
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, October 7, 2008

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at a.m. on Tuesday, October 07, 2008.

PRESENT

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B.
(Speaker)

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

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

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., LL.M. (Leic.), LL.B (Hons.), B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed.

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Mr. R. ST.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)

His Excellency Mr. D. ST.E. KELLMAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. W. F. DUGUID, J.P., B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS

Hon. R. L. SEALY, M.B.A.,B.Sc. (Minister of Tourism)

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, M.Sc. (C. Eng.), (Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Canon Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes of the meeting held on Friday August 8, 2008.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes so cited be confirmed, subject to any omissions, observations and/or corrections.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections, observations and/or omissions, then let those Minutes stand confirmed. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: First let me welcome all Members back from our short recess. I hope that you are all as refreshed and invigorated as you all look today.

Secondly, it is my pleasure to announce that in the interim, Mr. Pedro Eastmond, who was previously acting in the position of Clerk, has now been appointed to that position. I am sure that all Members will be happy in joining the Chair in congratulating him.

Asides.

PAPERS

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

House A17, sequence 02, 10.20 a.m.

Tuesday, October 07, 2008

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (National Council on Substance Abuse), Order, 2008.
2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Needham's Point Holdings Limited) Order, 2008.
3. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Coronation International Golf Limited), Order, 2008.
4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (The Ladies' Association for the Relief of the Indigent, Sick, and Infirm), Order, 2008.
5. Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Elsie Pamela Williams) Order, 2008.
6. Annual Report of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited for the year 2007.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Rural Development Commission for the year ended March 31, 2004.

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

1. Annual Reports of the Operations of the Barbados Drug Services for the fiscal years April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006 and April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007.
2. National Insurance and Social Security (Non-contributory Old-Age Pensions) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2008.
3. The National Insurance and Social Security (Benefits) (Amendment) Order, 2008.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: I am commanded to lay the Archives (Records Management) Regulations 2008.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to inform this Honourable Chamber that I am now sitting in this Honourable Chamber as an Independent Member representing the constituents of St. Michael South East and across Barbados.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of this day's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION THAT THIS HOUSE RESOLVES ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$80 004 807 00 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 20082009 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 6 20082009 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION

HEAD 19 TREASURY \$894 000

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: With your permission, Sir, I will try to deal in my introduction generally with this Supplementary as well as with a couple of economic issues under Head 19.

This particular Supplementary deals with a number of Heads. Under Head 19, we are dealing with expenditures relating to secondary schools, property and plants. You would also see in this supplementary that provisions are being made in respect of subsidies for the electricity bills in Barbados; for the Population and Housing Census; the Household Budget Survey; the Transport Board in respect of subsidies for the various services that it provides, and for the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport to undertake a special project road improvement programme and to facilitate payments to two major contractors in respect of the rehabilitation of existing roads.

Mr. Chairman, this is a large supplementary. I have always been of the view that when Supplementaries of this size come to the House they should be brought by way of a Bill particularly if they cover a large number of Ministries. Fortunately in this instance, these are three or four major activities that have been taking place, which arise principally out of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals either of this year or of decisions that were taken by the previous Administration, particularly in relation to the large component of this Supplementary that related to the subsidy to the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited.

Mr. Chairman, since then, I believe that everybody would be aware that there have been some major features in the international economy that would have made some of the things that were previously said even more relevant, and would in fact, have impacted very significantly on some of the policies that were announced in the Financial Statement.

Mr. Chairman, one of the most important considerations is that global growth has weakened considerably during the first half of 2008. Sir, when the original Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals was completed in this House, I do not think anybody would have had the prescience or even a forewarning that there was going to be such a major collapse in the financial system of the United States of America requiring a bail out unheard of in the history of economic analysis in world politics, world economics and world financial systems and developments.

10.30 a.m.

I believe these are some of the most troubling times that have descended on the world. They have the potential to have significant impact on other sectors of the economy in the United States of America, as well as to traverse the Atlantic and Pacific and have to have an impact on the United Kingdom's market, throughout Europe and potentially in parts of South East Asia.

Mr. Chairman, these issues would not have been as fully ventilated then, because even though there were strong inflationary pressures at the time, which curtailed demand, there was a very difficult task at hand with many policy-makers to curtail the prospect of stagflation.

It seems, however, that those inflationary pressures have levelled off somewhat, particularly in relation to oil prices, but there has been a worsening financial crisis in the United States, which has led to a reduction in global demand. I believe the vast majority of Barbadians who we represent, would see every day on their televisions, the nature of the international crisis that is being faced at this particular time.

Sir, even yesterday, as we were speaking prior to the bailout taking effect it has not been implemented, even though it has been agreed to by the United States of America Government. We saw a significant impact in the financial markets in the United States of America, that have been unheard of, so we have had two successive weeks of declines that are record in the history of the world's financial system.

Mr. Chairman, since the subprime mortgage crisis began to unfold sometime in the latter half of 2007... As I said, I do not think anybody could have anticipated that it would have had the impact that it has had, we have skyrocketing energy prices, consumer and investor confidence in the United States being shaken, a dampening of domestic demand, and economic activity.

Growth would have slowed considerably and unemployment would have risen through the first quarter. The United States Government would have responded to that with expansionary measures, designed to stimulate aggregate demand. Sir, the jury is still out to determine the extent to which these are going to have a positive effect on the situation.

Mr. Chairman, I think that is the background against which we are looking. The latest world economic outlook in respect of global growth, indicates that there is an expected deceleration in global growth, particularly in the second half, with only a gradual recovery in 2009. This would have been based on the prediction that there would be continued financial market weaknesses.

Sir, these analyses were done in July, 2008, therefore, the most up-to-date information that has been presented would not have, perhaps, looked at the impact of failing banks, or the prospect of failing institutions. Since then, there has been the falling out of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Lehman Brothers, AIG and most recently, Washington Mutual, which represent, collectively, the largest failures, but in respect of Washington Mutual, it represents the largest bank failure in the history of the

United States of America. Therefore, we have to see what the impact of all of this would be.

Mr. Chairman, only recently we had a presentation by the Central Bank of Barbados and I believe that in her presentation, the Governor of the Central Bank would have indicated to the Social Partners in Barbados, exactly what is the situation for the first six months of the year.

Mr. Chairman, in relation to the availability of statistics, nothing has changed in Barbados since January. Sir, I do not distribute statistical information in this country. Whatever has been presented to me, has come to my desk and has been approved in the manner in which it was presented. Sir, not an "I" has been dotted, not a "T" has been crossed. Sir, no amendment has been made. I know of no changes that have taken place in the Central Bank of Barbados, either in the research team or at the highest levels of the bank. There have been no changes in the Statistical Department since early January 2007.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am appalled at allegations which have been surfacing in recent times. These allegations are being made by persons who know better and also by those who do not know any better.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: No, I do not think they should know better either. You would only know better if it is not premeditated, but if your predilection in life is to allow others to think for you, or to wake you up like Rip Van Winkle and put something in your hand and say, put your name to this, and you do it without thought, then that happens.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, my learned colleague, the Leader of Government Business said it is robotic behaviour, but I prefer to use the expression "Pavlovian" behaviour, because Pavlovian has a scientific basis for it.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, even though it was conducted with animals, the concept of Pavlovian behaviour is known and has been applied to the human race, particularly in certain areas of the reaction of people and the repetition of their statements blindly. Sir, that is why I would characterise it as Pavlovian behaviour. Sir, nothing has changed, so that there could be no attribution to this Government, in any way, of having done anything differently.

Mr. Chairman, if an earlier availability of the statistics would help, perhaps there is something I should say to that. Sir, I say to the persons who are responsible for disseminating statistics that they should do it a little earlier, at least in relation to me. Sir, as Prime Minister of this country, I certainly should see the statistics before Honourable Members on the Other Side.

Sir, the most I would ask is that the Minister of Finance be entitled to see the statistics, prior to Honourable Members of the Opposition, or to others. Mr. Chairman, it says something about our country today, if other people could have statistics in their possession, where those people could quote from those statistics, and then call on me to verify those very statistics, when they have not reached me as yet.

Mr. Chairman, many years ago, in a Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposal, I quoted a number of growth rates from the Central Bank, and the then Prime Minister and Minister of Finance had launched a tirade against senior officers in the Central Bank because I was in possession of growth rates that the then Prime Minister said he did not have. Sir, I am not launching any tirade against anybody for doing their job, but I would think the basic courtesy would be that persons would provide the Minister of Finance with the information, before they provide other persons.

10.40 a.m.

Sir, as I have said, that is Pavlovian behaviour because if you adopt that strategy and quote from every piece of information that falls off the back of a truck, one of these days somebody is going to put the wrong information on that truck. Sir, I am not into that and, therefore, I think one needs to be conscious of the fact that nothing has changed and, in that regard, the Government remains committed to its policies as enunciated in the Budget. We inherited significant obligations left to us and matters undealt with by the previous Administration.

Mr. Speaker, we are only eight months into a new Government and there are people writing and saying all over the place that you should not talk about that. We are not to say anything about that. We are not to talk about the debt inherited in relation to the subsidy on oil prices, a matter which came to the then Minister of Finance prior to the General Elections and he said to let it wait until after the Elections. We are not to say anything about that. We are to get on with governing the country. We are not to talk about the prospect of the repayment about \$50 million in respect of the National Housing Corporation's arbitration, the total incompetence by the previous Administration, a debt that we have to pay.

Mr. Chairman, we are not to talk about the ABC Highway, a project that was contracted and operated on a rolling basis, which we had to look for the resources to pay and, Sir, more will be said about that later, yet you can still hear cries from certain people that we continue to subscribe to this and that. Sir, it is easy to sit from your position and make those statements.

Mr. Chairman, I was once led by a gentleman who said that the tax take in Barbados had climbed to the highest level ever. He then joined the Government Benches, did nothing to reduce the tax take, and now we are hearing that we need to increase disposable income in Barbados, which can be done by a number of methods. One is to reduce taxation, or to increase incomes but, Sir, that was not a strategy urged when the shoe was on the other foot. All of a sudden, loose tongues or tongues that have been unloosed are unleashed on the public of this country.

We are not to talk about anything that we have been locked into, we are not to talk about the debt that we have inherited, none of those things we are to say anything about. We are not to talk about the cost overruns, the payment of the university, or the fact that we had to look for the money for the Transport Board and, Sir, we are still paying debts for Cricket World Cup.

Mr. Chairman, we paid an attorney for work done six years ago in 2001. We had to look for \$8.7 million for the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, inadvertently omitted from the loan of \$20 million by the previous Government. We had to recapitalise Fund Access. It was not us who allowed it to run out of capital. We had to recapitalise the Enterprise Growth Fund, \$2 million of which was blown in the Hardwood Housing Factory, \$26.5 million to pay the Barbados Defence Force pensions, \$1.3 million for Legacy Barbados; \$24 million for arrears in salaries, \$8.1 million for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and, Sir, I could go through the list.

Mr. Chairman, there are people who say we should not speak about that - \$17.4 million for the Ministry of Health to cover a number of things, including the cost of High Court suits in respect of the St. Joseph Hospital Inquiry and \$12.2 million for the Drug Service. Sir, you could go through the list. The Arch Cot scenario - \$8.1 million for roads to Rayside Construction and other construction companies and the studies for Arch Cot.

