
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, November 4, 2008

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

PRESENT

His Honour MICHAEL A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B. (Speaker)
His Honour KENNETH ST.C. BEST, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. OWEN S. ARTHUR M.Sc. (Econ.)
Hon. DAVID J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)
Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Development, Labour, Civil Service and Energy)
Mr. GEORGE W. PAYNE, Q. C.
Mr. RAWLE C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip.Ed., LL.B
(Hons.) (Lond.,) LL.M. (Leic.), J.P.
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P.
Mr. HAMILTON F. LASHLEY
Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)
His Excellency Mr. DENIS ST.E. KELLMAN:
Hon. Miss MIA A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Leader of the Opposition)
Miss CYNTHIA Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.
Hon. RONALD D. JONES, J.P., B. A. (Hons.) M. A. (Ed.) (Minister of Education and Human Resource Development) (Leader of the House)
Dr. the Hon. DAVID C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B.,B.S.(Minister of Health, National Insurance and Social Security)
Mr. DALE D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C.
Hon. MICHAEL A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Housing and Lands)
Dr. WILLIAM F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS. J.P.

Hon. RICHARD L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism)
Hon. FREUNDEL J. STUART, B.A., LL.M. (Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Hon. JOHN D. E. BOYCE, B.C.H., MRAC, (Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport)
Hon. E. GEORGE HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A. (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)
Hon. STEVEN D. BLACKETT (Minister of Community Development and Culture)
Mr. JAMES D. PAUL, B.Sc.
Dr. the Hon. DENIS S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip. Theology (Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development)
Mr. ADRIEL D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.)
Mr. STEPHEN A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. PATRICK M. T. TODD, B.Sc.(Minister of State, Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development)
Hon. DONVILLE O'N. INNIS, Dip., B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade Union Movement and International Business)
Hon. CHRISTOPHER P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and International Business)
Dr. the Hon. ESTHER R. BYER-SUCKOO, M.B.,B.S. (Minister of Family, Youth Affairs, Sports and the Environment)
Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood.

MR. SPEAKER: This House is now in Session.

MINUTES

MR. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, October 14, 2008.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, then let these Minutes stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements from the Accountant-General for the month of April, 2008.

Secondly, Honourable Members, let me draw to your attention briefly; it appears that we have been taking the grace period for granted. I recognise all Honourable Members are here on time for the 10:00 a.m. start and that we seem to take it for granted and have been starting at 10:15 a.m. or thereafter. I am sure you all would recognise the usefulness if we could start at 10:00 a.m., as is provided in our Standing Orders.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S NOTICES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker:

WHEREAS Victor Sylvester "Gas" Clarke, from humble beginnings, of School Lane, Halls Road, Carrington's Village, St. Michael, rose to prominence to represent Barbados at the highest level in football.

10.20 a.m.

WHEREAS, Gas Clark, as he became popular earned to earned a reputation as arguably this island's midfielder and WHEREAS his dazzling artistry and skill brought glory and honour not only to his neighbour but to Barbados in general.

WHEREAS, Victor Gas Clarke after his playing days ended served at the National Sports Council in his capacity of football coach trying to impart his tremendous skill and love for the game.

BE IT RESOLVED, that his outstanding contribution to football and also to sports in general be acknowledged and also appreciated.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this House notes and place on record its gratitude to VICTOR GAS

CLARKE for his outstanding contribution to the development of football and sports in general in Barbados.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the first reading of the following:

1.

2.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5) 43 and 44 be suspended for the balance of today sitting.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the order of the day.

ORDER NO. 3

Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance of the payment of the principal sum of BDS 8.2 million Dollars and interest thereon to be borrowed by Needham's Point Holdings Ltd. from the National Insurance Board in settlement of a dispute between that Company and Johnston International Ltd. arising out of the construction cost of the Hilton Hotel.

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

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, as I move to speak to this Resolution, where this administration is forced to absorb another residual debt left by the former administration, it forces me, in my initial presentation to seriously appreciate the fact that there has not been one single project undertaken by the former administration that, not only has been bundled, but has left a debt trail scattered across Barbados that this administration now has to deal with. Sir, what is important in this particular debate, with respect to this \$8.2 million that has to be borrowed from the National Insurance, it is important that Barbadians understand the basis by which and on which, the dispute between Johnson International Limited, who was responsible for the construction of the new Hilton Hotel and Needhams Point Holdings and how it evolved.

Mr. Speaker, our grandmothers, great grandmothers and great grandfathers had a saying “A stick in time save nine” and to “Look before you leap and, Sir, way back in since in 1993/1994, and as far back as 1998, when Mobil Refinery left that site, the former administration was back and forth trying to make a determination as to remedial action at the site. Mr. Speaker, they procrastinated to the point where the environmental damage that should have been sorted out by the former administration by seriously looking at the potential threat the area from an environmental perspective, that administration procrastinated on the matter. Sir, I have read the file and read all the information regarding the companies that were hired to do the remedial work, so I am well aware of the period of procrastination. Sir, while they were procrastinating, the oil was spreading and contaminating the environment in that area, putting the entire coastal at risk. Sir, in their swift to blow up the Hilton Hotel, they never moved to do the type of remedial work that should have been done and the result is that the construction company was faced with serious challenges with respect to certain types of contamination when the construction was being prepared at the level of the foundation. Mr. Speaker, there is going to be an environmental debate in this Chamber at some stage and I will deal more fulsomely with the damage to that environment.

Mr. Speaker, suffice to say, that because the company known as Johnson International Limited had to encounter significant delays with respect to preparatory work that would have allowed the foundation to be an effect and solid foundation, there were added cost associated with fundamental delays in the construction of the new Hilton Hotel. Sir, that is why I started with the premise that one needs “To look before you leap.” Sir, old people have a saying “A Stitch in time save nine,” because, Sir, if they had done the preliminary work, we would not be saddled with this \$8.2 million in debt that is hanging our heads because of a former administration, a group of people who bungle projects. Sir, they are project bunglers.

Mr. Speaker, what is important is that we now have to borrow \$8.2 million, which is added to the challenge that this administration has to look for at the time when there is an international financial crisis.

10:30

Sir, \$8.2 millions is added to the challenge that this administration has to look for at a time when there is an international financial crisis. Sir, at a time when there is an international financial crisis, we have to look for \$8.2 million to settle a dispute that was caused because of an administration that did not do the prerequisite work and evaluation, a group of bunglers.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only a reality because bungling also occurred on the 3S project. Do they want evidence of bungling? Bungling also occurred at the Warrens project that left us with about \$100 million, which we have to spend at a time when there is an international financial crisis. That is called bungling squared.

Sir, the point is, this administration, a responsible administration, who understands the importance of fiscal prudence and the importance of debt containment. We must now look to spend money that could have been used to help people who need welfare services. We could have used that \$8.2 million to make sure that little children and old people in this country, get access to medication. We could have been using that money to help with the housing problem in Barbados. We could have been using that money but we must pay debts left by the former administration, a group of bunglers.

Asides.

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

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House and imputing the reputation of Members on this side. Sir, we have to be very clear as to the language that we set in this Honourable House. There have been circumstances where certain language has been used over there and has been acceptable, and when that language is used over here it is not acceptable.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute. Are you speaking with respect to when I have been in the Chair?

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: Sir, in fact, I have found you to be the best Speaker I have ever known.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am blushing.

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: I have to say that, because I cannot deal with the ones in the past. I have to deal with you. It is an imputation on the character and reputation of Honourable Members on this side. Sir, the Honourable Member spoke about building a new hospital and his Prime Minister spoke about repairing the old hospital. We did not call them bunglers.

Aside

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: Sir, the reference to bunglers - I am asking that they be withdrawn.

Asides.

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am not a bungler. The Honourable Member obviously is trying to use up the time. He is trying to speak until lunch time, so it is obvious that he has to find something...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please.

Essentially, Honourable Member, what goes around comes around, as they say. In my view, two things. There is a difference, in my view, between an Honourable Member referring to Honourable Members in their capacity as Honourable Members on the Floor and the administration in general. That is my view of it. Secondly, I want to repeat that although we cannot stop you from making asides, you must still maintain the atmosphere so that the Honourable Member speaking can be heard while speaking in this House. That is the Honourable Member's right. Please, keep down the to and fro and the shouting across the Floor, please.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I would like you to rule and I would abide by your rule. I am asking that the word bunglers be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the Honourable Member for St. Andrew please take his seat. I have already ruled on that matter.

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the ruling is. Sir, do not tell me it is not parliamentary.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thought the ruling was clear. The Honourable Member for St. Phillip West.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: I will continue and say they are "messer-uppers".

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please.

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: If the Honourable Member

has difficulty with the English Language and he does not know what word to use, I think the Honourable Member should take a lesson from the...

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you on a point of order?

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. G.W.A. PAYNE: My point of order is, he is misleading the House and he is using terms applicable to Honourable Members on this side that can be considered to be irreputable and unparliamentary, "messer-uppers". He needs to do a course in English Language.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute. Honourable Member for St. Phillip West, I was about to ask you to whom were you referring, when you said they were "messer-uppers", not that I understand particularly what the word means. Please stand when you are addressing the Chair.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: I was referring to a collective. It is what is called a single collective noun. I can answer the Honourable Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, Sir. Do not answer. Just a minute, please.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: The point is, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Phillip West, you do not have to answer the Honourable Member, at least not through this Chair. There will be opportunities for it. Please continue.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: The point is, and I will reiterate the reason why this is a problem for us at this stage. Sir, I will ask the Clerk to please bring the August Economic and Financial Statement to confirm my recollection, which is a very good one, that we are now running a national debt of close to \$5 billion that has been left by the former administration. I am saying that at a time when there is an international financial crisis, a crisis that is led by a currency set of problems, as well as elements of a debt crisis on the world market, it becomes critical that an administration of ten months old must be prudent with how it spends its money. We should not be spending it on old debts. That is the point and if they need to be educated I will do that.

Sir, let me be a bit more specific because it is important to explain why the \$8.2 million is required. The construction- the dispute with respect to the increase cost - Do you know why it came out? In 1998, the former administration hired a company, and that was after the

closure of the Mobil refinery, they contracted a consultant known as Golder Associates Limited, who was in partnership with Marshall Macklin Monaghan International Inc. to carry out a study on the environment conditions at the site, that was 1998, elections were then 10 years after. Sir, what is important here is, they then hired a company known as Fiton...

10.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, what is important here is that they then hired a company known as PYTHON. The point is that within the period of time between when Mobil Oil Refinery left Barbados, the type of remedial work that should have been put in place under the advice from the company that they hired, called PYTHON, was not put in place and that meant the contamination spread to Needhams Point. When Johnston International Limited was prepared to do its construction, they had to execute a level of remedial work, which meant that the cost had to go up in major ways. In fact, I have evidence that in order to get the work cleaned up, it may now cost about US\$65 million. Mr. Speaker, the point is that for ten years of procrastination, nothing was done.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I have been patient because I believe that Honourable Members, for the most part, should be allowed to make their speeches, but speeches are made according to truth, and in the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, the truth is defined as the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

If the Honourable Member wants to speak and mislead this House about what was done on this side, he cannot do so without indicating that it was the Democratic Labour Party Government, with no less a person than the person who now sits as Prime Minister...

Mr. SPEAKER: Excuse me, Honourable Member, what is your point of order?

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have not finished. Mr. Speaker, I giving you the point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: No. Honourable Member, please state your point of order.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I have said, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member is misleading the House in laying the blame for the environmental difficulties at the site next door to the Hilton Hotel, on the Barbados Labour Party Government.

I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that the responsibility for that environmental madness is at the feet of the Honourable Member for St. John and the then Cabinet who, in negotiating the situation with Mobil,

which was responsible for the environmental damage, Mr. Speaker, never sought to get Mobil to agree to remediate.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, you stand on a point of order. You are saying that it is not what he has said but it is, in fact, what you are saying.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I have not finished, Sir. Mr. SPEAKER: Essentially that is what it amounts to and there is no way that the Chair can be possibly in a position to say that either he is right or you are right. I cannot see how I can rule on the point of order in that way and what you are doing is effectively giving a speech.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not giving a speech. Mr. Speaker, if I was giving a speech, I would talk for a half hour or longer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you will get your turn to debate.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in order for me to justify why he is misleading this Chamber, I have to state the case. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of privilege, you are now curtailing my rights to be able to make a point of order in this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat and let us continue with the proceedings.

Thank you.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, we can go back from the 1940s when the Mobil Oil Refinery first came into Barbados, and then posit our argument from there to show the absurdity of the illogical postulations. Sir, it does not make any sense. I will continue.

The important point, Mr. Speaker, is that this administration should never have had, at this particular stage so early in our governance of this land, to look for \$8.2 million to pay off debts to deal with a dispute. Mr. Speaker, do you understand that we are paying for a dispute? Do you understand that it is a matter of a dispute between Needhams Point Holdings Limited and Johnston International Limited?

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is interesting? It is that very soon I will start to list all of the other disputes from the SAP at the National Insurance for \$34 million, and counting. The list can go on in here, but let me get back to the Resolution, Sir.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, it is important for me to explain these differences to Barbadians. This Resolution is to approve a Government guarantee, as we are forced to utilise the National Insurance to provide funding for the payment of this \$8.2 million.

Sir, I always like to be honest. When I was in Opposition, I was one of the first to say that I believe at the time, that the National Insurance held about 60 per cent of its investments in Government paper. Sir, I questioned the logic and the risk of that back then.

Mr. Speaker, even though I made that argument then, I will make the argument now, that because of the international financial crisis the problems with respect to debt, and the problems with respect to an international currency crisis that is leading the financial crisis, Sir, that if we were to borrow the loan outside of Barbados, we would have to pay an exorbitant interest rate, because of the high-risk international financial environments. Sir, that is one of the reasons I concur with the administration's decision to borrow, internally, from the National Insurance. It is not compromising the National Insurance because the return from the interest rate, which is supposed to be 6.8 per cent. What is important here, Mr. Speaker, is that from the actuarial reports that I am aware of, the returns that are necessary, run between 3 per cent and 3.5 per cent, so to get a return of 6.5 per cent is excellent. Sir, this is very important.

Mr. Speaker, they are some who do not understand that if they go in the ocean and drop 10 pounds of salt, you are not affecting the salinity. This is all I would say to those who would want to posit another counter argument of folly.

Sir, when you have \$600 million to invest, on an annual basis, and you are taking \$8.2 million at \$6.8 per cent, way above the actuarial return requirement, then you are doing very well. Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons we took this position to find the monies to resolve this dispute is because we, as a Government, understand the importance of not only the environment, but we understand the importance of the tourism sector to the development of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we were not going to stand by and allow a dispute to undermine and have any threats to the development of Needham's Point.

10.50 a.m.

We were not going to stand by and allow a dispute, even though not made by us, compromise in any way any potential remedial developments that we may have to

execute because we appreciate that at some stage we would have to further develop the tourism project in Barbados. Sir, like the good forward-thinking Democratic Labour Party people that we are, we had the foresight back in the 1960s to build the Hilton Hotel. Sir, under the astute and esteemed leadership of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, we will have the foresight again to transform the tourism product on the South Coast of this country. Sir, that is the reason we have put our heads together to find this money even though it is difficult for us.

Sir, the world is hurting economically, we are too as well, but we understand the importance. Mr. Speaker, this is very good governance.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore conclude by saying that we were put in a very difficult situation here. Sir, even though we believe fundamentally in fiscal prudence and in debt management, in the interest of Barbados and for further development within the Needham's Point peninsula, we had to decide to come to here and ask this Honourable Chamber to guarantee this loan that we are requesting from the National Insurance Board.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you and beg to move that this Resolution be read a second time.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a very brief intervention. Sir, I am not surprised by the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West because he would wish us to be diverted from the issues that this Resolution really generate. The Honourable Member would wish to impress us, although the Honourable Prime Minister remains unimpressed, that he is ready to speak on economic and financial issues. The Honourable Member is also willing to speak about the issue relating to the Hilton Hotel in a way to obfuscate the fact that the Hilton Hotel now, despite all his utterances, is a remarkable institution and is the envy of the region. Sir, he would wish for us to be diverted from that main issue, he would not want us to get to the substance of the matter.

Sir, although we have the Hilton Hotel, the reality is that they are unable, because of their lack of policy to fill it or to give it any adequate occupancy rating at any time. They talk about bungling, let us talk about that.

Sir, the former Government gave to that Government a tourism industry that was striving at record levels both in terms of arrivals and \$1.2 billion tourist spent; the first time ever for tourist spent. Since then, we had 'Hurricane Sealy' and 'Hurricane Boyce' on the tourism industry.

Sir, we handed to the Democratic Labour Party a tourist industry that was on the increase. Sir, as at the end of March this year, there has been a 10.8 per cent increase in long-stay tourist arrivals to this country. Sir, as at the end of September, this same year, we had a decline of 0.3 per cent. Sir, they have taken a marvellous and developed product and squandered it in the space of about five to six months in a way that only the Democratic Labour Party could do. They now want to brag about cruise tourism, that is the only leg they can now stand on.

Mr. Speaker, I am on record in this Chamber already of saying that I do not overly compliment any Minister for cruise tourism when it is successful, nor do I criticise the Minister when it is not that successful because cruise tourism is perhaps the most fickle industry that there is. Too many things are outside of our control and therefore it is an up and down industry, so I do not knock any Minister when the figures are not good, I never have.

Sir, to the extent that I have been proved wrong it is because of the policies of the former Minister of Tourism and the former administration of the Barbados Labour Party in dealing with the issue of cruise tourism by taking the bull by the horn and going to the cruise lines and ensuring that there were a certain guaranteed minimum number of passengers that they had to bring to Barbados every year.

Mr. Speaker, we also ensured that we develop the facility where Barbados would reach the stage of being a reputable and formidable home-port, that is why we could talk about success today in the area of cruise tourism. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish to hear the Honourable Member for Christ Church South on these matters when he stands not when he is sitting. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South could only talk on tourism matters when he is sitting, he cannot say a word when he is standing. He has been relegated to the realm of irrelevance for the Democratic Labour Party on the issues of tourism and international transport. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South cannot say a word on tourism matters except when he is in his seat.

Sir, I am concerned about the fact that under this Administration tourism is going nowhere fast. Sir, we had a situation yesterday - I call it a scandal of sorts - when a Minister of Tourism could get at the airport on the arrival

of Westjet - some people really got gall - and paint a story as though Westjet is a success or a product in any way at all of him or the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, they know nothing whatsoever about Westjet except perhaps how to spell it. Westjet is a product that was formulated and fully developed by the last Government, the Barbados Labour Party, the Chief Executive Officer of the Barbados Tourism Authority and the former Minister of Tourism.

Sir, Westjet started service yesterday under the Democratic Labour Party, but the tourism story was so successful under the Barbados Labour Party that the former Minister of Tourism was actually planning to go to Westjet to ask them to advance the commencement of services.

Sir, given the fact that the Democratic Labour Party continues to put the industry more and more in a decline, they could not have possibly gone to Westjet to make the point. Sir, it is really a disastrous day for us. Sir, there is not one single policy that has been introduced by the Democratic Labour Party in relation to tourism since it came into Government.

Sir, I could sit and take my seat. The Minister of International Transport could stand and discredit me and disapprove what I am saying. Sir, not one single policy initiative has been taken by the Democratic Labour Party since assuming office.

Sir, what is also alarming is that we have a situation where the main Government arm to deal with the promotion of tourism, the Barbados Tourism Authority, is currently in a state where morale has never been lower. Sir, it stems from the fact that you have a situation where the Minister of Tourism does not even speak to the Chairman of the Barbados Tourism Authority. There is no rapport at all between them. The Minister did not want him in the position in the first place but he was forced upon him and the Minister of Tourism is showing the Prime Minister now who is boss. There is no relationship between the Minister of Tourism and the Chairman of the Barbados Tourism Authority.

11.00 a.m.

This is one of the main reasons morale at the institution is at an all-time low, and it is being made lower by the fact that word is rampant at that institution that the current Chief Executive Officer is now getting ready to live. Sir, his position, when he goes, is to be filled by someone, on the basis of nepotism; someone who is a tried and failed product elsewhere in another Ministry.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am sorry to break you at this point but the inflection of your voice is making it difficult for me to hear you at times, and the interruptions make it even worse. Therefore, if you could

keep your voice up, so that I can hear you clearly, I would be happy.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat, the morale at the Barbados Tourism Authority is low. It is the lowest it has ever been, first, because of the lack of relationship between the Minister and the Chairman, and secondly because of the fact that the current Chief Executive Officer is to leave that position shortly and the intention now is that his post is to be filled by someone, on the basis of nepotism, and that person is someone who is a tried and failed product in another part of the tourism sector in Barbados. Sir, that is upsetting personnel at the Barbados Tourism Authority because it nothing more than the result of nepotism of sorts.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where tourism figures are down, where the Minister has not been able to come up with any initiatives. We also have a situation where a Government institution, which is supposed to come up with initiatives, finds itself under siege by the Minister perhaps. Sir, for whatever reason, that institution finds itself in a state where the morale is completely demoralised and people have become disinterested in functioning.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in these circumstances the only person who could be and who is satisfied is the Honourable Minister of Tourism. He is the only one who continues to thump his chest, in the face of a declining tourism industry and in a loss of flights in the tourism industry. The only one who could feel satisfied with that is someone who would have set low standard and performance for themselves, and that obviously is what the Minister has set for himself - a low standard of performance - and is living up to that reputation.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, what is also distressing is that the performance in tourism ought to have been averted. There are those who would want to say there are certain forces outside of Barbados and certain conditions that would be responsible for this. Sir, that is not so.

Mr. Speaker, I know someone from the media said to me that I have already made this point on three occasions. I said on those occasions that the Democratic Labour Party had the advantage, which we did not have, of being able to see problems coming. Sir, for example, the recession in the United States of America was on from early last year; they had the advantage of seeing that coming. Sir, the oil prices were going down but everybody, except perhaps the Honourable Prime Minister, could have seen that. Mr. Speaker, I said in those circumstances the Democratic Labour Party had the perfect opportunity to prepare itself

for the hit that was going to come. Sir, instead of doing something, either to avert it or to cushion this impact...

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is trying to mislead this Honourable House, by trying to indicate that at the time on assuming office oil prices were trending downwards. Sir, the most casual observer to world oil prices over the last nine months would have observed differently. I think the Honourable Member must stop misleading this Honourable House.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that they ought to have been able to do something about it. Sir, when we were confronted with the impact of 11th September, 2000, nobody could have foreseen it, nobody knew of it, yet immediately upon its occurrence the Government of the day took certain initiatives to immediately cushion that impact. Sir, we certainly did not wait for a number of months or weeks to pass before having a consultation or brainstorming, to deal with the issue, as has recently happened. Sir, we immediately took steps to ensure that the impact was cushioned on the Barbadian populace.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by trying to indicate that the Government's action in relation to oil prices has been subsequent to the consultations last week. Sir, the truth is that there have been three reductions in oil prices since the prices have fallen, and the Honourable Member must note that.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I did not understand the Honourable Member to be saying that.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let me remind you, when you are shouting like that, I cannot hear the Honourable Member who is speaking at the time.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member would want me to say that the Democratic Labour Party continues to rip off Barbadians consumers now that oil has fallen....

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please....

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member wants me to say that Government is charging higher oil prices now, that should not be charged, and that consumers are paying more than they should be paying for gasoline and diesel, then I will say that, they are ripping Barbadians off. I can get to that too but I will not say it.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat. Let me remind all Honourable Members that irrespective of what Honourable Members may feel the Chair is saying, my understanding is that when the Chair calls your attention, you have to stop speaking and take your seat. That is my understanding and I will not tolerate any Honourable Member ignoring this Chair.

Honourable Member, I had stopped you because my initial concern was that you were saying the Honourable Members on that side were ripping off people. That was my original concern. I now understand that is not the case. Please continue.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry that I imputed to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South any motive of ripping off the consumers. In fact, it is the entire Democratic Labour Party who is ripping off Barbadians.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party has not taken any steps at all to deal with the crisis that everyone was seeing coming, and therefore I think they have to stand on that. Sir, what is painful and disheartening is that....

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by trying to indicate that nothing has been done. Sir, we have announced, as recently as two weeks ago, a \$10 million injection into tourism advertising throughout our markets.

Sir, even as we speak, the entire Tourism Team is in London, at the World Travel Market, working hard to ensure that the visitors arrivals, which we still expect to maintain its numbers, remain high. Sir, contrary to what the Honourable Member is saying, the hard work is being put in at the World Travel Market.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, in the same way I would have ruled earlier with regards to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central that it was not fair and that it could not be allowed for an Honourable Member to say that nothing had been done in

those circumstances, I will be consistent. Therefore, I will not allow you to say that nothing has been done.

Honourable Member, I am happy to recall this because I remember I had the support of the Leader of the Opposition, who agreed it was a good ruling then.

11.10 a.m.

Sir, you have used my name in aid of something and I have absolutely no recollection of that because there is nothing wrong with an Honourable Member expressing his opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Would the Honourable Member of the Opposition please sit?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not allow you to say, in the circumstances, that nothing has been done. You must withdraw it and it must be struck from the record.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Sir, what should I continue to say. Could you tell me what to say, Sir. I am scared to say anything now because you cannot express your opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, it is really not a good idea to question the ruling of the Chair in that way. You know the procedures in place and I will invite you to take advantage of them in the proper way.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, were you addressing the Chair? Please continue.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Sir, the disappointing thing too is that while the Democratic Labour Party sits idly by and see a sector in decline, people are losing jobs in the tourism sector. Sir, what is hard to believe is that based on the comments of hoteliers, who met recently to discuss this issue, they are saying that for the first time ever, they have found that in the course of a tourist season, they are going to have to employ less numbers of people than they have done before. It is the first time they are going to be seeing a situation where they are going to be decreasing employment during a tourist season.

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by making the point that this is the first tourist season that we would have seen a reduction in people who are employed. If one looks at the statistics, one would recognise that between the period 1994 to 2008, that the number of people employed in the tourist industry that the number has been declining, so it cannot be the first time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the point is taken but when you look at it in its context, I cannot see

anything wrong with the general statement. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the industry is now facing job losses that need not have been faced in the industry. Sir, the last point that I will make on this matter is that the Democratic Labour Party like to play politics a lot with tourism. We have heard over the years much pronouncements that the industry is going to be on community tourism and Barbadians would be at the core of tourism and would benefit. Sir, I made a few notes of information that came my way. I have looked at two categories of accommodation, guest houses and apartments, which is where you look to see if the average Barbadian is really benefitting from owning accommodation in the tourism sector. Sir, it is startling that the month of April this year saw the highest decline for this year, a 59.9 per cent decline, in the number of persons who came to Barbados and stayed in apartments.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, these are notes that I have made. There was a 59.9 per cent decline in the number of people who stayed in apartments in Barbados. Sir, in guest houses, there was a 29.2 per cent decline in April this year in the number of people who came to Barbados and stayed in guest houses. Sir, that decline in the area of people who stayed in apartments, continued throughout this entire year under the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, it is startling that, on one hand, a Government would give the impression that central to their tourism policy is that Barbadians are to benefit. We see the all-inclusive sector still holding its own and going up under the Democratic Labour Party but somehow apartments and guest houses are the ones feeling a hit under the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, the highest decline in people staying in apartments in Barbados, a decline of 55.9 per cent occurred in April this year, when the Democratic Labour Party has dealt its own hand in the Estimates this year.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to labour on who should get the benefit of the first three months of success this year but in March, if not before, the Democratic Labour Party dealt its own hand in this economy, in tourism and in everything else, yet still, Sir, there is decline upon decline. Where is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party in relation to tourism? We heard talk about a brand-name hotel per year and I want to know what is the brand-name hotel that we can expect to open its doors next year in Barbados or even just turn the soil. What is the name of the brand-name hotel, the new one that is coming to Barbados?

Mr. Speaker, what is the status of the airport in St. Lucy? The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, who has fled

the Chamber is disappointed in the comments of the Honourable Member Christ Church South - I cannot blame him for leaving - would want to know the status of the airport in St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, the new cruise pier in the north, what is the status of these projects. Sir, at Harrisons Point, I want to hear someone on that side, perhaps, the Honourable Acting Prime Minister, what is the status of that project. I want to know if there are any difficulties being encountered in relation to that project and if so, what is the nature of those difficulties and if the project is once again back on track because I am aware of the fact that it was being derailed for a while. Sir, all in all, I think the Minister, who introduced this Resolution did himself a disservice by trying to dwell on a lot of irrelevance, side stepping the main issue we have in the Hilton Hotel, a project that was developed and conceptualised based on considerable foresight, the type which they could never have come up with; a project that is the envy of the region and, Sir, I am one on this side who is proud of the fact that we took the steps to develop the facilities at the Hilton Hotel.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I am indebted to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O. INNIS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give support to this Resolution and in so doing, it really reflects quite a bit, as my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West alluded to in his own presentation about the kind of financial management and challenges we inherited when coming into office in January. Of course, one could argue that after 10 months in office, perhaps we could focus a bit on what we intend to do in the tourism sector in this particular case but it would be remiss of me if I did not reflect on the challenges and a lot of the that we inherited back in January.

Mr. Speaker, \$8.2 million, we are asking Parliament today to guarantee as financing from the National Insurance Fund toward Needhams Point Limited in respect of the Hilton project and a matter that went to arbitration involving one of the contractor. I have heard quite a bit coming from the other side in respect of this particular project but let me say at the outset that it is my considered opinion that Barbados and Needhams Point did not get the best deal when it came to the Hilton Hotel project. Sir, the reality about it is that the taxpayers of Barbados are today still subsidizing the Hilton Hotel despite all the rantings, ravings and comments from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North in particular about...

11:20

the taxpayers of Barbados are today still subsidising the Hilton Hotel, despite all the rantings, ravings and comments from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, in particular, about the beauty of the building, the taxpayers of Barbados are still subsidising the Hilton project.

Sir, when you look across the breadth of Barbados at the kind of projects which the former administration did, the accusations of corruption and the wastage that we saw - you talked about development in the tourism sector, I did not hear one comment from the other side about Hotel Resorts Limited, better-known as the GEMS project, a project that was a gem to many friends of those on the other side. I saw individuals whom, I believe could not spell Ada backwards, who were struggling financially, become millionaires overnight under a lot of these things. Whatever I have, I had before I came into Parliament. Sir, we have in that GEMS of Barbados project, Hotel and Resorts Limited, a financial mess today. There is nowhere the taxpayers of Barbados could ever make any return on that investment. I believe that it may very well go at somewhat of a loss. I am awaiting the comments from the Ministry of Finance in respect of that as well.

Sir, when you look at other projects embarked on in this country - I heard people talk about successes for these grand buildings and so on, I am hoping that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would speak in respect of the prisons as well, the financial arrangements and how the taxpayers' money was spent. There are other things such as 3S and the ABC Highway. All of these kinds of arrangements we inherited, and today we have to take millions of tax payers dollars and settle issues with respect to these things.

