

remains outstanding. So, there are other issues, but that is a separate and distinct point.

Sir, one might even argue that it is a fine technical point. That is why I addressed my concerns not to the Minister of Finance, but to the Honourable Attorney-General, because I believe it is the Honourable Attorney-General who is going to have to look at it from the point of view of definitions, to determine where best and how best we should go forward.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, it is quite clear that a year ago, this Honourable House went to the Accrual System without fully understanding the Accrual System. It is clear that some contracts have been signed in this country affecting Government, which should really have been guaranteed by this House, and have not been guaranteed by this House.

Sir, for example, the scenario with the Prison. Am I to believe that there is no document anywhere committing Government to the Prison?

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Government could only guarantee debt if it was undertaking debt. The Government did not go to the International Capital Market and raised anything. The Government=s obligation is for a lease payment. The Honourable Member is confusing what is a commitment to pay a lease, with the undertaking of debt.

What governs the lease payment, is something called “An Implementation Agreement”. So you would not have had to go. We did not go to borrow money from anybody. The Special Purpose Vehicle did it, so it was not any breach of any Law in this country. In fact, that is the very reason why I am saying that it should not have been brought to book, because it does not stand as Government=s property. It really does not.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am very happy with that. Sir, the Honourable Member is telling me that after this Prison was built, Government could have remained at Harrison’s Point and there would be no need for this Prison, and the person who built the Prison, would have been holding a prison with no prisoners. This is a very serious matter, because there have to be some type of commitment given by the Government of Barbados to somebody to undertake to build a prison, and to be able to use it.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Perhaps, you now have to be reflective because I do not know what else to say. The Honourable Member is deliberately not hearing or incapable of hearing. I made the point that the relationship is governed by an Implementation Agreement. To suggest that there is no

document governing the relationship between the Government and the persons owning the Prison is untrue, but it is not a debt. It is like a lease.

Sir, if the Honourable Member were to lease out St. Elmo's Bar, in Moon Town, he would still be the owner of St. Elmo's Bar, and the person who is leasing it from him would not stand responsibility for any improvements that he raised money to do. I cannot put it simpler than that.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, it is quite clear that this House would have to know whether the money paid by the Government as part of a lease payment goes to the final cost of the purchase or not. It is not just a simple matter. If it is a normal lease, it means that the Government will pay out the money on a yearly basis. It will be an expense, and at the end of the day...

Asides.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Do not get too hot under your collar.

Sir, at the end of the day it means that Government will still have to turn around, and buy the Prison at its current value at the point in time. I am told that there is no agreement, there are no leases or anything like that. So this matter needs to be addressed, because it is a very serious matter.

Sir, if we are paying for 25 years before it is transferred to Government, it means, based on what I am hearing in here today, that all the money paid for 25 years, will service the use of the Prison, and will not go to the cost of the Prison, and at the end of the arrangement, the Prison will still...

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I am not hot at all. I am just confounded. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The reality is, at the end of the 25 years, the Prison is transferred to the Government. I cannot remember if it is for \$1. In those circumstances it is understood that the value is represented over a set of 25 annual leased payments.

Sir, in the circumstances, I can only assume that the Honourable Member is determined to either mislead himself or indeed is, as I said, not understanding the very simple point.

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

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Honourable Member must remember that we are not dealing with a car, and we can appreciate this argument if we were dealing with a car, because you know the useful life of a car, and

you can assign that 25 years to be the useful life of a car, and you can understand a \$1 being the book value. Sir, the Honourable Member is telling this Honourable House that the lease arrangement is part capital revenue and part current revenue. That is exactly what is happening. It has to be a combination of both.

Sir, if you are telling me that at the end of 25 years, the transfer cost would be only \$1, every time you are make that payment, you are actually acquiring an asset, while servicing a debt. So it is a combination of things. This is where you have a combination of capital expenditure and revenue expenditure. I know that this is a complex issue and many will not follow the argument.