Mr. Chairman, I am not blaming anyone. I am saying that these are obligations that a new Government had to pay.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Nobody is blaming you. You now remember Arch Cot? You now woke up and

remembered there is something called Arch Cot? It is nothing to laugh at, but are you still laughing a year later? You are still smiling about a serious matter? The public said you should not have been on television smiling with such a serious matter and now a year later you are back smiling in the House again when we are talking about Arch Cot.

Mr. Chairman, \$41 million for the university; \$33 million to bring to account the National Housing Corporation overdraft and we, therefore, tried to clean up the financial situation in this country and we have had additional expenditure as a result of debt incurred by the previous Administration, an increase in interest payments of \$38.4 million due to new loans and amortization has increased by \$12.5 million. We are supposed to forget all of that and pretend that we came to Government with a clean slate handed to us by a pure Administration.

Mr. Chairman, against the background of all of those factors, we have sought to do a few things we think would have an impact on our society, which will be accounted for in this particular Supplementary. If you look at the Supplementary, there will be others to come. One of them will assist in the provision of the free school bus service for school children in this country. Sir, I do not know that there is anybody in Barbados that should be opposing that.

Mr. Chairman, years ago, somebody said that the Barbados Labour Party always found themselves on the wrong side of an issue and that their job was to make sure they got on the right side of the issue. Sir, it worked for a while, but it has gone back to being on the wrong side of issue, that the provision of this free bus service could not get an unequivocal endorsement...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It was not unequivocal. It was very equivocal. Well, you can say how unequivocal it was when you get up to speak. Sir, it did not get an unequivocal endorsement except from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. I think that is what the Leader of the Opposition is speaking about when she said an unequivocal endorsement.

I am sorry, the Leader of the Opposition might be right. It did get an unequivocal endorsement from one person on the other side but everybody else had conditions. Sir, that has reduced the cost of living for the average person in this country. It has increased the school rolls in Barbados as indicated by the Principals.

10.50 a.m.

It has had the impact of reducing the stress and anxiety of young people when they arrive in school, and

should be ready to do work. It has helped in relation to traffic issues in Barbados, but most of all, I think it has lifted our young people out of an environment that was not conducive to their development.

Sir, that is not a policy in and of itself that stands alone. It comes against a background of a number of other things that have to be done in Barbados to ensure that our children enjoy their childhood and there is no blurring of an understanding of our role, in protecting our children. Therefore, we found the resources.

Sir, what I think was the most interesting aspect of it is, we came to office and found the Honourable Members on the Other Side moaning and groaning. We do not have enough buses and we have to buy buses. Not the Honourable Member for St. George North, because I know that he was very much in favour of this policy, and he said so. He was viciously attacked in an internal Party meeting.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I did not say for what. I have not yet said for what.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Free school bus service - I was never attacked in here, nor I was I ever attacked at any of our meetings, so, the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, what is the point of order?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, how should I characterise that intervention?

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is once bitten, twice shy.

Sir, the Honourable Member is not going to allow himself to be found in the same position that he was previously in, the point being that when the former Government was on This Side they complained. When we came to office there were less than 200 buses on the road. The Minister of Public Works, together with the officials at UCAL, Simpsons Motors, L & M and other entities worked together, because they were involved in a national enterprise of worth and were able to get over 255 buses back on the road in this country. Sir, that is taxpayers' investment, sitting down idle because of total incompetence by a previous Administration. We were being told in here that we have to buy new buses. We know why they were buying new buses all the time, flying all over the world, up and down, looking at buses.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is right. Not the Honourable Member for St. George North. I heard you and you are right, not you. You are not in that.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Exactly. It is the rest of them that were in that.

Sir, I could not believe that we actually have 255 buses on the road. It is a credit to the Transport Board, and most of all it is a credit to the bus drivers and the people who have to work with the school children in Barbados on a daily basis. I am saying this is one of many policies, not the only one.

Sir, we have proposals for the Summer Camps Programme, which we are planning for both the Christmas and Easter vacation, which again is a programme designed to help our young people, during what you may consider down time.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am talking generally. Do you object to my talking generally? Remember I said at the beginning that I was going to talk generally. It is not in this. Part of that has been provided already. In fact, we assisted with Summer Camps during the summer, and the remainder of the resources will be made available prior to the beginning of the Summer Camp Programme. Sir, therefore, we also found ourselves in a situation, against the background of the stunning criticism of certain persons in this society, as if they are the only economic managers Barbados has ever had.

Sir, I read with interest a certain former Minister of Finance saying that the Government was doing nothing in the face of the economic crisis that Barbados was going through. While he was at a political meeting talking, he said that he went to Guyana, the other day, with a group of businessmen. I do not know if he brought back any business. I do not know if there has been any jump in foreign exchange earnings from Guyana, as a result of his visit. That, I presumed, can be analysed. Sir, he is at a public meeting talking. He assumed that everybody is lying down watching television on a Sunday evening, or relaxing.

Sir, what we were doing, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself, for the first time in the history of Barbados' diplomatic representation, we assembled all of the North American Diplomatic and Consular Representatives together with the persons responsible for investment promotion in the tourism sector, labour offices,

Invest Barbados, BIDC, to discuss a specific North American strategy. That is what we were in Toronto doing, meeting with investors in relation to a number of projects in the same Financial Services Sector the individual said was the area of the greatest potential growth, but, Sir, we were doing nothing.

Sir, that is a clear indication. We put an additional \$10 million in resources in the hands of the Barbados Tourism Authority. We have a new service coming out of Calgary. I visited WestJet Headquarters, went down on the floor with the ladies who sell the vacations, talked to them a bit about Barbados and gave them a little pep talk, because it is important for us that we restore the Canadian market to where it was. The Minister of Tourism is to be complimented for the work that he did in relation to the WestJet service.

Sir, we cannot say that these issues will solve our economic problems, but we have not simply folded our arms in the face of what has been happening in the North American market. We are going to go after Europe in November, meet with our major investment partners there to make sure that we can have some stability, particularly in those markets which are the most volatile.

Sir, this particular Supplementary provision, under the purchase of fixed assets, deals with secondary schools. I believe that when the Minister of Education gets to the Head that relates to that, he will deal with it in more detail. That sum is required to cover the cost of additional security at secondary schools, through the provision of security guard huts and additional fencing.

Sir, those services which are identified in this Supplementary, including the road programme, are all aimed at getting some resources into the hands of small qualified contractors who employ Barbadians. The Road Programme is aimed at stabilising the construction companies in Barbados, one of whom told me that it was totally untrue, an allegation that they were about to lay off 200 workers.

11.00 a.m.

Sir, I do not mind that, because wild allegations like those are nothing new. They are bad for Barbados because persons who make those allegations, knowing them to be untrue are obviously on an agenda, and that agenda is to paint a gloomy situation in this country, just like the unemployment statistics, even in the years when we were supposed to have the highest economic growth, when millions of Barbadian taxpayers' monies were spent on Cricket World Cup 2007.

During the Cricket World Cup 2007 period, we were told that would be the highest level of economic activity

Barbados ever experienced, but we still had an increase in unemployment. In 2006, we still had an increase in unemployment in that quarter.

Sir, all of a sudden we are being told that there is an increase in unemployment. First of all the statistics were hidden and of late, that cast a doubt over their integrity.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is systematic, Mr. Chairman, but I am used to that kind of politics. The difference is that I came and found a Democratic Labour Party in 1978. It is still the Democratic Labour Party. I would have resisted the pernicious attempts by certain people to mislead me, whether they are calling in on the Call-in programmes or sitting down in my office with their very unique approach to politics.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I said that from the time I came, it is still the Democratic Labour Party. I do not know if the other main Opposition Party in this country wants to rename itself, "The Bovell Labour Party".

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: This is not what I am saying. This is what your Members are saying. I am only saying what they are saying, if you are going to allow people to lead you down the garden path, in relation to unemployment statistics about which they know little.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Come on, I would not have put that in his hands, I could not have.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Rayside is laying off people. Mr. Chairman, let me read into the record that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said from her seat that she is going to get the names. Therefore, this House needs to get the names of the 200 people that had been laid off and I am going to wait on that. I have checked assiduously.

Sir, to try and maintain levels of employment, we have the road project, the work on the schools, both in terms of fencing and maintaining security, which will also create additional employment. The Urban Development Commission steps up its activity from the 15th of October.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Not starting. The Minister who is responsible can respond in due course.

The Housing Programme has started, both the 500 Lot Programme, as well as the HELP Programme which was launched in Marchfield in St. Philip. Sir, as the Minister of Town Planning, I can say that the arrangements for the approval of the remaining lots under that programme have been set in train, and the NHC should be able to get lots in the hands of Barbadians who want lots.

I listened to a radio call-in programme on Sunday and could not believe what I heard from a former Minister of Housing.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, when I heard what was said by the former Minister, I would not have gone on the programme either. That was a distraction. The former Minister of Housing said that only 10 per cent of persons who came to her for housing solutions, wanted lots. In my Constituency of St. John, almost 100 per cent of the people who come to me, want lots. They will build their own houses.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It was totally incredible to think that Government had held up its housing programme because of such an allegation or view point. The Honourable Member for St. George North will tell you that the vast majority of people in the rural areas will start with a one-room facility, and come forward and build their own houses, so we have been starving these people of lots. Sir, that is why the Minister is right to go around to all the tenancies and we have been able to identify that more than 500 lots that only require surveying, because the roads are in already, the water main connections are there, the street lights are there, all that is needed is a buffer zone, in respect of the sugar cane area.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Town Planner, the Minister of Housing and I went to St. Thomas, St. George, St. Joseph, St. John, St. Philip, Christ Church and St. Lucy, all over Barbados and there are more lots available in tenancies. This is just the first phase in consonance with our promise, in respect of the 500 lots at \$5 per square foot.

Sir, there are other areas, and we had great cooperation and support from persons who are interested in helping the Government get this programme going, again, a credit to the Minister of Housing. This will have a stimulating effect on the economy, because contractors are

now able, both to access work privately, as well as work under Government's programme.

I am troubled for an economy that was so dependent on the construction sector. We warned time and time again and the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that it is possible to sustain a building boom in the long term.

Now that you have had the sub-prime crisis and you have had other factors impacting on this economy, and there is a slowdown in the very construction sector, which we predicted would happen eventually, the Members on That Side are pretending they know nothing about it, and they did not know the construction sector would have such an impact on the Barbados economy. But, essentially, all of our eggs were in two baskets. Sir, this is really one of the critical issues that we face, in terms of remediating the impact of what has been happening with the United States of America market. Sir, those are the major factors.

The final point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is that with respect of energy prices, the subsidy is being honoured. We made an adjustment. The adjustment that we made still did not bring the prices of petroleum products to the level to which they went at their highest point, which was US\$150 a barrel.

Sir, we were still subsidising petroleum prices. All the time the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was walking up and down Barbados telling us to subsidise them, so that the debt to the Barbados National Oil Terminal Company would have gone from \$60 million to \$120 million additionally, since then, as a result of our subsidy.

Sir, do you know that all the time we were paying that subsidy, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was still saying that the Government should be subsidising petroleum prices in Barbados? So we now have to deal with that debt.

11.10 a.m.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Fortunately, I hope it is going to be so for a long time. Oil prices have come down, but the debt racked up by the previous Administration and by the continuing subsidy is still there.

Sir, if you make sport with people's lives in that way, if you are so cavalier with statistics, if you think that all life is about is holding a Sunday meeting and receiving script minutes before you speak and simply trotting out a few criticisms. We have had criticisms of land taxes in this country. The previous Government allowed land values to escalate in this country and did nothing to intervene in the market.