Asides.

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

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House when he tries to suggest that the project at Dodds Plantation, the prison, was a situation of wastage. In fact, one of the clauses in that contract...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, is he not entitled to his opinion?

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, most of what any Honourable Member in here says is an opinion, even if he calls somebody an idiot.

Mr. SPEAKER: That would be unparliamentary.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Sir, because an opinion does not preclude an Honourable Member from saying that he is misleading the House. It is either his fact or it is his opinion. Perhaps we can try to differentiate very neatly between them but the Honourable Member has posited that the prison represented wastage.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me hear you.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Sir, empirically, I am able to say that the Government of Barbados received a substantial refund to the tune of \$10 million because the Prison project came in under budget. In those circumstances where the Government was able to receive a refund was not because Sommerville burnt, could hardly be categorised or classified as wastage.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, I will not dwell on this too much, but I hope that at some point and time we could also be informed of other refunds that may have gone elsewhere as well.

In respect to the Mobil refinery and that particular project at Aquatic Gap, where we will eventually have to come to Parliament, or elsewhere to seek some funding, an arrangement was made with an entity under the former administration, \$7.2 million, with respect to the cleaning up of that facility adjoining the Hilton. This is very important because it speaks to challenges in developing the physical plant around the Aquatic Gap area. Sir, \$7 million was allocated with respect to a trade-off of Esso and settlement to them, and today nothing has been done.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Sir, nothing has been done and the \$7 million has gone. Indications to date are that we would perhaps have to look for about \$30 million to complete the clean up of that site. That is a considerable amount of money.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: On a point of order. Clearly a precedent has been set in this Chamber. No person can say nothing has been done about anything because other Honourable Members have been asked, and I will ask that the Honourable Member to withdraw the statement "that nothing has been done".

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Thank you very much.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, again I would ask for a ruling. The Honourable Member has said the same thing that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North said,

“nothing has been done”, the same exact phrase, and now the Honourable Member for St. James South has said the same thing. I would ask for a ruling that he withdraws those statements, that which has been done to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James South please continue your statement.

Hon. D. O’N. INNISS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Sir, obviously, we have to spend some money in respect to cleaning up that site adjoining the Hilton Hotel. It is a view that is one of the most beautiful stretches of beach in the island. We intend, certainly, in part of the development of our tourism plant, to continue work in bringing brand name hotels, and other properties, to that particular facility. It would not be done in a manner similar to what the former Government did on the West Coast.

Sir, we inherited a situation in this country, and I cry shame on the former administration, because today you cannot drive on the west coast of Barbados to view of any part of the ocean. We, therefore, will leave a legacy for future generations that is not admirable. Sir, you can expect, with respect to physical development on the coast of Barbados...

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, in what way?

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Sir, the Honourable Member is grossly mistaken to suggest that there is no place on the west coast that you can drive without seeing the sea. I would refer him to the Paynes Bay area where you can easily drive along to view a wide expanse of the sea, including the Cuban Memorial. I believe that is in, or very close to his constituency. If he is not driving through his constituency, then he would not know this. He is misleading the House again.

Mr. SPEAKER: I find no point of order. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. O’N. INNISS: Sir, unlike the Honourable Member, I would like to remind him that no parts of my constituency are on the coast of Barbados but my constituents would certainly like to drive down Paynes Bay and up the coast to see parts of the sea.

Sir, the physical development of this island, as we have enunciated time and time again, will not see large concrete jungles on the coast of our island or remains. It is our intention to ensure that the tourism development of Barbados is one that also captures the spirit of what is Barbadian, and one that Barbadians can enjoy for many generations to come. That is a far difference from what happened under the former administration.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North quote some figures, in terms of tourism arrivals, and alluded to a point that the Government is not doing anything about tourism and tourism marketing, since coming to office, in January. The reality is, the global financial crisis that erupted in the last few months is currently having an affect and will continue for perhaps another year or so to have some impact on tourism arrivals in Barbados. Sir, just as important, the spending power of those who still choose to come to Barbados. Sir, as a responsible Government. We have not sat on our laurels, thrown our hands in the air and adopted a defeatist attitude and say there is nothing we can do.

Sir, as the first order of business we have allocated \$10 million in funding for marketing with the Barbados Tourism Authority in the marketplace. They have been asked to identify the most resilient parts of the market and deploy resources there accordingly.

Sir, even as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was making these comments, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, Minister of Tourism, is in London with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs seeking to maintain our support in that market, and wherever possible to expand it, not just in the short-term, but in the medium and long-term. So we are busy at work while others are just talking.

Sir, we have also started to look at a plan to restructure the Barbados Tourism Authority, not in a manner similar to how the former administration would have done it.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The last restructuring of the the Barbados Tourism Authority was in fact led, not by the ...

11.30 a.m.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The last restructuring of the Barbados Tourism Authority was led, not by the Barbados Labour Party but by the Democratic Labour Party Government. Go back and look to see when the legislation was passed.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I will not dwell on that point because you can have some individuals, get rid of them, put a lot of square pegs in round holes and call it restructuring as well, so let us not dwell too much on that point.

We have also embarked on a programme, where we have deployed other personnel in the marketplace, who know the marketplace. I heard Honourable Members on the other side talk earlier about nepotism. Sir, nobody has practiced nepotism in the public affairs of Barbados to the magnitude of the former administration.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: With the Barbados Tourism Authority we have said that here are the markets we wish to be in and here are the kinds of individuals that we need to be in the marketplace. We sought them out and found them and deployed them accordingly. I do not know any of them to be friends or family to anybody on our side over here.

We have also worked assiduously on expanding airlift into Barbados, and only yesterday, we saw the arrival of WestJet. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North say that this was his project. Sir, I sit here quite often and I believe that everything good that is happening in Barbados today, have their geneses in the former administration, including giving school children free bus rides in the public transportation system.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, every good idea that we get up in this House and speak about, we hear that it has its genesis in the former administration. The reality about it is that we are expanding our airlift into Barbados.

This week the Prime Minister of Barbados and his team are meeting with senior executives from BMI, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic Airways in London. We are busy at work. We do not fly about the world on junkets, as others may have done before. We do serious work and it is not about only seeking to expand and get larger numbers but we also have to take care of those who are currently with us. We have to make them understand that we appreciate their business.

Therefore, when our Prime Minister goes and has direct conversation with the Chairman of British Airways or Virgin Airlines, it is because we certainly want to assure them that we appreciate what they have been doing for Barbados and Barbados' tourism sector. I hope the Honourable Members appreciate that we are very busy at work in respect to the tourism sector.

We are also working assiduously on developing a tourism master plan. I am advised that should be rolled out very soon. We have consulted far and wide with all the stakeholders in the tourism sector, those who are directly involved and those who are indirectly involved. This is not any pie-in-the-sky piece of document that will come about, which is not implementable. We are working on a master plan for the tourism sector that, I am sure, will be well appreciated by all the stakeholders because they too, have been consulted.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Yes. It will be debated in here.

I heard questions about Harrison's Point. The Honourable Members on the other side should, at some point in time tell us about the sweetheart deals that were going forth in some of these large scale physical development projects in this country.

How could we take acres of land owned by the State and put into a joint venture for a small pittance? Those days are over. We have said to go back to the drawing table; ensure that land at Harrison's Point is valued by independent valuers and that the joint venture partners accept the evaluation as our input into the project, or they can go and fly a kite. We will not sell the assets of Barbados and Barbadians for a pittance, so let us appreciate that it is not business as usual. If that is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North wanted it to be, he is in for another thing, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated the merger of Needham's Point Limited in the Barbados Tourism Investment, Inc., because we certainly recognise the synergies there and the important role that those entities can play in the physical development, and the development overall, of our tourism sector.

Sir, I certainly hope that the Honourable Members appreciate that this Government is extremely busy, in respect of the development of the tourism sector, in such a way that Barbadians are not disadvantaged. We recognise that we need to add to the room stock. We recognised what was happening in the past, where there was great emphasis on condominiums, as opposed to traditional hotel plants. Sir, all these matters are being addressed in a very decisive and forceful manner.

Sir, we looked at the areas that the Government will have to take the lead, in terms of any incentives that may have to be offered. All these things are being dealt with to ensure that when the economic crisis that we are currently going through abates, Barbados is in a much stronger position and far more resilient going forward, than it has

ever been, in respect of such development. Therefore, when I hear others talk about the Hilton Hotel, and the clean up of oil at Needhams Point, one has to appreciate that these things are all part of a grand plan.

We also intend to go further because there are discussions about the lowering oil prices that I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North talked about. I want to say, upfront, that we have reduced fuel charges in Barbados at least three times in the last couple of months. The Honourable Member needs to ask to what extent can the private sector respond to these reductions and assist us in helping to reduce the cost of living in Barbados as well. Sir, the Government will not, and cannot do it on its own.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to reiterate my original point that it is unfortunate that we have inherited situations like these, which merit us going back, time and time again, to the National Insurance Fund. Sir, we do not know what else might be looming out there.

For example, I only realised a few days ago, that CBC got money from the National Insurance Fund that, perhaps, was one of the best kept secrets, but that will be dealt with, in the fullness of time. There are many things that are unraveling as we dig deeper into the souls of Government. There are many things we did not hear about, that we are finding out every day, which speak to the kinds of financial management that existed under the former administration. Sir, you can rest assured that his Government will share them all with the public of Barbados. There will be no secrets.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore close in giving support to this Resolution.

Asides.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I find this debate most interesting and curious, because the Honourable Member who led off the debate, made much about the previous Government's environmental management of that site and the extent to which it is now responsible for the fact that this House is being asked to guarantee \$8.2 million, in relation to a loan from the National Insurance Scheme. Sir, that was the manner in which this Resolution was presented to this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, I have been in this House long enough to know that sometimes people present things in a certain manner, not because it is really what they want to say, but they want

others to respond to allow the facts to come out, and the facts must come out now.

Sir, the reality is that the site on which the Hilton Hotel was rebuilt was not only the subject of remediation but it was the subject of a successful remediation conducted by PYTHON International, a company which he did mention. And so successful was it that the Hilton Hotel itself required that before a single block could be laid on that site, the remediation had to be to their satisfaction.

Sir, it would help to understand what was the process by which this House has now to treat to \$8.2 million in delayed damages to Johnston International Limited International.

House A19, Sequence 10, 11:40:14

Tuesday, November 04, 2008

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: While Johnston International may have made many claims in the arbitration, the reality of the situation was that the \$8.2 million came as a result not of any remediation works being defective or being delayed in relation to the Hilton site from the Mobil Refinery - I would come back to Mobil's role and the Democratic Labour Party's partnership with Mobil going back from 1991 - but as a result of faulty design of the foundation which was a manmade occurrence. The faulty design had nothing to do with oil seepage. It had to do with the fact that the design that was done could not accommodate the building which had been designed.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West should have told us two things, which I wish he would address in his wrap-up although, in fairness to him, Needham's Point Incorporated does not report to him as a Minister; however, the Government has a responsibility to tell the public of Barbados these two things.

The first is: Who was the engineer who did the designs for the foundation? Was it the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central's firm, and is it not a fact that the peer review had to be conducted on the foundations, such that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central's teacher, a Professor from Trinidad, was brought in to help with the redesign work such that we could complete the process of building a hotel on that site? Mr. Speaker, was the dispute also not in relation to the architect in addition to the engineer? Mr. Speaker, I am asking further - because when we left Government, the former Attorney-General, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph could speak fully to this in this debate - did Needham's Point Incorporated not had advice from its attorneys-at-law in Washington D.C., a company by the name of McManus Schor Asmar & Darden that they ought to proceed against

both the engineer and the architect for negligence that occasioned the redesign and that led to a delay in the construction?

The question begs itself, Mr. Speaker, what is the position of this Government and Needham's Point Incorporated today in relation to the recovery of the money, which has now had to be paid out and now have to be borrowed from the National Insurance Board, to satisfy the arbitration between Johnston International and Needham's Point Incorporated?

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what therefore I can say about this matter other than to say that the fault lies not on this side and not even at Mobil, because the remedial work was completed to the satisfaction of the Hilton International before a single block could have been laid in the construction of that hotel, but as a result of faulty designs of a foundation. Mr. Speaker, the documents are there for the Government as well as the attorneys-at-law, both local and international, to call upon.

Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, he did in fact say that there were design problems with the foundation, but he said it in such a way that you would feel that it is as a result of environmental issues, when it really was as a result of faulty designs by the engineers.

Mr. Speaker, the engineering firm which was responsible for the designs is the one which was owned and/or associated with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the person who has presided over the decline of this country's tourism.

Mr. Speaker, he was not satisfied to have caused the Government losses on the Hilton Hotel but he is now bringing that same poor performance to the entire tourism sector in this country. Mr. Speaker, that is what we have been laden with.

Mr. Speaker, unlike this Government that wants to look back all the time, I am not going back, I want to look forward. I want to look forward, Mr. Speaker, and ask the Government whether they would be pursuing a legal claim, as recommended by Needham's Point lawyers, McManus Schor Asmar & Darden out of Washington D.C., to ensure that money could be recovered from both the engineer and/or the architect as a result of the faulty designs.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we have come to. I forgive the Honourable Member for St. James South. The Honourable Member has nothing to do when the day comes and all day to do it in. He does not even have Invest Barbados reporting to him. He has no responsibility in foreign affairs and foreign trade. He has been appointed point man in here in order to look back to the previous

Administration's work. Mr. Speaker, perhaps he should remember where he came from and where he originally wanted to run in St. Philip North and remember the lyrics of the most famous person from that parish when it comes to the art form of calypso, that do not worry about us, all eyes are on you. Sir, nobody is interested in the past, they are interested in what you are doing.

Mr. Speaker, let me come to this matter, because there has been no less than 15 references today to the international financial crisis. Mr. Speaker, the international financial crisis and the international oil difficulties did not start in 2008. On February 08, 2007, 19 months ago, the bank HSBC issued a negative profit warning as a result of losses in their North American portfolio on the sub-prime mortgage crisis. By August of 2007, there were difficulties across the sub-prime mortgage portfolio across the western world and the G20 central bank governors met in Sydney Australia to determine what kind of response they would have to the sub-prime mortgage crisis.

Mr. Speaker, when we went into the election in December, we told the country that there were difficulties but that we could overcome them, but what could not happen with those difficulties was the kind of wild and reckless promises and giveaways being advocated by the Democratic Labour Party to get into office.

Sir, no problem. The country spoke and no sooner had they come into office, they realised that there were constraints.

Mr. Speaker, you would have thought that they would plan an economic policy for those constraints in 2008; no. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John came here in March in the presentation of the Estimates, the first time I have ever seen a Minister of Finance read a speech in an Estimates debate prepared by someone outside this Chamber reflecting an absence of competence and knowledge in relation to the portfolio...

Mr. Speaker, what did that speech say? Sir, you could go back and look at the newspaper reports and the Hansard reports. Sir, in spite of the fact that there were already signs of a slowing economy and in spite of the fact that there were already signs of the beginnings of capital markets difficulties and access to credit difficulties on the international market, this Government chose to reduce their capital works programme on the altar of fiscal prudence and put Barbadians on the frontline of any adjustments.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that capital works programme, as defined in this House, would have included the flyovers and \$150 million in works in flyovers over 18 months. Mr. Speaker, that came then, even with the reduced capital works programme in March, to be dropped out when the Prime Minister did the heinous thing of firing

people on the Floor on the House without reference to the facts.

Mr. Speaker, I will come back to those overruns separately because the cost of the remedial work on the flyovers as well as the cost of the damages whenever it is done has to be brought to this House. Mr. Speaker, you still do not have a solution to the traffic problems as was defined, but that is a separate issue.

11.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the reduced capital works programme, you had a Government taking an economic position that was suited for a 2006 economy, one that was growing without difficulties on the international economy, instead of one that already had an international economy showing that it was going to be a difficult year. Sir, that is the first thing they did to exacerbate a challenging international environment.

Mr. Speaker, the second thing this Government did was to come on April 16th and increased diesel by 77 per cent, even though they knew that the economy was already facing almost double-digit inflation problems, cost of living issues, et cetera. Sir, with that one act, they cemented this country into double-digit inflation for this year.

Sir, let us look at the Report of the Central Bank: In May it was 8.5 per cent; in June it was 8.5 per cent; in July, it was over 10 per cent. Sir, that was as a direct result of a Government not knowing what it was doing and taking the single item that is responsible for production in this country and subjecting it to a 77 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, never mind they came and gave three reductions week after week. If I were not in this Honourable Chamber, I would say that it was the action of a magician, trying to create an illusion that because you have three reductions, people feel they are paying less. Sir, what are the facts? The facts are that oil today is US\$40 per barrel cheaper than when this Government came to office, but diesel is 73 cents more per litre. Sir, in spite of the three reductions, diesel is almost 50 per cent more expensive today than it was in January, even though oil is US\$40 per barrel cheaper.

Mr. Speaker, I say, apart from anything else, there are Honourable Members on the Front Bench, who have a lot of mouth. Sir, I want to know why they are not putting that mouth to get the Government to stop price-gouging the people of Barbados. Sir, that was action number two.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this

Honourable House. Sir, this Government is not price-gouging the consumers, and I keep saying this. Sir, we have stated from day one, our policy is that we will not subsidise fuel in Barbados, and we have been very consistent with that. We, therefore, also reduced the prices of fuel when they were coming down in the world market. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has to appreciate there is also a time lag in between, when you do so and when the prices are lowered.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, no point of order found. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, if ever there was support for my premise, I thank the Honourable Member for St. James South. Sir, not only is the Honourable Member trying to justify his Government's inaction by reason of a time lag, the reality is that when all is said and done, this Government, by reason of a Press Conference held by the Prime Minister and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, admitted to the public of Barbados that they were charging 15 cents per litre alone on gasoline and diesel, in order to recover an oil debt, which could be raised otherwise to recover.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, whether or not you like it, whether or not you agree with it, the fact of the matter is that you are, in fact, charging more than diesel cost to day for the Government to buy. Sir, that is the reality of what this Government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James South should take note from his other colleagues because they are not prepared to support him on it. The truth is, that was the second action taken by this Government to exacerbate a difficult international situation.

Sir, the third action came when the Minister of Finance stood up in here on July 7th and put on the backs of Barbadians the biggest single package of taxation and increase in administrative fees, the biggest ever done by a Minister of Finance, since the introduction of Cabinet Government in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, on their information, what was presented to this Honourable House? The Honourable Member said it was \$104 million in taxes and increased fees. Sir, what the Honourable Member did not tell you, was that he did not include the arithmetic for the increased VAT take on the energy prices that he had pushed up by 77 per cent. The Honourable Member did not include the increase VAT take on environmental levy, which is variable. He did not include the increase VAT take on the excise tax, which is variable and which was increased at two levels, one by 1/3 per cent and the other by 50 per cent. Sir,

therefore, our figures suggest that the value of the tax package was closer to \$180 million.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will not be worried by the Honourable Member for St. James South. The Honourable Member is trying hard to show that he is a strong supporter of the Prime Minister, since the Prime Minister picks on him every week in Cabinet. Sir, the more the Prime Minister picks on him, the more he tries to show that he is an ardent and loyal supporter, because the Prime Minister might soon realise there is no work for him to do.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you are still dealing with the Resolution?

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am still dealing with the Resolution. Mr. Speaker, in the absence of rulings from you, I am also reflecting on voices I hear in the Chamber. Mr. Speaker, the third act was the increased taxes and the increased fees. Mr. Speaker, when an economy is facing difficulties in relation to growth.... Sir, by then we already had the Governor of the Central Bank coming out, when that Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals was held in July, telling us that growth would, in fact, had been receding.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's own speech predicted increased unemployment and increased inflation. That is a fact. Sir, the solution was not to increase taxes and fees but to give the people in Barbados the opportunity to maintain and expand their purchasing power, and at least to ensure that in doing so they could maintain jobs in this economy.

Mr. Speaker, the fourth action by this Government was their failure to take action, in relation to reducing land taxes, already in a difficult situation, where consumers and businesses were face with increased prices, yet this Government, in the face of increased land valuations, failed to do what almost every Government has done to increase the land tax rates at a time when evaluation went skyrocket.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you that in spite of all the pleas about the international economy, this Government is not powerless to deal with it. Sir, I regret that we have reached a stage where the Government of Barbados feels that the economic environment now leaves them powerless. Sir, they waited four weeks before holding a national consultation on something which, by their own admission when they held it, was urgent.

Mr. Speaker, in the wrap up, when the Prime Minister indicated that he needed a war plan, what was the course of action taken? Sir, a committee was established, to meet three weeks later. Sir, do you understand there was a

consultation on 29th October and that the first time a committee was set up to meet was between 17th and 21st November, yet they say it is to produce a war plan. Sir, by then we would all be bombed. It is the quickest equivalent by this Government to the raising of a white flag, to indicate that it is powerless, that it has no imagination as to what to do.

Mr. Speaker, I say this, when all is said and done, the Government cannot deny the facts, as expressed by the Executive Director of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., that bookings have begun to reduce by as much as 15 per cent in the last four months.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James South could do well to go and find jobs for the people in this constituency, many of whom are going to be disproportionately affected as a result of the reduction in tourism activities on the west coast.

12:00 noon.

The Honourable Member for St. James would do well to go and find jobs for the people in his constituency, many of whom are going to be disproportionately affected, as a result of the reduction in activity on the west coast.

Sir, it goes further. There are at least three major tourism projects that have either been put on hold indefinitely, or deferred for at least one year. Sir, Beachlands, on the west coast; Regent Redevelopment, on the west coast and Mahogany Court, in Christ Church. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South should worry about that. Sir, the implications are, that those construction companies that would have been able to continue employing people because of the promise of work, have now lost the opportunity to execute those projects and, therefore, we expect a further increase in unemployment, particularly, in the construction section.

Sir, this Government, for the last six weeks, in fact, more than that, the Prime Minister talked about an economic stimulus package and we have not seen that package because building fences around the schools cannot constitute an economic stimulus package. We heard that they put \$10 million extra in the Barbados Tourism Authority but what are the facts surrounding the Barbados Tourism Authority? They have now seen to it that they removed the head of the Barbados Tourism Authority to the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. Sir, there is no leadership at the Barbados Tourism Authority; there is no leadership at the Barbados Investment Development Corporation and they have just brought on a man at Invest Barbados, in circumstances where there were 49

applications for the job, and there was not a single interview, before they appointed Wayne Kirton to the head of Invest Barbados.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you know very well you are not allowed to call the names of persons.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, the new CEO. I apologise, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that at this time, in Barbados, we are in the invidious position, that none of the three productive sectors, that are at the head of this economy, have leadership in their organisations that need Government's development in it, the Barbados Investment Development Corporation; the Barbados Tourism Authority and Invest Barbados has just got somebody but they have not told us - but we will get to that in another debate - about the other 6 or 7 people that have been rooted out, no less than rooted out of the organisation, but this country is now expected to have its productive sectors meeting.

Sir, do you know why it is important? Let me take two minutes to address it. Sir, the last Central Bank Report has already shown that there is a deterioration in the country's foreign reserves, \$129 million lost in the last quarter. Sir, the point is, in this country until we finish what I call the post-independence restructuring of the productive sectors, we have had to rely... there are three components to how you meet your import bill, the foreign exchange earnings from the productive sectors; the extent to which you rely on private capital inflows and the extent to which you borrow to finance capital expenditure, to build productive capacity for a future generation.

Sir, last year we did not go to the foreign markets. Sir, that is a fact but the truth also is, we were able to be buffeted by the scale of private foreign capital inflows into this country, money coming in to build the same Beachlands project; money coming in to build Regents project and money to build all the other projects we saw about the place. What is clearly being seen, with the pausing of those projects and with the already seen reduction in private capital inflows, we run the risk in this country of having a balance of payment problem next year, already on a difficult economic situation with high unemployment rising, inflation rising and with growth significantly being reduced.

Sir, this is a serious matter. It is not a matter to be trifled with and joked about with political asides, because

what is at stake now, is the stability and security of Barbadian families and households. I have maintained, as we did after 9/11, that it is easier to increase debt for two years or three years, and bring it down as the facts are reflected after 9/11, than to deal with an increase in social disequilibrium, that is driven as a result of households being split in half, because people are losing their houses and jobs, and people losing the capacity to maintain their family structure, largely because they cannot make ends meet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have three minutes in which to conclude.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: However much in this Honourable House, we may want to disguise it between artificial semantics of politics, the reality is, the average Barbadian is having difficulty spending money this year, as compared to a year ago. Sir, however much we may want to disguise it, people are losing their jobs; however much we may want to disguise it, people feel that it is not only the international environment but this Government has taken decisions, and I have chronicled at least four major decisions that have made the international environment more challenging and made our situation worst domestically.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is, Barbados has a unique advantage, which the rest of the world does not have. Sir, the Central Bank Report shows that we do not have a liquidity crisis and that the cost of money in Barbados is potentially cheaper, because we do not have a credit crisis but that this Government has failed to come up with solutions, in order to be able to address the situation in a creative manner that would allow us to be buttressed against the international environment.

Sir, I go further and I will end where I started. I find myself in a curious situation on this side, hearing the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, supporting for the first time in his parliamentary career, the borrowing of money from the National Insurance Scheme but, Sir, I shall not hold that against him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please keep down the asides, please.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I shall not hold that against him because he now understands, sitting on that side, that any productive investment in this country that can earn the National Insurance Scheme above that which the actuaries recommend as a decent return, is one that is worthy, in order to be able to secure the National Insurance funds for future generations. Mr. Speaker, I only say that as an aside for what it is worth and I welcome him to the club that recognises we have responsibility to find investments, particularly at this time, when the National Insurance Scheme's options for international investments will be

significantly curtailed as a result of the international financial crisis.

Mr. Speaker, let us be straight. This \$8.2 million has nothing to do with the Barbados Labour Party and Mobil. This \$8.2 million has nothing at all to do with environmental cleanup. It has to do with faulty designs of a foundation, undertaken by a firm well-known to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, and it has to do with a judgement in arbitration that relates to that amount.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please conclude.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. It also has to do for the future on the fact that the Government of Barbados has a responsibility to accept the advice from Macmanisure to take action against both the engineering firm and/or the architect in respect of recovering the money that we are now being asked to guarantee today. Sir, it has nothing to do with Government.

Sir, let me say, as I wrap up, that we have too many instances of defective work being done by professionals. It was the same with the IDC building at Newton and I certainly would have seen to it, had we still been in Government, that once that building is finished that action also be taken against the professionals involved in that building, at Newton, to recover the losses which the Government has had to absorb today, and that must be the new hallmark.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, thank you.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

12.10 p.m.

His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: Sir, it is rather interesting to hear that after 14 years in Government, the Barbados Labour Party is seeking to blame somebody for a project they started. Nobody would believe that this was a project started by the Barbados Labour Party, and it was the Barbados Labour Party that got rid of Mobil, promising this Parliament they would have done a clean up before the construction of the Hilton Hotel. This Honourable House was promised on many occasions that before anything started, there would have been a total cleanup. During the process of the construction of the hotel, this Honourable House was informed that the problem still exist. Therefore, the hotel could not be completed because the cleanup was not done.

Asides.

His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: That is what we were told. I remember that Sir Harold St. John...

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I repeat, the Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House. The cleanup on the Hilton site was not only completed but it was signed off by Hilton International. What remains to be done was the cleanup on the Mobil site, and that is why they had difficulties also with Exxon Mobil, bringing an injunction as to whether a wall should be built or not because of the migration of oil from the Barbados Light and Power site. You can check with the others on it. It is not true. The Hilton cleanup was completed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, proceed.

His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: Sir, another confirmation by the Leader of the Opposition that what I am saying is correct. Sir, what was happening, the oil was moving from one site to the other site. That is true. That is another confirmation.

Sir, there is no doubt that this Government has taken the right decision. We could have done, like what happened in here in 2001, where a Government said to this Honourable House, that there was nothing to be done, that 2001 crash was upon us, and as a result the whole tourism industry would have crashed. I remember well, when in the Opposition, telling them it could not happen like that. The 2001 crash had nothing to do with the Caribbean, the Caribbean was a zone of peace, rather than behaving in this Honourable House as though 2001 had something to do directly with the Caribbean, we needed to go and market the Caribbean as a zone of peace.

Sir, the former Government is not accepting what has happened on the world financial market. Even though there will be repercussions for the Caribbean, we are not directly affected. We are seeing a Government recognising what is happening and being dynamic. I will not accept from this Government any situation, where they behave like the former Government if something happens in the G8 countries, we lie down and play dead. We are seeing the tourism ministers not only targeting the traditional markets, but targeting a market that we, in Opposition have been preaching to the Barbados Labour Party for 14 years.

Sir, look at all the debates in Hansard on tourism and you would see, we have always said to them that they neglected the Canadian market. If they were to return to the statistics I the 1970s, they would realise there was a relationship with the Canadian market and it was ripe to be tapped, but they ignored it. According to one minister, who believed that \$20 tourists, according to him, would not

matter and did not want to hear anything called Community Tourism. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North was here, and I remember when the comment was made. I also remember the direction of his head, because he did not agree with that because he understood community tourism. He understood that in tourism you needed the right mix, as he has always preached.

Sir, I remember when the Honourable Member was Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism. He demonstrated he needed to have the right mix. We are now being told have no liquidity problem in Barbados. It is good advice. Yet the Leader of the Opposition is walking around Barbados telling everybody that this Government should have one term only, while trying to impress this Government to be reckless to use the foreign reserves to allow Barbadians to get cheap fuel, when it is expensive on the world market, in effect, destroy the foreign reserves of Barbados, so that they can walk around and say, "I told you so".

Sir, this Government understood and will continue to understand that we need to save the foreign reserves to ensure investment in productive projects to earn more foreign exchange, while increasing the foreign reserves instead of depleting them by offering cheap fuel even though fuel is expensive on the world market.

Sir, we are also hearing that Barbadians should be allowed to do what they like with fuel and borrow. Sir, borrow from where, the markets that have been crashing every second? We are now saying to the Minister of Finance to go on the American, Euro and Canadian markets, and all over the world, to borrow. Sir, borrow on crashed markets? What utter madness.

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

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Sir, the amount that this side contends which Government ought to raise is not for continued opened borrowing but simply to raise that amount, which remains outstanding as a result of the change in oil prices, that we say you can borrow domestically. You do not have to go on the foreign markets to borrow that. We say the Government should absorb that finite debt, that capped debt, rather than putting 15 cents per litre on the backs of everybody driving into a gas station for gas or diesel in this country. Sir, 15 cents per litre, 50 litres in a car works out to \$8. Every time a person fills up a tank, they are paying for the Government debt that could have been raised separately. All we are saying is that at this time, given the financial and economic difficulties, the Government should absorb it, rather than asking every consumer to pay \$8 a tank every time they fill up their tank.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Lucy, please continue.

His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: Sir, we are now hearing that nobody wants to invest in Barbados. Yet, the Leader of the Opposition would want us to believe that nobody wants to invest but they want to lend. What utter madness.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Honourable Member knows I meant no disrespect. Sir, nobody wants to invest but the Honourable Member wants us to believe that they would be people who would want to lend.