19.00 p.m.

Sequence 49

Estimates - Tuesday, March 25, 2008

House A5C, Sequence 50, 7.00 p.m.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that sometimes you attempt things for a particular reason but when it comes to servicing it, this is where you get the problems. I believe that the Government tried to delay but this will have to be a combination of Capital Expenditure and current expenditure which the Government has cleverly been able to use over the years under EduTech.

Sir, if you go back to the debates in this House, you will see where I said that Government had been able to use EduTech, and use Capital Expenditure and Revenue Expenditure and treat all as revenue, or the reverse.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, one has to be very serious on this matter because to the best of my knowledge the Government capitalised what we would normally have called expenditure, normal repairs to schools and was able to project it as a capital project.

Sir, this is not the first time the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East heard this particular argument. I have always warned the previous Government that they capitalised Revenue Expenditure to get a project called, EduTech. Now, we are seeing another case where they have been able to play to the two again.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this has been a more lengthy Debate than I had anticipated. I think that in relation to it, there are many matters that came across the trail, which do not fit within the four corners of what we are doing here.

Sir, for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, this is not akin to the BACT debt. The BACT debt was already a Government guarantee debt by a Statute. The Barbados National Bank Act required the taxpayers of this country to guarantee that debt. Automatically, all debts of the BNB are liabilities, so that you were transferring a debt which already had attracted to it, the security of Government's guarantee. Sir, that is one category of debt.

Sir, let us not misunderstand that you can create different kinds of BOLT arrangements. There is no one size that fits all. There may be BOLT arrangements that require the asset to be transferred as a legal asset to the Government, or remain in the Special Purpose Vehicle. There may be no Special Purpose Vehicle, and there can be a variety of arrangements. However, there has to be some accounting standard at the end of the day that treats the BOLT arrangement or the asset.

Sir, if the private unit treats the asset as an asset on their Balance Sheet, then the public sector or Government Unit cannot also treat it that way. Therefore, what you are looking at is not the legal ownership of the asset but what you would call, the economic ownership of the asset.

Sir, very often in BOLT arrangements, the entity that owns the asset is a shell. Sir, because it is a special purpose vehicle, it only survives for the life of the financing arrangement or the lease. Therefore, since it expires, you do not capitalise it by making the asset, an asset of the Special Purpose Vehicle.

Sir, I cannot say what the position is in relation to the Prison. I realise the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East cannot, and I am sure if the Attorney-General can at this stage, because, obviously, these things come with very complicated arrangements.

The Coast Guard has a special service vehicle for the building, the Coast Guard Relocation, Inc. The Halls of Justice has a special purpose vehicle and the White Park Development Inc. The Prison has one, but I suspect the arrangement is different for a variety of reasons, not the least among which is that I think the methodology used for financing it was different.

Whereas, the Coast Guard Relocation was a Barbadian bank which financed it, the White Park is also a Barbadian bank, and I believe that the arrangements for the Prison were slightly different.

Therefore, BOLT arrangements need rules. This is part of the problem. Sir, what is being done here is to seek to conform with the Financial Management and Audit Act of Barbados, passed in 2007 which, to my mind, may not have fully appreciated new forms of financing. Therefore, even though we are using the Accrual System, the Accrual System is coming into contention with a new form of financing in which the difference between legal ownership of an asset, and economic ownership of an asset, are conflicting.

Sir, it is clear therefore that we need to have new Regulations or Laws to deal with BOLT arrangements. I believe it was one of the things that we had pledged, apart from the fact that we believe BOLT arrangements should be self financing. Provision should not have to be made out of the Consolidated Fund for lease payments or for contributions from the Consolidated Fund to finance the BOLT arrangement.

Sir, in some countries, they use user fees, so you might build a road on a BOLT arrangement and you set up a toll system and the toll system pays the lease arrangement. We are not going that way in Barbados, but there are projects that Government undertakes, which can finance BOLT arrangements, and we will go that route with BOLT arrangements.