Sir, now that people's properties are being valued at the true value, or the values that they caused those properties to escalate at, we are hearing you should adjust the tax bands. We did not impose any new land tax rates in Barbados at all. We have not adjusted anything. We kept appealing on the Other Side for the Government to intervene in the market by providing more lots for Barbadians. Sir, if you had been able to get that 500-lot programme going in tenancies, many of the people who have been affected by the increase in valuations would now be owning properties that would not have been affected by it in any significant way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, that is why I am trying to say to you that I am not going to allow anybody to pull wool over my eyes. There may be people who have a vested interest in acting as if the world started on January 16, 2008, but at the end of the day, we have not meddled in any way in the land tax arrangement. I saw nothing on the file or anywhere else that suggested that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East had made any recommendation to adjust the tax band in this country.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, it has been an interesting summer and clearly the Prime Minister, in his different stance this morning, has sought to let the country know that he is on terra firma in Barbados so that his voice would sound. He has strayed far and wide and has offered a unique and singular perspective as he usually does to the facts. That has been his wont, but we have come accustomed to accept that.

Mr. Chairman, I would simply say if that would help satisfy the tremendous pressure that he has been put under since the end of August from his own Party supporters and the tremendous pressures that his own Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance has been put under by his Cabinet and parliamentary colleague, then so be it, but I believe that the Prime Minister ought to have that kind of elbow room to sound off. However, when he finishes talking as if he is still in Opposition, as if he is powerless to shape the affairs of Barbados, then perhaps he may do well to remember what are his powers.

Mr. Chairman, I perhaps, therefore, would start where he ended off on the matter of land tax, because what we heard a Minister of Finance telling this House and, by extension, the public of Barbados, is that because the Other Side was responsible for the increase in land values, which by the way was an extension of the extraordinary growth in the economy, is that he never touched it. It is like a child. I never touched the cookie jar. He forgets, Mr. Chairman,

that he has the power to adjust the land tax rates, margins and the bands in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I would have thought that given the recognition that the values of properties have gone so high that the Minister of Finance would have come here today on the 7th of October, knowing full well that the land tax bills will be out within less than a month, in November, to announce an adjustment in the land tax rates and/or the margins - I will tell you why the rates - in this country to ease the pain of Barbadians. Sir, that is not his primary concern and I would show you why throughout this speech.

Mr. Chairman, he is to tell you here today he did not touch the cookie jar, he never adjusted the rates. Sir, there are 30 members of this House and not one other Member of this House has the power to adjust the land tax rates downwards other than the Honourable Member for St. John, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. We took 19 000 people off the land tax roll in this country. We did so because we recognised that those at the bottom end ought not to be penalised for owning a piece of land.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to give you two ironies today. You would hear me repeating them, because I cannot believe it. The very Party that said they want to give Bajans a chance to own a piece of the rock is now the biggest stumbling block to Bajans owning a piece of the rock. I want to repeat it. The very Party that is now trying to tell people that they want to give ordinary Barbadians the right to own a piece of the rock is now the biggest stumbling block to Bajans owning a piece of the rock.

Mr. Chairman, valuations have gone up all across Barbados. They have gone up in Cane Garden, Grazettes, Cane Vale - the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central should check it - Wavell, Eden Lodge, in St. Peter and in Orange Hill in St. James.

Sir, you can go and check the facts. Every time that we had valuations that went up more than we expect, there was a reduction of the land tax rates and an adjustment of the margins. Sir, the reason you touch the rates is because in the case of unimproved land, the land tax rate is 0.6 per cent. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy knows these things well. There are no margins with unimproved land. There is no band to adjust.

Therefore, when the land tax valuation goes from \$33 000 to \$57 000, as it has on a piece of land in St. George owned by a constituent of mine, her land tax goes from \$220 to \$334. Without her doing anything at all, Mr. Chairman, her land tax rate has exponentially increased and the Minister of Finance is coming here to complain about the fact that the economy did well under the previous Government and values went up for land and that it is almost powerless for him to do anything. I am glad that he

is standing because maybe he would acknowledge that he has the power under statute.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I am glad that you are glad that I am standing too. Sir, I never said that the economy under the previous Government did well and because of that land values increased. I said the previous Government sat idly by, did nothing to intervene in the market and allowed valuations to increase. There is a difference between a financial objective and an economic objective. The Government should have intervened economically. Land taxes do not stop people from owning land. You do not pay land taxes when you buy land. The greatest impediment to persons buying land in Barbados is the price of land and we have done something about that.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, had the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance got up to acknowledge his power... He is the only man in Barbados who has the power now to ease the burden off the backs of people when it comes to the payment of land tax next month.

Sir, you have pensioners who bought houses 20 and 25 years ago for \$25 000 and \$50 000 in parts of St. Michael and their land values have gone up. One or two people in the district may have sold their house for \$1 million or so and a pensioner, retired public servants, are now finding themselves facing valuations of \$750 000 and \$850 000 in the district where the property was bought for under \$100 000. Mr. Chairman, even though they get a 50 per cent rebate as a pensioner, it is too much for them to bear.

11.20 a.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, that is the callous approach of this Government in relation to the suffering. Sir, this is a Government who said its priority is cost of living No. 1, cost of living No. 2, and cost of living No. 3, but the Honourable Member did not tell us that his priority was to raise the cost of living and not reduce it.

Mr. Chairman, what are the facts? Sir, in almost every instance, when this Government has had a chance to act, it has contributed to the increase of prices in this country, Sir, the worst and first example being the 77 per cent price hike on diesel. Sir, the Prime Minister has now admitted that - and I am told he has done it before today - even though oil prices have come down, he has to deal with the debt that is owed to the Barbados National Oil Company (BNOC).

Mr. Chairman, therefore, instead of reducing the prices of gas and diesel for all and sundry in this country, the Bajans now are to pay the debt, which could be raised

by this Government, through a bond or paid for through the Consolidated Fund. Sir, that is the difference we are talking about.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am telling you that ordinary Barbadians are to pay the debt. Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister said that the increase in debt, at the most, could be \$60 million.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House and is obviously unfamiliar with statistics. Mr. Chairman, we came and found a debt of \$60 million, which, on its present course, would soon reach \$180 million.

Mr. Chairman, I said \$120 million more, and not \$120 million in debt. It compromises the very Barbados National Oil Company (BNOC). Sir, if that is the strategy the Honourable Member would have pursued, the Honourable Member should have said that to the public. Sir, had she done that, I am certain they would have made her Leader of this country, and the Honourable Member would now be standing in This Place, instead of me.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Prime Minister needs not worry about me. Sir, there are 270 000 Barbadians out there who are facing the pressure from this Government. If it is \$120 million, that represents less than 1.5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. Sir, the Prime Minister is going to raise money to pay for other things.

I am saying that instead of putting the money on thousands of Barbadians to pay back the debt for the Barbados National Oil Company (BNOC), the Government could raise the money elsewhere.

Sir, Government could raise that money from a bank or a bond, or they could put it on to the Consolidated Fund, which would affect the deficit. Sir, the Prime Minister could do whatever he chooses, but it is wrong to put it on the backs of the consumers and producers in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I go further. It really allows me to come to the inescapable conclusion that the biggest price gouger in this country is the Government of Barbados. Sir, the reality is that the 4 cents per litre that is being put on the price of gasoline and diesel, is purely to repay a debt that the Honourable Member for St. John could finance through any bank, yet the Honourable Member is asking poor people to help finance that debt.

Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister is asking poor people in this country to pay off a debt that he could ask First Caribbean, the Barbados National Bank, or any bank, to help him raise. Sir, what would be the difference of the debt profile of this country? It would go up by 1 per cent Gross Domestic Product. Sir, that is the difference.

Mr. Chairman, I am disappointed in Honourable Members sitting on the Front Bench, because on the other occasions they would have spoken in this Honourable House, they would have put the interest of the people first, but suddenly there is an artificial allegiance that boggles the mind.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, in these matters, I have come to learn and understand that the reason we are in public life is to make people's lives easier and better.

Sir, when the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said at the beginning of this year that this is not a year for people to blindly follow precepts that they would have previously advocated, that this was a year to ease the tension, and that Government may end up having to run a little more debt to get people out of the straight and narrow path.

Mr. Chairman, that was not the Barbados Labour Party speaking, that was not anybody other than the Head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Sir, despite all of the talk we heard in here today, what did the Americans do? Sir, they found US\$700 billion to bail out, not just the banks, but to protect jobs across America and to protect ordinary Americans.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. John could rail against the Opposition as much as he wants about the fact that we are preaching debt. Sir, we are not preaching debt, we are preaching the protection of ordinary Barbadians, just as we did after September 11.

Sir, after September 11, the consequences for this country were particularly more acute because while we may and will face consequences from this crisis, it would be as a result of the reduction in purchasing power, hence people might make decisions that might not necessarily see them travelling as much later this year, or early next year, particularly since the demographics of the persons who may get laid off are the same demographics of the clientele that we want to come down here for four or five days from the eastern seaboard.

Mr. Chairman, after September 11, there was no lag. Airlines stopped flying the very day, and with tourism there was an immediate prospect of significant decline in the

tourism industry. Mr. Chairman, we took a decision to put policies in place that yes, they did lead to an additional debt, but the additional debt did not prevent the economy from growing, both consecutively and successfully, for the next five years.

Mr. Chairman, the pure measurement I use is as I go around, I ask Barbadians, and I know it happened to me. Last year people could have spent money without thinking twice. This year, nobody spends one cent without thinking twice.

Sir, the Minister of Finance got here today and talked about somebody being given a script. I do not think there could have been a more appropriate description of himself. Sir, the Prime Minister, like Rip Van Winkle, awakes when being given a script. I am told from reading the newspaper that it is either from his political consultant, or from his Minister of State. I do not know which one, but maybe it is from both. Sir, the Prime Minister suddenly awakens and realises that there is a problem to be fixed. Sir, guess what? The Prime Minister talks about the problem, yet does nothing. Sir, there have been no new policies.

Mr. Chairman, when the Prime Minister went to St. Michael West, we heard that there would have been an economic stimulus package. Where is the economic stimulus package before this Honourable House? We are covering, in many instances, expenditure already incurred, like a subsidy for electricity.

Mr. Chairman, this Party will support the subsidy for electricity because we introduced it. We introduced it as a means of cushioning ordinary Barbadians, at a time when oil prices were moving at such a rate that we felt Barbadians needed that buffer. Sir, oil prices have been steadily falling, so that once the oil prices reach a certain level, Government could legitimately re-adjust its spending and not have to carry the subsidy, because the subsidy is linked to a threshold price for oil.

Mr. Chairman, for one year the former Government of Barbados had to subsidise the consumers of this country. Did it break the Government of Barbados? Sir, it did not, and that is the point we are making.

Mr. Chairman, by his very own words today, the Minister of Finance has conceded that oil prices are below \$90 per barrel. Therefore, all we were saying to the Minister of Finance is that even though we have to pass through some of the increases in prices, we have to be able to limit what passes through, because ordinary people cannot bear the burden.

Mr. Chairman, if the Prime Minister knows that and does nothing about it, if the Honourable Member does not

implement the promises that were outlined in the Manifesto, for example, taking VAT off electricity....