Mr. Speaker, this is the type of advice I would not expect to hear from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I was told in here today that Beach Land, Region and Mahogany Court projects are on hold. One would have thought that any prudent businessman, having these projects now in a place like Barbados would recognise that in these economic times where the majority cost is labour, the market would now be right for them to execute their projects, and by the time the economic situation changed, the project would be completed and they would be ready. However, the Leader of the Opposition is saying to these investors do not to come Barbados because it is the wrong place to invest at this time.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. This side has never told anybody not to come to Barbados. Sir, I cannot help it if the incompetence of the Government is such that the private sector either locally or internationally has no confidence in them. That is nothing to do with us. We know of at least three major projects that have been put on hold. Sir, to suggest that we are telling people not to invest in Barbados is to accuse this side of sedition.

His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has admitted that it is bad judgement on behalf of the investors and they have no justifiable reason for putting these projects on hold.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Sir, if I have to jump up in here every two minutes until Obama becomes President, I will do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are entitled to jump up.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have never said ...

12.20 p.m.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, if I have to jump up in here every two minutes until Obama becomes President, I am going to do so.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The point is, Mr. Speaker, I have never said in here that it is justifiable. I said that I cannot help it, if the investors have no confidence in this Government's management of the economy.

His Excellency Denis St.E. KELLMAN: I did not say that the Honourable Member said it was justifiable. I said that the Honourable Member has agreed with me that it is poor judgment on behalf of the investors.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I do not agree that it is poor judgment because if I was looking on, Mr. Speaker, I would wonder how a Government could raise \$104 million in taxes in this environment; I would wonder how a Government could increase diesel by 77 per cent in this environment; I would wonder how a Government could not intervene to reduce Land Tax rates in this environment and I would wonder how a Government could come with a reduced Capital Works Programme in this environment, when the economy was slowing down. Four clear actions.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue, Honourable Member.

His Excellency Denis St.E. KELLMAN: I cannot believe that the Leader of the Opposition, who in another breath elsewhere, said that the Government revenues will fall because of what is occurring on the world market, especially with the financial services companies.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. Sir, far from the Government's revenues falling, we indicated that the Government, both in March when we saw the Estimates, and more so in July when the Government foisted what we believe is close to \$180 million in taxes on the backs of the people of this country. Sir, revenue not only cannot fall, the Central Bank Report has shown that it is way up by almost 9 per cent or 10 per cent, as compared to last year's.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue, Honourable Member.

His Excellency Denis St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for recognising that the Government had foresight and understood what was going to happen to the world market and ensured that they raised the finance to cushion the effect to what is happening on the world market.

Sir, that is a brilliant statement made by the Leader of the Opposition, who is saying that the Government had the foresight to ensure that when the markets crash, the Government will not lose any revenue. Sir, you cannot blame the Government for that, because that is what you call prudent management, and good accounting principles.

I am very happy, Sir, that the Leader of the Opposition has admitted not only to this country but to the world, that the Government had foresight in ensuring that they protected the revenues of the country to carry out their programmes.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Mr. Speaker, you have a responsibility to protect my privileges. This is the third time I have referred to it this morning. The Honourable Member continues to refer and attribute statements to me that I have denied. Mr. Speaker, they are untrue. It is wicked, and I will use stronger language if it continues to use it, because I have a right.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, as long as he continues to speak those things and attribute them to me, when I continue to deny them, I am going to have to come to the conclusion that there is a mens rea now that can be attributed to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that I would not otherwise have associated with him in the past.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, my understanding is that it is his interpretation of essentially what you have said. Now, you keep denying it. Fine. And he sticks with his interpretation.

Asides.

Honourable Member for St. Lucy, please continue.

His Excellency Denis St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member knows that what I am saying is correct. I want the Honourable Member to tell this House, why the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited has been given a subsidy, in the amount they have been given in this country, yet the consumers in this country seem not to recognise that subsidy, as it relates to their bill.

Sir, wherever you go in Barbados, you still hear people complain about double or triple amounts on their electricity bills, even though the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited was given a subsidy, as far back as December 2007.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by speaking generically. I Honourable Member could only be referring to commercial customers because the Barbados Labour Party Government, in December, arranged to pay the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited a subsidy to hold the fuel oil prices at October levels. As a matter of interest, they are virtually back down to October 2007 levels now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

His Excellency Denis St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am now to believe that the Honourable Member is saying that whatever is told to them by the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited they agree to, and that the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited would stick to what was said.

Sir, based on the document I have in front of me, the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited also agreed to pay the same Government a substantial amount of money to complete a wall, which they have not paid it yet, Sir, and for all these years, the Government never collected the money.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is now entering into a matter that was, in fact, before the courts, as a result of an injunction that was brought by Exxon Mobil. The agreement was that the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited was to build a wall, in order to ensure that there was no migration of the oil.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, there is only one Government and in the same way we look forward to the Government telling us whether they are going to recover the monies from the engineer and the architect, I want to know whether they are going to pursue and ensure that the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited pays their portion for the wall.

His Excellency Denis St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, now we are hearing about a wall being built for migration of oil. Sir, is the oil going to the Hilton Hotel or to the sea? I can only conclude that it was going either to the Hilton Hotel or to the sea, and seeing that the Honourable Member said that it was not the Hilton Hotel, it had to be the sea.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked, the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited is, in fact, on the above side of the Mobil site, and not on the sea side.

Mr. Speaker, anyhow, the point is that I am not going to allow the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to mislead this House because the site on which the Hilton Hotel was built was not only remediated, but it was done to the satisfaction of an independent international consultant. It was regrettable that we did not have that signed off on the foundation, which was designed by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central's company, before we started.

His Excellency Denis St.E. KELLMAN: I was told by the Honourable Member that the Government lost \$129 million in foreign reserves, and we were told that the Government should be reckless in their energy policy, because one is getting the impression that we are now getting all of our oil from Barbados, so we can afford to allow Barbadians to have oil at a cheap price, Sir, and it will have no effect on the foreign reserves of the country.

I know that cannot be true and I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East will know that is not correct. I know the Honourable Member will not support that stand when the Honourable Member looks at the \$129 million that was claimed to be lost in the last quarter, that if we were to allow Barbadians to have fuel, which is imported using foreign exchange would have been larger, than that \$129 million. Therefore, if \$129 million is a negative, Sir, it means a higher figure would be a bigger negative, so the Honourable Member has no argument on this point.

Sir, we can assure the Honourable Member that we will ensure that we have enough foreign reserves and that we control the foreign reserves of Barbados as such, that we can carry out those capital projects that the Honourable Member was speaking about.

Sir, we at this point in time in a financial crisis, cannot be seeing flyovers as a serious capital project. We have to be talking about productive projects and the Honourable Member is telling us in here that the Government could have been doing the flyovers for capital projects.

Sir, let me tell you something. I have Harrison Point. I have the Grantley Adams International Airport. I have the seaport. I have many projects that this money could be used on that are productive, and could bring in foreign reserves for the country.

Asides.

12.30 p.m.

I told the Minister of Tourism in the previous Administration that we as a Government could not continue to have home-porting with people leaving the Grantley

Adams International Airport, getting on the highway and driving straight to the Port. Mr. Speaker, I want to see a change to that. I called for it when I was in Opposition and I am calling for it now that I am in Government.

Mr. Speaker, we need to work with those agents to ensure that when those persons come in at the Grantley Adams International Airport that they get an island tour so that they would know something about Barbados. They cannot continue to use the facilities of Barbados and we do not gain from it in the way that we should. Sir, if persons are using our facilities, we should get some sort of benefit from it. Mr. Speaker, that is a cheap form of advertising Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when persons home-port, we have to use that opportunity to market the total of Barbados to those persons. We cannot use our ports for other countries just because we are getting a pittance. We have to look at the bigger picture and recognise that if we allow them to have an island tour of Barbados, there is a possibility that we would get greater benefits.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing wrong with home-porting. The problem comes with how it is used. We cannot continue to use home-porting for the usage of statistics like how the Barbados Labour Party used it. Home-porting is about earning money for the country, that is why we would have to make the change. Mr. Speaker, this Government is about change and not about continuing things as usual.

Mr. Speaker, when the Euro, the Pound and the Canadian dollar was high, we had a good opportunity to push all of our synergies into the tourism industry to ensure that we capitalise on the growth of those currencies so that we can get more people into the country. I spoke about this in this House prior to the change of Government.

Mr. Speaker, I warned this country that we were going to be caught up with the local dollars and not in the foreign exchange. Sir, instead of persons looking at the number of persons coming into the country, they targeted the amount of money they were making not realising that the most important thing would have been to increase the numbers because once you multiply the numbers by the increase in the currency that you would get real growth. Sir, because the Pound moved from \$3 to \$4, they were satisfied to keep the 10 000 tourists they were getting instead of going for more to benefit the country.

Mr. Speaker, what was needed prior to 2008 did not occur. Sir, now that the Pound has dropped, we have to work doubly hard to ensure that we keep the tourist statistics and the earnings up. Sir, one would appreciate that with a falling currency, you would have to get more tourists to get what you would have had previously. Mr. Speaker, we had a golden opportunity to capitalise on the

higher Pound, the Euro and the Canadian dollar and we never did it.

Today, Sir, this Government has to do it. Mr. Speaker, it would be more hard work for us, but we will do it. The Barbados Labour Party had a golden opportunity not only to promote Barbados but also to promote the strengths of the currencies so that we could encourage people to come to this country, and they did not use it.

I thank you very much, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

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

12.40 p.m.

RESUMPTION

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. 1.Statutory Board (Pensions)(Pensionable Office) Order, 2008;
2. Shipping (Incentives) (Jamming Catamaran Cruises) (Barbados Inc.,) Order, 2008;
3. Shipping (Incentives)(Silver Moon Inc.,) Order, 2008.

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

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

1. Betting and Gaming Duties Order, 2008;
2. Annual Report of the National Petroleum Corporation for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2006;
3. Liquor License Order, 2008.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Resumed)

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer a few comments with respect to this Resolution. Sir, this morning we heard a number of speeches that would suggest...Sir, they remind me of sometimes watching cricket and you find that someone has a new ball in his hands and do not know how to use it. Sir, that is how I felt when I heard some of the speeches from the other side, that, in fact, they were faced with a new ball and did not know how to use it. Sir, some of the pronouncements I heard, I could not understand the relevance, given the facts of this particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the Hilton Hotel project was delayed. There is no doubt there were cost overruns. There is no doubt we now have to spend \$8.2 million settling arbitration proceedings with Johnson International. There is no doubt that because of these delays there will be increased cost in terms of cleaning up the site at Needham's Point. Sir, these are all indisputable facts. There is no doubt that the Government of the day was led by Honourable Members on the other side.

Sir, all we are saying is that consistent with their behaviour, consistent with their lack of proper management, as a result of their lack of proper management, we are faced to settle yet another matter with respect to projects that were managed by the Cabinet of Barbados of the other side.

Mr. Speaker, yet my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, would say that he has presided over a project that has seen the return of funds to the Treasury of this country. Sir, we are happy if this is the case but that would be one of several, that would be one project where there was not a cost overrun but the facts would probably prove otherwise, once we have a closer look at those facts.

1.30 p.m.

Mr. A.D. BRATHWAITE: ...where indeed there was not a cost overrun but, the facts would probably prove otherwise, once we have had a closer look.

Sir, my concern is more about our tourism product. I must say that I do not agree that the results of today's tourism product has a lot to do with the present Minister of Tourism. My experience in terms of marketing is that usually you do not see the results of your marketing efforts for a year to 18 months. So, therefore, I believe that it is probably too early for us to see the stewardship of the Minister of Tourism. Sir, when I heard Honourable Members on the other side suggest that the poor management of the present Minister of Tourism is a result

of what has happened over the last few months, it is inconsistent with my knowledge of marketing.

What is the position with respect to our tourism plant over the last few years? Sir, in 2007, there was an increase of 2.1 per cent in terms of long-stay visitor arrivals. Sir, of that increase of 2.1 per cent, it translated into just over 11 000 visitors from 2006, of which approximately 10 500 came in April 2007, during Cricket World Cup. Sir, in other words, if one took out that significant event, tourism arrivals, with respect to long-stay visitor arrivals, between 2006/2007, would have been stagnant. Sir, you would hear Honourable Members on the other side speak about how great their performance was, in terms of tourism arrivals in Barbados over the years. Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that. If you take out the visitors that arrived in 2007 for Cricket World Cup, there would have been little increase in long-stay visitor arrivals, between 2006 and 2007.

Asides.

Mr. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, I am not a tourism marketer, but I looked at the figures and the jurisdiction from where we get our business from and it concerns me. I would like to believe that our Minister and the Cabinet are looking at it, and addressing it because we need to ensure that we understand the relationship between tourism and the other sectors of our economy.

Sir, I do not understand, for example, how we can have our largest market share being from the U.K., and then I read in a report about financial services centres commissioned by the city of London. I believe there were about 50 financial centres reviewed in the report and Barbados was not mentioned at all. We did not make the list. Sir, that is my point about synergy. In fact, we cannot have a situation where we are putting lots of effort into a market like that. I believe we have 240 000 long-stay visitors out of the U.K. during 2007. Yet, on the other plank of our economy we are not recognised because we have either not spent the money or we have people with just tunnel vision. Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that when we market Barbados we do not market it in isolation. We need to ensure that.

Mr. Speaker, the second market that should concern us is the Canadian market. We spent lots of time and effort in the Canadian market. I believe that between 2006 and 2007, we probably had just over 50 000 visitors out of the Canadian market each year. Sir, that should concern us. We should not be thumping our chests and saying how well we are doing in Canada, when in fact, if you go into Toronto, you will see that everyone has been to Cuba and you see Cuban signs all over the place. If you compare how we are doing with other markets, we should be concerned. Sir, we should not accept mediocrity and thump our chests. I would

like to believe that the present Minister of Tourism will not fall into that habit.

Sir, I reiterate that I cannot see the link between what has happened over the last six months with respect to our tourism arrivals and the taking over of the Ministry by the present Minister of Tourism. The realistic position of his efforts, would be seen over the next couple of months, when his policies would have had a chance to bite, as my colleague has said. Sir, as I said, I am not a marketer but the logic is easy to follow.

Sir, my concern is that I have the Crane Hotel in St. Philip that employs about 600 employees, not all from St. Philip, regrettably but our concern should be to ensure that we have plants like that, which are able to survive.

Sir, again, I want to say that in this present environment all Honourable Members in this Honourable House should be concerned about job preservation. They should not be concerned about thumping their chests and bragging "I told you so," whether they are right or wrong. We should be telling to our tourism administrators to hold strain. Let job layoffs be the last thing that you do, so that we can continue having our people employed. We should not be saying to each other to go into St. James South to see how many of your people have been laid off. If that is the case, we should be saying it with sadness. There should be no, "I told you so," with pride from anyone who is serious about the welfare of people in Barbados, that people have been laid off. Sir, the cry should be to hold strain. Let the laying off of our workers be the last resort.

Mr. Speaker, where projects are concerned, we need to do whatever is required to allow these projects to go forward with haste. Sir, in St. Philip I am concerned about Sam Lords Castle and I would like to see it developed. Sir, there is another project earmarked in St. Philip North, and from the discussion I have seen, this will employed probably another 800 Barbadians and, Sir, I would like to see that completed. Mr. Speaker, I am sure there are other projects, but in St. Philip alone, if we could have these projects done over the next couple years, we would see another 1 500 employees in Barbados. Sir, these are the things that concern me.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why we are in this debate is about the guarantee. There is no doubt we have to give the guarantee but our concern now has to be how do we take this country forward and keep our people employed in all aspects of our economy. Sir, as we are dealing in particular with the tourism sector, our concern should be how do we keep our people employed. I do not believe that the past administration did a good enough job in terms of diversifying our product and, in particular, the markets we went into and we need to address that.

Mr. Speaker, we should not be concerned when the USA is down and put our hands up. I believe that the USA accounts for 135 000 to 140 000 long stay-visitors but we need to look at other markets. I hear the suggestion that we should be looking into Latin America but we should not wait for a crisis. Sir, logic would tell you that the wider the basket you have, the better chance you have to sustain any volatility. Sir, it is simple logic.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the Minister and his team will be ensuring that we do not fall into this rut again, that we do not fall into the situation, where we are only proud about the development of two particular markets, and when the pound goes down or the dollar is weakened, we panic because we have nowhere else to go.

Sir, I would also like to urge, at this time, for us to reflect on our product, for us to improve our efficiency; for us to improve our standards and our service. We should not just sit down, put our hands up, and say things are bad and that there is a projection of a 10 per cent decline. We should ensure, when things are good, that the first brand people think about, is Barbados. Sir, that is what we should be doing. We should be looking within Barbados, within the products that we have, within hotels and the markets that we are now operating, with our partners in these markets, to see how we can maintain or improve what we have.

Sir, there is no need for us to panic, to put our head up and say, "Oh Lord, things would not work out, there is all doom and gloom." Sir, that is the Opposition's politics and we are not interested in that. We are interested in maintaining employment; we are interested in building new plants.

Sir, if the Leader of the Opposition is correct, that there were two projects that have been stalled...

2.00 p.m.

Mr. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, we are interested in maintaining employment. We are interested in building new plants. Sir, if the Leader of the Opposition is correct that there were two projects that have been stalled, those are commercial decisions which have nothing to do with the Barbados Tourism Authority or this Government.

Sir, anyone who watches CNN, and I believe that Honourable Members on the other side probably watch FOX as opposed to CNN, and as you know CNN is the more reliable media, but I am sure they get their news from FOX. Sir, my point is, anyone looking at what is happening in the world economy would see that Barbados is not alone in its challenges, but we are confident in this...

In fact, in 2007 we had supporters of the Democratic Labour Party saying to us, are you sure you want that Government, things are going to be rough. Sir, Barbadians knew long before that we would have had to do some serious managing of this economy, they knew and we knew that. What we did not realise is the number of things that were hidden from us. That is why from time to time, we have to come into this Parliament to reiterate certain positions. The Honourable Member for St. James South. For example, mentioned CBC. Every month it seems there is some other matter where the Government quietly borrowed money or quietly guaranteed money, and we are now having to pay for it. That is why we have to go back to these issues.

Sir, as I said, the ordinary man in the street knew that it would have taken some serious management of this economy post January 15th. The majority of the ordinary Barbadians, in this country, who voted knew that the best persons to manage the economy would have been this Government.

Sir, we are not daunted by the challenges. We understand the challenges, and I am saying to my colleagues, hold fast, stay the course, we have to weather the next twelve months, but I have faith in you and we have faith in each other.

Thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join this debate, at this stage, in the afternoon session. Clearly, the tone has been set by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, a serious contribution when compared with the kind of diatribe that could be attributed to the contribution...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will not allow you to say that the Members are talking diatribe.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: I withdraw that, Sir. The kind of contribution we heard from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East where absolutely void of any content, attempted to drag the names of Honourable Members of this Chamber, and indeed Members not present in this Chamber, into a discussion for a simple guarantee of \$8.2 million to pay for a disputed settlement on the building of the now Hilton Hotel. Let us go back a little while and step back into the history.

I remember when Needhams's Point Holdings Limited was set up, because I believe the first Chairman was the Honourable Harold St. John, a predecessor of the constituency of Christ Church, a noted attorney-at-law and

a manager par-excellence. Sir, the truth is, and we have done our investigations, even in the brief moments that we had. The Honourable Member attempted to drag the Minister of Tourism and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South Central into this debate in a less than favourable way, but we have checked.

There were a number of issues relating to works done by many contractors involved in the project. The Honourable Member's involvement as a professional was minuscule, in the scheme of what was happening. Indeed, in the final analysis, it was another contractor recommended by the Chairman, at the time, who made the majority decisions as to how that project went forward. It was a mischievous attempt by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to drag down the name of an Honourable Member of this Chamber.

Sir, it is not uncharacteristic of her because that is the type of politics which she intends to practise, and that is the type of politics which will continue to confront her every time she takes her Annual Conference at Queens College, when you have to bus-in people at 1 o'clock for an 11 o'clock start, and when you can get the Honourable Member for St. Andrew being selected above her as the Leader of the Party. She had better watch her back and stop interfering with business she knows nothing about. As I said, she believes in a lot of snipperous underground text messages.

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, a lot of underground text messaging. That is a characteristic of the Honourable Member. She likes to boast that she has instant information about somebody, using the modern technology from the time a decision is made, bam bam bam, the Honourable Member can produce some inference to somebody may have text somewhere. It is a characteristic that we have to watch.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please keep your asides down.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: It is a characteristic in a developing economy and we have to start to rely again on the integrity of the contribution of professionals and not to be constantly wary if communication takes place, which Honourable Member over there will be peeping up under you, literally, peeping up under you and peeping up under the ministries as we carry out the work of this country and trying to disrupt. They are not going to disrupt me. They are not going to disrupt this team. When we talk about the failure of the Hilton and the failure of the present contract at the Hilton to pay its debts, we are talking about facts.

The arrangement with Hilton International, now, is not redounding to the benefit of Barbados in terms of financial numbers. Sir, there is an asset but if you try to value that asset on the international market today and try to use it, you are going to find real value. What is their record anyway in tourism and tourism stock development? Sir, the GEMS of Barbados is anything but a gem, and we know what this country went through from 1994 to January 14, 2008, because we tried to stop - well we tried to stop but they were still signing permits in the Ministry of Transport and Works on January 15th. The Honourable Member for St. George North can speak to that. They were still trying to award land to their lackies, even on the morning of the 15th instead of trying to make sure, like Obama does today, that he gets the vote out and he is emptying their desk too, but that is for another occasion.

Sir, we have inherited a not so rosy environment when it comes to the building of the hotel sector.

Sir, when the Pier Head land was vested in the Barbados Shipping and Trading, every one of them, man and woman, got up in here and thumped their chests, and talked about how great thou art and how great thou will be, and what great investments we are about to encounter. Sir, Honourable Members on this side who were here, will, and can recall the debate, and how they tried to ridicule the Opposition of the day when our contribution spoke about caution, and to date not one piece of paling has been removed from the Pier Head. None of the structure...

2.10 p.m.

Sir, none of the structures at the Pierhead have shifted. There was not even a coat of paint at the Pierhead. We now have to deal with the question of a re assimilation of the entire project, so the Honourable Members do not have any record to come in here and shout about. The GEMS of Barbados is a failure and there was wastage at Greenland. I heard the Honourable Member talk about the ABC Highway and flyovers. I have said before and I say again, if flyovers was the solution to traffic management in Barbados, we should be now discussing the widening of the road and not the building of the flyovers. The flyovers should have been finished and we should be now talking about widening the road.

Sir, that is an up-side-down administration over there. They feel they can now come to Barbadians, after the event and try to wipe away any nonsense that they want, but we are not going to fall for that. Sir, in all the international shocks that have occurred, we have been able to whether an oil price that reached an unprecedented US\$165 per barrel, and which financiers were predicting would reach US\$200 by the end of this year. Sir, to demonstrate the volatility and the fickleness of the

international situation we are dealing with, today the price of oil is US\$65, but we do not know where it is going.

I am sure that after the elections in the United States of America this evening, there will be another change in the whole international economic spectre. Sir, people will feel differently if a Republican is elected this evening, as they would feel if a Democrat leader is elected this evening because they present a fundamentally different philosophy, in terms of the international relations and how America will deal with its friends and its enemies. Sir, that is the difference and that is why tonight's events will impact, very seriously, on the world and by inference on what happens in Barbados.

The investments in Barbados that have slowed up are predominantly the investments that are reliant on foreign borrowing by foreign investors, whose sources have become slowed. We have embarked in here - and I want to remind the Honourable Member now that she has returned to her seat - on a structural package and a stimulus package in the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport. Let me explain.

The value of this package over its life has been set at some \$31 million, and it has been passed in here, of which \$10 million is earmarked to be spent in this financial year, in the building of roads, in the building of roundabouts, in the repairs to the infrastructure and this is to encourage employment in the Barbados economy; and to encourage employment and investment in work which does not have a large foreign component, Sir, and that is the point we have to make clear.

Therefore, the Honourable Members over there have to understand that this Government is in safe hands. We do not have to look over our shoulders. Our leadership is clearly defined for all to see, so we do not have to worry about the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. We do not have to worry about the Honourable Member for St. Peter, who was awarded the greatest award in the Barbados Labour Party but was absent and refused to accept it on the terms that it was being offered because, in the fine print, there is a little detail which says that you have to do x, y, or z, in order that this arrangement stands.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Obviously, when the Honourable Member for St. Peter read the footnote, he said that he is not part of that any more and he got in an aircraft and went back to Malta. Mr. Speaker, it was as simple as that, Sir.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is misleading the House, and he is not in a position to talk about the Honourable Member for St. Peter and to associate such motives to him, when the Honourable Member for St. Peter led a distinguished mission to Malta to deal with their elections on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Those are the facts and I did not know, Sir, that Honourable Members were allowed to attribute motives to Honourable Members who were not present. Sir, if that is the case, then I could attribute motives to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, in relation to the faulty designs on this matter.

Asides.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, all that has been revealed by that intervention was that the Honourable Member did not know that this mission was on, because if she knew the mission was in Malta she would have made arrangements so that the Honourable Member for St. Peter would receive his deserving award in the Barbados Labour Party when he was present, so that is not our fault.

Sir, they talked about wastage. They talked about bad spending. We talk about the fact that continually in the Ministry of Finance and in other Ministries, we rake up these kinds of burdens which come upon us as we try to manage these situations.

Sir, look at the Warrens Buildings; Was foundation too? Yes. Was that bad management, too? Yes. Was that the friends of the Barbados Labour Party parading, too? Yes. Sir, that is the main trouble. Whenever you examine the situation, it is less about foundations than it is about friends of the Barbados Labour Party who were involved and, deeply involved, in these projects.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Is the Honourable Member telling me that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was a friend of the Barbados Labour Party so that is how he got the job to design the foundation at the Hilton Hotel? Or did he get an opportunity like any other professional in this country to be able to work?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you do not stand on the point of order to ask questions.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South please continue.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, there is a distinct hand, as I said, walking through all these projects that we

encounter, under the guise of a thing called, the PPC, the Planning and Priorities Committee. If you ask any civil servant about that, Sir, you would get the most vivid response and I am glad that up to now, certainly, not in the form in which it was left, because it became an opportunity for the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to wash her mouth on every civil servant that she could find.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am not in the habit of behaving like the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, who believes that by the volume and tambour of his voice he can intimidate people, but it does not work so, Sir. Perhaps it is a good thing that they do not have a PPC, because, Mr. Speaker, they would run everybody out of the room when they hear him.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the only time I believe that I hear my voice is when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East speaks and I usually jump around to see if it is I, or her echo.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please speak to the Resolution.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member needs not fear when he hears my voice.

Audio failed.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I know what I am going to do for the Honourable Member. There is a fitting that you put on a trumpet when you blow it that allows it to raise the octave much higher, so the tone moves from 'oou' to 'ooe'. So I am going to get one of them and see if it would assist me in me distinguishing who is speaking.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please speak to the Resolution.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Fortunately, I have never asked the Honourable Member for Christ Church South to like my voice but the one thing that I can assure him is that when I speak, there is substance, but when he speaks there is none.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, all morning we have been discussing the question of opinions and I am sure, Sir, you have established very clearly in the rules that all Honourable Members are entitled...

House A19, Sequence 20, 14:20:14

Tuesday, November 04, 2008

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, we have been discussing the question of opinion all morning, and I am sure that you have established very clearly in the rules...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute, Honourable Member, I have ruled on it, please let us proceed. It is not my intention to allow you to comment after I have ruled on the particular point of order. Please, let us proceed.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I am moving on, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Fine, thank you.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, there will continue to be certain divides between the way we approach the business of managing this economy and the way they did. The facts of the matter are that the lessons of the Administration of the Barbados Labour Party over the last 14 years are nothing to be proud of. They have to put that in their gall bladder and deal with it. That is one of the reasons why the people did what they did. The people rejected ineptness; inadequacies; inefficiencies, wastage; nepotism - they used that term this morning - lack of communication; and the kind of treatment I referred to of the civil servants by the Honourable Member at the PPC.

Sir, instead of projects being discussed, they were being ruled on. As she said in her own words, she knows more about the ABC Highway project than anybody else in here. She knows more about it than even the Honourable Member for St. George...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will always insist that you refer to Honourable Members properly.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, the Honourable Member knows more about the ABC Highway project than the Honourable Member for St. George North who was the substantive Minister of Transport and Works. The Honourable Member cannot hold up his head now because he knows that is a fact. The Honourable Member just went around and ruled like a ruff scruff, 'it gine be so', 'it gine be so'. That is a fact. The minutes are there to prove it.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. It is unfortunate that the Honourable Member wants to continue to mislead this House. Mr. Speaker, my involvement with the ABC Project only started in October

or November of last year. To the best of my recollection, Mr. Speaker, the project was already being executed for some 18 months by that stage. If therefore, the Honourable Member would now want to mislead this Chamber, I challenge him to produce any documentation showing my involvement in that project prior to November of last year when I would have three meetings to try and bridge the gap between the Ministry of Public Works' estimates and SSS's estimates. Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members keep insisting that there is only one Government, but when they have to take responsibility for their own portion of that continuum called Government they get nervous and start clutching at straws, but the facts are there. I cannot, neither can any of us, erase the minutes of those meetings. None of us can erase from Barbadians the wastage that was planned for the highway.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I would not agree to the Honourable Member continuing to mislead the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: In what way? Tell me please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have made a point and I would like a ruling. I defy and dare the Honourable Member to produce any documentation showing my involvement in that project prior to October of 2007. I was brought in as Minister of Economic Affairs to resolve one issue alone. The Ministry of Public Works contended that the project was valued at \$115 million for Phase I and SSS contractors contended it was \$125 million. Mr. Speaker, we settled at \$117 million which was less than a two per cent variation on the Ministry of Public Works' estimates ensuring that there were considerable savings to the Government of Barbados. If the Honourable Member is suggesting that my involvement goes beyond that...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have not heard the Honourable Member make reference to that. The Honourable Member has gone on.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: No, he has not gone on. He went back to the same minutes he refereed to prior to my intervention.

Mr. SPEAKER: What minutes? Please take your seat Honourable Member. I have ruled on that already. The Honourable Member has gone on. I have not heard him say that he is speaking about any specific thing which involves the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I spoke for the record what my involvement has been and I would state it again.