Sir, a prison is slightly different. Obviously, Government needs to own the Prison, and I make that statement in the loosest sense of the word. Therefore, bringing it to book is a statement of the Government's treatment of the asset, as the asset of the people of Barbados. Sir, financing it may be different; likewise, the Coast Guard Station. Sir, you cannot have a Coast Guard Station and treat it as an asset, owned by somebody else, even if there is a lease arrangement in place, or your Halls of Justice.

Therefore, these matters, even just for the sake of your concepts of nationalism, you cannot have a Hall of Justice owned by a private company, or by private financiers. Sir, these things I think we need to be clear about, and we need to have a standard set for how we are going to deal with BOLT arrangements.

Sir, when we came to the flyover issue, one of the concerns we expressed was, who will own the flyover over which people are going to be driving? How can you apply a Road Traffic Act that relates to public highways, to a privately owned flyover? Sir, these are things that we need to resolve.

I will say this, credit to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I do not think the international institutions have resolved these issues. They are holding seminars every week, all over the world, trying to work out

how BOLT arrangements fit into both the old system of financing, as well as the new accrual system of accounting. They have not resolved it. Despite the good accounting brains that we have in here...

Asides:

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I think the contribution that has been made makes sense because the point is that, in the absence of the Rules, the issue that had been raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East will not be solved because it cannot be done arbitrarily. We cannot say we are going to treat the prison this way; the Coast Guard Station that way; and the Halls of Justice another way.

There have to be some basic standards for how we account for these, whether we treat them as assets on the Balance Sheet of Government; whether we allow the financing entity to carry them as assets, until such time as the lease payments have matured, reached a certain stage or whatever. I believe that would be one of the tasks in relation to financial reform that we are going to have to deal with. Sir, the point is, we are bringing it to account now.

Sir, it could be brought to account 20 years from now but purists would say that under our Financial Management and Audit Act, this would not be a true reflection of the Government's liabilities and assets.

House A5C, Sequence 50, 19:10:14

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that having introduced the Accrual System, we have not necessarily fully understood the impact of the introduction of the Accrual System on our system of governmental operations, and we need therefore to resolve that.

Mr. Chairman, we are bringing these expenditures to account now. We think that this is the better way to do it. There may have been other ways to do it, but we are doing it this way. We think this is the best way to wipe the slate clean and to move on from that point.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, based on what I am hearing from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, it means then that the 25 years' payments would have to be much greater than this actual figure of \$348 102 650 that we are bringing to book.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of elucidation. That again might be an accounting sleight-of-

hand I do not know, but that would include the market value of the assets as opposed to the real value, or the cost of the assets, in other words, the full maturity of the asset including the payments that are made in relation to the asset.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, if this \$348 102 650 is the total amount of payments, plus the \$1 then it brings a different argument, but if the total payments are greater than this, then it also gives a different argument.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of elucidation. The fair market value of the asset is \$288 602 650, which is US\$144 301 325. That is as distinct from what we are seeking here as supplementary expenditure of \$348 102 650. This also includes the Coast Guard Headquarters and the Prison expenditure. What I move as Head 13 related to the Coast Guard vehicles and the Integrated Coastal Surveillance Project.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands now, which is going to treat these as assets, is dealing with Dodds and the Coast Guard Headquarters. That is what brings that up to that expenditure. The other amounts would be debt service, interest expense and expenses of loans in respect of these transactions, all of which have to come under different heads.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, that is exactly the point I have been making. That means that we would be picking up the Capital Expenditure and what you would not see is the Revenue Expenditure which would be expense to the various Heads.

I thank you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

The question that Head 13 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 14 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE

\$2 501 600

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Supplementary required under Head 14 relates to the cost of financing the expenditure in respect of the road network services, not the other amounts that we are bringing to book. This is the amount that would cover the road network services under Head 37, Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport.