11.30 a.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: You know that, but you do nothing about it. You do not implement the promise that you made in your Manifesto, like taking the Value Added Tax off electricity although you talked about it in the Throne Speech, even though the subsidy existed before both the Manifesto and the Throne Speech. Mr. Chairman, it then says to me that it is a callous approach on the part of this Government, and that the Government is guilty of price gouging in a way that is unknown to the rest of this economy.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance has the power and I am surprised that Honourable Members on the Front Bench appear to be carried along knowing full well that when they go into their Constituencies, people across Barbados are complaining about the burden they are carrying.

Sir, people across Barbados are saying that things are too tight but, Mr. Chairman, I simply say this, that these are not things that are beyond the power of the Minister of Finance and the Cabinet. I am appealing to them in all sincerity. There has to be a way of raising the debt owed to BNOC other than asking ordinary poor Barbadians and producers to carry that debt. You can raise that debt through other instruments, or you could even put it on the Consolidated Fund. I agree that the Barbados National Oil Company (BNOC) should not carry it because BNOC is not the one providing the service, the subsidy and the welfare to the people of Barbados but do not ask every person buying gasoline and diesel in this country to pay the debt either. The price increases are already too high for them to carry for the Government to put debt on them that you can get otherwise.

I am asking you as well to reduce the Excise Tax by the increased money you are getting from the VAT because 15 per cent of \$250 is more than 15 per cent of \$141. Therefore, instead of taking the increased money, pocketing it, and running down the street with it, reduce the Excise Tax by the amount of increased VAT you receive.

Mr. Chairman, when I say that Government is the biggest price gouger in this country, I am not saying so idly, I am showing you what the Government has done. Let me be clear. Sir, that I support the school bus service and for all those who have recently come, the files will show that the first person who held meetings and started the planning for the school bus service in this country was myself in 2001 and, everybody in this House can say so. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy cannot say so. He

does not sit in Cabinet, so he does not know what is going on.

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the House the impression that the Honourable Member has no power in Cabinet, that she brought a proposal to Cabinet for free bus service and it was knocked down by the Cabinet of the day.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I can understand why the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is obsessed with Cabinet, having been left out of the Cabinet, but I never said about bringing anything to Cabinet. The reality is that the planning work was done at the level of the Ministry but, like with most things, in fact, almost every initiative that this Government has launched, including the Medical Transcription last week, including the lots at Marchfield that the Minister of Housing talked about, including the lots at Ellerton, including the lots at French Village, the ABC Highway....

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: They should not fool people because there is a continuum to Government and it is not a problem that they get the opportunity to finish it, because that is what Government is about. This is why we find it peculiarly strange that the Prime Minister would seek to characterise as debt ordinarily expenditure that Government faces in the course of its activity and, what is the ordinary expenditure.

We heard him complaining about giving soldiers pensions. Mr. Chairman, that was the one new policy initiative, I thought he would have been so glad to be the Minister of Finance that had to pay the pensions out because we did all the work. We passed the legislation. We did all the preparation for who should get. They supported the legislation and now quarrelling that they had to find \$20 million for pensions.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am craving your indulgence.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have given you at least eight minutes already extra.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am craving your indulgence because the Honourable Member had almost an hour and I would appreciate it.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member complained about the Drug Service but the Drug Service comes with a

Supplementary every single year and I can empathise with the Minister of Health, because he knows that every year there is a Drug Service Supplementary in this House. Sir, all the things he wants Barbados to believe “Oh Lord, poor me, look at what I come and find. I cannot work, I cannot function.” That is what Government has to deal with every year.

Mr. Chairman, I will remind him in January, February and March when the other Supplementaries come at the end of the quarter, the same way they have come every year, since we have had this system of public financial Administration and budgeting.

Mr. Chairman, he is preying on the innocent, and he has a unique perspective to create a problem that did not exist and then say something. We never complained about the integrity of the unemployment figures. We complained about the timeliness of their release, that they were not being released on time. It is a fact that six weeks after the completed quarter, unemployment statistics and cost of living are not normally released in this country but, Mr. Chairman, he said I got them before him.

Mr. Chairman, I could only have gotten them before him, because the Prime Minister was out travelling so much he would not have known what was on his desk and clearly would not have seen it because the statistics come six weeks or seven weeks after they were supposed to come. Sir, it is not my fault, according to his Political Consultant, having been accustomed to the big life in Opposition, he wants to make sure the big life is continued in Government.

Mr. Chairman, those are not our words. Those are the words of the Political Consultant to the Prime Minister and you can go and read them. Sir, I say that it is important for investment decisions. It is important for Government to be able to have a sense of what the data is in order to make decisions, not just the Government of Barbados, but people who are planning out expansion. It affects investor confidence and the reality is that no amount of diversionary political tactics will change the fact that unemployment is up in this country.

Sir, \$3 000 jobs were lost in the first six months of this year and more jobs are being lost in this quarter, which traditionally and in fairness to the Government is usually the worst quarter in the financial year. In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, we have heard nothing from the Government that is designed to stimulate jobs in this country other than the 182 jobs they took on at MTW to deal with the environment.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that we would welcome from the Government a statement of policy how you are going to deal with relieving unemployment in this country.

Sir, that is what we want to hear, not about who is fighting in the country and who is not because, first of all, you are making up the lies and, Sir, there will be a Press conference elsewhere today that will also vindicate me in respect of a lot of the lies elsewhere. Sir, that is the nature of the Democratic Labour Party to distract, but that works in Opposition. It does not work in Government, because it does not put rice on anybody's table. It does not put food on anybody's table.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying to you that there is an immediate need for the Government to remove from the backs of ordinary people in this country the payment of the debt to the Barbados National Oil Company and go and get it from banks.

There is also a need for the Government to reduce the Excise Tax to ensure that there is no increased revenue to the Government from an increase in VAT. I further say that with the price of oil having been set the last time at \$112, that the Government can also pass on the reduced cost. Sir, oil is now \$88 and the Government can reduce the prices.

11.40 a.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Now, whatever the last bill at BNOC is, the Government will have access to that, and it will make sure, therefore, that it carries it to that level. Once these prices can hold, because the truth is, if in truth and in fact there is some level of global recession that will ensue, there will be reduced demand.

For the first time since 2002, China lowered interest rates. Mr. Chairman, why? Because the Chinese recognised that over 1 000 factories are going to be affected by the reduced purchasing power of the American market. As if it was not bad enough, we saw the German Chancellor, this weekend, having to guarantee all of the deposits, without capping any German financial system, because of the likely impact. Let me tell you, the bankers and the insurance people on Wall Street exhibited a level of greed that the Bible speaks about in an appropriate way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wind up.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you Sir. Let me say this. I will finish the sentence. The reality is, however much they may have done nonsense, the people who suffer are the people with jobs at the bottom of the economy, and the people with jobs at the middle level of the economy. That is where the reduced purchasing power is coming from the reduction in disposable income. Sir, I will come back and deal with the allegation by the Honourable Member for St. John that this Government found a situation where we had not done anything about

increasing disposable income, in his attempt to deal with the Honourable Member for St. Peter, or the former Member for St. Michael North West. I am not sure which one he is dealing with, but suffice it to say, the most aggressive tax reform, taking 26 000 off the Income Tax roll, happened under the Barbados Labour Party, and 19 000 off the Land Tax roll. I do not know what that is, if it is not increasing peoples' disposable income.

I will come back, particularly when we get to the Head of the energy matters, because in fairness, I recognise that this was a general debate. I am not speaking to the equipment, but I will then speak, Head by Head, as the matters come up.

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

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I cannot believe my ears that we are now dealing with debate after, for the last two weeks, we had to listen to, coming out of the United States. The same thing that was asked by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, is the exact thing that has caused the economic crisis in the world. That is, instead of using long-term borrowings to finance capital projects, those countries used long-term borrowings to finance recurrent expenditure.

One would have thought, after seeing what has occurred in the world, that a responsible Opposition would be encouraging Government to continue their programme instead of asking Government to borrow money to pay daily expenses. That is exactly what is happening.

Sir, if we were to get a long-term loan to finance the oil company, we will be just financing short-term expenditure with a long-term loan. That is what you call economic madness and that is what will wreck an economy. Sir, people have to understand that because it is recurrent, it means you are dealing with a bottomless pit. You borrow today to finance the expenditure and as soon as it accumulates you have to come back and borrow again. I am saying that is economic madness, and no Barbadian who has been watching and following what has occurred on the world market would accept the kind of advice that is now coming, out of a supposed to be responsible Opposition.

I cannot believe my ears that an Opposition, after witnessing what is occurring on the world market, would ask a small country like Barbados to do the same thing that America did, when they have all the international banks and all the money in the world. Yet we have no international banks of that standing to prop up our foreign reserves, but we are supposed to encourage Barbadians to drive around and blow fuel through their pipes. That is exactly what we are asking.

Sir, we are not saying take the money and finance capital projects and protected projects to boost the country. We are telling Barbadians to be reckless, and every Sunday you do not have to worry whether the oil prices go up in the world or not, and blow gas while the Government borrows to sustain your ignorance. Barbadians are not like that.

Sir, I want this Honourable House to understand that I have been in here long enough to know that this type of recklessness was never practised when we were in Opposition, and we will not do it in Government either. All this talk about what the Government should do with housing lots is utter foolishness. I am going to tell you why, Sir.

Sir, for many years we have been asking the former Government to set up a parallel land market. Let me explain what I mean. There is no doubt that the private sector has been able to influence the price of land in this country and you cannot blame them, Sir. Mr. Chairman, what was ridiculous, when you have a government that entered a land market, purchased from the land market, created a scarcity and then put the land in a land bank.

In other words, what the Government of the day did, it encouraged the private sector to keep high prices. What is now happening, the Democratic Labour Party Government, instead of holding land in a land bank, we are now creating what is known as a Parallel Land Market where we are now putting lots on the market at much lower prices than the market demands, to cushion the impact of land prices on the masses of people in this country. That is what you call progressive Government.

Sir, it cannot stop there. There are a lot of poor people who have lands in this country that is landlocked. The Government needs to use the Ministry of Transport and Works to put roads into those lands that will open up those lands for the use by poor people and make housing lots available. We will not sit back and allow the Opposition to tell us how many acres we have in a land bank. We will allow the Opposition to tell us how many housing lots we are putting out there for the poor people.

Sir, if you want to understand poor people in this country, all you have to do is drive through St. Lucy and you will not know the difference between a terrace or a village. Once we are given the land, we will build houses to suit.

Sir, I am a strong believer. I have been preaching it for 14 years and I will not change. Poor people do not need house and land, they need a lot. Especially in rural Barbados there is still something called culture, community and the coming together on weekends and helping each other.

Sir, over the last few years, we have divided the communities in this country. Persons who are accustomed to getting the carpenter, mason, plumber and electrician, from the community to be involved in their house building, we divorced the house owner from those persons and brought in something called the contractor with no relation to the area, and when the person had a plumbing problem they could not find the plumber. When they had an electrical problem they could not find the electrician. Sir, we created social problems within our communities.

Sir, this Democratic Labour Party Government will have to change that. We will have to divide the spoils. No one man should be able to build a house by employing others. We need to recognise that there is something called an electrical contractor, a plumbing contractor and a mason, who is also a contractor in his own right, and a carpenter. We need to spread the spoils within the community, while rebuilding the community spirit. All we have done is destroyed the culture of Barbados, and it needs to be divided and rebuilt, Sir, divided in a way that the spoils can be used to rebuild that community.

11.50 a.m.