Mr. SPEAKER: Fine, that is in the record. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I speak for the record to make sure that the public is not misled. The Honourable Member has a way of making these references and walking away and having them printed. Let me advise that the \$117 million that the Honourable Member speaks about is merely for the first phase. In other words, there were another \$160 million pending for the flyovers, so do not let the Honourable Member walk out of here and make Bajans feel that the highway was going to cost \$117 million and that when you finish and it cost more than \$117 million or whatever...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because when I spoke on my intervention, I made it clear that the settlement related to Phase I. I never sought to tell this House that it related to anything beyond Phase I. If the Honourable Member is incapable of constructing a speech that is coherence, he must not try to foist it on Honourable Members in this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well in that case, his was a clarification because he did say Phase I.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, mine, correctly stated, was a mere re-clarification and a clarification by the Government, not the Leader of the Opposition, so that the people of Barbados know the facts.

Sir, we are going to continue to differ in the way we approach many of the issues in Barbados. We have said to Barbadians that the cost of fuel continues to be unpredictable and in that case, we have taken a position that as the cost of fuel goes up, the price of fuel may rise and as the cost of fuel comes down, the price of fuel would come down. We are saying to Barbadians from this exercise that we need to conserve and recognise where we can effect savings on our own so as to reduce our dependency on fossil fuel. All over the world, the new economy speaks to the question of using renewable energy as a way of offsetting the high cost of fossil. It is also politically astute because it reduces the power and the influence of those international governments who have control of these fossil fuel assets. Sir, there is nothing wrong with that policy, and we would continue to differ with the Barbados Labour Party in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, at any stage that we see fit, we reserve the right to make sectorial adjustments along the way as we manage this economy. Sir, as we look at the situation in Barbados, sectorial adjustments can be made at any stage.

Sir, Leader of the Opposition cannot run the Government from that seat. She had her turn and she ran the Government off rails. She and the Honourable Member for St. Peter ran this Government off the tracks. The train was on the side.

Mr. Speaker, there was a story of a recent accident - this is not to downplay the tragedy - in which they said that the engine driver was texting, so maybe the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was texting when the Government was running and the train went off the track.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Ever so welcome, wait for a call. The Honourable Member is pointing in the wrong direction when he is talking about texting and texting Cabinet decisions out of Cabinet. I am not in Cabinet. If he wants to text a message to the Honourable Members on the Frontbench, let him do that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat. I find that as no point of order.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I want to go back now to the question of this tourism thing. Mr. Speaker, as we discussed, the Hilton Hotel, and obviously the impending development in the entire Bay Street area, and decide on what on priorities we would accept and what actions we would take and indeed how we treat our entire tourism...

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North spoke in his contribution to his feeling about cruise tourism, that is fine. We can all have different feelings, but there are other views. I believe he has come to learn to respect other views.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who feel that cruise tourism eventually leads to an increase in land-based tourism because persons who come and visit for a day or a couple of hours are attracted by what they see and what they find here and then they come back.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, only last week, in Trinidad and Tobago, we met with the Florida Cruise Tourism Association and we were able to continue maintaining Barbados' position of trying to make sure that we are attractive as a hub. Sir, at the end of the exercise, it is about Barbadians and therefore we have to make sure that we can provide opportunities for Barbadians to work at our airport and seaport.

Sir, we have serious challenges in terms of being able to handle cruise tourism and freight shipping in the port. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members on that side would have left it that way. We have now got to take

decisions that are going to take this country forward in its ability to so marshal its forces that we can both handle cruise tourism, which is growing, which is solidly booked for 2009. We are now looking at 2010 with the people who sell the package, but we have got to make Barbados attractive. Sir, they know the cost of doing that business, they know there are certain concessions that have to be made sometimes.

Mr. Speaker, as has been said earlier by the Honourable Member for St. James South, the Barbados Tourism Authority is now investing \$10 million more in niche marketing, to ensure and to firm up our arrivals for this winter season. Sir, what is wrong with that? What nonsense are we hearing from the mouths of Honourable Members on that side.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you cannot accuse other Honourable Members of talking nonsense. Please withdraw that statement.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I have withdrawn the statement.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Sir, there is another point, and I thank you for your protection of us in relation to what we speak being categorised in that way. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber. Sir, nobody on this side has opposed the additional allocation of \$10 million by the Barbados Tourism Authority because quite frankly the \$10 million is below what we would normally give to the Barbados Tourism Authority in the last six months of the financial year and therefore we have never opposed it.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes in which to wind up.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I believe I should close my contribution in a way that would demonstrate to Barbadians what we in the Ministry and in the Government of Barbados are doing, to ensure the stability and the continuance of good governance in this country. Sir, if those on that side wish to criticise a policy which seeks to employ 182 persons in a national environmental enhancement programme, and to provide a cleanup programme of our environment, so that when our visitors and our people alike visit, we could be proud of our country, one in which we have seen the results of the neglect in terms of the kind of flooding that has visited Barbados over the last two months.

Mr. Speaker, this is not as a result of the work of the Democratic Labour Party, it is as a result of the neglect by the Barbados Labour Party, in dealing with the question of wells management and flooding mitigation in Barbados.

Sir, the Honourable Members over there have to accept blame for these situations. There are units in the Ministry that are not being effectively controlled and are not effectively being made able to contribute to the kind of development and the kind of effectiveness which Barbadians are looking for.

Mr. Speaker, the other project which we have put in place is one which sees us taking our school children to school and back, free of cost. Sir, they do not like to hear about that, because that is part of the Democratic Labour Party philosophy which has started in 1961, when our social policy included free education and free school meals. Sir, it is people like the membership of the Barbados Labour Party, and I believe they have very close relation with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East too, who fought against those things vigorously. They also fought against Barbados becoming an Independence nation.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked, my father, who was a member of the Barbados Labour Party, became a Member of this Honourable House in 1969, after Independence. Sir, I do not know what the Honourable Member is talking about when he refers to people in the Barbados Labour Party objecting.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you need to wind up at this time. Your time has essentially expired.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, in winding up, let me say that these programmes of a social character are required to maintain stability in the community. It would, therefore, redound to our benefit; it will build community leadership; it will build confidence in the community, where visitors and Barbadians alike are happy and comfortable to live in, and not only Barbados Labour Party sitting Members of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support to this matter before this Honourable House and to state at the onset that the issue being debated as it relates to the cleanup of hydrocarbon material which would have seeped into the environment around the former Mobile Oil Refinery at Needham's Point.

Sir, having grown up in that area, this concerns me deeply. Sir, during the 1970s, I remember as a young lad journeying to the Aquatic Beach, locally known as Pebbles Beach, where you had the outflow of the cooling water from the the Barbados Light & Power Co. Ltd. operation. It was called the 'Hot Pot' where the old folk, some of whom suffered with rheumatism and other arthritic problems, would get therapeutic treatment from that warm water emanating from those grills.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that while the Barbados Labour Party was in office for the last decade or so, they would have neglected the proper management of the remediation work necessary to clean up that spillage that occurred over the years during the operation of the Mobile/Esso Oil Refinery.

Mr. Speaker, in listening to the debate earlier today, I was a little confused with statements coming from the other side. Sir, I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and others on this side who indicate that it is not farfetched to conclude that these hydrocarbon petroleum products that would have oozed into the soil in the environs of the Mobil Oil Refinery, would end up in the area of the Hilton Hotel site.

Sir, I am not speaking from theory but from experience, many of us who would have bathed or journeyed to that area, would know that on occasions the water there at Carlise Bay would have been contaminated with oil. Oil could be seen floating on the water because there was piping running into sub-service of the marine environment, bringing the crude oil from the ships offshore, into the refinery. There were always problems. There was also an outflow drain, with waste water going into the sea, bringing that oily, smelly residue with it.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, this area has been seriously contaminated to such an extent that the health of persons who utilise that area would be at risk. Sir, this is a very serious environmental issue, one that should not be partisan.

Sir, to give the public at large and this Honourable House a general background to the development of this cleanup project, I am informed that as far back as 1998, after the closure of the Mobile Oil Refinery at Needham's Point, the Government of the day, the Barbados Labour Party, would have engaged the services of a consultants, Golder Associates Ltd., et al. They had concluded, inter alia, that the entire area of the refinery site was contaminated with these petroleum hydrocarbons products and that ground water would act as a medium to take this petroleum residue from the higher elevations - in the area of the Barbados Light & Power Co. Ltd., and from the eastern side, from other tank form, where there were other big tanks at the refinery - and take it to lower elevations, northward, southward and westward. Sir, it is now clear that the areas such as Pebbles Beach, the Military Cemetery, the Hilton Hotel Fitness Centre, the hotel itself, Grand Barbados, et cetera. Sir, that entire area is contaminated.

2.40 p.m.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: ...and ground water would act as a medium to take the petroleum residue, from the higher

elevations in the area of the Barbados Light & Power Company and the eastern and other tank farms, where there are those big tanks at the refinery, going to lower elevations westward, southward and northward, so that it is now clear that area such as Pebbles Beach, the Military Cemetery, the Hilton Hotel Fitness Centre, the Hilton Hotel itself, Grand Barbados Hotel, and the entire area of the Aquatic Gap is contaminated. Sir, I can also tell you that the Government would have engaged the services of Fiton Technologies Inc. to undertake the remediation work...

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Sir, this is a serious thing. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber, and by extension adding injury, perhaps to even this Government's economic opportunities. The reality is, the site at the Hilton was remediated before a single block was built. The reality also is that Fiton International Inc. was engaged, having successfully remediated the site on which the Hilton was built, to also clean up the other sites on which the Mobil Oil Refinery was located and for which there were concerns as to the implications from the Barbados Light & Power operations, hence the need for the wall to be built to be able to contain the remediation.

Sir, for the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown to get in here and talk about Grand Barbados and the Hilton Hotel being contaminated, and he called all of the various sites, gives the impression that is the state of affairs as of today. It is only this Government that will reap the consequences of any fallout, in relation to the environmental and tourism management of that area. Sir, it is a serious thing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: I agree that it is a very serious issue and I am casting the blame squarely at the last Barbados Labour Party Government.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House to cast the blame in relation to the Barbados Labour Party. The last negotiations with Mobil took place under a Democratic Labour Party Government, and in circumstances where Mobil was never requested to remediate. It was only when the Barbados Labour Party brought to an end Mobil's contract and its 15 per cent after tax return, given by the now Prime Minister, that we put on the table Mobil's liability for remediating the site, and Mobil accepted that liability. Sir, if there is any entity, that is responsible for bringing to an end decades of contamination, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West said it started in the 1940s, and he is right, so if there is any entity that is responsible for bringing to an end the environmental contamination, it was the Barbados Labour Party in getting

Mobil to accept the responsibility for cleaning up the site. Sir, that is how Fiton got engaged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, that is his interpretation.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Sir, I would not be phased by that intervention, because the facts speak for themselves. I am informed that as far back as April 2003, in the middle of the Barbados Labour Party Government's term of office, that in April 2003, the then Barbados Labour Party Cabinet, contracted the services of Fiton Technologies Inc., to do the remediation work. Sir, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on May 21, 2003, by the then Government, and on June 8, 2003, by Fiton, for the commencement of work prior to the preparation of a comprehensive contract.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I thank the Honourable Member for explaining and agreeing to everything I just said.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Sir, I reiterated, adamantly, that the approach of the Barbados Labour Party Government, at that time, was to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to allow the commencement of work, pending the preparation of a comprehensive contract. I am sure the public would be familiar with that form of governance by the Barbados Labour Party Government, as it related to the 3S project, where you have a Memorandum of Understanding, no contract being signed, sealed and delivered before work commenced, and we now have to clean up all of that mess. It is mismanagement, in my view, and poor governance by the Barbados Labour Party regime.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party Government entered into an arrangement with Fiton Technologies Inc. to do the remediation work. It was supposed to last twenty-one months, less than two years. Yet there were protracted delays that resulted in 2004, 2005 and 2006, with years passing by, and all of that oil residue seeping into environment in that area, and you do not call that mismanagement by the Barbados Labour Party Government, and we, the public of Barbados, have to suffer the consequences of the poor management of this situation. The facts speak for themselves.

It is clear from the various information, that came out of that arrangement, that the delays had cost implications because the project initially with the Fiton Technologies Inc. contract with and Government, was less than \$10 million. Now over \$10.4 million have been spent to date, including increase costs due to project delays, and Fiton, in a letter to Government dated March 19, 2007, raised concerns about the implications for additional cost.

Sir, they drew to the attention of those concerned, that the initial scope of works which were outlined in the

baseline study, years ago, were not sufficient. They realised that because of the continual seepage of this hydrocarbon free product into the environment, the situation was getting worse, day by day.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East mentioned the tremendous implications for the tourism project in Barbados, and I agree, but the Barbados Labour Party at the time did not seem to bother. They allowed the...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we still want to maintain an environment where the Honourable Member can make his presentation reasonably uninterrupted. Please keep down the asides.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Sir, the contractor, Fiton Technologies Inc. outlined specifically areas of concern. They said that areas of problems of contamination, not identified in the Baseline Study, nor covered by the contract between Government and Fiton, included areas such as the access road to the former Barbados National Terminal Limited, Sparks Gap, the Island Inn Hotel, Brown Sugar Restaurant, north of the former refinery site, Grand Barbados, and at the North West corner of the former refinery site. They have been doing test holes and found that in recent times you have been getting...

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. It seems to me that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown is reading. It is clear he is reading from a document and we would like it to be made a document of the House. It would help us and we would not have to listen to him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, you all know that the Honourable Member cannot be prevented from relying on his notes only.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Sir, if the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown claimed the privilege that there are his notes, if he asserts that, of course, I abide by your ruling. The Honourable Member has not said whether there are his notes, or whether he is reading from a document. It would be good if he would lay claim to the notes before you rule, Sir.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Sir, I take copious notes and I am reading from my notes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Sir, the areas that Fiton Technologies Inc. indicated that the scope of works has to be broadened to deal with the cleanup include Carlisle Bay, Aquatic Gap, Pebbles Beach, the Mobil Park, Hilton Hotel,

South Beach, on the south side of the east tank farm. Sir, the issue is very serious and no political grandstanding would solve the problem. This Democratic Labour Party Government gives the public the assurance, that we will stop at nothing, within the law, that this mess left by the Barbados Labour Party Government will be cleaned up on behalf of the future viability of tourism and indeed the public at large in our country.

Sir, this is very serious.

14.50 p.m.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: ... Barbados Labour Party Government is cleaned up, on behalf of the future viability of tourism and indeed the public at large in our country.

Mr. Speaker, this is very serious. What is further, this Government is bound now by certain arrangements, entered into by the Barbados Labour Party Government, because in the agreement between Esso and Government in relation to this cleanup issue, it was made clear that any reasonable claim to support the need to expand the scope of work outside the original baseline study would have to be supported by Government. Indeed, the last Minister of Energy, under the Barbados Labour Party Government, it is reported that on the eve of the general election, met with FITON and agreed to take to Cabinet a proposal to allow FITON to extend their scope of works. So the Barbados Labour Party Government was fully supportive of the claims by FITON, that this contamination of the environment in that area had spread far and wide way beyond the plant where the refinery was housed. I am saying that the Barbados Labour Party must be blamed for neglecting that issue to reduce the speed at which this remediation work was done. This is very costly.

Sir, there are projections that this whole cleanup will cost the Government over \$60 million. Sir, involved in this process is a lot of technology. There is a special bio-remediation phyton treatment that has to be done. In some instances, the depth of the soil contamination in that area, is between 3 metres and 6 metres and one proposal which would cost over US\$23 million, I believe, would involve scraping off that contaminated top soil and taking it to another site. They talk about interring it at another location, or burning it and bringing back that residue to filling in the area excavated at the Mobil site. Sir, millions of dollars are involved in cleaning up this mess. It is a very serious environmental issue.

Sir, we agreed that the whole area at the Needhams's Point/Carlise Bay stretch is prime beach front area that investors around the world would love to engage in terms of developing hotel operations in that area, but that cannot be feasible unless we clean up that site. I am saying it is a shame that the Barbados Labour Party Government did not

see this as a priority, the need to expedite the cleanup of that area and to get hands on in terms of solving any contentious issues, so that the work could proceed with great alacrity.

Sir, the public at large spoke in their numbers on January 15, 2008, and the Democratic Labour Party Government is here to rescue the people from the jaws of the Barbados Labour Party mismanagement. Sir, talking about jaws, do not let me forget - the Honourable Member for St. James South reminded the Chamber about Hotel and Resorts Limited, Savanah Hotel, in that general area. I remember Eastry House. The former Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, wherever he is today, would remind his newly claimed from on the Barbados Labour Party side, of our visit, when he was a member of the Democratic Labour Party Opposition at the time, to Eastry House. I was part of that delegation. We saw it on the TV cameras. We saw the gross incompetence of the Barbados Labour Party in that regard, Gems of Barbados. At Eastry House we saw a dilapidated site. All of the rotten ceiling falling all over the place, the boards ripped apart and vandalised, no proper security. Sir, do you know what happened? It was being documented in Government circles, back then, that millions of dollars were supposed to be spent at Eastry House, renovating the area and when the cameras and the Democratic Labour Party team, headed by the former Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, visited, we saw no evidence of any repairs. Rather, we saw a dilapidated dirty place. Where did the millions of dollar go? The public will not rest until we uncover that mystery.

The former Honourable Member for St. Michael North West likes to do a lot of research. He should really go and research now that he is in the jaws of the Barbados Labour Party, and let the public know where that money went.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the facts are clear. It is a crying shame of the gross mismanagement of our country by the Barbados Labour Party Government, and we can assure the public of Barbados that the Democratic Labour Party Government, is serious about revolutionising the tourism product in our country, but let us reiterate that this Democratic Labour Party while propelling tourism will not sell Barbados out.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter, when he was Prime Minister and Leader of the Barbados Labour Party Government, boasted that land must fetch the highest economic value. Even the public library in Speightstown would have been removed, because they wanted investors to come in and take up every inch of beach front property in Barbados for tourism. So no windows to the sea for Barbadians. Within a decade most of the west coast has been lost to tourism development, hardly any access to

these beaches by the public. The Democratic Labour Party understands that Barbados must be first, and Barbadians must be able to enjoy the beaches where Jack said we could not bathe there, but the Democratic Labour Party said “that beach belong to we”.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the course of this debate has proceeded, as if contamination in the area of the Mobil refinery, rests at the feet of the Barbados Labour Party, or perhaps at the feet of any administration. I believe we have to be frank and we have to accept the facts as there are. The Mobil refinery was there on that site for five or more decades, during which time the Democratic Labour Party would have been at the reign of Government and also the Barbados Labour Party would have been at the reign of Government. It is an element of startling naivete of the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, to suggest that the contamination of Needham's Point rests on the shoulders or the backs of the Barbados Labour Party. In fact, if the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown would have followed...

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: On a point of order. I was not in any way suggesting that the contamination of itself rest with the Barbados Labour Party. I am saying that the lack of Barbados Labour Party making the cleanup of that contamination a priority was an area that condemns the Barbados Labour Party Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: It is the Barbados Labour Party recognising the tremendous potential of the area of Needhams's Point, negotiated with Mobil for the closure, so that those lands could in fact reap its highest economic value. That is a fact. So those negotiations proceeded on the basis that Mobil refinery would be closed, there will be some element of compensation for them but they would have to foot the bill for the remediation of the site.

Sir, let me make it clear. The administration that I was a part of, as we look at all of our projects, we considered in every context the environment. The fact is, when we drafted the Energy Bill, for the first time we put in significant provisions to deal with the remediation aspects of recovering oil and gas resources. I am certainly satisfied that not only in our speech but also in our action, we paid careful heed to the environment in relation to any remediation issue...

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am certainly satisfied that not only in our speech but in our actions, we paid careful heed to the environment, in relation to any remediation issues as they arise. I believe, Sir, like the Leader of the Opposition that this debate has proceeded on what could be called, a false footing.

The Minister of Health whom, I believe, is acting as Minister of Finance, since he led off this Resolution, sought to fit this debate within the context of a pollution issue, a callous regard for the environment. These may not be his words but that is certainly the import of what he was suggesting. He sought to place this debate, Sir, squarely within the boundaries of contamination of the site.

Mr. Speaker, what are the facts? I believe that the records will show the facts. I would ask the Honourable Member who led off the debate to respond to this particular item. Was the remediation of the Hilton site completed at the time when the construction was started? It is a yes or no. Secondly, was the remediation not signed off on, by Hilton International, before it was started? We also need to ask the Honourable Member: What were the claims of the contractor, in relation to this \$8.2 million?

Mr. Speaker, the Resolution said clearly that it is for the settlement of a dispute. The Honourable Member has skirted all around what is this \$8.2 million dispute. I cannot find in anything that he said, any clear statement of what is the kernel of the dispute between the contractor and Needhams Point Limited.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if the Honourable Member were to peruse his file carefully, he would recognise that the issue of contamination was not central, if at all relevant to the issue of any faulty foundations. Sir, he has led us down this path to deflect us really from what may well be the central issue here.

Mr. Speaker, let us not fool ourselves. Major construction projects have disputes. There will be delays occasioned sometimes by weather; or delays occasioned by mistakes in the design. This is not an issue that is unique to any project which is being run by the Government. Ask the other engineers, if there are any engineers in the House, who may be able to comment on such a matter. There may not be, such an individual whom, I believe, could well admit honestly that as long as you have a major construction project, you can have delays; for heavens sake, Mr. Speaker, even if you are just building a small house, you can have delays. Therefore, let us not try to blow this situation up into one of such stark uniqueness that has never before been seen; that there is a dispute between a contractor and a contracting party to the cost of \$8 million, \$800 million, or \$8. The fact is that there are disputes. I am quite sure, Sir, that if we looked in the Annals of History at the large capital works project...

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I said, 'Annals', but some Honourable Members might prefer to look some place else but if that excites them; they may see it as a cultural thing, so I leave that to them.

The point is, Sir, I am quite sure that if we looked into the records, we will see similar disputes arising on the Democratic Labour Party projects. Sir, going forward, we will be in this House next year, or the year after and we will be discussing none of these issues. Therefore, we really must not become alarmists and try to make the Barbadian public believe that something like this is as a result of mismanagement of the Barbados Labour Party administration.

Sir, there were project managers on this site of the highest professional quality. There were engineers, including the engineering firm of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. In fact, he might have been so highly recommended that I am well aware that his friend got some work at Arch Cot, too. Now, of course, we may have to reconsider the byproduct.

The fact is, Sir, that there were faulty designs produced by that Honourable Member's firm, a peer review was conducted, an individual had to be called from the University of West Indies to conduct that peer review and to carry out the design changes. It so happened that the individual who had to do the peer review on the design changes was one of the Professors. I do not know how the Professor felt about that, but that is a fact and the Honourable Member who led off the debate could well accept it and move on.

Mr. Speaker, it has been argued that the Needhams Point Holdings Limited is not making any money. The word, "bankrupt" was not used but it has been said that we continue to subsidise the Hilton Hotel.

Mr. Speaker, in circumstances where the Hilton Hotel is making no money, and the Hilton continues to be subsidised, a person would have to question how it becomes a workable equation for the Government to guarantee Needhams Point Holdings Limited whose only source of revenue, as far as I know, is the income from the Hilton Hotel. Sir, if the Hilton is so moribund, how does this administration try to sell to us, with cherries on top that it makes a good and bankable financial management decision for the Government to guarantee a loan of \$8.2 million to Needhams Point Holdings Limited, so that they can pay off Johnston International Limited. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the Acting Minister of Finance said that it is at a better interest rate than the market.

Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty with the Government guaranteeing this loan, I do not believe my side does but, certainly, Sir, when the justification that is posited by the Honourable Member is perhaps a little difficult to follow, or perhaps a little difficult to swallow, then we must have concerns.

I repeat. Hilton is moribund. Needhams Point Holdings Limited's only source of revenue is the Hilton Hotel, but we will guarantee a 15-year loan to Needhams Point to pay off a debt at a better interest rate.

Now, how does a Government sell that to the National Insurance Board? I certainly believe that the National Insurance Board, before it agrees to take on such a loan would, certainly, especially under the guise of the most astute Honourable Member, have to question what is the justification, and how can we sell this as an investment.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side are convinced of the wisdom of the investment that we made in Needhams Point Holdings Limited and we continue to stand by it. We are convinced of the wisdom that we made to the Hilton Hotel. I am quite sure that the Hilton, which may not be making any money, certainly it stands out and compliments the Barbados tourism product, in a way that is salutary.

The other side may reject that if they wish, but all they have to do is to go to a place like Trinidad and look at the Trinidad Hilton, built around the same time as the Barbados Hilton and come away from there asking yourself: How does this sell my country? Sir, we stand by our investment in Needhams Point. We stand by our investment in the Hilton Hotel. We support the Resolution but I believe, Sir, that the truth must be told.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members must accept that the issue of remediation is an issue, while it may have some connection to it, it is not the central element of the dispute.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Member, who led the debate, is saying is that as a result of the remediation challenges in relation to the Hilton Hotel, and the work was done, is that the delay costs this Government \$8.2 million. The Honourable Member has the file, we do not. I invite him, Sir, to tell us plainly and simply what is on the file.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise very briefly in this debate in support of this Resolution of a

guarantee of a loan in relation to the very vital work which is required to be done at Needham's Point in relation to the cleaning up of that area.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but say again that we would continue to have these episodes of denial. The other side continues to be in a denial syndrome as it relates to the many things that we would continue to unfold, I do not believe that this would be the only one, in relation to their stewardship.

Mr. Speaker, \$8.2 million is nothing to scoff at. The point which was being made earlier by my colleague from the City of Bridgetown is that we are not saying that the other side is responsible for any environmental disaster in the way that they have put it. However, more proactive planning and a better response within a specific time would most likely not have cost this Government \$8.2 million at this stage. I believe that message has to be sent.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch very briefly on a number of issues, which I believe are bigger issues in this debate that ought not to be missed. Mr. Speaker, anything that threatens any aspect of our tourism product must be considered important. We are very vulnerable to environmental hazards. I believe this incident at Needham's Point really ought to be looked at and perhaps be even more intensely studied with a view to ensuring that we can buffer ourselves in the future perhaps against any similar recurrences.

Mr. Speaker, from an environmental protection point of view what I hope would happen, as the next step in this episode, is that those who are responsible for this environmental problem be held accountable. Mr. Speaker, while we are guaranteeing loans and are trying to ensure that the environmental hazard does not present a further problem and threaten particularly our underground resources and by extension the very important tourist beach area in that area, I believe that we ought to put steps in place to ensure that those responsible for this particular episode do not get off scotch-free.

I believe too, Mr. Speaker, that this incident points to perhaps the need for tightened legislation in relation to the potential hazard in relation to industrial concerns. I believe that Mobil and the Esso operators really ought to have been bound by higher standards in relation to the industrial operations which would have occurred at that particular point.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is not too late to review our legislation to ensure that we tighten up to make sure that this particular scenario is really governed by tighter regulations and laws. Mr. Speaker, it must be a part of our tourism master plan.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we need to see what has happened at Needham's Point as perhaps a test case in relation to other areas in Barbados where there could be potential hazards waiting. We could think of our plan where we are looking to further develop the north for tourism. We are aware of the presence of the Arawak Cement Plant in that area. I believe that we have to be proactive and ensure that standards are set to ensure that if hazards occur they are quickly dealt with and that the very crucial issue of clean up is not left to the taxpayers of Barbados but that those corporate concerns that are responsible are quickly brought to the table to clean up what they have left.

Mr. Speaker, I do have a few concerns which I hope the current Minister of Tourism will deal with and address in a very profound and comprehensive way as it relates to the whole question of the protection of our beaches, in particular focussing on the Needham's Point Development. Mr. Speaker, I believe that what may have escaped the other side in planning the redevelopment of the Hilton is that the Hilton development ought to have been seen as a model development in relation to tourism in Barbados. From my observation, I believe that the neglect of our beach in the area of the Hilton plant has caused some very alarming erosions, therefore the use of that beach needs to be looked at in a very serious way.

Mr. Speaker, what we have at the Hilton is something that ought not to be replicated in Barbados. I have raised this already with the Minister of Tourism, but I believe that the very high fences which we find at the Hilton Hotel need to be removed almost immediately. It is almost a separation of the Hilton Hotel - which is, after all, part of the heritage of Barbadians - from Barbadians and visitors alike enjoying the beach in that area. Mr. Speaker, I believe that fence is really an eyesore, and it ought not to be seen as an example for other tourists beaches in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we ought to seriously look at ensuring that very high fence, which looks very divisive, is removed and that the beach area at Needham's Point can be rehabilitated and made aesthetically pleasing for both the persons who occupy the Hilton Hotel as visitors and certainly those who use the beach.

Mr. Speaker, I have visited destinations such as Hawaii where there are very stringent laws in place to ensure that hotel plants do not set up any physical barriers that may be deemed to be separating the hotel plant and therefore becoming an impediment to the use of the beach in that particular country.

Mr. Speaker, as Barbados becomes more of an intensified tourist product where every inch of the beach would have to be accessible and have to be developed in

the interest of our foreign exchange earning capacity, I believe that we would have to find that mix and that blend so that we do not send a signal that we are creating and setting up physical barriers to the enjoyment of our beach.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the second point I would like to make is that certainly when it comes to the question of the development of our tourism product and issues pertaining to the impact of the international environment, I believe in this debate we had a number of inferences and statements made which perhaps ought to be more guardedly reviewed, in relation to what is happening globally and what is impacting on Barbados.

I believe it would be madness to imagine that the global economic crisis is not affecting small open economies such as Barbados. Therefore, any slowdown or fallout, in terms of tourist arrivals and the impact on tourism on countries such as Barbados, have to be connected to what is happening globally, particularly as it relates to what has occurred in the United States of America, as a result of the economic fallout and the financial meltdown, propelled by the developments on Wall Street. It is a profound source that will continue to haunt destinations such as Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, what I believe has to be looked at, and certainly in this debate to date, although we have had a number of statements made from the other side in relation to whether or not we as Government are managing our tourism industry in a proactive manner, what has been missing are perhaps ideas or suggestions from the other side.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard no suggestions from the other side as to what they would do in a similar situation. What has happened to date is that this Government has already unfolded a number of measures that are designed to ensure that those international impacts and the ricochet from the international financial dilemma, even though we know it will have to impact on us, that it does not impact on us in a manner that causes us any undue worry, and that we could cushion the impact of what is unfolding globally. Mr. Chairman, I believe that certainly the proposal and the idea of looking at the unconventional tourism markets and basically broadening the tourism product must be complimented and seen as a movement in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I believe what we have to do in the future, certainly not only in relation to this particular environmental problem that has occurred at Needham's Point, but because of the volatility and vulnerability of our tourism product, is to unfold a number of measures which are designed to protect our tourism product, not only from

international financial fallout but from any potential impact which could cause us significant problems in relation to our vital tourist market.

Sir, I feel that we have to get in a protective mode. I believe we have to adopt measures that are designed to ensure that where we go from here, we will have almost a cushion and a number of measures designed to ensure that our tourism product can withstand a number of potential challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague, in relation to what is happening in the United States of America and the Presidential Election. Sir, certainly the world has not only been shaken by the financial fallout and the impact that it would cause but I believe that we are in a waiting mode, in relation to what is happening in the United States of America. I believe that our potential visitors from North America and Europe are also in a waiting mode. Sir, that obviously is feeding in to the caution which is now in the tourism market world.