I beg to move that Head 14 stand part.

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

The question that Head 14 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 37

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT

\$20 863 660

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, this Supplementary in the amount of \$20 863 660 is for the Highway Construction Maintenance Project, which we have been discussing in this House. This is to bring the payment to C. O. Williams and Rayside Construction up-to-date for the work so far.

I beg to move that Head 37 stand part.

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

The question that Head 37 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 38

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LANDS

\$348 102 650

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: These funds, Sir, are required to appropriate the amount representing the fair value of the Prison facility at Dodds in St. Philip and the Coast Guard Headquarters.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 38 stand part.

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

The question that Head 38 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at 10.00 a.m. in the morning.

In moving the adjournment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I first want to thank the Speaker as well as yourself for the conduct of the affairs of this Honourable House. I remember you referring to yourself as young to the Chair. I know that you would have attained two score years and ten and persons might consider that not to be too young but in knowing yourself. I know that we in this House could consider you as actually young because you run up the hill while those who might be 55, 60 or 65 might walk up the hill. It might be best for some people to walk rather than to run.

House A5C Sequence 51

7.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also want to compliment all Honourable Members on This Side, the majority who are in the House for the first time. I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John and those Honourable Members who would have already spent one term before, have equipped themselves extremely well and should give themselves a round of applause for that. I think it speaks volumes to the education system of this country that these young men and women have so equipped themselves, so that this country can be justly proud.

I would want as well to turn to the Chairman of Committees, a young man who comes from the parish of St. John, from that well-known district of Gall Hill, an area that he represents. He has also done an excellent job as Chairman of Committees. Indeed, as the Leader of that great parish, I feel proud that the Honourable Member, on his first outing, has done so well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want to thank the staff for working with us. I think this Parliament has an excellent staff, one which is led by the Acting Clerk of Parliament. Sir, I would not want to speak out of turn but as a true trade unionist who hates to see persons acting for such a long period of time, I would hope that this House would act judiciously in remedying that particular situation.

I know that with the full compliance of all Honourable Members of the Management Commission of Parliament, that matter would be soon rectified. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Back Bench, of course, supports this very well and since this is a totally unified Party and Government, the support which is lent by the Front Bench

is fully supported and we would expect that the prominence of their voice and experience would continue the support.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would want to thank the Police Force for their service. I do not know if any of them would be going on recess, or on vacation, because we know their service is always called upon in all corners of Barbados, but one would want to urge them to continue to do a good job in the protection of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to everyone involved, I want to extend our fullest appreciation.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Opposition would simply want to associate itself with the remarks of the Leader of this Honourable House. It is not possible for us to wish person happy Easter again, but simply to say that I trust that the Easter break would be well deserved, particularly for the workers of Parliament, for whom the Estimates are always the most difficult time of the year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we leave here, we leave knowing that our work is done but in the case of most of the workers of Parliament, theirs extend because of the nature of having to process so much, within such a short space of time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would be remiss of me, I think that while we did not see you bat your hand fully to the end of the week, there was a clear improvement in runs day by day.

I would want to commend the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central who, I think on This Side we can say, we felt acquitted himself well, in terms as Chairman of Committee.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to thank all Honourable Members on Both Sides for giving me their support, as I continue looking forward to serve this country, Barbados.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now adjourned until Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House be now adjourned until Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

7.24 p.m.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Dates in the text. The source gives ‘Monday, March 25, 2008’ (25 March 2008 was a Tuesday). The weekday and date do not agree; printed as in the source.