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I know exactly of what I speak because I had a fire in my Constituency in December 2007, and if you were to go to Checker Hall Tenantry Road No. 2, you would witness the house that was rebuilt by the people of St. Lucy - who not only spoke, but carried out the action and that is what I am speaking about. You would recognise that those persons were able to rebuild that house on the same spirit and merit of which I speak. Sir, if that can occur, why should that family when they get an opportunity to build a house, offer it to a contractor when there are persons in the community that can build that house.

I want to send a warning to this House that we believe we must imitate every culture that comes to Barbados and that is what is destroying Barbados. We want to mock everybody and we want to give up our good values because we want to mock people. I have lived long enough in this country, under the Barbados Labour Party, to see a concrete house, in the road while coming up Cave Hill, when masons, carpenters and plumbers and so on could not find a job. They went so far to import concrete houses in this country, and we have artisans all across Barbados and they could not get work.

Sir, we have to understand that when we empower our people, we look after the foreign reserves of the country, and it cannot be about a "too few". It has to be about the masses of people of Barbados and the total Barbados as a whole. The large contractors must get some, but the other artisans must get some work in this country, too. Sir, they have to understand that the difference

between themselves and us, is that we look after the total picture, while they look after the "too few".

Sir, they talk a lot. Every day on the radio you can hear them speaking about reducing electricity, as if this Government is not doing that. Mr. Chairman, \$15 million and another \$33 million will be coming to reduce the cost of electricity to poor people in this country and when they advocate, one gets the impression that the Government is just sitting and not doing anything about it, Sir.

I do not believe in speaking until I get black and white and nobody can change that. This is why when people speak on their assumptions in this House, I always tell them that one year from now, I will remark on what they had to say in this House, because when dealing with figures, they have to be reproduced in a document.

Mr. Chairman, I want you to know that it is not just about talk, but about action, and that is exactly what is occurring. The point is Barbadians know that we are not a rich country. Everybody saw America as the richest country in the world, and they now understand the policy of the Democratic Labour Party because they understand that we are running a policy to protect the foreign reserves and the jobs of Barbadians.

Sir, I want to make this general point. When there was all the talk about globalisation, I said in this House - and I will continue to repeat it - that what we should be interested in is localisation, and until we practise localisation, we can preach localisation, and until we know how to sustain ourselves, then we could talk about borrowing money to pay for fuel.

Sir, if we cannot find money to buy food, why should we borrow money for fuel? We need to ensure that the Government finds money to ensure that the productive sectors are functioning. When the productive sectors are functioning beyond what we expect, then we can free up, Sir, but we need to put this economy back on a sound footing.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot expect Barbadians to be reckless, so that people could walk around, telling people that we expect to be the Government in the next five years and that is why the call came from the Opposition. They would like us to be reckless so that the Barbadians would dump us in the next five years. We would have to be a foolish Party to accept the advice coming from the Opposition when the people voted them out for that same reason. Sir, the reason we are here is because we are supposed to be different, and we must demonstrate that difference.

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

Asides.

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I want to understand. I want to leave this with you. Current debt cannot equal capital. It seems to me that the Leader of the Opposition is asking us to go out and borrow long-term money to pay for current debt. This Government will borrow long-term money to ensure the productive sectors are performing right and to ensure that debt, which is long-term is redeemed. This Government should never borrow long-term money to pay for rice and potatoes, as is being asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Chairman, I have made that charge against that Government for many years and they denied it, and today the Leader of the Opposition has confirmed that this is exactly what they have been doing for many years, asking this Government to do like them.

I thank you, Sir.

Asides.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Of course, compliments must be given to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for having steered this economic ship so well over the past eight months. The Prime Minister has clearly and pellucidly outlined the difficulties that he, as Leader of Government encountered, and the people of Barbados can be justifiably proud that there has been no collapse in this country, especially when one looks at the major economic crises emanating out of the United States of America, and to some extent, out of Europe. Therefore, regardless of the kinds of noises that persons would want to make to create hysteria in the bosoms of Barbadians, I think the people of Barbados made a decision in January of this year and they are willing to stand by this Government knowing that they made a sensible decision.

In this Supplementary before us, which seeks some \$80 million to support the services of this island, there are some provisions for education. In fact, \$2.485 million will be used during the balance of this financial year, particularly, in the area of security for our schools. There was a decision taken in the past, not to secure by fencing a number of our schools, and one saw to some extent the consequences of this decision.

Mr. Chairman, I am not saying that physical security barriers will stop the most determined from gaining access to our schools. In Barbados we have approximately 104 Government-owned schools, 82 nursery and primary schools, and some 22 secondary schools, but we have taken

a decision that we need to secure our schools in a very serious way.

This security is not to stop persons who use like playing fields, or persons who have legitimate actions to schools as written between the Ministry, or the Boards of Management and then, because PTAs, political parties, sports groups, and cultural groups all have access to such heavy public sector infrastructures.

Sir, we have always said that there must be a level of respect in relation to that kind of expenditure. There are some persons who completely disrespect public buildings. The majority of public buildings in Barbados are, in fact, the schools across this country.

12:00 noon

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, we have the example of a pyromaniac, if you want to call the person that, on several occasions attacking the Parkinson School in the Constituency of St. Michael South East. To refurbish the gutted building would cost in the region of about \$1.8 million. That is an impact on the resources of the people of the State. Sir, over the next two years or so, in order to further enhance the facilities at the Parkinson Memorial School, we would spend some \$5.5 million. That is the impact of the pyromaniac on that school.

Mr. Chairman, schools in our communities should be respected as places where people could meet, where learning takes place, and where community and social activities can take place.

Mr. Chairman, we also had attacks on the St. Stephen's School, not once, not twice, but thrice. The school in the Constituency of St. Michael North East was also attacked by some vandals who lit the building. There was also a skirmish at the Charles F. Broomes in relation to someone trying to get into the facility, which is adequately secured, by throwing some combustible substance into the school.

Mr. Chairman, these kinds of things are really mind-boggling. Therefore, when we commit some \$2.485 million to further secure these facilities, it is to protect these persons who operate within the schools and to send a message to the wider Barbadian public that our school children and our teachers must be protected.

The property of the people as managed by the State must be protected. A call must go out to all the people of Barbados that when they vandalize the infrastructure of the State, that they pay their taxes for, it would cause greater damage to the State.

During the summer, there was major work. This is not a new exercise. This is a major exercise of the Government during the summer domestic programme. This year we spent just under \$1.1 million to ensure that 16 primary schools were refurbished and some prefabricated units were constructed to take care of some of the needs of the excess students in those units.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to note that outside of one small haemorrhage in the system, the school term started well and on time. Of course, one should always compliment our Project Unit, the contractors who worked on the schools, our Education Officers, our Teachers and our Principals for ensuring that the schools were ready for September.

Mr. Chairman, as part of the exercise of maintaining some work in this country, over the next five months firms would be involved in fencing around the schools. We have nearly 70 schools that are in need of fencing and some that have gates that need re-attaching. The largest outlay of this money, \$198 000, would be for the Coleridge and Parry School in St. Peter which has no fencing whatsoever.

There are various figures, some quite small, to do repairs in gaps which developed in the area of fencing right across all of those secondary schools and some 47 or so primary schools. The other schools already have that existing infrastructure, the fencing, the gates and access.

Mr. Chairman, in all of these places where the community uses the fields to play, we would ensure that the appropriate gates are put in place so that persons could gain access to the fields. We are not shutting out the community, we are just providing some security. In fact, we will even provide certain custodial type of behaviour in persons in the communities who live near to those schools so that they can have an oversight and would be able to say yes, John Brown group has been using the field for this period.

Mr. Chairman, we have to have a sensible organisation of the use of these facilities. We will work with all community groups, church groups and civic-based organisations to let them understand that the facilities are there for them to use. This exercise would put some money in the hands of Barbadians as we move towards Christmas, before the start of the financial year 20092010.

Mr. Chairman, one cannot scoff at \$2.5 million in an exercise like this, because this is not the only thing. There are other developmental projects in education which are ongoing. The St. Ambrose and the Ann Hill projects conceived and continued right through the period of this Government are now being executed by this Government. At some time soon, we will be looking to commence work

on the nursery school at Sharon, again another concept, but continued right through overtime.

Mr. Chairman, to find the resources to do those things is important. Therefore, when the Prime Minister speaks to the amount of work we have to do to bring a lot of things to book and bring down the debt, one has to understand that is quite substantial. Yes, we are still being able to execute major projects in this country and to bring on line activities such as the fencing and the security huts.

Mr. Chairman, many of our schools do not have security huts for the security guards or the watchmen to use as a home-base after they patrol. It is not always the best thing for persons to travel through the school. We need to give them the type of facilities so that their working conditions are improved. This is the commitment of the Government of Barbados, and this is what we will do. These things were being called for, for years.

This Government will put in place a safe and healthy environment for our workers so that the watchmen and security guards will have comfortable environments from which they can guard the facility during the course of the day and night.

Mr. Chairman, this is a caring Government. It will not only look after the safety of the schools, but also after the health and security of those persons who work within the schools. Therefore, I want to commend this \$2.485 million to this House and urge its support not only for this, but for the \$80 million which the Prime Minister has so eruditely spelt out to the people of Barbados.

I thank you.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for allowing me to speak at this time before the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Mr. Chairman, this is my first intervention in a debate as an Independent Member of this Chamber. First of all, let me say from the outset that I have absolutely no difficulty in supporting the measure that is before this Honourable Chamber, particularly the Supplementary requested by the Minister of Education and Human Resources which looks at the improvement of security for this nation's schools which, in my mind, is absolutely critical, vital and necessary. I say that against a background because all of us in this Honourable Chamber know that there are a number of external factors that are impacting seriously on the social and economic environment within Barbados.

12.10 p.m.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, one of these external factors is violence in schools.

Sir, recently while watching CNN, we heard of the eruption of violence that caused the lives of 10 students in Norway. Sir, one would have thought that this kind of occurrence would have only been relegated to a country such as North America, where one so frequently hears of this massive killing of persons in school settings.

Mr. Chairman, Barbados has experienced minor acts of violence in its schools, such as fights. There is no absolute surety that a massive security breach could occur in Barbados' schools that could cause a high level of violence. I believe this measure being introduced in taking the necessary precaution against such an eventuality, is a good one.

Sir, I also want to say that I am happy about it. It is my understanding that \$5.5 million is going to be spent on improving the Parkinson Secondary School plant.

Sir, a year ago we witnessed three devastating fires, in a spate of three months, which destroyed the eastern block. Sir, there was a private security firm employed at the school, yet these three fires occurred. Sir, one has to ask, in the face that there is security attached to the school, how could the Parkinson School have suffered three fires in a spate of three months? Sir, in my view, this begs the point that there must be a correlation between the schools and the communities across Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, let me give you an instance. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Parkinson Secondary School was one of those schools that was constantly vandalised. There was also no relationship between the school and the community. Sir, thanks to a former Headmaster, Mr. Dennis Reece, now deceased, who saw it fit at the time to fuse a relationship between the school and the community. Sir, unfortunately, today there are still some secondary school Principals who believe that the schools are their property alone and that they must live in a segregated environment and not encompass the immediate communities.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Reece has been able to build a relationship between the school and the community. Sir, and since then, just about a year ago when these fires occurred, there was a harmonious relationship between the Parkinson School and the community.