I agree with various pronouncements that have been made, not necessarily in this Honourable Chamber, but by international observers, in terms of the movement of tourists globally. They have said that the developments in North America, particularly the Presidential Election in the United States of America and the shocks that have actually been waved in other markets, have really brought about a number of cautions in relation to international travelers. What we are seeking to do is to put measures in place, to ensure that caution does not become a long-term situation. Sir, I believe that certainly the results of the Presidential Election would have an impact in relation to how visitors are looking at their plans. Sir, certainly persons who are planning their vacations will begin to accelerate their plans in relation to what is happening in their own market.

Mr. Speaker, in a nutshell, I believe the situation at Needham's Point needed some proaction on the part of the last administration. That lack of proaction has cause us.... I believe the \$8.2 million is basically only the beginning because there are only a number of measures that have to be put in place to clean up, not only the particular site which Mobile operated, but we do know that the environmental threat has spread to other areas which we know we have to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, this debate is not so much about casting blame, it is about seeing and considering the developments at Needham's Point as an example of what could happen, and that certainly in a destination such as Barbados, perhaps we need to have the kind of robust legislation that is of such a nature that it protects our tourism plant from these kind of developments.

Mr. Speaker, with those words, I pledge my support to this Resolution. I believe the measures that are needed now after this, to ensure that we could quickly further Needham's Point, that, of course, we could move the fence, clean up the beach and bring back to that very vital tourism area the kind of ambiance that is necessary, so that we could bring about a more diversified look and feel to our tourism product in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. JAMES D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution before this Honourable House and to say that the Resolution, in some aspects, represents a failure on our part to deal or to treat the whole question of environmental protection in a more serious way. Sir, maybe it might mean that in future, for products such as these, that we at least ensure that the kind of due diligence required, in respect to these things, are done in a way that does not sacrifice the environment at all.

Sir, to date, very often one hears persons asking for persons within the Environmental Planning Unit and other agencies of Government to make haste and approve large projects, without, at the same time, trying to ensure that the kind of investigation required, if we are not at the same time going to compromise the environment, are done. Sir, that is one of the things I think we need to recognise. I think we need to recognise that we should ensure that we do not try to push forward projects without, at the same time, ensuring that we do not do damage to the environment in the future.

Mr. Speaker, in that respect, we would have to say that the kind of resources required to fix a problem which, in a sense the incoming administration could not have foreseen, is unfortunate. What is also unfortunate too is the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in that regard, when, at the same time, this is a Government that has clearly demonstrated the kind of fiscal responsibility, where we have at least tried to ensure that the sectors of the economy which need protecting are, indeed, protected.

3.30 p.m.

...at least try to ensure that the sectors of the economy are protected and, at the same time, ensure that the sectors of the economy that need still to be protected that they are protected as well. Sir, at the same time, we are hearing that we should be even more responsible by doing other things that they are suggested by saying that we should give back more to the public without recognising that we have tried, at all times, to try to ensure that we protect the disadvantaged sectors within the economy. Sir, one of the points we need to recognise, as far as that is concerned, is that Barbados is a tourist destination; we are trying to develop a peculiar destination and I believe that

one of the things we are going to have to pay careful attention to is that we do not engage in developments which also comprise our destination for its peculiar nature.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked a lot about beach land that we have on the west coast without recognising that a lot of the developments we have seen coming into Barbados in the last two years or three years have in some cases not enhanced Barbados as a tourism destination. Sir, in some cases, you have visitors coming to Barbados and complaining that they feel hedged in because of the kinds of developments that we have seen taking place on the west coast of Barbados. Sir, in that respect, the previous Barbados Labour Party administration has to take full responsibility for things such as these. Therefore, I should think that we have to congratulate the Government for moving in such a speedy fashion to at least try to resolve a situation which they found placed upon them and without any prior warning.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at what the Government is currently doing, as far as tourism is concerned, you have to congratulate them because at least we see initiatives in terms of trying to attract visitors from other destinations and trying to beef up the agencies that are responsible for tourism promotion. I also want to ask the House to recognise that one of things the Government is trying to promote is the whole concept of community tourism. Sir, I hope that St. Michael West Central would be able to participate in the aspect of community tourism because we recognise that if we are not engaged in these kinds of projects; if we do not act quickly to resolve the issues that we are faced with, we can compromise the tourism product.

Sir, I want to encourage Government to continue in current vein and also to look at the concept of community tourism even more than we have been doing in the past under the previous administration. In that regard, I want to encourage the Government to look at community activities all over Barbados and see the extent to which local communities and the activities that they engage in, could actually be included as part of our tourism strategy in terms of trying to promote tourism.

Sir, that is why we have to give importance to this particular Resolution and ask that the Government move forward very speedily in terms of trying to resolve the difficulties that we currently face. Sir, in that regard, I want to give support to the Resolution and, Sir, I thank you very much for allowing me to speak on it.

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

Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to this Resolution and in doing so, to caution this House that we spend time today looking

back at the history of this problem, at its genesis and what was done wrong but to caution that having recognised what was done wrong that we learn from those mistakes as we go forward. Sir, in that regard, I join my voice to those of my colleagues, who have just proceeded me.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about development and this administration is intent on developing, carrying this country forward and as we do so, sustainable development has to be our policy and our philosophy. This means we have to develop without risking our environment; our environment for today and for the future, for ourselves, for our children and for our children's children.

Mr. Speaker, we have been chided because certain documents and certain speeches that came from this House, like that of the Budgetary Proposals did not include words like climate change. I have said time and time again that it is okay to use those words but that our actions have to speak louder than our words. We have to show that this administration is prepared to develop responsibly; prepared to make sure that all developments, whether done by locals or whether it is done by international conglomerates, that they do not harm our environment.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to it a moment ago that too often we have developers who find the environmental impact assessments to be burdensome and they try to get around them, try shortcuts and try to beseech the political directorate of the day to allow them to proceed without them because the cost and the time are too consuming. Sir, we know that from time to time, this may have been allowed but we need to protect our environment strictly and rigidly. We need to ensure that no amount of money will allow us to sell our birthright and our heritage. Sir, the view sometimes that you would hear from developers is that the people in the Ministry of environment or the people responsible for overseeing this are exaggerating and they call them names like tree-huggers. I have heard somebody say that they are simply technocrats who went overseas and learn a practice that is not applicable here and that they just want to show what they have learnt and institute it here. They have said that about things our environmental assessment but we cannot have that view of those technocrats or those persons who have been appointed to protect our environment. These people are no less than guardians of our heritage and if we have sent them on courses or sent them overseas to study; then these people are skilled because they have been trained and we have to allow them to protect our heritage. Sir, when they decide that something is not good for our environment, I do not think that any political directorate should be irresponsible enough to say that we should forget the experts and that we need the project because of the money that is involved. Sir, we cannot be that reckless with our environment.

Mr. Speaker, what we need to do is something that has not been done yet. We will hear people talk about what should have been done and what we should be doing but what should have been done and has not done, is the legislation to protect our environment and so, we have to move quickly to ensure that the legislation is prepared and passed that protects our land and our marine environment. Sir, it must be adhered to and there must be penalties with that; penalties that are not so slight that there are just minor fees that international developers would feel they could just pay a few hundred bucks and go ahead and develop where and how they feel. Sir, we have to take greater care.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard today, in what was described as the ground water contamination, that there is even contamination with lead. We have heard of the impact this can have like seepage into our ocean that will damage our reefs and coastline. Sir, our reefs are there to protect our coast and when our coastline is damage...

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO: We have been talking a lot about the tourism product but our tourism product is more than the hotels we build and it is more than community tourism. We know that our beaches are a big part of our tourism products so we have to protect our reefs that protect our beaches. Sir, our fishery depends on our reefs and if we allow this kind of seepage into the ocean, we damage our fishery. It has been found that there are fewer turtles nesting in that area. It has not been clearly identified if this is the cause of the contamination from that development but it has to be a source of concern for us, so we have to make sure the legislation is passed and we will move to do.

Mr. Speaker, I caution that as we look to explore offshore oil that we take this also as a lesson, that this administration sends a clear message to all concerned that they cannot treat our environment willy-nilly, that they will have to abide by any legislation that we put in place for the protection of our environment.

15.40 p.m.

Dr. The Hon. E.R. Byer Suckoo: This is not the resolution but this is important to our development. The same will hold true for all who want to develop hotels and any other tourism here. Sir, whether you want to develop a play park, a theme park or anything, you will have to abide by the rules that will guide the protection of our environment.

Sir, we know that around the world there are tourists today who not only look at the cost of travelling to a country, hence the need to make ourselves appealing to tourists. There are tourists today that look to see how green

your tourism package is before they travel, therefore, we must make sure that we project a green package; to protect the environment; that our carbon footprint is not seen to be harmful; and we can offer things like carbon exchanges to tourists. These things are in place for tourists coming from the larger markets, and we must be prepared to be a part of that market. Sir, we talk about tapping into other markets. We have to also appeal to tourists who attracted by green tourism.

Sir, I want to make the point that it is the intention, as I understand it, of this administration to protect our heritage. I daresay that no amount of money should cause us, as I said earlier, to be reckless with our environment but to develop responsibly. As I said for the Month of the Environment, in June, "Living Sustainably is Living Responsibly", or that developing sustainably is developing responsibly and it behooves every one of us, who holds office in this Honourable House to adhere to that, because our development and governing Barbados are not just about today, it is about the future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution and say from the outset that, there is a lot of hullabaloo about nothing. I believe that when a Government can bring a package to help pay for either a cleanup or a bill that was left by a previous administration and it is currently shown that this particular item is worthwhile, we all need to support it. I believe that a lot of work has been done in the Needham's Peninsula, by the former administration. I believe when we took office in 1994, a lot of work had to be done, and I refer to the Mobil oil site. A lot of cleaning up had to be done. To say that the Peninsula is still a problem is not true. The Government must not send the signal...

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The debate has made it very clear that the only area of that Peninsula that has been cleaned up is the one which now sits the new Hilton Hotel. The whole question of the FITON contract on the Mobil land area and the impact of the Barbados Light and Power is what is under discussion. The Honourable Member has to stop misleading the Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. George North, continue please.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown made a point that in 1998, a

contract was signed for the cleaning up of the site and a lot...

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: On a point of order. Sir, the contract with FITON - the arrangements with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and FITON was not in 1998 but, indeed, in 2003.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, an effort was made for the cleaning up of the site. To send the message that there is contamination in that Peninsula is sending the wrong signal not only to Barbadians, but to other parts of the world. This Government has been sending a lot of wrong signals across the Caribbean. Sir, from January 2008, this Government has been sending signals that they do not want Caribbean people to come here. There have been a lot of bad statements coming from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. He went to New York...

His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is his opinion. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, no one gave the Honourable Member for St. Lucy a ticket to New York.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, the Honourable Member went to New York...

His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House. The Honourable Member is mixing up a ticket with a car. I can assure you that ticket to New York was Government business, and I can account for that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I could not believe that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would go to New York and make such a statement on Government's funds. I could not believe that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy while in New York would make such a statement affecting our tourism product. Yet the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have us believe that he is a champion, and very patriotic. The Honourable Member behaves as though he is the only speaker. In fact, he has been championing Community Tourism over the past 14 years in this Honourable House, but the statement which he made is

damaging and I will show you in my presentation why it has been damaging to our tourism product.

Sir, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has to be careful when he speaks. He cannot send a signal today that there is contamination on the Peninsula. It is wrong.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House.

Mr. SPEAKER: In what way?

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: The Honourable Member is suggesting that I am misleading the country about the level of contamination. I am saying that the contractor FITON has reported that the latest investigation has proven that there is a huge plume of hydrocarbon under buildings such as the Island Inn Hotel, Brown Sugar Restaurant and Grand Barbados. The facts are there.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: That is an opinion. That is an opinion from this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member is a Member of Cabinet, and to send a signal across the world that there is contamination will destroy this country.

Sir, I recently got a call from a resident of Mason Hall Street.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: I am always in Mason Hall Street. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West knows that we have always frequented the Nelson Street and Church Village areas. So there is nothing new.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: He is my friend. We have had many drinks in the City. He knows full well that he must represent his constituency. I said this to him numerous times and that rather than come in here make people believe that something happened in the last Government - that the last Government did this and that, the people in the City want to hear what the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown is doing for them especially as it relates to the Needham's Point peninsula and if he going to continue the Board Walk that the last administration started from Needham's Point to Bay Street. We have done a lot of work in the Bay Street area. The Honourable Member knows that is so. He gets in here and say that there is no open window to the sea. He does not know that the old

Esso site is at least a window to the sea, right in his constituency. He does not know about that.

Sir, the Honourable Member does not know that the former Government's intention was to allow Bay Street to remain as an open window to the sea. Is he continuing these policies? Is he talking about...

Asides.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we have to be careful because we know, and he must remember that before 1994, the Mobil agreement was signed between the Democratic Labour Party and Mobil. All of us know that the Democratic Labour Party arranged to give Mobil a number of concessions after tax. The Democratic Labour Party and Mobil were in bed together, so any problem with the cleanup of Mobil site must refer to the Democratic Labour Party and he has to understand this, because they had the original contract with Mobil. Sir, we pointed out in 1994 that it would cause serious problems.

Mr. Speaker, I go further. The present Democratic Labour Party Government must get on with doing the things that they are supposed to do so as to find employment for the people.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Government has nothing to do. Sir, for the last six months they came in here with only money Resolutions, and no main programme. I have not seen any Bills coming before Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Hon. K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Sir, for the Honourable Member to say that this Government has done nothing for the last six months and that we only come to this House with money Resolutions is misleading the House.

Sir, the Government came to Parliament and approved the Acquisition of land at Constant so that houses can be built. We started the NICE programme to look after the draining programme and the debushing programme in this country.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East must show us if there was any major piece of legislation that was brought to this House by the present Government. I am not talking about whether or

not it was good. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North brought a Resolution and I am thankful because it is a very good thing. In fact, he has kept his word, Sir, and he one of the few persons, I daresay, who keeps his word in the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are essentially imputing improper motives to the other Honourable Members.

Please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that all the Members on that side are not Honourable. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is an Honourable Member. I am not saying that he keeps his word, though, but I am saying he is one of the few and, of course, I am not referring to my friend for St. Philip West.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of work has to be done by the present Government. The Government has to get on with the job of governing the country and stop bellyaching every time they come in here. For example, the Democratic Labour Party Government came in here today with much exuberance about bringing WestJet to Barbados but the contract was signed by WestJet two years ago, under the Barbados Labour Party Government.

Sir, if you look at the statement that the Chairman said.

His Ex. Mr. Denis St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member would have to be misleading the House. It is impossible for any Government to sign a contract two years ago and it to take two years for an airline to get from Canada to Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not understand the cycle. I once said in this House that most programmes take one to two years, and the Government would soon understand that most of their programmes will take two to two-and-a-half years. The Chairman of the Barbados Tourism Authority in yesterday's newspaper, made the point that negotiations started with the West Jet more than two years ago. Then fact is that all the work was done by a former Minister of Tourism, Noel Lynch.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying we know that Air Canada had two wide-bodied jets coming to Barbados every day for the last three years. In the last year, a small Air Canada jet was coming to Barbados.

His Ex. Mr. Denis St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is giving the public the impression that the change to small jet occurred under the Democratic Labour Party, when the Democratic Labour Party was only in Government for 10 months and he said it happened for the last year. It meant, Sir, that it happened under his stewardship.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, one has to commend the Government because I think there is a need to attract more tourists from the Canadian market. It is important that the Government attracts tourism out of Canada. I applaud them for continuing a programme in moving tourists from West Canada, Eastern Canada and, generally, the north American market.

The truth of the matter is that when you look at the European tourists and the north American tourists, one knows that tourism, as far as the English market is concerned, is more profitable and Governments over the years have been concentrating on spending more money in the European market and they will continue to do so, and that is why the Prime Minister tonight, most likely, is in England, unless he went there to watch the speech of Obama. Can you imagine that he is watching the speech of Obama and we are going to be here until midnight tonight?

His Ex. Mr. Denis St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that the Prime Minister has not concentrated on the Canadian market, when everybody knows that the first place the Prime Minister went was to Canada.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Ambassador for CARICOM is now making his pronouncement out of New York. Mr. Speaker, you studied that?

His Ex. Mr. Denis St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that the only time a politician can speak is when he is in Barbados. Everybody knows that we knew about the flyovers, not in Barbados but from New York, while the same Honourable Member was in New York.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, he is entitled to give his impressions.

Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Honourable Member, all I am saying is that the Ambassador to CARICOM is now going to New York as part of his jurisdiction to make pronouncements. Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have ruled on the point of order. Please proceed.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that it is a serious thing, that his Government has lost its control. The Ambassador to CARICOM is going to New York. People are doing as they like and there is no control from this Government. Something is wrong.

Sir, Honourable Members, especially the Front Bench say all sorts of things, contrary to Government policy. I am saying that the Government has to watch the signals, Mr. Speaker, because of a letter which I have here from one of my friends.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I used to work with the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) as an examiner many years ago, and one of my friends wrote me a letter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you going to make that letter a document of the House?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, Sir.

The letter was about the statement that was made by the Prime Minister. I say this because it is serious; that a Prime Minister could go to Guyana to say, "Ever so welcome, wait for a call."

4.00 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please identify the document specifically as to where it is from.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It is a letter from a friend of mine.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, you need to identify it specifically so that you can make it a document of the House.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I could read it, Mr. Speaker. It is a letter from a friend of mine which reads "Dear GC"...

Mr. SPEAKER: This is from an anonymous friend?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: My good friend out of Jamaica wrote me a letter:

"Dear GC

I have been coming to your lovely island for the past 15 years..."

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, my understanding is that if you are making it a document of the House, you need to be able to identify it specifically and let us know whom it is from and so on. You seem to be saying that it is from some form of an anonymous friend and in my view that cannot qualify as a document in that way.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I could summarise it. I might not be able to read it, but I want to make the point because my friend out of Jamaica...

Mr. SPEAKER: So you are not making it a document...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I do not have to read it. I could summarise it because my friend...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute. I just want to be clear whether or not you are making it a document of the House.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, if you said to me that I cannot read it or I cannot make it a document of the House, that is no problem.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am just saying to you that if you are making it a document of the House, then you have to identify it specifically and so on. You cannot just say that it came from some friend or another.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: My friend is John Hopkins.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute so that we could get that clear. That is on the...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It says: "Dear GC, I have been coming to your lovely island for the past 15 years..."

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by trying to give the impression that the person is his dear friend, yet he would write so serious a letter like that on that piece of scrap paper.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, that is the problem with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute, I am still on this point of you making it a document of the House. If you are making it a document of the House, please just do it properly, and please identify it for us specifically. Give us the name of the person, the date of the letter and so on, so that we could get it read into the record.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It came to me by fax.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is a letter dated...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It is a letter dated October 28th.

Mr. SPEAKER: Which year?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: This year, 2008.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I have a problem with that letter because that person would have to have foresight to write a letter on the 28th of October to deal with a speech that was delivered on the 1st or the 2nd of November.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must overrule because in all fairness he has not yet read the contents of the letter, so we do not know what he is dealing with.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I received a letter...

Mr. SPEAKER: So it is dated the 28th of October and it is from... What is the name again, please?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The name of the writer?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Catherine John Hopkins.

Mr. SPEAKER: John Hopkins. Okay

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: He is a very good friend of mine who used to be one of my table leaders at CXC.

He said: 'Dear GC...'

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is seeking to mislead the House on the premise that the origins of that letter is from the person that he says without the House being able to ascertain the true origins and to verify that the letter has been sent by the person to whom he refers. I therefore believe that the Honourable Member is misleading the House on that point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Indeed, now that you mention that, I did hear him say before that it came from a Catherine somebody...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I never said Catherine. I always said John and you asked me John who and I told you one of my table leaders.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. John Hopkins.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the point the person is making is that after...

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is again seeking to mislead the House by trying to read the contents of a letter into the debate for which he has not made a proper application; therefore he cannot seek through the backdoor to introduce the contents of a letter into a debate by not having made the application.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I have been in this House for 13 years and no speakers had to make any application...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute please. I simply want to know whether you are still making the document a document of the House.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I will paraphrase from the letter.

Mr. SPEAKER: So you are not making it a document of the House? Continue with your presentation.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the point that the speaker is making...

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I hope you are not standing to deal with that same point because I have ruled on that and we are moving on. We do not know whether he would paraphrase, let us see what he does as he goes forward.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: All I was saying, Mr. Speaker, is that my friend John who is a CXC table leader is saying that he has been coming to Barbados for the last 15 years and now this statement by the Prime Minister has him very disturbed. He wants to find out if in the future he has to receive a letter from somebody in Barbados to ask him to come. That is what the guy is asking. Mr. Speaker, the people across the region are concerned. They want to find out...

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. I got up previously on a point of order and indicated to this House that the letter is a waste of time because the Honourable Member said the letter was dated, October 28th.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are not in a position to determine what is a waste of time. The Honourable Member has a right to speak. If he wants to discuss something that has been said to him by his friend, he is entitled to do so. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: For 14 years, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have ruled on your point of order.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I accept your ruling, Sir.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy always tries to disturb this House and he is supposed to be one of the oldest persons in...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: He has made the same statement, and it seems to me that this is a policy of the Government, because this is not the very first time that I have heard that ever so welcome, wait for a call.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

His Honour K. St.C BEST: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is referring to Honourable Members in this Chamber as he and I would want the Honourable Member to show respect to Honourable Members in these Chambers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, thanks for pointing that out. Continue Honourable Member.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry about that.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Honourable Member for St. John and the Honourable Members of the Frontbench seem to be in unison with each other because this is not the very first time I am hearing, 'ever so often, wait for a call'. Of the very first speech the Honourable Member for St. Lucy made, he attacked immigrants from the Caribbean islands and he continues to do it.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. I have never made a speech attacking any immigrants from the Caribbean because I do not know anybody in the Caribbean as immigrants, I know them as Caribbean brothers and sisters. Sir, the immigrant thing is over there. They are our brothers and sisters over here. Sir, I also know that we have a population limit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well, Honourable Member.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is entitled to his opinion. He went to New York and said that we have a population problem. Mr. Speaker, whenever a person cannot make a solution, there is a problem. If the Government cannot look after the population of Barbados adequately, they should stop governing. I am saying that the Government must govern in this country. Mr. Speaker, whether or not there is overpopulation, they have to govern and find ways and means of providing work for the people of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, unless the laws of this country have changed, if a person has immigrant status, they are now being treated as though they have a work permit by this Government. It is a serious thing. I had a constituent...

4.10 p.m.

His Excellency Mr. DENIS ST.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House, and that is a very serious charge. The Honourable Member is accusing the Government of Barbados of breaching the Laws of Barbados.

MR. SPEAKER: That is correct.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that Government is breaching the Laws of Barbados but that if one's navel string was not buried here, that person would have problem.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that Government has to be careful because we have Barbadians... Sir, my family lives in Toronto, I would not like to see Barbadians being treated in North America the way they want to treat people here. I am not saying that Barbadians are not to be received. Sir, for years, Barbadians have been treated first. Every employer must treat Barbadians with respect and must give them the first option, but the Government is coming out and making a policy that Caribbean people are not welcomed in Barbados again.

Asides.

His Excellency Mr. DENIS ST.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is again misleading this Honourable House. Sir, the Honourable Member would have to produce the evidence. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member knows he cannot come and make blanket a statement like that. The Honourable Member knows what political confusion he wants to create in this country but he would not be given the permission to do so. Sir, it is unfair for the Honourable Member to make a statement like that and not produce the evidence. If the Honourable Member could produce the evidence, I would give way.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that all of us here, at one time or other, has either had a friend of Caribbean nationality, where some of us would have employed those persons.

Sir, I know for sure that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy usually encourages tourists to “Moon Town” and that most of those persons are from Guyana. Sir, I would want to ask the Honourable Member how many persons he has working in his establishment at “Moon Town”, who are from Guyana.

Asides.

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Sir, through you, I would like to inquire as to the relevance of the Honourable Member’s contribution to the Resolution. Sir, the Resolution at hand does not relate to what the Honourable Member is speaking about.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, this is a Resolution which deals with a tourism-related matter. Sir, I am saying that, of course, we support the Resolution but that we have to be clear. Sir, I think the Government has to come forward with clear signals, and we are having mixed signals that people in the Caribbean are not sure what this Government is about at this stage.

Mr. Speaker, I am further saying that the cleanup of the Hilton is something that was started by us. Sir, we know that other Caribbean countries have always looked to Barbados for leadership. Sir, Barbados is a leader within the Caribbean and therefore I would want to hear the Ambassador coming forward with strong policies that promote that unity within the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, how could you promote one love in the Caribbean? How could you promote one destiny in the Caribbean?

His Excellency Mr. DENIS ST.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by giving the impression that he has heard the total interview that was given to Voice of Barbados (VOB) and the Nation Newspaper. What the Honourable Member would have to tell this Honourable House....

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I cannot see where that is going.

His Excellency Mr. DENIS ST.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member could only make that

statement if he had read the whole interview that was given to everybody.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is not a point of order. Please conclude, Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the University of the West Indies has just given a Doctor of Letter Award (DLitt) to Leroy “Stalin” Calliste, for singing “Caribbean Man.” I am saying that we are Caribbean people and therefore the signal from Government must be sure, it must be clear; the signal must always promote that one unity. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to wind up this debate. I want to first thank all Honourable Members of this House for their contributions. I recognised that based on a Resolution where we are asking this Honourable Chamber to provide a Guarantee for a loan from the National Insurance Scheme to Needham’s Point Holdings Ltd., has led to very far and wide debate. Sir, I never thought that I would have been out in the Caribbean community, and a whole number of other elements, but this is the nature of politics.

Mr. Speaker, I want to revisit and redirect the discussion. Sir, irrespective of all of the conversations from the other side, under the provisions of the Companies Act, Cap. 308, of the Laws of Barbados, the Needham’s Point Holdings Ltd. was incorporated on January 13, 1999. It commenced operations on November 27, 2000. Its principal activity is the redevelopment of the Hilton Barbados, into a resort and a corporate hotel.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at what has happened. We know there were some delays with respect to the opening of the Hilton, which has led to serious revenue problems for the Hilton but more so, we have had significant losses every year since its operations. Sir, losses for 2006 are over \$14 million, losses for 2007 are about \$6 million, while losses projected for 2008 are projected to be even worse. Sir, furthermore, in relation to the debt profile in terms of long-term financing, between 2006 and 2007, \$125 million was borrowed. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that despite the talk of building the Hilton Hotel, if these are the type of economic dynamics that surround that particular institution, with a loan profile of between \$125 million between 2005/2006, they have again put an albatross around the necks of the children of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn my attention to a number of areas of misrepresentation. Sir, it is quite obvious there are persons who speak as though they understand international economics and its impact on local economics, and are making some very grave mistakes. Sir, let me put the financial crisis into context. Sir, Barbados has a

liquidity problem. The international financial crisis is about a liquidity problem, it is about credit, and so it does not have the same impact on us.

Mr. Speaker, that impact we are talking about, the response of this administration to further lower the deposit rate by 0.5 percentage point, has been an excellent response, as we attempt to free up some of the money in banks, to allow it to be loaned to the Small Business Sector in Barbados. Sir, the loan to people to build houses and so on was the right response to continue driving growth and development in the country.

4.30 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: ...was the right response to continue to drive economic growth and development in the country. Sir, it was a response to that problem. Mr. Speaker, furthermore, what we need to understand is that the international financial crisis is not a debt crisis. It is not a crisis based on a currency factor of economic crisis. Sir, because it is one of credit, it means that the investors, who would want to invest in Barbados in a developmental project, do not have access to funds to do so and that is the reason why certain project might well have to be either shelved or delayed. It has nothing to do with the economic policies of the Honourable Member for St. John or this Party. Sir, that is again an attempt to mislead Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, what is also important is that when you have an economic financial crunch as one of credit and you do not have the economic growth that you would expect in international economies, what would occur, Mr. Speaker, is that you have an increase in demand in general. Sir, we would expect a decrease in demand for our export services, whether it happens to be tourism or international business and we are responding to that. Sir, that is the reason why the Prime Minister and the Minister of Tourism are overseas trying to counter and provide opportunities to create the mechanism via which Barbadians would continue to do what they have to do. Mr. Speaker, what is critical is that the Honourable Members on that side have again confused apples and oranges.

Mr. Speaker, because of the international credit crisis, that would have led to a reduction in demand and that would reduce oil prices because the demand for oil would also go down. Therefore, this administration has to see how the economic crisis was going to play out and how it was going to metamorphose. Sir, you could not jump into the lynn when the crisis was taking shape. We now understand the sectors that would now be impacted on more fundamentally because it has now become solidified. Sir, that is the reason Honourable Members on the other side is so bamboozled and confused. Sir, because they do not understand, they are 'cufufilled'. Sir, Barbadians need

to understand that we were essentially hit at the same time with an oil crisis problem and a liquidity problem in a dual situation. I thought the responses we were the right responses and in time we will be proven correct.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to a statement made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, a very learned individual, I do believe but when it is said that since in 2007, that there were signs on the international horizon that we would have had an economic crisis or downturn in the economy and the Honourable Member said "because when one looks at the earning profile of HSBC". (in China)

Mr. Speaker, what I found quite interesting is that during that period of time the majority of the banks were given A rating and B+ rating by Standards and Poors and Moodies. Therefore, I do not know the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East or if it is same people are advising. Sir, that argument does not really make much sense.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make one other response to the statement of the question of past due principal. Sir, when oil prices went up, we spoke to the people of Barbados, they understood and there were decisions to pass through some of that dynamic. Sir, when oil prices are falling, we have been reducing the cost of petroleum product in Barbados....

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. When oil prices rose and they decided to carry a pass-through, they passed through all of the increase, not some as he is contending and when oil prices drop, instead of passing on all the decrease, they have only passed on some of the decrease, so he has "the all" and "the some" in the wrong place.