Q3. Opening. The source opens with the heading ‘RESUMPTION’ and Mr. Speaker’s statement that the House was in Committee of Supply when the suspension was taken; the debate on Head 57 is already in progress and its heading is not given. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Head 60, Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe. At the end of his speech on Head 60, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development, the Minister moves ‘that Head 16 now stand part’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Heads taken after the guillotine, Head 10. The motion on Head 10 is run into a paragraph (‘Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON I beg to move that Head 10 stand part, Sir.’) rather than given its own speech heading. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Throughout. Some apostrophes and quotation marks are damaged in the source, for example ‘Joe=s River’, ‘PRIME MINISTER=S OFFICE’, ‘one year=s commitment’ and ‘from point AA@ to point AB@’. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Resumption after 12.30 p.m.. The Sitting was suspended by Mr. Deputy Speaker but resumed by ‘Mr. SPEAKER’, and the procedural line reads ‘Mr. SPEALER left the Chair’. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The record of Tuesday, 25th March, 2008 opens with the resumption of the House in Committee of Supply on the Estimates, Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair, the debate on Head 57, the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport, being in progress. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Member for Christ Church South, reported that the Licensing Authority’s records for basic licences were now largely up to date and spoke of the Bitumen Programme.

Mr. D. D. Marshall raised roads and a bridge at Mellows and Joe’s River, Mr. R. St.C. Toppin defended the widening of the Highway, and Hon. R. D. Jones and Hon. C. P. Sinckler defended public servants. Dr. W. F. Duguid, Mr. G. A. Clarke, Hon. M. A. Lashley and Hon. P. M. T. Todd spoke on traffic, the Road Traffic Act and discipline in the minibus and ZR sector, and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley raised constituency roads such as Skeete’s Road, Jackman’s. Progress was reported and the Sitting was suspended until 1.35 p.m.

In the afternoon Miss C. Y. Forde, Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, Hon. Dr. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, Mr. H. F. Lashley and Mr. J. D. Paul spoke on constituency works, rural roads, the effect of traffic on health and a new policy for public service vehicles. Mr. Toppin turned to high regional air fares and LIAT’s use of foreign executives, which drew a reply from the Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson; Hon. S. D. Blackett withdrew a remark and spoke on drinking and driving. Mr. Boyce, winding up, said \$336 009 was provided for the Transport Authority under Amendment 4, and Head 57, as amended, was agreed. After a five-minute suspension the House resumed at about 4.40 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe presented Head 60, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development, \$73 498 105, describing its three components of social care, constituency empowerment and the Urban Development Commission and the rising demand on the National Assistance Board. Miss Mottley criticised the Minister’s presentation and spoke of the place both parties had given social development since before Independence; the Prime Minister replied, recalling a lecture by an African cleric on reconciliation in South Africa and promising Constituency Councils. When the guillotine fell, the Chairman put the remaining Heads one by one, from Head 10, Governor-General, \$917 684, to Head 61, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business, \$68 620 047, all agreed without division. The clauses and Schedule were passed, and the Bill was read a third time as the Appropriation Act, 2008.

Hon. R. D. Jones then gave notice of a Resolution for \$460 554 449 under Supplementary Estimates No. 16, 2007-2008. The Prime Minister explained that under the Financial Management and Audit Act, 2007 and international accounting standards the Prison at Dodds and the Coast Guard Headquarters at Brandon’s were to be treated as finance leases and recorded as assets and liabilities, with no cash disbursement. Miss Mottley, citing the IMF Article IV Consultation of 2006, argued that the risks and rewards of ownership lay with the Special Purpose Vehicle and that only one year’s commitment

should be brought to book; Mr. Kellman and Mr. Paul also spoke. The Prime Minister replied that the test was economic rather than legal ownership and that the case differed from the BACT debt.

Head 13 (\$89 086 539), Head 14 (\$2 501 600 for road network services), Head 37 (\$20 863 660 to bring payments to C. O. Williams and Rayside Construction up to date) and Head 38 (\$348 102 650 for the fair value of the

Prison and the Coast Guard Headquarters) were agreed, and the Resolution was passed.

On the adjournment, Mr. Jones thanked the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, the staff, led by the Acting Clerk, and the Police, and Miss Mottley associated the Opposition with his remarks. The House adjourned at about 7.20 p.m. until Tuesday, 22nd April, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.