Mr. Chairman, it is against that background that I want to urge both the Minister of Education and Human Resources Development and the Minister of Community Development and Culture, to let us call for a national summit meeting of all the primary and secondary school Principals, along with the community practitioners across

Barbados. Let us discuss how best we could improve the relationship between the schools and the communities.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that all secondary schools should also be made into performing centres for creative arts. Sir, the Parkinson School, for instance, has produced the best cultural talent in Barbados, along with the best cultural artistes. Sir, I can boast of that fact.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: The fact is that the Pineland Creative Workshop also uses the Parkinson School as its headquarters. I remember, in 1990, amidst all the violence and deviance that we see occurring, we did a play called: "Of Age and Innocence." Sir, in that play we did a social assessment and came to the conclusion that 10 years or so later, this is what we would see happening. Sir, at that time, we were grossly attacked by some teachers, police and nurses. Sir, the play looked at all the social factors that would impact on children's behaviour within the schools. We even came to the conclusion that if there was not a check with the ZR culture at this time, that it was going to escalate and get out of hand. Mr. Chairman, it is, therefore, critical that this summit meeting between the Principals of these schools and the communities take place.

Mr. Chairman, there must also be after-school education, what I call compensatory education. This must continue within communities. Mr. Chairman, we are virtually on the verge of establishing an academy of sporting excellence in the Pineland community, but it is to be a national programme. Sir, this means that we are piloting soccer, cricket and football. Sir, we would be looking for some of the best talents across Barbados. We would also be having some of the best coaches available in the community, where these persons engaged in sports would be able to develop their skill.

Mr. Chairman, at this critical juncture in our social development, we must also have not only the community and school, but we must also have the private sector on board. Sir, the Parkinson School has, not only produced good artistes or good cricketers, like Rawle Clarke, who is now accompanying the Seniors' Team in Utah, but at this point in time it is critical that we have that relationship between the schools and communities. Sir, in that way, so many problems could be solved between the schools and the communities. In fact, it would cut Government's expenditure. It would greatly reduce the security at schools across Barbados if there is that relationship.

Sir, security should not always be measured in dollars and cents, but also how best we could impact on the society as a whole. Security could also be measured by the importance of fostering that relationship between schools and communities.

Mr. Chairman, I want you to imagine that after 3.00 p.m., there is a surge of activities happening in communities across Barbados. There are reading classes in the Resource Centres across Barbados. There are teachers lending of their skills, their time and talents to pass on that knowledge. There are many retired persons, for example, nurses, superintendents, who come back into these communities and work with young children, particularly those children who are out of school during the summer vacation. Sir, a serious mentor programme must be developed, which would also take into consideration that relationship between the school and the community.

Mr. Chairman, in winding up, I wanted to make this short intervention, because I felt it was critical that we clearly understand there is a role for the community practitioners, the Principals and Teachers of secondary or primary schools, where together all of us have to come together to work for the stabilisation and for the harmonious action of communities across Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, as I take my seat, I want to compliment the Minister of Education and Human Resources Development for coming to the rescue of the Parkinson Secondary School, by bringing a provision before this Honourable Chamber that says that the eastern side of the school that was destroyed would now be rebuilt.

Sir, another serious problem the Teachers and students at Parkinson School encountered was the noise level of the traffic flowing across the Highway by CBC. Sir, both parties complained that noise level affected their ability to concentrate.

12.20 p.m.

Sir, there is only one thing I would like to say in concluding, because I should have concluded three minutes ago. I want to say that in that relationship between school and the community that there should also be a relationship between school and also the contractor, who will be given the job.

I am sure that once work is happening in a particular community, that persons from within the immediate community should be employed and working on that particular project. In other words, it is a total package, a total programme that I am speaking about.

Mr. Chairman, I support the measure before this Honourable Chamber. I want to thank the Minister for supporting the Parkinson Secondary School, which has a rich history. Sir, as I take my seat I want to thank him for this intervention.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

I thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church West for giving way. I believe it is important that I say a few words on the Supplementary since some \$43 million is under the Head of the Transport Board and International Transport. I want to commend the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East for his independent and thorough intervention. It is a like a breath of fresh air to hear him speak like this again in this Chamber.

Mr. Chairman, somebody asked about putting food on the tables of Barbadians. The social programme that we have instituted at the Transport Board providing free transportation for school children, has put food on the tables of Barbadian families.

I would like at the onset, to commend, as the Honourable Prime Minister has already done, the Board of the Transport Board, the members of staff of the Transport Board, the drivers especially, and at this time, there is some pain that we grieve with the families of that tragic incidence yesterday which also curtailed a special event we had planned, and may they have relief soon.

Mr. Chairman, the achievement at the Transport Board was because of a commitment of this Administration to the kind of programmes which utilised the facilities we have. We have about 309 buses at the Transport Board and the former Administration, as has been said already, was proud of the fact that they could only keep, on average, 175 buses usable a day. It is an absolute shame. The average has already been stepped up to some 230 buses and, as mentioned by the Honourable Prime Minister, peaking at about 255 buses when we started the programme on September 2, 2008.

Mr. Chairman, we have, therefore, to maintain that programme and that is one of the reasons for the Supplementary today. We have projected that between now and the end of the financial year 2008/2009, we shall need another \$30 million to support the activity at the Transport Board. Sir, I believe that Barbadians would be proud of their money being spent in this way, especially as it answers the very important social programme of taking our children to and from school safely and Sir, the ridership on the buses reflects the response of the Barbadians.

Mr. Chairman, we had as many as 612,909 rides in September alone by school passengers, compared to an average of 250 000 leading up to that time. What we are seeing is utilisation of scarce resources that this country has, utilisation of scarce resources that the taxpayers of this country pay for, and indeed, they expect us, as the decision-makers and the leaders in the community to put in place these kinds of programmes.

We listen to the comments of the head teachers and listen to the comments of the parents. We do not have to listen to the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. We listen to the parents and head teachers talking about the arrival of children at school.

Sir, not only are they on time, but they are focused on the business of dealing with education and training. I am sure that every Member in this Chamber commends this kind of approach. We have to rescue our generation and the money that we have spent and will spend in this programme will be well spent.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry remains committed, therefore, to ensuring that this programme is maintained and the kind of details that have to be put in place to make sure the programme is maintained, like working late at night, and as has been mentioned before, working with many contractors, not only with UCAL and Simpsons, but small contractors like L & M and Transtech, to call a few names, and small providers of parts to keep the rolling stock of the Barbados Transport Board moving, and Sir, this is very important.

Mr. Chairman, as I have said, let us commend the members of that organisation for a job well done.

Mr. Chairman, I need to turn for the moment to the other area of the Supplementary - road repairs and a stimulus package of \$10 million. Let me make the point early that the \$10 million is the expected expenditure between now and the end of the financial year 2008/2009. The total programme is more of the order of \$33 million. This programme again seeks to address urgent needed road improvement in Barbados that has been sitting around the corridors of the Ministry of Transport and Works for many years.

Mr. Chairman, it may amaze you and this Honourable Chamber to know that the present solution in place at what they call the 'Wilkey Triangle' has been championed by the staff of the Ministry of Transport for many years, and it was supposed to have been put in place to bring about the solution, which it has brought about and that is a relief of the traffic and the gridlock that is now almost a memory in that area. Sir, there are finishing touches required, but I want to commend the local contractors again as they work assiduously to bring about the completion of the widening programme of the ABC Highway.

Sir, as we embark on our other options and our other solutions to introduce, as I have said in here many times - one-way and that kind of approach, we are sure we can ease the gridlock at areas like Warrens, Collymore Rock, Top Rock and Hothersal Turning. Sir, that is the commitment of this Ministry.

Mr. Chairman, we also need to relook at the programme implemented by the last Administration and I want to announce here that we are going to be looking at what has become known as the road overlay, the foam bitumen, where you scratch the surfaces and resurface only. We believe that there may be areas where we have checked that programme, because when this treatment is done to roads that are not properly bonded by sidewalks or some kind of curb, it can be an eventual, not necessarily money spent.

12.30 p.m.

We understand the need to bring about urgent repairs in some areas, but at the same time, we need to be sure that these repairs will be lasting, and we can look forward to some serious life from these roads. There will be a re-assessment of the remainder of this programme. It is essentially about 60 per cent consumed, but the opportunity to visit the next 40 per cent of the \$70 millions, committed by the former Administration and continued by us, will redound to everybody's benefit at the end of the exercise.

Sir, the roundabout at Boarded Hall is part of the stimulus programme. The roundabout at Coral Ridge is part of this stimulus programme. The roundabout at the Grooves/Andrews Factory is part of this stimulus programme. These are programmes that will be immediately tackled. Sir, remember, as I said before, these are solutions already at the advanced design stage in the Ministry of Transport and Works. If Prior Park can be included, of course, Prior Park will be looked at. We have to examine our priorities very carefully as we go about the programme. I believe that the Prior Park roundabout was already in the Estimates.

Sir, the other important fact about this programme is, as mentioned again by the Honourable Member of Finance, we need to make sure that new people get employment for these programmes, or we will be wasting time. We will get new people employed to carry out these tasks.

I believe that St. Andrew was well-fatted by the Honourable Member. On the few times that he said or did anything, he made the point that when he was Minister of Housing and Transport in another incarnation, he would have taken care of that. We will, as I said, be looking at the needs of our roadways and making sure the kind of improvements that are necessary are put in place.

Sir, remember that \$1 million is being allocated at this stage to road signage and road marking. I want to declare from this position that I will be expecting the Ministry of Transport and Works to improve the road marking of the streets in Barbados. It is unacceptable. I believe that we should make all the resources that we can available to the staff and, where necessary, put new staff in

place to ensure that our roads are marked. Even in areas where the road is not regulation size, at least by dividing in two, it demonstrates to the user that this half, although it might not be enough, is really mine, so let me keep as tight as I can to this area.

I think that the country Barbados would be a lot better off with this commitment and this approach. Sir, along with the road markings, we are talking about signage, bold signage that tells you where you are or where you are heading, for that matter.

Sir, in a country that boasts such a high dependency on tourism, we should do better and we must do better. We are committed to doing better at the Ministry of Transport and Works. With this money, we are committed to doing better in making sure that these signs are erected, and erected in a timely fashion. It is not something that we can linger on. We must do it now. We must get out into our highways and byways, into our country, into St. Andrew, St. Thomas and St. Lucy, as we help to direct locals and visitors alike around this beautiful island.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, this is going to be money which I believe that Honourable Members will find is very well spent.

Sir, there are obviously a number of roads which have been neglected. In some cases you would almost get the impression, deliberately, under the last Administration as they carried about their political agenda. Places like St. Lucy would have been starved of any road improvement for 14 years. Places like St. John would have been starved of road improvement for 14 years, under the political agenda of the Barbados Labour Party, but St. George North would have been glazed with every highway and byway, flyway, foot bridges and all kinds of beautiful ornaments.

Sir, we completed the roads because there is no point punishing the people of Barbados, because of the selfish agenda of the Barbados Labour Party when in Government, so we completed the roads, but this time is a new time, so that areas that have been neglected in the past can look forward to the serious and aggressive attention of this Administration.

Sir, I want to assure Honourable Members that this programme will be hastily put in place. The contractors that will be used, as I said, will be urged to employ new people, more people, so that more Barbadians can find work and we can stimulate the economy, somewhat, while we improve the environment that is so important to this country.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, thank you again for giving me a chance to make a simple contribution to this debate. First, I recognise that we made, to some extent, a departure from how we would do a Supplemental. Normally we would call Heads and debate these Heads. Instead we have gone to more speaking around the issue and I appreciate and understand that. If that is the way we will now do Supplementals, maybe, we need to make a statement on how Supplementals would be done in the future.