MR. PRESIDENT: Honourable Member for St. Philip West, please continue.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, again in what clear is that the Honourable Member does not understand what she is talking about and the fundamental for that is this. I have spoken in this Honourable Chamber about the lag effect of inflation in an economy. Sir, I will say no more on that because I am not in here to give an economic treaty to Honourable Members on the other side but the point is that in the Budget this administration placed a mechanism to ensure that when oil prices fluctuate that there would be appropriate movements to ensure that petroleum products are so adjusted in the economy, which is the right thing to do and is the right response. Sir, again, I concur with that.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is again misleading the House. When they last set oil prices, the price of oil was at US\$122 a barrel and they carried the price of diesel from \$1.46 to \$2.57. Mr. Speaker, the price of oil has dropped by US\$48 per barrel since they last adjusted the prices but the price of diesel is still \$0.72 per litre more expensive, even with the three weekly price reduction, so that diesel is 50 per cent more expensive even though oil has dropped by more than 40 per cent.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Philip West, please continue.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, if I may respond to the minister of diesel, because it is the only thing that the minister speaks of. Sir, this economy is a broad-based economy, so I am not going to get caught up in that. The point is that during the Budget this administration placed a mechanism to deal with those issues and Barbadians would be the judge because Barbadians have been benefitting from the reduction in fuel cost and diesel, and they are enjoying it. Sir, that is the point, so I am not going to get caught up in that any longer.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also make one other point that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would have been trying to mislead Barbadians. Again, it has to do with the fact that the Leader of the Opposition should read the Report of the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados and understand what the Governor was saying but the Leader of the Opposition does not have a clue about what was said. Sir, (16:29)

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is in Government and he needs to get on with the business of the people and stop worrying about us on this side.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, is that a point of order? Very well! Honourable Member for St. Philip West, please continue.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: The Honourable Member does not want me to respond to areas or inadequacies that were positive in this Honourable Chamber and, Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak to them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please do.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Sir, what was important is this. The Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados made it quite clear that in the context of the economy environment that we no find ourselves in that we expect to have a moderation of inflation.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: Sir, that becomes important because we are having a downward spiral of oil prices and its impact in terms of core inflation in Barbados. The Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados also spoke favourably with respect to what may happen to the external current account deficit problem, or external balance, because we are beginning to recognise we only had a drop of about \$15 million in the foreign reserves over the last quarter or so. The fact is, when one checks with the Barbados Hotel Association, with respect to their projections for the upcoming financial period, there is a pending cricket tour that will bring in a number of potential persons in Barbados, it would offset any massive slide the Honourable Member may want to see. He does not understand, clairvoyant now, soothsayer. Sir, I have to correct these areas of misinformation.

Sir, let me also say that distinct from the fiscal and balance of payment impact, due to the rising oil situation, we have made the correct responses in Barbados, on this side, and I am very proud to be part of an administration that is guiding Barbados through some of the most turbulent times the world has ever seen. In fact, it is being said that this is probably the second worst international economic crisis, and we have done extremely well so far in managing the economy, stirring through dark waters, turbulent waters we have been stirring it and doing a good job.

Sir, referring to the Resolution, the financial crisis may have some long-term implications to the international business sector or the tourism sector, but this administration is a proactive administration. One of the things we recognise, we could not allow a dispute to continue to be on the doorsteps of the Hilton Hotel, one of the flagships with respect to where Barbadians and foreigners may want to visit. We believe that we have done the right thing in coming here today to provide this guarantee for this \$8.2 million. Sir, I would also say that it is part of the commitment of this administration to the continuing development of the tourism section and the tourism product in general.

Sir, I would essentially want to thank my comrades for their participation, with respect to this Resolution before the Honourable House.

I thank you.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 4

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$3 287 503 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2008-2009 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 8 2008-2009 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 13 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE 11 TO THE RESOLUTION

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

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, this amount of money is being sought to deal with an issue occurring in Barbados in the month of February 2008. As Honourable Members of this Chamber will remember, a flight originating out of Accra Ghana arrived in Barbados with 153 passengers on board. Sir, 97 of those passengers remained in Barbados, while others went on to other countries in the Caribbean; 47 were in transit to Trinidad and Tobago; 1 Antigua; 5 to St. Lucia and 3 to Jamaica, thus making 153 persons.

It should be noted that this inaugural flight, part of what I believe the process connecting to another major continent, from which persons can come to Barbados and benefit from our services, hospitality, skills, organisation and certainly from the tourism product which we offer. The 97 Ghanians who stayed in Barbados were supposed to travel back to Ghana on a charter flight, Ghana Airways, on February 15, 2008, but this flight never arrived in Barbados. Therefore, consequently, the Government of Barbados was required to cover the cost of accommodation, and ultimately the cost of repatriating our brothers from the continent of Africa, in Galla, West Africa, back to their homeland. A decision was taken as part of the accommodation of the Ghanians, to house them at the Paragon Base, where one recognises is a reasonable large facility which would have given accommodation to persons who were stranded in this country, through no fault of their own. Therefore, certain expenses were undertaken by the Barbados Defence Force on behalf of the Government and peoples of Barbados. Those expenses totaled, I believe, \$184 371. That was to ensure those persons were accommodated in comfortable circumstances, cots, pillows, food and things of this nature. Therefore, the Honourable House is being called upon through this Supplementary to provide...

16.40 p.m.

Therefore, the House is being called upon, through this Supplementary, to provide that sum of money which, obviously, was not budgeted for, but was expended by the Barbados Defence Force. We also had a situation where, there was no airline returning, and all those persons wanted to return to their homeland had to be accommodated.

Again, in keeping with the generosity and the kindredness that one has with all the peoples of Africa, the Government of Barbados, after some time passed, because of difficulties of getting a charter flight, was able to secure a charter with Miami Air International and arrange through one of our leading travel agencies to take those persons back to Ghana to the tune of some \$618 446.40. The two combined, totaled some \$802 817.71, not an insignificant amount.

We are being told that the leadership of Ghana would look to provide some kind of recovery on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados and we await that response from them. At the meantime this was, obviously, an unplanned expenditure. You know that we have to operate and by the law and since it would have been expended, we have to meet our obligations under this particular Head.

Therefore, it is not a contentious matter. It is a matter which any Government would have to undertake to satisfy those persons who were left stranded on their shores. It is not a situation that some persons want to say that if they were others, we would not have done this and we would not have that. All legitimate Governments have to act in a particular way. None of these persons were mistreated by Government or the people of Barbados. They were not mistreated by the Barbados Defence Force or any of the legal agencies of this country. I think that should be stated.

In other places, people do not behave as civilised as we do and, I think, it is a mark of pride that first Barbadians were welcoming to our brothers from the Continent of Africa, particularly Ghana, because we understand very well, the historical imperatives, which show that attachment. Essentially, most of us, if not all, are of African extraction and from West Africa, where Ghana is located and we were able to equip this Nation so well that those persons are, in fact, back in their homeland. I am told that they are conducting themselves in the matter that befits them, and their peasants in the country.

Of course, we look forward to more persons from Africa coming to Barbados, just as we look forward to more and more persons coming from South America and Asia to our shores. Sir, one has to understand that just like here is movement of our people into other places as tourists, respecting the laws of those countries, we have to

maintain that very high principle and tradition of persons coming and enjoying whatever we offer and returning to their homeland to help spread the message, relative to Barbados and the hospitality that we offer to those persons, who were stranded on our shores.

I want to commend Head 13, which calls for some \$802 818 to this Honourable House and look forward for its support.

Thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, very briefly, the sum of \$802 000 being requested here, is really not a significant amount. The Honourable Member mentioned that there were talks going on between the Government of Barbados and the Government of Ghana. I would just like to get some more details on the status of those negotiations and how close we are to recovering this sum of money.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Mr. Chairman, in response to the comment from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, the sum of \$618 446.40 is the actual cost of charting the flight to repatriate the Ghanaians. The Government of Ghana has agreed to reimburse the Barbados Government to the tune of half of that cost. Discussions are ongoing. We have sent them all the requisite documents and the last discussion held with the new Minister of Finance, indicated that Barbados will be reimbursed 50 per cent in short time.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 19

TREASURY - IN THE AMOUNT OF \$324 603

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, again, this matter does not involve much debate. Essentially, it for the provision of a reception hosted by the Prime Minister for just over 1 200 persons from Soroptimist International coming to this country. That was obviously a major fillip at this time to the economy of Barbados, when one can have,

at one fell swoop, such a large number of persons present, as part of the outreach and embrace for a major international agency. Of course, there is a local branch of Soroptimist International here in Barbados that does excellent work.

I am sure that all Honourable Members of this Chamber would agree that NGOs have become a major part of our governance landscape and, as such, should always be encouraged, facilitated, and given a 'hands-up'. Sometimes, you have to measure the extent of the hand because there are so many hands that would want to benefit from the support of the State. Therefore, one has to be sure that as one gives, they are able to utilise those resources to the benefit of their constituencies. In this case, the work of the Soroptimist International here in Barbados is particularly exemplary and to have been able to assist in facilitating their 74th Annual Conference, such a major international meet here in Barbados was a coup - if one wants to use that word - I hesitate in using such pejorative terms, particularly in such a delicate democracy such as ours.

Sir, the resources have been allocated and, obviously, would have been unplanned for in our Estimates but as part of our governance procedure, we have come to this House with the Supplementary to the tune of \$324,000 and ask the support of the House under this Head.

Thank you.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a short intervention. I join the Leader of the House in supporting this Supplementary that is currently before us.

4.50 p.m.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a short intervention and join the Leader of the House by supporting this supplementary that is currently before us because this is a major non-governmental organisation in Barbados that is doing tremendous work. Mr. Chairman, it is not an ordinary feat, at a time which we consider to be the off-season in Barbados, for a non-governmental organisation to attract over 1 000 persons to Barbados, which would certainly enhance the domestic economy of this country.

Mr. Chairman, I really believe that major non-governmental organisations like this should always be supported in their efforts to help to define the social

landscape of Barbados. As recognised and said by the Leader of the House, the Soroptimist International is a worldwide charitable organisation, which incidentally is involved in the management of over 120 countries across the world. One of their major focus is the eradication of poverty coming out of the Beijing Platform for Action, a conference that was held way back in 1995.

Mr. Chairman, it is of note that there are two chapters of Soroptimist International here in Barbados. The first is Soroptimist International of Barbados, which has been operating in Barbados for 45 years and the other is Soroptimist International Jamestown which has been operating in Barbados for 20 years.

Mr. Chairman, their work is spread across Barbados. They are doing a tremendous mentorship programme at the St. James Secondary School. They are also providing scholarships across the island for those who are most in need. Sir, from a serious perspective, they are really helping those vulnerable children in communities across Barbados in terms of the development of their education. Sir, they have assisted PAREDOS in their programming with parent education, and they have also done a lot of community work.

Sir, why I am on my feet speaking to this particular Head is because at the moment Soroptimist of Jamestown is working on a project called the “Stepping Stones Project”, which is an inter-generational approach to service delivery. They are trying to build a multipurpose facility to support youth at risk in Barbados and elderly persons across Barbados. Sir, this is a wonderful mutual relationship between the two most vulnerable sectors of our society.

Mr. Chairman, the project is a family-based programme for mentorship of displaced teenage girls, which is critically needed in Barbados. Perhaps, we should be encouraging other organisations that have the kind of infrastructure of Soroptimist Jamestown to build other facilities like this across Barbados on a zonal geographical base.

Mr. Speaker, this project would actually bridge that gap between the youth on one hand and the elderly on the other hand. Sir, I really believe that Soroptimist Jamestown should be supported in pushing this project. The project would cost them \$3.9 million. I believe that they have managed to raise just about \$1 million and they would need another \$2 million.

Sir, I am making an urgent plea in this Honourable Chamber for the Government to help them to complete this facility by providing them with part of the \$2 million, because they are also working to solicit funds from other sources.

Mr. Chairman, while I am on that, I realise that Government is working towards the establishment of a Centre for Philanthropy - good persons with good ideas who have money to put back into the society. Mr. Chairman, I think that this is rather good because there are a number of regional and international organisations that really want to invest in the social capital of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I always said in this Honourable Chamber that the development of this country cannot always be measured in dollars and cents. Sir, now that the world is in an international recession, it is critical that we have a mesh of the social programme and the economic programme of our country.

Sir, the social practitioners across Barbados are going to make their work known to us at a time like this because this is the time when we should see acts of goodwill and voluntarism from persons who would have a special interest, particularly those persons who are overseas, giving back to this country.

Sir, when we arrive at a level of financial self-sustainability, many of us, more or less, evaporates, because you do not see them and sometimes you believe that they do not reside on planet earth anymore because they do not even go back to their communities or put anything into them.

Mr. Chairman, I think that the idea as fostered by the Honourable Prime Minister, who I understand is overseas doing business, is a very good one. Sir, I would hope that when that sector is established that more Barbadians contribute to it. This is not the time in our history when we should be playing politics, this should more or less the time in our development when all of us as a nation have to come together for the national good. Sir, I therefore believe that Soroptimist Jamestown should be helped with the remainder of the funds they need because they are doing a very good programme.

Mr. Chairman, I have a document that they presented to me. I have studied it and I really believe that it is worth making a document of this Honourable Chamber so that we could have a model of a similar project once it gets started that could be replicated across Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, with those few words, I want again to urge Government to help this organisation to achieve this noble objective so that those displaced and at risk youth, particularly those young girls, could be given professional counselling and mentorship so that they could develop into positive citizens of this proud nation of ours.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, practical experience has shown that a government would budget specific sums for specific purposes and then within the budgetary period of a year events occur which were not foreseen at the time of the preparation of the Estimates and the Budget. Mr. Chairman, it is therefore acceptable by us on this side that the explanation given by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central about not being able to foresee this expense is indeed a sound point.

The Soroptimist Club, as has been said by the last Honourable Member who spoke, is a mature organisation made up exclusively of females, some of whom are extremely motherly, all of whom are community-minded.

The Soroptimist Village in the constituency of St. Michael North stands out as a beacon of the type of work that has been done. In my own bailiwick, St. James, the Soroptimist of Jamestown has distinguished themselves as being exceptionally committed towards the upliftment of this country. They have embarked on many projects. They have often helped the poor. They have singled out marginalised people, both male and female, for special help. Some of them as individuals have made sacrifices without any urging in the interest of executing their programmes.

5.00 p.m.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, we are here talking about a conference which concluded recently, and it is a tribute to the work of the local Soroptimist Club that a Barbadian citizen could be President of Soroptimist International, which includes the United Kingdom and Ireland. That says a lot about the Barbados Soroptimist Club.

Mr. Chairman, the other thing that comes to mind, in light of an earlier presentation by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, is that increasingly Barbados' name is spreading rapidly, like wild fire, throughout the world, to such an extent that Barbados is perceived to be a most desirable place, not only to visit but also to live.

Sir, in light of that flight from Africa to Barbados, where people may have been given the impression - God knows by whom - that they could come here, the evidence was clear that there are people whose own circumstances may not be the best, who feel they could risk it in Barbados, where they could have a better standard of living.

Mr. Chairman, at this stage, in this short presentation, I would like to distinguish between the tourists who come, and the persons who come looking for residence. This question of inflows into Barbados suggests to us that Barbados' borders are really widely opened. The reality of the situation is that Barbados does not really have closed borders, and there are those who could have a livelihood in Canada, the United States of America, Puerto Rico or Hawaii, but who would still favour Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, the challenge before this Government is that in a situation where the Soroptimist Club have had a successful conference, should we, as today we have been mentioning niches, not try to market Barbados more, as far as the conference aspect of tourism is concern? Sir, the renaming of the Sherbourne Conference Centre to the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, should help inform policy by which we diversify our marketing approach to bring people here, to include making Barbados the premier conference centre in the entire Anglophone Caribbean. That should be an objective of this Government.

Mr. Chairman, at the same time, in circumstances where there are those who would like to come here and more or less have an existence off Barbados gratuitously, then one has to be careful to put the comments recently made by his Excellency, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, in its proper context. Sir, there can be no doubt what activity that could start out as tourism could ultimately be activity that could end up as inward migration, in circumstances where we do not want it said that Barbadians feel alienated in their own country and that there are opportunities in Barbados for non-Barbadians, while Barbadians themselves are denied opportunities in their own country of birth.

Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding our commitment to the World Trade Organisation and to the Caribbean Community and (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy and all that flows, we have to have an informed policy of managed migration, in terms of the long-stay of people who were not born here and who do not qualify as citizens. Mr. Chairman, the policy of managed migration must be one that not only takes into account the ideals of any trading and economic bloc of which we are a part but also the economic realities that prevail in Barbados, especially in these perilous times. Therefore, as we set out to make Barbados better-known and to enrich our tourism, at the same time, we have to be very careful to ensure that persona non grata does not slip in here.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard disturbing rumours that a number of criminals, who were born abroad and are therefore citizens of abroad, have come to Barbados on forged documentation, proving good character, and using that forged documentation as the basis on which they apply

for immigrant status, work permit, et cetera. Sir, therefore, we have to be extremely careful.

Mr. Chairman, I said our borders are very much opened, the gates are flung wide, and the country's name is good generally-speaking. Sir, I am not being political here but the fact of the matter is that the country's name is good and as a result, there would be those who not only would be curious to visit but who would want to stay.

Mr. Chairman, I know of Caucasians from metropolitan countries who, on one visit to Barbados, have fallen in love with it and would want to stay. I know of persons who, on one visit to Barbados, keep extending their period of stay to make up the maximum of six months.

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: There have been marriages of convenience, some of which have proven very painful, where people believe that under our law, if you hook up with the right partner, at the right time, under the right circumstances, where they fill out some forms, pay a fee and become entitled to stay, then that is the route to pursue.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I would like to urge Government, as I compliment it on recognising the excellent work of the Soroptimist Club, to seek to diversify its thrust in tourism, to embrace more conference, while, at the same time, to look out for those non-governmental organisations that have been doing well to further the interest of this country.

Sir, I close by urging strongly that we distinguish between what is normal tourism-related activity and migration and that we be enlightened in our approach to both. Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

His Excellency Mr. DENIS ST.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would want to thank the Honourable Member for St. James North for a very statesmanlike speech. Sir, there is no doubt that as we go forward in this day and age, one has to recognise that political allegiance will not take precedence over country. Sir, one must also recognise that in a country Barbados, which has 166 square miles, there will be a limit, especially when one considers this is a country that depends on tourism as its mainstay for developing its revenue and foreign exchange.

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt, and I have already said on a number of occasions in this Parliament - and the Honourable Member for St. James North would bear me out on this - that one of the best places for tourism is the Caribbean but that one has to be very careful, as the

Honourable Member has stated, how we allow that conversion to be made, without recognising that we first would create a number of social problems for our country. Sir, before any country could accept an increase in population, that country must first know what is its true local population. Sir, there is no doubt when one looks at what is occurring in Barbados and in places such as Trinidad and Tobago, one does not have to be a magician to know we have a serious problem in our primary, secondary and tertiary schools in Barbados. Sir, one recognises now that instead of being able to rent a house, you could hardly find a room to rent.

When one looks at the situation when going to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, when one looks at the demand on the hospital, one must recognise that all of these things will create headaches for those who have to allocated funds for the administration of this country but moreso by the Minister of Finance, because the Minister of Finance has to budget, based on local statistics.

Sir, for a long time, Barbados has been budgeting based on a population of 280 000 people, and that figure has been creating shortfalls. Sri, when one looks at the actual figures, which are higher than the estimated figures, it is obvious that every time we would have to come back to this Parliament for supplementaries because of the fact that we are not budgeting, using the true figures.

5.10 p.m.

Sir, it is obvious that every time we will return to this Parliament seeking more money because we are not budgeting with the true figures. Sir, until we can have an immigration policy or until we can accept more persons in Barbados, we must first know how many people we have.

Sir, I also want to take it further. One has to recognise that the problem facing CARICOM today, is not the free movement of people in its true sense of people being able to move and live in a country but it is for us to have the ability to move capital to those countries that need to build up their resources instead of allowing people to move to other countries that do not have resources, where you dilute those countries and stop countries that can be developed from developing. We need to recognise that the solution is the movement of capital to those countries that have resources so that we could tap the resources for the benefit of the Caribbean.

Sir, that is why I found it rather regrettable when I heard a news story one morning, and it was very short-lived because it dealt with that main point. Sir, that point was that what was needed in the Caribbean, is for Trinidad, the country that has the resources, not only to give budget support, but to look at the bigger picture, that is, to look at those countries that have potential and enter into a capital

arrangement with them so that you could develop the resources. Sir, once you develop the resources, you are not only developing the resources for Trinidad and the country but you are developing the resources for CSME. If one looks at it from that logical position, one would recognise that what is needed now is for the Caribbean leaders to come together and recognise the resources of Guyana. A good example of that is when we saw the situation with the food crisis in the world, where Guyana was able to increase its exports. Sir, not only increase its exports, but also to increase their shipping and export prices.

It was also interesting to hear the President of Guyana making this point and I think that people who are fast to criticise, should also listen well. Sir, at one stage Guyana had a debt service ratio of 94 per cent, today that ratio is 4 per cent. I heard them speak about it in New York and at Sherbourne and when one listens to something like that, one should stop and pay careful attention to what the President of Guyana is saying.

Sir, any logical person, who is thinking right now and any person who has money to invest, would tell you that the best place to invest that money, right, now is in Guyana. We in Barbados need to take the lead because(17:13:11)

...NO RECORDING (17:15:47) to correct all the wrongs that occurred previously. If those opportunities are practised the correct way, I am telling you the Caribbean would be a better place. Sir, that is why I was very quick to support the pact between Trinidad and the OECS. The OECS needs money and Trinidad has it and they are in the best position to find the money for the OECS and it would also stop them from walking around with their credit cards on the international market.

Sir, if we can get Trinidad to have a pact with the OECS, and bring them to a particular stage, it means more trade for the Caribbean and it also means that we would be in better position to implement the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). Sir, if we do not do this, we will find that we have these splinter groups. Sir, as it currently stands, the Caribbean is a zone of peace, but if one watches what is going on within the Caribbean, and we allow certain people to walk around with their credit cards, soon from now the Caribbean, if not watch carefully, would not be a zone of peace any more but it will be a zone where confusion would reign.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: . . .

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

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this measure before this Honourable House and add my voice to those who suggested that the expenditure on the hosting of the reception by the Prime Minister, for the Soroptomist of Great Britain and Ireland, is conducive to enhancing the tourism product of our country. Sir, that is to say conference tourism is big business internationally, and we in Barbados stand to benefit tremendously from this product, given the need to diversify our tourism product, in view of the current international recession, Britain is our major market in terms of tourism, so the more British people we get here to see Barbados, the better for us in terms of marketing the tourism product.

Mr. Chairman, I remember a few weeks ago, I was fortunate to be part of the CAPAM activity, a grouping of Commonwealth public and civil servants and they held their biannual conference for the first time in the Eastern Caribbean, here in Barbados, where hundreds of civil servants from throughout the Commonwealth, from as far as Australia, Canada, the Asian continent and other places came to Barbados, many of them for the first time. Sir, I remember the Prime Minister hosted a reception for them at his official residence, Ilaro Court and I give kudos to the organisers because set up the grounds of Ilaro Court in a sort of village scenario, with rum shops and a bread cart. Sir, I got a cheese cutter out of an old-time bread cart and a lady passed around with her 'can-can' dress and a tray handing out Bajan fudge. Sir, I have not had fudge for many years. Mr. Chairman, the landship gave performances, there were stilt walkers, the 'tuk band', calypso and so forth. Sir, clearly, the glee on the faces of those delegates told the story of their lasting impression of our island paradise.

5.20 p.m.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: ..clearly the glee on the faces of those delegates told the story of their lasting impression of our island paradise. Clearly, they would be inclined to come again and visit our shores as tourists.

Sir, I am saying that sometimes members of the public can be harsh, in saying that these are cocktail parties that are just luxurious, but there are really investing in the tourist product in our country if properly utilised.

I agree that the conference tourism, especially in the temperate countries, be it North America or Europe, these persons are very excited to venture to tropical paradises like Barbados to engage in conferences because they are mixing business with pleasure. They are able to enjoy the local culture, the cuisine, the friendly nature of our people, warm climate, sun, sea and sand. Once they have had their appetites wet for the splendour of Barbados then, clearly, there is that strong magnetic pull to return to Barbados, and to tell their friends about the beautiful island paradise,

called Barbados. Sir, for years the tourism personnel have argued that most of our tourism is repeat tourism, word of mouth support for Barbados as a tourist destination.

Sir, over two years ago, I was fortunate to visit the Coronado Springs Hotel, which is in Orlando Florida, part of the Disney complex. This was a massive convention complex. The convention of which I was a part of hosted in one room over 2 500 delegates. Along the corridor, in several other rooms of that Coronado Springs Hotel, were several conferences going on simultaneously. So what we are now doing in Barbados is really a drop in the bucket, so to speak. There are billions of dollars to be gained, in terms of conference tourism but we must provide necessary support services, translators at the Barbados Community College and the University, in terms of people who can be translators for the various languages, be it Italian, German, French and so on.

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

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Even in the Caribbean, I remember I was at a conference in the 1990s at the Oceana Hotels, Downtown Kingston, similar to Broad Street. Next to the Oceana Hotels, which was built specifically for this purpose, you had the Jamaica Conference Centre with several conference rooms. We have to provide the necessary conference hotels, within short distance of the conference centres, and provide the necessary ground transportation and other support services because time would be critical at these conferences. They have a limited time and lots of activities. So you have to have everything running smoothly.

I support the call for improve conference tourism. Indeed, they are members of service clubs on both sides of the House, Kiwanians. I was a member of Rotarac and Circle K, the college arms of Rotary and Kiwanis. Recently the Soroptomist had a regional conference bringing delegates from around the region to Barbados. The Soroptomist paid a visit to the Ministry. They are very interested in helping poor people, for example people from the city and other working class districts in our island. There are service clubs that want to give these people a hand up, and not necessary a handout.

Sir, I support this money Resolution and encourage investors to come on board with the Government, to enhance the conference tourism product so that we can bring thousands of conferences from around the world weekly, in the tourist season and off-season period, to propel tourism forward and to earn the vital foreign exchange for our country.

I thank you.

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

Hon. K.St.C. BEST: Sir, I rise to support this Money Resolution for the simple reason it is good to see that the Government of Barbados and the people of Great Britain and Ireland saw it fit to come to these lovely shores, as part and parcel of their programme of development. The Government of Barbados was pleased to have them here to be hosted at a centre, which was referred as the White Elephant, but it is the shining light of the Caribbean as far as a conference is concerned. This says a lot for Barbados. Sir, the Soroptomist Club International coming to Barbados speaks a lot. Sir, I have always advocated there should be the gap between the young and old. Mr. Chairman, any caring Government which is part and parcel of the Democratic Labour Party should have that gap. That is why we are focusing on the old and young people because Barbados is an aging population.

Sir, when international organisations come to our shores, they bring ideas and talent to enhance and help develop our small organisation. It is of such that Barbados is recognised on the map, and a citizen of Barbados now heads that organisation. That speaks volumes for a small country like Barbados. Sir, one should not see any expense in this area as just a cocktail party, but one where there is the exchanging of ideas, the meeting of minds, where programmes can be developed locally to the further development of any Soroptomist club in Barbados.

I want my comments to be associated with the Independent, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, who indicated that the Soroptomist Club need assistance. If they can afford to raise \$1 million, I am sure this could assist in somewhere bringing their dream to reality.

Sir, under Head 13, immigration matters...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, we have past Head 13 already.

Hon. K.St.C. BEST: Mr. Chairman, there was an addendum. That is why I want to refer to Head 13.

Sir, the Africans come to these shores to view a different country, but there were circumstances beyond their control. Members of the public want to believe that when this caring Government sought to repatriate those persons to their homeland, there was masquerading in the Press that this Government was treating those brothers and sisters like criminals.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I do not want to reopen the debate on Head 13. I am not aware there is an addendum, and if I give you the leverage to proceed,

of course, I would be bound to give other Honourable Members the same leverage. I believe we have past Head 13. Let us deal with the current Head under discussion.

Hon. K.St.C. BEST: Sir, I must reiterate that it was a brilliant move by the Government of Barbados to host these people and want to see more of these conferences where we can encourage more senior citizens to come to Barbados to enjoy our hospitality and where we can have this tourism package...

5.30 p.m.

...senior citizens to come to Barbados, where Barbados would be marketed as a destination for the aged or for those persons who want to retire.

I want at this stage to lend my support to this money Resolution

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this Resolution and, in particular, to address the issue of the Supplementary for the hosting of the cocktail reception for the Soroptimist International. I feel very much attached to this kind of activity, having been a member of an NGO, the Rotary Club International for a few years and, in Barbados, the Rotary Club of Barbados West.

Sir, these non Governmental organisations (NGO), in many respects and in many countries, over the years have been providing yeoman service to the development of communities. The Soroptimist here in Barbados, as I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East speak to glowingly earlier, has been providing wonderful work, in respect of poverty alleviation and general community development in Barbados and we commend them.

We must also commend the President of the Great Britain and the Ireland Soroptimist Group, a Barbadian, for being so visionary and dedicated in respect of the work to attract such an international group and their conference to Barbados. Sir, very often, people do not recognise the hard work that goes into organising such conferences. As indeed, a tremendous stance that this individual and her team here in Barbados could have worked so assiduously and dedicated, to bring this conference to Barbados.

Sir, this brings me to the issue of the role of the NGO movement in the development of economies like Barbados. I always say that often their work is not

recognised and rewarded as they should. Those who would have read *The Third Way* and the wonderful works and exploits of intellectuals and academics, in respect to the role of the NGOs in the development of the economy, would attest to that but in Barbados, we do not have to dig deep into such books. We have had what we call community practitioners, social workers and small groups in every community - in every nook and cranny, for want of a better term - that have been providing guidance to young people. They have also been providing assistance to the elderly folk, repairing roofs and providing food, where necessary as the need occurs. They provide a whole range of services, often going far beyond what Government should provide. I think the time has really come when we in Barbados give the NGO movement the level of recognition that it rightly deserves. Every aspect.

Another example is the health care sector. Sir, for many years, I have also been very supportive and active in the HOPE Foundation Group, where we have looked at the work of those who suffer with sickle cell anemia, Chron.'s disease, colitis, lupus, et cetera, in Barbados. Sir, in many respects, that one entity has been relieving the Ministry of Health of a lot of the burden, in relation to the education and treatment, in particular, support services for those who suffer with these illnesses, as well as provide comfort to their families.

We have seen the work of the Cancer Society in Barbados. This is another outstanding NGO that has been bringing the medical practitioners, the sufferers and their families together to create that kind of synergy and activity that aid in the prevention and treatment of the illness and, of course, the after care for those who have to be treated accordingly.

Then, in the wider NGO group, we have seen the Red Cross Society. I have worked through my own Rotary Club with the Red Cross Meals and Wheels Programme. We will be surprised that sometimes the only hot meal that some Barbadians get when the day comes in through that Red Cross Programme. It is unbelievable.

I have seen some of the most dilapidated and despicable housing conditions in this country, going around with the Red Cross once a week in delivering hot meals to those in need. Sometimes it takes such, to really hit home to many of us the extent of poverty in Barbados, and the importance of these NGO movements throughout our island.

It goes further. Look at the sporting arena and see how some of the NGOs have certainly helped to develop the skills of many young men and women in this society; which is far more than what Ministries of Sports over the years, could have hoped to achieve. This is why sometimes I think Government has to create the kind of enabling

environment and give moral and financial support to non Governmental organisations, as we seek to develop our country further in the 21st Century.

If you look into the whole issue of gender affairs and the work of the NGOs in that scenario, Government may have established policies, but not the National Organisation of Women. It is the group that has provided shelter and support for battered women in this society, that is fully deserving of our support, as a politician and a Minister said.