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that all Honourable Members who spoke before were out of order, including the Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just saying that if that was the way we were going to do new Supplementals, I do not have a problem with it. I think it is a reasonable way, as the Honourable Member for St. John said, but let us make it clear to everybody that if this is the new way going forward, for Supplementals, that we change the Orders or the Laws so that we can do it in that way as opposed to what we have been doing time and time again, by calling the Heads and having speeches on certain Heads, rather than joining everything together, but I understand it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What will occur from time to time is that the Chair will exercise its discretion to move the debate along. That is all you have had in this case. There will be no changes to the Rules in relation to Supplementaries, but the Chair, as you have seen, has exercised its discretion, to enable the business of the House to proceed in a manner that I believe is conducive to the kind of debate that we have been having.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you for your clarification and I will go forward.

Sir, one would expect a new Government that considers itself a caring Government would first and foremost want to cushion our vulnerable people from adversity. I think that should be a tenet which all Governments that are interested and concerned with its people's welfare would want to cushion our vulnerable from adversity, but what are we actually seeing here today? I speak in particular to the energy crisis.

12.40 p.m.

We are now seeing a Government that has seen a 40 per cent reduction in its cost price, which it pays for energy products in this country and refuse, in an arrogant manner, to pass on that reduction to the people of the country. The arrogance is now being shown by a Government to take its profit margin from a simple 15 per cent to 45 per cent. If that is not price gouging then, what is?

Mr. Chairman, I happen to pick up this document. Nobody is keeping to this document.

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that he is nobody. He said that nobody is reading the document, and he had the document in his hands and was reading from it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please continue, Honourable Member.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am reading from the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto of 2008. The first thing is, "Part I: Putting People First," but we did not realise it was putting them first in the firing line. We did not realise it was putting the people first to carry the burdens of the significant tax increases and the significant energy increases in this country.

Sir, it went on further to say that Barbadians can and should rest-assured...

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is saying by giving free bus fares to school children that you are putting school children in a firing line and he has to withdraw those remarks.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, it went on to say that Barbados can and should rest-assured that a Democratic Labour Party Administration will do something tangible and meaningful about this vexing issue of the cost of living, because we are beholden to no one.

Sir, they have done something tangible. They have increased it. They have done something meaningful.

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by saying that when this Government reduced land from \$30 per square foot to \$5 per square foot, we are actually price-gouging the consumers of this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please continue, Honourable Member.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will continue.

The people did not realise that this Democratic Labour Party Administration would now go so far as to price-gouge the people of this country by maintaining and increasing their profit take on energy products when they have an opportunity to reduce them. If that is not an uncaring Government, then, what is?

The Honourable Member for St. John got Over There and talked about a stimulus package, equating to \$10 million in roads, and \$2 million for fencing for schools. Essentially, that is what it is. The best stimulus package you could bring, is to reduce the profit margin for the people on energy prices.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I do not know where the Honourable Member was. I never spoke about any stimulus package. I responded to the manner in which a stimulus could be given to the economy, with reference to a so-called economist, who had made certain comments in the newspaper.

The stimulus package has a number of elements in it, which are included in this Supplementary, but include the building of two brand-new office buildings for the Government to maintain employment, so we did not have any employment strategy. I talked about housing...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Oh, if you do not want me to deal with it now, no problem.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member, please continue.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. John wants to bring a true and tangible stimulus package to this economy and this country, he needs to reduce the profit take of Government on the energy products. That would amount to much more.

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have read my Estimates and the Honourable Member is misleading the House, because clearly, I am saying that the Government is giving back \$33 600 under energy, along with \$15 million previously. Sir, that is more than \$48 million that the Government is giving back.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Please proceed.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You know, if I have to get up and sit down, and get up and sit down on these points of order all day, I will do that, because the people of Barbados have the right to understand that at the end of the day, this Government has options and it is arrogantly refusing to take those options to ease the burden of the people.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member must not, under our Rules, impute improper motives to Members, but an accusation of arrogance, not to the Government, but to its Members, is also a reflection, Sir, on the standards of this Chamber, the Honourable Member should not say that, and it should be withdrawn.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, the objection is in relation to the use of the word "arrogant" in the context used. Are you going to withdraw it? Are you relating that to the policy? You did say the Government so you are withdrawing that part.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I will withdraw it in relation to the Honourable Member but refer it with relation to the policy of the Government.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: The policy of the Government is showing that it is in no way a caring Government because instead of reducing the profit margin and bringing it back in line with what is accustomed, the Government of this country has taken the decision to profiteer from the reduction in the cost price of energy products and maximise their take, rather than passing on that benefit to the people of this country. Sir, that is absolutely wrong, and it is something that should never be tolerated in this country.

If we, as a people, want to get this economy kick-started and moving again, what we have to do, Mr. Chairman, is to put the money back in people's pockets, so that they can invest it, instead of Government taking all.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, the poor people like the freighters in this country, who carry sand and stone to building sites, are suffering from an increase in diesel prices, the increase in road taxes of \$3 000 and up for a truck...

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that these

gentlemen have charges and these charges are remaining with them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please continue.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying, that the poor freighters in this country are having to suffer increases in diesel prices.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, Honourable Members, I would urge you to allow the Member to speak in as much silence as possible. Asides are allowed, but I am hearing some asides that are interrupting the Honourable Member in his speech, please.

Honourable Member, please continue.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The poor freighters are suffering because of the increases in diesel prices, increases in road tax, even increases in the cost of purchasing the marl, grits and sand. They cannot pass on all to the consumer because construction now is not booming as it was before, so we are seeing increased expenses and decreased income. They are

having significant problems. People who depend on the transportation industry in this country to carry goods from here, there and yonder are having to bear the brunt of these increases.

12.50 p.m.

What we need to do as a country - this is not about any partisan politics - is to kick-start this economy. Diesel is the fundamental input of this economy. It carries industry, construction and development.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy many times talking about the "too-few", but all through these Estimates I am seeing that the "too-few" are going to benefit. I am not seeing the masses getting any benefit. Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy feels that there have a "too-few" for one side, he must know and recognise that there have a "too-few" for the other side too who decide that they must now benefit from the fatted calf that they did not have a chance to benefit from before. He should not get up and say that he feel that there is only a "too-few" on one side. The "too-few" on the Other Side feels that they should benefit now. That is what these Estimates are carrying for them.

Mr. Chairman, let us change the mind-set. Let us not focus on the "too-few", but on the masses. Let us not put the people of this country in the firing line anymore. Let us cushion our vulnerable from adversity as these energy prices come down. It is a window of opportunity for the

Government to show that it is prepared to take the tough decisions and reduce the take that it is taking with energy prices.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This is just as a means of guiding the future conduct of debates. We have had quite an extensive debate so far. In terms of time, this debate is basically to conclude by 1.15 p.m., subject to the discretion of the Chair. I would encourage Honourable Members in their future contributions to be succinct so that we can best utilise the time.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That would include the wrap-up by the Honourable Member for St. John as well. I recognise the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, this is an intervention basically to deal with two very short areas. The first one relates to a Supplementary for \$200 000 under the accounting code for Professional Services to provide for an evaluation of the present St. Joseph Hospital structure as well as the Villa Maria structure.

Mr. Chairman, one would recall that a few months ago, I took a team from the Ministry of Health as well as a team associated with the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport to the St. Joseph Hospital to evaluate that particular facility to see how, given the recommendations within the Haynes Report, the St. Joseph Hospital and the Villa Maria facility could be re-integrated within the health care system.

Mr. Chairman, part of the recommendations of the Ministry how we decide to move forward with the St. Joseph Hospital facility would be to have an evaluation done of the present state of that facility as well as the Villa Maria facility. What we are essentially looking to do is to evaluate the structural, the mechanical and the electrical integrity of the St. Joseph Hospital. Sir, we would also be looking for a full report on the structural, the mechanical and the electrical integrity of the Villa Maria facility.

Mr. Chairman, what we want out of this exercise is to have an evaluation done as to what structural remedial work would be required to bring the St. Joseph Hospital and the Villa Maria facility back to any relative usage. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for the inclusion of the sum of \$200 000 for that particular exercise.

Sir, given the time available, I would want to spend the next two minutes to essentially make two comments in very strong support of the position taken by the Prime

Minister and Minister of Finance with respect to some of the decisions that this Government had to take.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to essentially disagree most strongly with the views of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East as well as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West to having this Government borrow for continuing consumption processes. I also want to disagree very strongly that any country that exists with high vulnerabilities...

Sir, because of the state of the fiscal affairs of Barbados left by the former Administration, we cannot be that reckless not to understand that there comes a time when you cannot, by taking those types of reckless measures, put entities like the Barbados National Oil Company Limited on the rocks as well as to put this economy on the rocks.

Sir, before the last election, I spoke ad nauseam about the high vulnerability of the Barbados economy to external shocks. Sir, as soon as you had one slight increase in the price of oil, which was an external shock, we started to see a ripple effect in Barbados in terms of an inflationary effect.

Mr. Chairman, what the Honourable Member for Christ Church West does not understand is that oil prices being dropped today have nothing to do with the lag effect of the previous high oil prices which would have had an inflationary impact on the economy, which would have created problems with respect to the provision of goods and services for any economy.

Mr. Chairman, I would strongly suggest that a monkey should not play with guns and so on. They should stay out of those things.

Mr. Chairman, I support very strongly the measures taken by the Honourable Member for St. John, the Prime Minister, because they are the right measures to take at this particular point in time. To continue to borrow for consumption would be a major danger.

Mr. Chairman, the other thing that we are going to make sure that we handle very carefully is that when we borrow for developments, we engage in projects that are themselves income-generating and in projects that have a short gestation period, so that the repayment period can come on line early and take the fiscal stress off the economy.

Mr. Chairman, I have to educate those Honourable Members on That Side all the time. I started it a while ago, but I have to continue to educate the Opposition.

Mr. Chairman, those are the only two areas that I would want to make an intervention on. Again, I want to thank the Prime Minister for the supplementary intervention.

I thank you.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Resolution in respect of the granting of certain sums of money. Sir, I want to deal with a particular issue that was raised in the debate in respect of the charge made against the Government in respect of land taxes.

Sir, we all know that one of the primary reasons the price of land has been increasing at the rate that it has been is because the previous Administration resolved itself to adopt a policy that land should go to its highest economic value. They also resolved that Barbados' land should be put on the world stage for bidding. What they did was to create a situation in this country where foreigners were able to come into this country and outbid Barbadians for land. Sir, they know that.

1.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, it is inexcusable for the Leader of the Opposition to pretend that the reason we see an escalation of land taxes in this country is due to the inaction of this Government. Sir, that is misleading.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I indicated that on every occasion when land values increased in this country, the Minister of Finance would call in the Commissioner of Land Tax, and there would always be a downward adjustment of the land tax rates, as well as an adjustment of the bands, because there would always be pressure on the people who would have to pay the land taxes, if the rates are not adjusted downward.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is free to go back and do the research. The Honourable Member would see that on every occasion land values went up - because they have gone up consistently every year since Independence and before - the power that lies in the hands of any Government is not to suppress the price, but to adjust the tax rates and to adjust the bands, so that people do not have to pay.