Sir, there are business and professional clubs, in terms of entrepreneurial development within the female group in our society and also in terms of sensitising, men in relationships with women. Sir, an example is the Church. As a Christian society, we can all readily attest to the importance of the Church in not only their personal development but their development as a society on the whole, a solace providing a place of comfort for those in need, providing guidance to the members of the congregation, providing marriage counselling and other counselling of sympathy for those who may have lost love ones, et cetera.

Sir, we can even look at the Church in terms of its relationship with the educational development in Barbados. Many years ago, perhaps the Church did more to educate Barbadians and to provide educational facilities for Barbadians than even the Government was doing. Therefore, we cannot and we must never ignore, historically, and even today, the role of the NGO movement...

Audio failed.

A lot of the problems we had in the past as Government sought to embark upon some projects on its own, through the bureaucracy of Government we have seen...

Audio failed

Clearly identified and linked to a particular sector or a group in our society, who know the stakeholders; know who are the needy persons, then I believe that we ought to be able to use Government's resources to assist in getting resources to them.

Mr. Chairman, you have heard the Government speak recently to the establishment of Foundation Legislation and the whole issue of Philanthropy. I am sure this will come to the Floor very soon because we recognise that there are many high-net worth individuals, and successful companies on our shores, and those abroad, who certainly have Barbados' interest at heart and are willing to give and to come generously.

We believe that as a Government, we need to create the kind of environment that enables such to flow; create the kind of environment in terms of our fiscal policies, and in terms of the tax incentives that we offer to such entities. We believe that people would not just give like that. They need to have something in return. Therefore, when we talk about the Foundation legislation, Philanthropy and creating that new kind of industry in Barbados, as a Government, our role should be, by and large, to facilitate such and ensure that those who invest through these social development programmes get the kind of recognition...

5.40 p.m.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: ...and to ensure that those who invest through these social development programmes get that kind of recognition and rewards that they so need.

Mr. Chairman, you could see going forward a wonderful public/private sector partnership in the development of non-governmental organisations in a society. Mr. Chairman, I could only urge all Honourable Members to get on board and play their part. Each of us can look around, reflect on our development over the years and link a lot of it to some non-governmental organisation in this society. It is an inescapable fact, it must be dealt with in a non-partisan way. I think we all can readily accept the importance of such.

In respect of this particular issue of Soroptimist Club and such like, from a business and tourism perspective - and I agree with all the comments made before - Barbados has what it takes, to my mind, to become the convention centre of the Caribbean.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Chairman, this creates another wonderful opportunity in the tourism sector. I know that the Minister of Tourism, when he is here, would speak well to this. Mr. Chairman, we have in Barbados marketing plans to go after the convention industry. It provides a lot of resources to economies like ours. I am sure that many of those over one thousand soroptimists who came to Barbados, would return with their families, so I am satisfied that the money that we have talked about here has been well-spent. It is an investment that we will receive returns on in the short, medium and long term.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I want to again commend the Soroptimist International group for having the foresight of bringing this meeting to Barbados. I certainly want to commend the non-governmental organisations in Barbados on the whole for the outstanding work they have been doing over the years and to assure them that this Democratic Labour Party Government stands as a solid and

committed partner to the development of the non-governmental organisation movement in Barbados.

I thank you very much.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I want to support this Money Resolution for the Soroptimist Club of Barbados. I must agree with the Honourable Member for St. James South who have just spoken. I must say that he has spoken correctly on this occasion and has shown that when one considers the entire performance of this organisation and all non-governmental organisations, one could conclude that this really is a non-partisan affair. Mr. Chairman, I would want to lend the voice of the Opposition in supporting this measure. I also support the action of the other non-governmental organisations, the Lions Club, the Red Cross and the Rotary Club of Barbados, who have done a wonderful job, as well as the other organisations who may not be as popular as the big ones, who sometimes lend their assistance in the communities. As the Honourable Member said, Government cannot do all and companies cannot do all. In our society, we need to attract both small and large organisations to do the work within the communities for the needs of the society.

In our society there is a need for more health-related organisations, cultural groups and sporting groups. Mr. Chairman, I believe that once they perform a creditable service, they should be assisted in whatever way they can.

Mr. Chairman, the Soroptimist Club Jamestown West has been asking for the lease of the land which has been provided for them about five years ago. I am not sure if the lease has been sorted out as yet. The land is in central St. George. Nothing has been done with it.

A portion of land has been set aside right at the Odle Glen for lease from the National Housing Corporation. It is less than an acre of land that the Soroptimist has been asking for. It is not really something well known. It is through the National Housing Corporation where the lease should be organised because the land is vested in them.

Mr. Chairman, I know that five years ago we had a number of objections to it. I as Minister then approved it. I am not sure where it is now, but I know that at that time they wanted to set up a day nursery for the elderly and to do something for the women group. Therefore, I would want to urge the Minister to look at it favourably, I know he would do so, and see if they could start the construction because it is really outstanding.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the Soroptimist Club has been doing good work throughout Barbados especially in

the coastal areas. Mr. Chairman, they also want to get in the central areas. We need to encourage them because there is a need for this type of assistance to the poor in our society.

I thank you.

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, I too would want to join and congratulate the Soroptimist International for bringing their conference to Barbados. Barbados, like most of the speakers agree, is increasingly becoming one of the destinations for conferences. I deem it a noble gesture for Soroptimist International to choose Barbados to be the destination for their conference this year.

The Soroptimist International is a group that has been making a significant contribution, as most Honourable Members agree, especially with the elderly village at Eden Lodge. I myself had reason to visit some elderly people living in that village. It is a well-appointed village. I am sure that the Soroptimist Club will improve the facilities there over the years to make it even more habitable for those elderly folks who now find there as their natural home.

Mr. Chairman, the Kiwanis Club, of which I am a past President, is also one of the clubs that I believe that as a Government we ought to be making some significant contribution to their coffers to assist them in executing the work they do throughout Barbados. These service clubs do rise to the occasion and assist Government in executing the work it has to do in the area of social development. The Kiwanis Club has been very much involved in the provision of bus shelters throughout Barbados. Within the last three to four years they have been involved with the silver dollar drive, which has realised several thousand dollars, which they allocate to several charitable organisations in Barbados. This is a noble venture. They have also assisted the Barrows Children's Home and the Nightengale Children's Home over a number of years especially at Christmas and other events to make the children feel as part of the natural upbringing.

Mr. Chairman, I do not know if it would fall to me in my ministry or to another Government agency to make some representation so that they would be assisted with a subvention of some kind over the years to assist them in the many ventures that they undertake. I am hoping that at some time in the near future the management of the Kiwanis Club especially would influence the main shakers and movers in the Kiwanis organisations internationally to bring their convention to Barbados so that we could share in the work that they are doing across the globe.

5.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, the next person I would like to commend is the Chairman of the YWCA, who has been making a significant contribution in terms of the breakfast-feeding programme they have undertaken over the last number of years. It is a much-needed assistance, especially to young persons. I am sure a survey would have been done that would have necessitated the YWCA to implement such a programme.

I want to say that in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, we are presently looking at a pilot project which will start at one of the community centres. This would be done commencing the new school term in January, where we will implement a programme similar to that of the YWCA and other agencies that have been coming to the assistance of young children. Sir, you would appreciate that a child who is undernourished or underfed cannot be a child who is ready to learn. Therefore, we as an agency within the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, have formulated a programme which we will start as a pilot project in one of the St. Michael community centres. If this project works out, we would do the adjustments and soon spread it across Barbados, according to our financial resources.

Mr. Chairman, I want to support this Resolution. The Soroptimists in particular and the other service clubs across Barbados are doing an excellent job in working hand-in-hand with Government, in helping Government to execute and support some of its social projects across Barbados. Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, I also want to join my colleagues and lend my full support to this matter before us at this time. Mr. Chairman, it is true that as our Government seeks to advance the development of our society, it is our view that we cannot approach social development from a macro position, since we believe there are able community-based organisations that are very capable of engaging the public at different levels and providing services that complement Government's agenda at the various levels.

I think this particular group of which we now speak, the Soroptimist Club, is a worldwide-known organisation that has contributed significantly to the development of members of societies the world over. Therefore, whatever we could do to encourage this kind of developmental activity in the society, I am quite sure would be a credit, not only to Government as a whole but certainly to our Prime Minister, who believes sincerely that we have to continue to find those micro systems in our society that are willing and ready to participate in the development of our people.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that in going forward we have to clearly understand what it is we expect of these partners. I believe they are social partners in this process and that in order for them to be able to blend their activities with the overall vision of the Government, we believe it is necessary for us to articulate, in measurable terms, what is it that we are seeking to achieve.

Mr. Chairman, we do not believe we could just throw resources behind any organisation. Certainly, in our Ministry, we believe we have to look carefully at the objectives of the projects of organisations, to see what they intend to achieve through their activities. We believe what they do must lend towards Government's effort to eradicate poverty from the society, to create access to ordinary citizens in the community, and to partner with Government wherever necessary, that we would be able to work together across Barbados and indeed across the region, to achieve the kind of outcomes we believe necessary.

Mr. Chairman, we cry so constantly about certain developmental trends in our society among our people but what we do not do sufficiently, is to recognise the contributions of community organisations which have, over the years, given so much to community development. We do not do sufficiently recognise these organisations that have piloted great programmes that have been able to snatch young people from non-productive existence and put them into the kind of existence where they continue - and I am quite sure will continue - to make a very valuable contribution to the productive lives of our country.

Mr. Chairman, therefore, it becomes necessary that when we look at a matter such as this, we see the bigger picture. Therefore, in our micro approach we need to re-engage the church. We need to re-engage those community organisation. We need to articulate, in more detail, what roles could they play in enabling us to be able to produce the kind of citizens of tomorrow, who would be a productive citizen, who makes his or her contribution to the development of the society.

Mr. Chairman, what we are hearing a lot of is that a number of persons who grew up in ordinary communities migrate. They go to other places that are considered more affluent and almost deplete the natural resources of their own communities. What community groups do is to stay on the ground in those communities and try to mobilise young people. Sir, in some cases, depending upon the goal of the programme, community groups mobilise our seniors. Sir, mobilising our seniors is now becoming a loss endeavour. We are bypassing seniors who have retired, who have so much knowledge but there is not an audience for those senior persons to be able to share their knowledge.

Mr. Chairman, what we in the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development

want to do, is to encourage fuller participation of all elements of the society. Therefore, where we find those communities structures that have a proven record or proven programmes to deliver those services, I believe Government should be willing to inject the kind of capital that will enable those structures to be able to make their contribution.

Mr. Chairman, truth to tell, if you look at Government's approach to community development in general, you would realise that the concept of the Constituency Councils is one that has, as its philosophical platform, the view that the communities needs can be best met by those who live in the bosom of those communities. Sir, it is not unusual because truth is, years ago that was how our communities developed; years ago that was how we lived. Sir, years ago, ordinary persons from the church, from the plantation and so on, made their contributions on a persistent basis. That kept communities together, that kept them knitted together, that kept young people together, that kept the society a more productive society. Sir, we have to get back to that kind of process. Sir, even though some of the approaches may change, the basic commitment is to engage persons in their own communities.

Mr. Chairman, I remember when community policing was really something. I remember when police officers, some of whom were from the community, others who came into the communities, were part of looking out for the children. They were part of making sure that families stayed together, and all of the other things that are necessary.

Mr. Chairman, I believe this is a demonstrated platform that the Government is committed to ensuring that it identifies those areas and those persons in communities, who have demonstrated a capacity to make an indelible contribution on the lives of people in the society.

Mr. Chairman, I do not believe we have done well enough as a society to keep those important systems engage. We should not have to do a special project called Project Oasis. We should not have to do other projects that really serve the purpose of re-engaging people. The basic structure of Government should start from the foundation.

6.00 p.m.

Dr. the Hon D.S. LOWE: The basic structure of Government should start from the foundation and should build itself up and here is only where we make the policy but the policy should really be carried out at the ground level on the ground floor where ordinary people, many of whom are not looking for compensation for their service, many of whom simply want to give back to their community something that is lasting and something that would continue to build the virtue of the society. Sir, I am

happy to join with my colleagues and say kudos to all those organisations. Sir, there is a whole list of them and those that are emerging because the message of Government is that once persons are prepared to come on board and assist the state in achieving its social agenda, there will be resources available to support those organisations and to enable them to become the kinds of virtuous organisations that any developing societies need. (18:01:26)

Therefore, I believe that we have to continue to reach out; we have to continue to do training; we have to continue to train trainers to train and we have to continue to reward people for their volunteerism. We do not do that enough and certainly we have to continue to recognise the inputs and services of our seniors, who would have given so much over such a long time to help make this society what it is.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, much of what I am going to say has to do with basis human rights and some observations made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central. The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central mentioned a programme for children. We would have heard the aphorism that a society that does not look after its old people and its children, is an uncaring society. There is in Barbados currently, Mr. Chairman, a disturbing evolving phenomenon. Sir, I do not wish to alarm either this House or the country but this is a problem that has resulted from inward migration. We have had a number of undocumented persons in Barbados with little children of school age and because their parents have been undocumented when permission is sought to admit these children into the public schools' principals, either through fear of breaking the law or through an abundance of caution, ask them to prove that they are here legally and they cannot prove that they are here legally, children are denied the opportunity to go to public schools.

Mr. Chairman, in old fashioned days, we would say that Barbados is for Barbadians first but on human rights grounds, it is cruel to deny a child an opportunity in life based on the dereliction of duty of its parents or base on its parents fault. I just want to bring before this Honourable Committee this observation, especially in view of the fact that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is both Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and from both an educational and a human resource development perspective, and even a humanitarian perspective as well, we have to be careful with this growing phenomenon of undocumented children not going school and many escape the gaze, Mr. Chairman, of school attendant officers. Sir, when people are illegal, they go

underground and one Honourable Member mentioned earlier in this debate, when people go underground funny things happen.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy raised the question of hardly being able to find a house for rent. We are not having in Barbados something that is unknown to Barbados. We are having in Barbados, and the Honourable Member for the City knows this, that people are renting a room and sharing certain common facilities all over Barbados, such so that in some small houses, they are 10 occupants; 12 occupants and such like and, at the same time, Mr. Chairman, there is also the phenomenon of undocumented people working and not being in the social security safety net or paying National Insurance.

Mr. Chairman, it has happened that some employers knowingly do not pay National Insurance for illegal immigrants, who work for them but the law says that even where a worker is illegal in the country, that worker should pay National Insurance. If you check Cap. 47, it says quite clearly that even when a worker is not seized of a work permit and is not a proper migrant that they should still pay National Insurance if they are working.

Mr. Chairman, I have encountered first instances of persons here illegally who recognise that National Insurance should have been paid on their behalf by their employers, some of whom would have held their passports to keep them here and some of these people in their anxiety to look after themselves wondered whether they could pay their own National Insurance, 100 per cent of it until such time as they could be regularised.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to raise these two issues especially about the children of illegal non-nationals, who do not go to school, who are hidden away and who are suffering through lack of education. Sir, at the same time, those scores and scores of illegal immigrants, who are here working illegally and who are expecting facilities like the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to be available to them, the polyclinics and such like, these are issues and matters that individual members of Parliament will know about either now or in the fullness of time. I believe the time has come when we have to look at all our systems to ensure that legality and proper social justice prevails.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will not be long but I felt compelled to get up on this occasion to really compliment the number of speakers who went before me. Sir, in a short time of 15 minutes the Honourable Member for St. James South and the Honourable Member, the

Minister of Community Development and also the Honourable Member for Christ Church East enunciated a policy in this Chamber as it relates to good governance with the CBOs and NGOs across.

Mr. Speaker, I really believe that the time will come in this Parliament very shortly, when we should have a full debate on a full partnership between the NGO sector and the Government, which is the pathway to good governance in a shared relationship between civil society and Government. Sir, listening to the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development, that debate, when it comes, will be one that we should entire the entire CBO and NGO sector to Barbados because the kinds of enunciations that were clearly made on this Floor tells me that all of us are practically in synch of endorsing a policy of NGO partnership with Government in a very practical and meaningful way, cognisant of the fact that there are a number of youthful organisations. Sir, the Minister of Community Development would know this, that they listen in the community but they do not exist. There are number of persons that would want to beat the system by establishing what I call "paper tigers" because they only exist on paper. When you check in the community, they really do not exist; they do not do anything whatsoever.

6.10 p.m.

Sir, permit me to use this occasion to compliment the Barbados Youth Development Council for doing a wonderful job of embodying most of the grassroots organisations across Barbados. There are some wonderful regional conference plants and also national conferences whose efforts I would like Government to support.

In addition, I heard the Honourable Minister of Community Development speak about the activities of the community organisations in Barbados. One wonderful way of honouring those community practitioners across Barbados is within the Resource Centres, Barbados, and within the schools to create the necessary Halls of Fame and Walls of Fame where the communities could recognise their own heroes. Heroes Day in Barbados should mean more than just the heroes whom we recognise for their macro work in Barbados. On Heroes Day each individual community across Barbados should be celebrating Heroes Day in a way that is befitting their own community heroes.

Sir, what is nationally wrong with community sports groups across Barbados, creating their own cricketing legends out of their communities, their cricketing and football legends.

Suffice to say, I was happy in reading, when I was in dialogue with the Secondary Schools Committee, the name of an Honourable Member in this Chamber came up for

prominently assisting in the formation and smooth running of the Secondary Schools League, for which I have proposed it to be named after Victor 'Gas' Clarke. That is the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central for the role he played. I hope I got it right, Mr. Ronald Jones. Sir, when the debate comes to Parliament I am hoping that it would be bipartisan, so that all of us could really speak to the development of sports in communities across Barbados in a very positive way.

Sir, I just only want to make those few interventions, and at the same time I would also want to recognise the work of the Pinelands Creative Workshop across Barbados and the region as a national grassroots organisation of merit and their work and worth should also be recognised.

Finally, I was enthralled, because I never thought that the Honourable Member for St. James South was a true community practitioner but listening to him I could see that his adventures have been with many groups. It was very heartening to know that we have real community practitioners in here. Sir, when that debate comes, I am sure that the Minister of Youth Affairs, Environment and Family, it is going to be a wonderful mixup in this Honourable House. I am extremely happy and delighted that this is the pathway we all would be taking.

Thank you.

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

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Sir, I rise in support of this Resolution and to recognise the importance of NGOs as far as empowering communities are concerned. One of the things that has not been recognised in societies, today, has been the fact that NGOs can play a critical role in doing things which Government, because of the fact that Government is embedded in bureaucracy cannot on their own do. I think that one of the things that Government clearly for the future would have to explore is how can NGOs within the communities to also deliver services that Government might need to provide and in an innovated way.

Sir, as you are aware, I also came out of the NGO movement from the point of view of my involvement in Cooperatives and because people sat down and saw creative ways in which helped themselves, we see the successes in our communities today. I think we need to build upon some of the same methodologies we employed in very successful NGOs in order to enact change within the community and to make an impact at the grassroots level.

Sir, I think it is important for us to recognise that NGOs can play a role in terms of community

empowerment. We talk about community empowerment, but sometimes we do not understand the role that NGOs can play in facilitating and strengthening the ability of the community to provide services for itself.

As a matter of fact, one of the things that has happened in Barbados today is the lack of self-belief when it comes to peoples' ability to do things for themselves. Again, NGOs can play that critical role, filling the vacuum that currently exists in the communities to get individuals in the communities to move in that particular direction.

Sir, in that regard, I want to look at the whole question of the impact of immigration in the community, and the likelihood of organisations such as, even the Soroptomist Club, playing a role of mitigating the negative impact that immigration has had.

We might not be aware, but because we have in recent past allowed immigration in a very unregulated way in this country, we in societies where it is having an impact. This is not strange but in some societies we might not know this, we are moving to a stage where in order to make ends meet, we have a situation where the normal living accommodations for children is being compromised. As a matter of fact, in order to earn a buck, in some cases, parents actually sacrifice the living accommodation of children, in order to bring in migrants into that particular home. It is having an impact on the family environment in the home and society. Sir, we have to look at this in a very serious way.

Sir, we also have to understand that we can use NGOs to fight counter this, because it is a societal problem which can also raise the level of street children we see in more developed societies. Sir, we talk about the march towards a developed country status, but we do not understand that along the way there are a lot of casualties in terms of the society that we might also be getting. We must examine how we can use organisations in a very creative way to transmit the message.

Sir, NGOs can play a critical role in upholding society's values. Again, we have to examine those creative ways in which we can employ NGOs in order to maintain our creative values.

Mr. Chairman, go back to the question of philanthropy. I note that one of the points made was this Government wants to put a emphasis on philanthropy. Let me say, this is nothing new. Many of us who was raised in an era in Barbados where we had to depend on philanthropy to get through. I was raised at Westbury Road, near St. Leonards Church, mainly because of the fact there was a gentleman who spent time with us, as boys, on evenings coming home from school. Our parents were busy out working, but he spent at least time to instil in us the

kind of values which helped us as young men to grow up. He was showing the qualities of philanthropy, which we also want to at least encourage in our communities.

In that regard, I would embrace the concept where Government wants to encourage philanthropy in the community in a very meaningful way. Again, we are using organisations, not only the Boys Scouts or Churches, we are talking about encouraging teachers to engage in groups after school to help children.

There are also organisations in the society - we have young men in the society who are willing to play a constructive role, with young boys, to help show them true values. Sir, these are the kinds of things that we should concentrate on.

Sir, I want to compliment the Government for the support that was given to the Soroptomist Club. I also want to suggest something for the future. In order for these kinds of activities to have meaningful effect in the communities, we need to spread it. I want to borrow a term from Obama, when he talks about spreading the wealth. When he does that, he means to say we need to at least create an impact in the wider community. We do not need to concentrate - all due respect to the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre, we do not need to concentrate it there. In future, when we bring groups into the country, especially positive groups like the Soroptomist Club...

6.20 p.m.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: ...All due respects to the Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, but we do not need to concentrate it there. Sir, in the future when we bring positive groups like the Soroptimist Club into the country, we should get them to engage in activities in the communities that help to highlight the work that they are doing and, Mr. Chairman, the very positive work that we are doing.

In that respect, Sir, I note that we even have a more bipartisan approach to that situation, where you can have the demonstration effect of showing people the power of concerted action on the part of a community, in terms of trying to resolve the very difficult problems that we will face, as we go forward as a nation, trying to reach that developed country status.

Mr. Chairman, we want our society to move along but we also have to be careful that we do not adopt the situation, where some succeed at the expense of others. Sir, we would want a society, in which everybody feels that they have a stake in it. We need to aim at creating a society in which people feel empowered, so that they can help themselves, and that the State can also respond to their needs in a very creative way. I would suggest that one of

the creative ways in which the State can actually respond to people's needs is through the use of non governmental organisations. Sir, I thank you very much and, again, I support the Resolution.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, there were some very outstanding presentations on this matter. It simply shows that within the bosom of the Honourable Members of this House, really beats the kinds of hearts relative to the NGO movement and the whole notion of volunteerism within this country. There are many other organisations which could be mentioned today but, of course, they should recognise that the Government looks forward to giving them support, where necessary.

One remembers the organisation such as the Jaycees, whose contribution to the development of the National Stadium was extremely exemplary at the time of the 1970s, built on land donated by the Government of Barbados and then the work through the resources of the Bingo, which assisted in the construction of that facility. Of course, the worth of that asset to the people of Barbados, is significantly outstanding.

Mr. Speaker, Head 19 was called as well, which deals with software and hardware for the Treasury Department, as part of our Tax Administration System. Sir, as you know, we have gone to the Smart Stream system quite substantially, across the length and breadth of the public service, schools and other governmental organisations, which should, hopefully, facilitate Government's management of the resources of the State.

Therefore, under Head 19, there are funds in the sum of \$165 750 to meet the acquisition of a new management planning and control system, which would be used for the preparation of the Estimates, and as a forecasting tool. This is an important piece of software.

Sir, we have really gone with heavy penetration with information and communications technologies into this country, and nobody can stand away from the impact of information and communications technologies into this country and nobody can stand away from the impact of information and communications technology, because it is right on our doorsteps and it is at our schools and it is to be used by all and sundry.

There are persons who have benefited in some way from the Technology Resource Centres across Barbados from access to training modules, either in the public service or put on, again, by the same voluntary organisations in Barbados, because persons really have to become conversant with the technology.

The same way that one became addicted, almost to the television, which is another form of communications technology, the visual and audio which come from the television, one has to become conversant with what the computer does, and what the associated technologies do.

Sir, part of Head 19 as well, were funds required to meet the cost of computer hardware, so you have the software and you have the hardware for the project at the Inland Revenue Department.

Therefore, I want to commend this Resolution to the Honourable House and beg that Head 19 stands part.

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

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

HEAD 43

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SUM OF \$126 000

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not a difficult matter. The Government of Cuba, through, what one could call two of its agencies, in reality one agency, but one understands this particular dynamic, through the Communist Party of Cuba and the Government of Cuba over time, have been providing scholarships to Barbadian students.

Cuba is one of our Caribbean neighbours. Cuba is a sister country within this region and it is a part of the colonial experience. In our part of the world, we speak English; in that part of the world, they speak Spanish. The Government of Barbados has said that we must develop a third language, because there is the Nation's language, the dialect as we call it; there is English, which is the basic mode of communication. Therefore, Spanish would essentially become the third language.

This is because there is an extremely large area to the south west of us, south and central America, which we have to really exploit for the benefit of Barbados' tourism and to be able to utilise the goods and services provided by that very large population base.

Cuba, as one of the Caribbean islands, has been extremely generous to all the countries of the Caribbean, in its provision of scholarships. Sir, not only the Caribbean but the wider world, through the provision of services, such

as scholarships for medicine; veterinary medicine; physical education; engineering; art and many of the disciplines which impact on the development of our countries.

In the past, persons going into Cuba for the first time, the Government of Barbados made a contribution of some \$4 000 to those students. This would be what you call, money to help them establish themselves in Cuba. One recognises that the heavy use of currently in Cuba is really not part of the process. There is provision of some resources in part of the scholarship, but many of the parents have come to us to say that they need a little more.

When this scholarship was first established through, I believe, one or two NGOs in Barbados, the Cuban Government provided some funds monthly to help them subsist in Cuba but it has now become problematic. Sir, several of the students, bright as they are, have come from reasonably low income backgrounds. Therefore, the parents of the students in Cuba - I believe we have approximately 81 students in Cuba - made a call to the Ministry of Education asking for the provision of some more assistance to their children.

Mr. Chairman, we in the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, took a determination that we provide \$200 monthly, for the nine contact months, when the students are in Cuba. This is also in association with the first-time grant which was previously given of the \$4 000. Now, we say that all students studying in Cuba, there would be a provision of some \$1 800 Barbadian dollars to assist them in acquiring their personal items to help them over the period of time they spend in Cuba.

The first year is one of emersion in the language. Spanish.

6.30 p.m.

Even though these students might have gone to study Physical Education, the first year is totally set aside for the learning of the Spanish language. In fact, persons are coming back now not only with the training, but are speaking fluent Spanish based on the Cuban model. There are variances of every language, but one has to ability still to communicate with others who speak Spanish as well.

Mr. Chairman, this Supplementary of \$126 000 for this year would be to support those Barbadian students. We do not want to send our students overseas where a scholarship has been provided by one of our sister countries and have them immersed in some level of difficulties. Mr. Chairman, we really want to thank the Government of Cuba for its assistance in medical services, veterinary medicine, physical education, engineering, the arts and the other disciplines.

Mr. Chairman, we want the House to support this supplementary of \$126 000 for this year. This would then go into our Estimates for 2009/2010 as it was not budgeted for the 2008/2009 period since it is a request which came after the Estimates. The Cabinet of Barbados thought that it was truly a worthwhile gesture to continue to support the Cubans.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I do not like to be disingenuous at all. They started with the \$4 000 which has continued. We have added this to all of the students for the period of their studies, so it would be an annual grant which would be going to those students in Cuba.

Mr. Chairman, I commend this supplementary of \$126 000 under Head 43, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to the Honourable House.

I beg to second that.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I want to lend my support to this supplementary for the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in relation to the Cuban students. Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate some of the comments made by the Honourable Minister in relation to this whole project in Cuba where the privilege is being given to sometimes very poor working-class people to be able to pursue their studies at the tertiary level.

Mr. Chairman, when we look at the training that is offered in other countries including North America and so on it is sometimes 100 times more expensive; therefore the gesture by the Embassy of Cuba and indeed the Clement Payne Movement and any other agency over the last 12 or so years should be highly commended.

Mr. Chairman, I know that St. Lucia and two other Caribbean countries have been sending students to Cuba to undertake studies. Mr. Chairman, I knew that at one point in time the students from St. Lucia had the privilege of staying in a facility that was constructed by the Government because many of them felt that their standards of living were so high compared to that in Cuba, that there were little rumblings and grumblings. However, over time the students have been able to settle in well.

Mr. Chairman, that was the reason why some time in 1997/98 the effort was made to facilitate those students with the \$4 000 amount to help them to be able to live that standard that we know is synonymous with Barbados. Mr. Chairman, we did not want to make the students in Cuba feel different from ours because you would appreciate that

if the Cubans have to conform with those standards that we did not want ours to go in and make them feel uncomfortable. I think that this is a good gesture that Government is doing to offer the \$200 per month stipend to each of the students because it would help them to be able to live a better life while they are there.

Mr. Chairman, I think that the whole exercise of conversational Spanish at the primary level would add to this kind of exercise because we must not always be looking at flying out far to do our studies when children can pursue their studies to the level that would match any of those in the international arena right here in the Caribbean. Those persons could come back to Barbados and be able to offer service to this country.

Mr. Chairman, cultural training and cultural studies is one of the areas that Cuba is very strong in. We know of the area in dentistry, the engineering department and the physical education department that was mentioned by the Honourable Minister and so on. Sir, we need those kinds of persons to come back to Barbados and service our country.

For too long we have had students who have become scholars and exhibitioners but those students do not return to Barbados to give back to the society. Many of the students who have gone to Cuba have returned and are giving back service to this country. I believe that is what should be happening. If we are spending the taxpayers' money to help the students, they should come back and at least be bonded to give at least two years service to the development of Barbados. I believe that the training would not only serve them in an academic way but indeed in a cultural way because we have some cultural links with Cuba.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, there were many persons who visited Cuba way back in the early 20th Century who have stayed on in Cuba and have families there and so on. Therefore, I think it is important that we look at the cultural aspect of things and that we have exchange visits as a result of the training and the relationship that has developed with Cuba for those students to be able to pursue their studies there.

I also know, Sir, that there is a parent group that has been established so that when challenges arose, the parents would meet and then a delegation would visit the ministry. I believe that this too is coming out of what the parents would have been recommending. We are all aware how expensive it is to educate our children; therefore any exercise undertaken by this Government or indeed any other government in the future would receive the support of this side because we understand that it is not an easy task to educate our people outside of Barbados. We know how expensive it is.

Mr. Chairman, we know of many parents and guardians who are barely on the breadline but they want the best for their children. Therefore, we would lend our support to this exercise because it is extremely necessary when we look at it in terms of the cost factor of those universities beyond the Caribbean that are so expensive where the content and everything else is similar to what is being offered in Cuba. Sir, we on this side would wish to give our support to this particular supplementary.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I too would want to endorse this supplementary that is currently before this Honourable Chamber. Sir, it would be remiss of me if I did not compliment the work of what I would call the unofficial Barbadian ambassador to Cuba, Mr. David Denny, for doing a lot in forging links with Cuba. I believe that almost all Barbadians would passionately tell you that Mr. Denny is a very serious advocate and a very serious ambassador for Barbados as it relates to Cuba/Barbados relationships, so I really would want to use this occasion to compliment him for his work over the years with Cuba.

Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that at the same time the work and the contribution that Cuba is making to the other territories including Barbados is in a way undervalued. I am saying that from the perspective that Cuba is a wonderful partner right here in the Caribbean. For instance, we could talk about the Cuba light bulb project, which is an energy project that has been set up to help recipients of this programme save on their energy bill. Sir, all of us know how it went wrong a bit in Jamaica but we cannot subtract from the value of that project.

6.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, additionally, Cuba invited persons from all over the region to come to its shores for free operations, especially older persons, those with glaucoma and other eye problems. Sir, almost 95 per cent of those persons reported total success, and I am sure this was not at a cost to the recipients of this programme.

Sir, as I keep saying, we have a wonderful partner here in the Caribbean, and they must be complimented for the work they are doing. Sir, all of us might not agree with some of its policies but if you talk about socialism being practiced in a real way, in a true way, and as a good ally to Barbados and other Caribbean island, you have first to look at Cuba.

Mr. Chairman, against that background, I am saying that today November 4th is a very significant day in Cuba. It is also a very significant day in the United States of America, as in a matter of hours history will be unveiled,

where, for the first time in the history of the USA, they will have a black President.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to make a call from this Honourable Chamber to the USA Congress, I would want to ask that at their first meeting with the new President, that he would free the five Cubans who are locked up, unfairly so, in the jails of America. Those five Cubans were part of the terrorist act in Barbados who, on the morning of the Cubana crash, blew up BWIA. They then blew up a Cubana flight over Barbados' waters, where a number of Barbadians lost their lives in that disaster.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying let justice be done, though the heavens might fall. Sir, it may not sound palatable but the truth sometimes is not always palatable, but the fact of the matter is, this should be one of the first orders of business for the new President who will be sworn in some time in January. Sir, all I am saying is that Caribbean Governments, particularly the English-speaking Caribbean, should join together and make a call for the freedom of the five Cubans who are unfairly locked up in jails in the United States of America. Sir, while America has these five Cubans locked up, at the same time, the current USA Government is launching acts and are trying to free the world away from terrorism. Sir, that is a strange contradiction.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to dwell on it too long, but it is a serious matter of concern. Sir, as soon as one takes this position, one is branded as being either a leftist or rightist. I am neither, I stand for what is principally right. Therefore, if we as Honourable Members of this Chamber cannot get up and face the might, or if we subscribe to the policy that might is right, then something is wrong with all of us. If we cannot understand that Barbadians lost their lives in that Cubana airline disaster, that America is sheltering these persons under what I would call a Bush initiative, then you would expect that with a new President, one having our pigmentation, that I am anticipating very early these five Cubans would be free.

Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development for bringing this Supplementary, so that Barbadian students could continue their education in Cuba. Sir, I want to further compliment Mr. David Denny. Sir, whatever we might think of him, history will record that he was our true grass-root ambassador to Cuba. He continues to push and champion the cause for poor people's children to get an education in Cuba, free of cost. Sir, I am very glad the present Government continues to support this process.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

His Honour KENNETH ST.C. BEST: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support to this Money Resolution

before this Honourable House. Sir, I think one recognises and is fully aware that education is serious business, and that this Government is about serious business. This Government is about serious business to see that its citizens are well-looked after, despite whichever country win which they choose to pursue their studies. Mr. Chairman, one of my greatest concerns as we debate this Head, which I think my Government is doing its very best to solve, is that students leave here, go to Cuba and on their return, they face a number of challenges in the job world.

Sir, I would want to say that my Government, as well as other Caribbean Governments, have taken the principal position to ensure that there be an examination to the standard of other universities and to the Caribbean as a whole, to ensure that those students who return to Barbados could find employment within the system.

Sir, another of my greatest concerns is that we must not water-down the system, where there might be the situation where students may have as little as three or four "O" Levels. Sir, the organisation that looks after the scholarships might be doing a good job but one would have to review the selection process of the students, to ensure there is a criteria set as to the amount of qualification needed to study in Cuba.

Mr. Chairman, I know that some persons would have gone to Cuba with only three or four certificates, when within our own country they find it extremely difficult to gain entry to the Barbados Community College. Sir, that is why we find there is difficulty when those persons return from Cuba and want to practice their profession here. I am sure my Government is doing its best, in collaboration with other Caribbean Governments to alleviate that problem.

Mr. Chairman, I would hope that as we contribute to the development of Barbados and to the wider Caribbean, that all players on board would understand that the gesture might be well-intended but that we must prevent creating further hardship or discomfort to those students, who would have probably spent six or seven years away from these shores, where upon their return, are faced with another hurdle while trying to find legitimate work. Mr. Chairman, we can solve that hurdle by solving the problem at the beginning, that is, to ensure that the people we send to Cuba have the prerequisite qualification to enter any institution here in Barbados or beyond our shores.

Mr. Chairman, I would want wholeheartedly to support this Resolution and to say that the organisation which looks after this venture should do more to educate the public of Barbados. I am sure this Government would take the requisite measures to ensure that the people of Barbados are educated as to the problems that face those children who go to Cuba and return, in the hope of finding employment here in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I know that US\$200 might sound insignificant but it is US\$200 per month; it is better than nothing. Sir, as time goes by and as the economic climate in this world changes, I am sure this Government would ensure that those Barbadians students would benefit more.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support to this Money Resolution and to say that as an educator myself, I am delighted that Government is continuing to promote access to education to all classes in our society. Sir, the philosophy of our late, great leader and National Hero, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, is that the Democratic Labour Party will provide free education for Barbadians, from primary through to tertiary level. Sir, at that time, the young Democratic Labour Party Government of 1961 was opposed by the Barbados Labour Party. They said that such a measure we would have broken the Treasury, that Government could not afford to 'fly over the sluce gates', as it were, and let any and every person get access to education. Sir, we proved them wrong.

6.50 p.m.

...the Barbados Labour Party at the time opposed the young Democratic Labour Party Government of 1961. They said that we would break the Treasury and that the Government could not afford to open the sleuth gate, as it were, and let any and every person access an education and we proved them wrong just as we proved them wrong when we fully liberalise access to transportation on the public buses, making it fully free to all Barbadian students. Sir, this is the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party and so, this measure is a further testimony to this ideological divide between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir, I agree that we must make sure that standards are maintained, and I am confident that the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, through its higher education section, will ensure that the necessary accreditation is made and that an assessment of diplomas and degrees offered by countries around the world are properly assessed to standardise them and equate with our local and international standards.

Sir, I am happy that we are seeing here, what we call in international relations, "south/south corporation", between third world developing countries, like ourselves, where we can have exchanges in terms of accessing the strengths of our neighbours and reciprocating. Mr. Chairman, I believe that with the fall of the Berlin wall, the cold war scenario of international politics is behind us and we realise that our philosophy or foreign policy enunciated by the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, where we declare to the world that we are friends of all and satellites

are still relevant today. So we should not be up in the “isms and schisms”, and stigmatise people and discriminate against them because they may have studied in Cuba, China, Russia, Venezuela or wherever.

Mr. Chairman, I urge the United States of America and other western powers to match the scholarships provided by these nations mentioned before and provide more scholarships to Barbados, which I am sure would go a long way. Sir, we are not begging but we are saying that as part of good neighbourly relations, these scholarship opportunities are welcomed. Sir, because of our standard of living improving over the years, Barbados has been graduated from soft loans from the World Bank and other Breton Woods institutions. Sir, one would not like the world to think that we cannot benefit from the access of scholarships and such assistance to help develop the human resources of our country. Mr. Chairman, we are not begging alms, we are talking about investing in the human capital of our country so that the standard of living, the productivity in our country can increase so that we can play, as a nation, an integral in the development of human kind in this new millennium.

Sir, I look forward to increase access of scholarships from around the world. The Chinese have given us scholarships in the past, and now that we are setting up the mission in China, we would need translators and the presence of Barbadian personnel to run that mission and promote relations between Barbados and China, and other countries have helped us over the years.

Mr. Chairman, coming back to Barbados, I draw attention to the fact that the Barbados Labour Party was in office for 14 years. Sir, I speak from experience because I was fortunate enough to win a bursary, offered by the Barbados Government in the early 1990s to study at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies. I got \$1 800 a year for that bursary in the early 1990s and could you imagine that the Democratic Labour Party Government assumed office in January 2008, to find that the bursary has not increased by one red cent, and the Barbados Labour Party was in office for 14 years? Sir, inflation and the cost living have gone up and the Barbados Labour Party could not care about those poor working-class Barbadians who needed that assistance. Sir, they met the matriculation, had good academic ratings, qualified for the bursary and the Barbados Labour Party Government did not raise that bursary in over 14 years.

I look forward to this new Democratic Labour Party Government allocating funds to increase the size of the bursary because it is badly needed. Sir, I went before a Committee, which was made up of representatives from the University and the Ministry and apart from academic performance and the priority areas, you had to demonstrate financial need, so I know that a lot of working class

Barbadians rely on such assistance from the Government in order to cover the cost of books, food, transportation and clothing.

Mr. Chairman, I also look forward to the number of bursaries being increased because it was a small number and this also applies to the other campuses of the University of the West Indies, Barbadians studying in at Trinidad at the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad; the engineering and agricultural students, who now have to pay in terms of boarding and lodging because they are living in a foreign country and would need more assistance but the Barbados Labour Party did not increase the bursaries or at the Mona Campus, where there are medical and pharmaceutical students and so forth.

Mr. Chairman, there is a grant of \$2 000 which the Barbados Government offers to final year students at the Cave Hill Campus of University of the West Indies and other places to allow them to complete their studies, which is the maximum and I am sure that we can add a little more to this, given the current financial need of these students. Sir, having reached the final year, they just need that little support so that they can graduate and not have issues that would compromise their ability to complete their studies.

Sir, I think we can also increase the awareness in terms of the public relations of these programmes available. I am sure that a number were not aware that final year students at the Cave Hill Campus could acquire grant assistance from the Government and, indeed, that students over the age of 35 years of age can, on a case by case basis, apply to the Minister of Education to access the Student Revolving Loan.

I have also been informed that the extent of the scholarship of Government exhibitioners, is not as much as the Barbados scholars, and given the fact that many of these exhibitioners may wish to study outside of the island or outside of the region, the fact that the Barbados Labour Party Government did not increase the quantum of the exhibition grant, it is important this Government looks to increase the size of the money awarded the Barbados exhibitioners.

Sir, the National Development Scholarships is another way in which Barbadians can access education. I think at one stage the Barbados Labour Party Government had almost shrunk that National Development Programme. Sir, the priority areas can be very limited sometimes and if you broaden this, then we can encompass more students to access these very vital areas.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas talked about bonding students. I agree that there is an issue of brain drain with many of our graduates being lured to the developed countries where they earn a better income. I

believe it is the responsibility of Government, when we force those scholarship recipients to sign a bond to return and work in Barbados for the number of years they studied, we must provide placement services to assist these graduates to find a job or open a small business so that they can repay the Student Revolving Loan. Sir, often times these students are left on their own and would rather repay the Government the money because they cannot stay in Barbados without getting a job and repaying the loan.

Sir, I agree that we need to encourage those graduates to give back something to the society but we must facilitate this process, in order to be fair to these persons.

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

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: In closing, I just want to make the point ...

7.00 p.m.

..encourage those graduates to give back something to the society but we must facilitate this process, in order to be fair to these persons.

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

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: In closing, I want to make the point that I am linking the Human Resource Development with National Resource Development, so we should not be penny pinchers and say that too many persons getting university degrees and the Cave Hill Campus is bursting at its seams. That is nonsense because the United States, for example, our model, the percentage of their high school graduates gaining college degrees is well over 50 per cent. We in the third world are lagging back in the teens, because they appreciate that human resource development creates the scientists, entrepreneurs and inventors, and as a people with a Democratic Labour Party Government, we always pride ourselves in development. We have created the middle class, the accountants, civil service and doctors through access to education. I am saying, maintain the standards, but promote massive education to empower our people to move forward.

I thank you.

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

Dr. Hon. E.R. Byer-Suckoo: Sir, I just want to add a few words in support of this Resolution. As one who studied in Jamaica, I see this intervention as being

extremely useful. I am sure it has come as a major relief to those students and their parents.

I remember vividly when I went to Jamaica, it seemed a strange land, I experienced a culture shock. I was told that or going to Jamaica, I would experience culture shock and I figure it could not happen, because it was one of our Caribbean countries. For me it was a strange culture. Being hardly a student of means BDS\$20 at that time, and the state of the Jamaica economy, a Jamaica dollar sliding all the time, it was very useful. Sir, BDS\$20 would go a long way towards books and even food. I know students receiving BDS\$200 a month will experience a major relief.

I have spoken to some of these students who are overseas, and when they come home on holiday, they can tell you about the days they are struggling. Their parents who hear of their plight may get to communicate, but there is very little they can do to assist them because they themselves are struggling. They are not wealthy, which makes it difficult for them to be able to get supplies or money to their children.

Sir, to have a Government back them and assist in this way, is of great relief. I can only imagine myself having a son who is overseas studying, I appreciate the anguish that parents feel when your child is overseas, knowing he or she is not well but you cannot reach out and touch, and there is very little you can do, but now you know there is somewhere you can go.

Sir, when I was overseas there were times when you felt you had no one to turn to. I know there are many in here who studied overseas and would have had the same experience. Fortunately, I found Bajans in Jamaica and you know they say that there are Bajans everywhere you turn, so you just have to hope to find one and I know they tend to look out for their own.

Sir, I am glad for the parents in all of this. As Minister of Family, we want to support parents in their endeavour to raise their children. It is one thing to raise them when they are in your household, but when they are overseas studying, you know you are limited in what you can do for them.

Sir, the Ministry of Family is pleased to know that we are looking out for the children, not just the Ministry, but this Government is seriously looking out for parents and the youth.

I believe there can be no national development without youth development. Likewise there can be no youth development without national development. As we go forward in developing this nation, we have to seek to develop our young people, those who are here studying and those who chose to go overseas, because the offer was

better, or because what they want to study is available overseas, but not available here. So to that end I think we have to - and my colleague from the City of Bridgetown, just mentioned, some of the other areas that students are being assisted, and perhaps need to be assisted more.

We were pleased that in the budgetary proposal there would be an increased loan allowance for the Student Revolving Loan Fund, and the terms would be better as well. I know that there are many parents and students, who are anxious to be able access these increased loans at better terms.

Sir, while the parents of the students in Cuba, have banded together to form an association, I know there are many other students in other groupings, whose parents have not done so, and perhaps have not been able to experience the kind of success for their children as they would like.

At this time I would like to urge the Ministry of Education to listen to those other students. I know there are many who have come to me, perhaps, as the Minister of Youth or Sport. For example, there are students who have received sports scholarships, but there are partial scholarships. There seems to be no way they can meet the other cost involved. I know of students who had to turn down significant sport scholarships because they did not have the additional funding to support themselves while they were there.

Sir, it would have allowed them the opportunity to develop those sports skills, as well as get that tertiary education, to take them where they want to be. They may not have had the means within their family. Sometimes they call up the Ministry of Education and ask if they can get funding for a particular course and maybe it is one that is listed, so right away they are turned back. We do not do that. There need to be a better approach to the student. There need to be a more comprehensive policy that all students, regardless of what they study, would be given an ear.

Sir, there are students who may be doing courses that may not have been done before. The courses of study and choices today are not as simple and are more varied than when I was a student. Sir, a student would have done well and you would have expected that student to do law, medicine or a handful of courses. Students are going away and studying all kinds of things. The sky is the limit, literally, the sky is the limit. Who is not reaching to the sky is studying the stars, space and beneath the sea. Sir, they want to study these courses and they are told we do not offer courses for that, but these are courses that can assist in national development. Again, I reiterate that developing our young people through education and we have seen this

before, and as my colleague pointed out, developing our young people can bring returns to our development.

Sir, when we send our young people overseas to study these other courses other than the typical medicine, law and so on, these are skills we can encourage if we create the environment for them to come back and study here.

Sir, my colleagues mentioned those students who are on Barbados Exhibitions and who have excelled, but the funds received do not even cover their tuition. They have excelled in the area of academia, and what they receive does not cover their tuition or academic cost. These figures need to be revised. If they were studying at the University of the West Indies, it might have gone further but many of them are doing courses, today, that are not being offered at UWI. We should not limit our scholars, especially those with aptitude, to just doing courses that are offered at the University of the West Indies because these courses can help in our national development,

Sir, again, I think may be if the parents were to band together in an association - again, people think that when older students got an Exhibition or some scholarship, their parents have money. We know that is not the case. There are a lot more people in Barbados who want a tertiary education, but they need that assistance. There are some who would have to give up a full-time job for part-time in order to get that tertiary education. Again, it is something that may not have been done before. Where there is no precedent they immediately say this is not the case.

Sir, while we have made strides through educating our people, I know there are opportunities where we can serve our people better by enhancing the finances and other arrangements for them to access courses in Barbados, the region and across the world, especially when those courses are not offered here. Sir, doing so is going to pay dividends for our country.

Sir, we know we are facing economic times and it could be tough. We need to develop a cadre of people who can go into different fields, who could explore different territories for us. We cannot limit ourselves. We are telling our young people today, every time we stand and speak, for example, in my Ministry, not to limit themselves. They have access to the internet and television so their ideas are expansive.

7.10 p.m.

We cannot limit ourselves. For example, every time we stand and speak in my Ministry, we are telling our young people not to limit themselves. We have access to the Internet, they have access to television and so, their ideas are expansive, more than we would have been

exposed to, so we cannot then turn around and limit them because of archaic policy that were set maybe 20 years ago. It is time to revise that. We tell our young people the sky is the limit. They see opportunities through the CSME, they see opportunities through the EPA with the European Union, and we have to be able to give them the kind of support they need, in order to improve themselves and improve our country.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Asides.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I really did not expect that this debate would have lapsed so far. This country has provided its citizens with what is termed, free education. We know that essentially they are the taxpayers who provide for our people who are studying but the resources are finite. In fact, they are competing demands for the resources of the State.

Therefore, the Government has done well in managing for those persons at our University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, even though we pay for them at a first degree level, we provide economic and tuition support at the Masters level, once you have an upper second or first class degree. Then, for peculiarities, persons who are a little lower down the scale, based on the human resource needs of the country, we provide support as well, and also at the doctoral level, we provide support.

We also provide subsidies to persons at BCC; SJPP; Erdiston Teachers College, and other institutions. Maybe acquire their books; pay bus fare; or whatever. Those systems exist. Every year, the Government of Barbados put money in the Estimates to help take care of those resources.

There has been a bit of abuse of the system by some persons who are not using the resources provided for what they asked for, but by diverting it to some other cause. This might call for a bit of tightening up to ensure that it goes to what they asked for. The enabling grant that the Honourable Member for the City spoke about is still there. Persons in their final year of study can benefit from that enabling grant of \$2 000 in the final year. All of this is to help our students to successfully traverse the educational arena.

These are not things that you talk about loudly but these are things which are done for our students in Barbados. I know that there are some concerns, in relation to the quantum of the exhibition and that is a matter now under review. At the same time, I hope one does not expect that there will be, especially if there are courses being done

in Barbados or within the UWI system, and they go off somewhere where they would not expect that there would be total economic cost being paid for that, because it is done within the system. There may have to be some consideration for those programmes which are not part of your UWI system, where you might need to top it up a bit, but that is under careful consideration. The demands are great and we are doing the best we can to support the education of the citizens of Barbados.

Sir, all that the Government asks, is for persons to redouble our efforts to be successful. This is what is important, since the contributions of the taxpayers of Barbados to their welfare and their education, is tremendous.

Sir, we are speaking of just under \$500 million, which is \$½ a billion to provide education for the citizens, and that is a tremendous amount of money. I am not going to go into a cost benefit analysis because we have to educate our people, but one would want the one who receives the service to ensure that the service which they are given that they actually hold on to it, grasp it with both hands and use it for the development of themselves, the development of their communities, the development of their country and the region.

I want to compliment the Honourable Member who has contributed so far, and beg that Head 43 stands part.

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

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

HEAD 52

MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND ENERGY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1 864 491

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, the sum is being requested, Sir, to Supplement the provisions of the Estimates for 2008-2009. This sum is required essentially for four broad areas, under Programme 112 that of Financial Control and Treasury Management to provide provisions for the sums of maintenance of property, general operating expenses and also for professional services.

Sir, with respect to Programme 113 Revenue Collection, these sums are required again for operating expenses and professional services to be executed, within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

I therefore move that Head 52 stand part.

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

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Explanatory Notes to Head 13 as amended stand part.

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

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

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

On the separate motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

7.20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to move the adjournment of this Honourable House until Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 10.00 a.m., I just wish to indicate that our Presiding Officers would be out of the island from the 9th to the 12th of November, for training. We always have to ensure that we keep knowledgeable about the systems of the governance of Parliaments.

Mr. Speaker, speaking on the adjournment, I am sure that I have not as yet congratulated the Clerk on his appointment. I know that you moved that as Speaker, but on this side we would want to compliment him for being appointed by the Management Committee of Parliament. He has always done an excellent job. Once you have established high standards and principles one would not experience a deterioration in those very high standards.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the Clerk on his permanent appointment. I believe that he has earned the position through hard work, interesting work, diligent attention to details and a sense of research; therefore I believe that Honourable Members on this side, those who are here and those who are not here, would join me in congratulating him.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I really want to support the permanent appointment of the Clerk of Parliament to this Honourable Chamber. He came up and was tutored

probably under the best Clerk of Parliament that we have had in the Commonwealth and I really want to congratulate him because he is always willing to help and is always there for you particularly on technical matters relating to this Honourable Chamber. Again, Mr. Speaker, I just want to congratulate him on his appointment.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Speaker, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

7.30 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. R. D. JONES.....	2
Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 2.	

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

PRIVATE MEMBER'S NOTICES

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY.....	2
------------------------	---

FIRST READING OF BILLS

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER NO. 3.....	2
------------------	---

Dr. the Hon. D.C. Estwick, 2, 4, 5, 6; Mr. G.W.A. Payne, 3, 4; Hon. Miss M.A. Mottley, 5, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22; Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16; Mr. R. St.C Toppin, 6, 8, 9, 10; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 8, 9; His Excellency Mr. D.st.e. Kellman, 9, 19, 20, 21, 22; Mr. D.D. Marshall, 11; Dr. W.F. Duguid, 11, 12.

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 3 (resumed)

Hon. R. D. Jones, 23, 49; Dr. the Hon. D.C. Estwick, 23, 47, 48, 49; Mr. A.D. Brathwaite, 24, 25; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 41, 45; Hon. Miss M.A. Mottley, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 48, 49; Hon. P.M.T. Todd, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 41, 42; Mr. D.D. Marshall, 33, 35, 36; Mr. S. A. Lashley, 36, 45, 47; Mr. James D. Paul, 39; Dr. the Hon. E.R. Byer-Suckoo, 39, 40; Dr. The Hon. E.R. Byer Suckoo, 40; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47; His Excellency Mr. D.st.e. Kellman, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47; Hon. K.St.C. Best, 42, 46; His Ex. Mr. Denis St.E. Kellman, 43.

ORDER NO. 4.....	50
------------------	----

Hon. R. D. Jones, 50, 51; Mr. R. St.C Toppin, 51; Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, 51; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 51.

HEAD 19

Hon. R. D. JONES.....	51
Mr. H. F. Lashley, 51, 62; Mr. R. C. Eastmond, 53, 54, 61; His Excellency Mr. D.st.e. Kellman, 54; Hon. P.M.T. Todd, 55, 56; Hon. K.St.C. Best, 56, 57; Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, 57, 58; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 59; Hon. S. D. Blackett, 59; Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe, 60, 61; Mr. James D. Paul, 63, 64; Dr. the Hon. D.C. Estwick, 65.	

HEAD 43

Hon. R. D. JONES.....	65
Miss C. Y. Forde, 66; Mr. H. F. Lashley, 67; Hon. K.St.C. Best, 67; Hon. P.M.T. Todd, 68, 70; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 72.	

HEAD 52

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK.....	72
Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 73; Hon. R. D. Jones, 73.	
SUSPENSION.....	23
ADJOURNMENT.....	73
Hon. R. D. Jones, 73; Mr. R. C. Eastmond, 73; Mr. H. F. Lashley, 73.	

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BEST, Hon. K.St.C. (St. Michael East)
BLACKETT, Hon. S. D. (St. Michael Central)
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Mr. A.D. (St. Philip South)
BYER-SUCKOO, Dr. the Hon. E.R. (St. George South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
DUGUID, Dr. W.F. (Christ Church West)
EASTMOND, Mr. R. C. (St. James North)
ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D.C. (St. Philip West)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
INNIS, Hon. D. O'N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Ex. Mr. Denis St.E.
KELLMAN, His Excellency Mr. D.ST.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East)
LASHLEY, Mr. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
LOWE, Dr. the Hon. D. S. (Christ Church East)
MARSHALL, Mr. D.D. (St. Joseph)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M.A. (St. Michael North East)
PAUL, Mr. JAMES D. (St. Michael West Central)
PAYNE, Mr. G.W.A. (St. Andrew)
Suckoo, Dr. The Hon. E.R. Byer
TODD, Hon. P.M.T. (City of Bridgetown)
TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C (St. Michael North)

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

EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. First Reading of Bills. Hon. R. D. Jones moves ‘the first reading of the following’, but the source lists only the numbers ‘1.’ and ‘2.’ with no titles of Bills. Printed as in the source.

Q2. Order No. 3, Miss M. A. Mottley, take-slip 12.00 noon. The sentence beginning ‘the Honourable Member for St. James South could do well to go and find jobs for the people’ appears twice, either side of the take-slip ‘12:00 noon’, in slightly different wording (‘this constituency’ / ‘his constituency’). Both versions are printed as in the source.

Q3. Order No. 3, Chair labels. During the debate on the Resolution, with the House sitting and the Speaker in the Chair, one ruling on naming persons is headed ‘Mr. CHAIRMAN’ and one intervention in Dr. Estwick’s reply is headed ‘MR. PRESIDENT’. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee of Supply, Head 19. Part of His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. Kellman’s speech is missing: one paragraph ends ‘because(17:13:11)’ and the next begins ‘...NO RECORDING (17:15:47)’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Head 13. A take-slip reads ‘16.40 p.m.’, mixing the 24-hour and 12-hour forms. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Committee of Supply, Head 43. Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo’s speech (about 1,580 words) is printed under the heading ‘Mr. CHAIRMAN’, which calls the Member for St. George South; her name appears only in the text, ‘Dr. Hon. E.R. Byer-Suckoo:’. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Committee of Supply, Head 43. Mr. H. F. Lashley is called by a speaker headed ‘Mr. SPEAKER’ although the House is in Committee of Supply. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Committee of Supply, Resolution total. The Resolution grants \$3 287 503, but the four Heads debated (Head 13, \$802 818; Head 19, \$324 603; Head 43, \$126 000; Head 52, \$1 864 491) add up to \$3 117 912. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 4th November, 2008 at 10.15 a.m., with His Honour the Speaker, Mr. M. A. Carrington, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood. The Speaker reminded Members that sittings were due to begin at 10.00 a.m. Mr. H. F. Lashley gave notice of a Resolution recognising the footballer Victor Sylvester ‘Gas’ Clarke, and Standing Orders were suspended. After the luncheon suspension Hon. R. D. Jones and Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick laid papers including the Betting and Gaming Duties Order, 2008 and the Annual Report of the National Petroleum Corporation for the year ending 31st March, 2006.

Order No. 3 was the Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance of BDS 8.2 million dollars and interest, to be borrowed by Needham’s Point Holdings Ltd. from the National Insurance Board in settlement of a dispute with Johnston International Ltd. over the construction cost of the Hilton Hotel. Dr. Estwick blamed the former administration’s delay over oil contamination from the old Mobil refinery site for the added costs, calling its members ‘bunglers’, which drew points of order from Mr. G. W. A. Payne and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. He argued that borrowing at 6.8 per cent from the National Insurance, against required returns of 3 to 3.5 per cent, was sound during an international financial crisis.

Mr. R. St.C. Toppin said tourism had been handed over at record levels and cited falls of 59.9 per cent in apartment stays and 29.2 per cent in guest-house stays; the Speaker required him to withdraw a statement that nothing had been done. Hon. D. O’N. Inniss said Barbados had not got the best deal on the Hilton project. Miss Mottley, the Leader of the Opposition, said the \$8.2 million arose from a faulty foundation design rather than oil seepage and asked who had designed the foundations. His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. Kellman replied on oil prices, foreign reserves and home-porting, amid repeated points of order from Miss Mottley.

In the afternoon Mr. A. D. Brathwaite, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Mr. D. D. Marshall, Mr. S. A. Lashley, Mr. J. D. Paul, Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo and Mr. G. A. Clarke spoke. Mr. Todd cited the contractor Fiton Technologies Inc.’s findings on contamination at Needham’s Point and blamed the last Barbados Labour Party Government; Mr. Marshall said that Government had negotiated the refinery’s closure on the basis that Mobil would pay for remediation. A long exchange followed over

whether a letter Mr. Clarke wished to read could be made a document of the House. Dr. Estwick replied and the Resolution was agreed to without division.

Order No. 4 took the House into Committee of Supply on the Resolution to grant \$3 287 503 to supplement the Estimates 2008-2009. Under Head 13, \$802 818 met the cost of 97 stranded passengers from a flight out of Accra, including \$618 446.40 for a return charter, half of which Mr. Inniss said Ghana had agreed to reimburse. Under Head 19, \$324 603 covered a reception hosted by the Prime Minister for some 1 200 Soroptimist International delegates, and ten Members spoke, several on

the role of NGOs. Under Head 43, \$126 000, Mr. Jones explained a grant of \$200 a month for nine months to about 81 students in Cuba, supported by Miss C. Y. Forde, Mr. H. F. Lashley, Hon. K. St.C. Best, Mr. Todd and Dr. Byer-Suckoo. Head 52, \$1 864 491 for the Ministry of Finance, passed without debate, and the Resolution was reported, read a first and second time and agreed to.

On the adjournment Mr. Jones congratulated the Clerk on his permanent appointment, joined by Mr. R. C. Eastmond and Mr. H. F. Lashley. The House was adjourned at about 7.30 p.m. until Tuesday, 18th November, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.