Mr. Chairman, therefore, for the Honourable Member to use the red herring about the increase in land values, is to ignore the fact that one person and one person alone, by the Laws of Barbados, has the power to reduce the land tax rates of this country, as has been done by previous Ministers of Finance.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member demonstrates that they do not understand the impact of the policies they have advocated. Sir, what they have not taken into consideration is the fact that our land has effectively been put on the world's stage for bidding. Therefore, in a sense, in the past, the previous Government has done nothing to cushion Barbadians from that.

Mr. Chairman, I would also add one thing, because from the policies they advocated, what they did was to compromise the productive sectors in every way. Sir, I am pleased to note that at least the Prime Minister has indicated that he is pursuing a path where we would identify certain sectors of Barbados which would be preserved for its nationals. Sir, I think the Opposition wants to applaud the Government on that particular initiative.

Mr. Chairman, I want to move to other aspects of the Resolution, which speak to where we are utilising our scarce resources to address certain fundamental issues which must be addressed in our society.

Sir, I want to look at the question of roads. Sir, St. Michael West Central is one of the most traversed areas in St. Michael.

Sir, as a matter of fact, we have to applaud the Government for the timing of this Resolution because there are certain maintenance works that need to be conducted. Sir, for example, let us look at Fairfield Road. There are also areas in Seclusion Gardens that need to be addressed.

Mr. Chairman, at least we show a separation from the previous Government, which, in itself, showed some kind of a love relationship with these big projects, without, at the same time, recognising there was a need to address the other subsidiary roads in this country. Mr. Chairman, at least this Government is taking the opportunity to address those particular issues which need to be done.

Sir, there is a simple issue like signage. In St. Michael West Central, we have a situation where signs have been removed for some time. Therefore, one does not know where certain areas are to be found. Mr. Chairman, when the Opposition was the Government, they refused to address these particular issues. Sir, for example, there is no sign at 2nd Avenue, Fairfield. Sir, not only that, at Wavell Cross Road, an area where we have had frequent accidents for some time, these funds will be used to address these issues that affect ordinary people in communities.

Mr. Chairman, I heard references from the Other Side to the effect that this Government is not a caring Government and that we were not looking after the needs of ordinary people. Sir, these are the kinds of things we have had constituents in St. Michael West Central

complaining about, and we are using the resources of this country to address those issues.

Mr. Chairman, I want also to look at the question of schools. Sir, the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School, which exists in St. Michael West Central, the fencing there has been broken a number of times. Sir, here again, we will have the opportunity to utilise the resources that are coming from this Resolution to address that particular issue.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that we cannot but support this Resolution as it stands. Sir, I would want to encourage the Opposition that instead of engaging in partisan politics - as I see happening - to recognise that when we bring something that is going to help ordinary people in communities, that they should support it.

Mr. Chairman, I support this Resolution. I thank you.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I shall try to be as brief as possible. I did not realise that I was granted the opportunity and for that I thank you sincerely.

Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate that I am very proud to recognise that this Government would continue the programmes the Barbados Labour Party started. Sir, the record must reflect the new schools that were built during the period of the Barbados Labour Party have all been fenced. Sir, the EduTech schools and the new nursery schools that came on stream have all been fenced.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I understand the background of what the Government is doing in relation to fencing these schools. Sir, we all acknowledge the great contribution schools play in the various communities. Sir, I could refer to the school where I worked for many years, where almost daily that school was vandalised by the community. Sir, opening up the school to be a part of the community had, therefore, lessened the vandalism. Therefore, the whole exercise of involving communities is paramount.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member mentioned the Lawrence T. Gay Memorial School, which is one of the schools which was fenced, but it was terribly vandalised a few years ago. We know of the Parkinson School and the other schools mentioned that were vandalised. Sir, the Lester Vaughan School has been vandalised late last year, and the guards were also beaten very badly. That is a school that is properly fenced and, therefore, the question we might want to ask might be, is fencing the full answer?

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the children and members of staff should be properly secured in the schools'

environment, but I would wish to add that in addition to fencing, that the schools should be working on beautification projects, where sweet limes, bougainvillea, "Pride of Barbados" could all be grown to act as fencing. This could become a pilot project where members in the community, as well as the general workers at these schools could help because it would enhance the environs of those schools, thus making them better and greener for those therein.

Mr. Chairman, the final comment I would wish to make is that I am happy to see that some of the roads are going to be attended to. Therefore, I would wish that Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport would pay special attention to the bridge at Endeavour, St. James. Sir, approximately \$300 000 was voted in a Supplementary last year October, for work to be done to this bridge and, to date, nothing has happened. The fact that this bridge is still not repaired has destroyed the lives of the communities around Lion's Castle, Endeavour, and Lewis Village. I believe that urgent attention should be paid to this, because the Barbados Labour Party did make special provision for that road to be completed.

Mr. Chairman, I have a number of comments but I will give way because I understand the constraints of time, and I greatly appreciate the opportunity to have made my contribution. I thank you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I know our time is limited and again I apologise to this Honourable House that this did not come as a Bill, which certainly would have given all Honourable Members more time to speak on all of the issues.

Sir, some of the other matters which I have spoken of, including a Supplementary for the Ministry of Health and a Supplementary for the Ministry of Housing and Lands, will follow very shortly and the full extent of what the Honourable Member for Christ Church West described as a fiscal stimulus package in this debate, would be known.

1.10 p.m.

Sir, there are many elements to it. I think that those who advise the Opposition should remind them that there are many ways in which you can inject a fiscal stimulus in an economy. I do not think that Barbados is a diesel economy, but if you tell me it is and if your leader agrees with you that it is a diesel economy, perhaps I should reflect on all I have been taught about the Barbados economy.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I referred in particular to the Budget Debate of this year at

page 82 when the Honourable Member made it clear that the prices of petroleum products, LPG and natural gas, would now be set by the Ministry of Trade without intervention by the Cabinet and it would be in place by August of 2008. This is now October of 2008 and it is not in place.

It went further and these are his words. It said “the price of petroleum products and LPG will be adjusted monthly by the Ministry of Trade on the advice of the Ministry of Energy based on the prices of these products by importers.” Sir, we have not seen that and for the Honourable Member to get up and suggest about whether we are a diesel economy or not, let him keep to the Budget and reduce those prices as was stated and is expected by the people of this country.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not know what that was all about. If your time has ran out...

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The new point of order is a point of elucidation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, that is not a point of order.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Sir, he said he did not understand.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, that is not the basis of a point. You have made the point of order already and there is nothing new before the House on which to base a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I do not understand and I must say so. If the Honourable Member ran out of time when he was speaking earlier, then he could have said to me that he had something to add and I would have been gracious enough to give him the time to add all of that. I said, and I repeat, that until the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, I did not know Barbados was a diesel economy. I did not know it. He was supported by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who said it was true. He said it fuels everything in our economy.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that fishermen are taken care of. They already have the concession. Farmers already have the concession, manufacturers have the concession, the PSVs operators have the concession and if the Honourable Member is telling us to pass on the prices, he needs to go back and see what happened when the last adjustment was made, and tell me if he really thinks he wants us to pass on the prices. You are watching too much television. What you see on CNN...Sir, I am sorry.

Mr. Chairman, people in Barbados are often watching too much television so what they see as the price on CNN is not necessarily the price at which Barbados buys a shipment of oil. The Honourable Member was Chairman of the National Petroleum Corporation (NPC) and I thought he would know better, but that is why the National Petroleum Corporation did nothing because if you have a Chairman of the National Petroleum Corporation who said that this is a diesel economy..

DR. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member for St. John should go further. If he is now opening to the public of Barbados and telling them that we received preferential prices, he would also be well-advised to let them know that it is in relation to the international price. Even if you pay a percentage of the international price, when that international price goes up or down, your cost price still goes up or down relative to that ratio.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Member says I am now opening up to the people. Sir, the pricing of petroleum products did not start in January. We have been pricing petroleum products by this mechanism when I was Minister of Finance before. Sir, nothing is being opened up. The only thing that was concealed from the people of Barbados was the debt, the secret tax, which the Honourable Member for St. Peter said he had imposed one day down the East Coast, when he said the only thing Barbadians did not know was that he had imposed a secret tax on them.

The second secret that Barbadians did not know was that prior to the Election, the Honourable Member for St. Peter was asked to deal with the question of oil prices because of the unsustainable debt of the Barbados National Oil Company. Sir, that was withheld from the people of this country and the file was labelled “let this wait until after January 15”. That is what was concealed, nothing else.

I have said what our policy is going forward, that we delayed it. We did not delay it because oil prices were coming down. We delayed it because we took into consideration the fact that if we had passed on the then adjustment, which saw oil prices at US\$145 a barrel, it would have meant that prices would have gone through the roof, so we absorbed it.

Mr. Chairman, it would be highly irresponsible of me as Minister of Finance of this country to go and borrow money to finance present consumption. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke but she has not spoken about energy conservation today. She has not talked about alternative energy sources. She has not talked about

the impact of fossil fuels. All she is saying is to borrow money...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by suggesting that I do not support those measures by not speaking for them and that is the innuendo which is to be drawn. He is known for his innuendos and, I am, therefore, using the opportunity to correct the record and to indicate that not only did we agree...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, hold on, please. When the Chair is seeking to address a matter there must be silence. Based on where you are going, there is really no point of order. You have corrected in terms of the issue you have raised, but there is no basis for you to continue. I believe you are about to make a speech and I have ruled there is no point of order.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am going to reiterate the fact. The Honourable Member has a full 15 minutes to speak plus and at no point during that address did we hear anything about factors that could mitigate the oil import bill in this country. What we heard was that the Government...

I want to use the words "let First Caribbean or BNB pay." Now, when we borrow, who pays? You think the bank is going to pay and we do not have to pay it back? You do not think the same poor people have to pay back the debt? Sir, all you are doing is deferring the cost of present consumption to future generations of Barbadians. I would rather take that money and invest it in trying to save jobs in this economy. I would rather take that money and try and invest it in new accommodation for Government.

1.20 p.m.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I would rather take it and try to boost our social programmes, including the transport system, including our education system. We have to find \$450 million, and counting, to undertake a new hospital which everybody said this country needs.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well the \$500 million that you all said, that extra \$50 million was for somebody else.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Silence, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member must not use these occasions to send messages to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West. The

Honourable Member is misleading the House, and to suggest that the cost would be for somebody on this side, I know that he has the Honourable Member for St. Philip West in mind, and he must not seek to send messages there in talking to the Opposition, especially when it comes to whether it is a new or refurbished hospital, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have taken the point of order. I have accepted the point of order in relation to innuendo, which I will ask the Honourable Member to withdraw and to move on.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I listened carefully to what was said today. I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. They said that this Government did nothing to ease the impact of the cost of living on the poorest in this society.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Again, we never said that you did nothing. In fact, Mr. Chairman, remember saying that you were giving back a dollar and taking back \$4 out of people's pockets. So it is inaccurate to suggest that you did nothing to ease the cost of living.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, let me quote them directly, because the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East always forgets what she says. I think that when you engage your mouth in an exercise that your engine, which is your brain, should be working. Do not talk for the sake of talking. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said, "Every new policy of this Government has had the effect of increasing the cost of living." The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, what did he say? "We have put the most vulnerable in the firing line."

Asides.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: We put the people in the firing line.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You mean people like you. You reduced your medical fees? You did? You published that in our Manifesto?

Sir, I really do not get into these absurd arguments. The Transport Board policy would have reduced the cost to consumers to by at least \$700 a year. The pensions that we introduced to assist the most vulnerable across the board except one category, only one category of pensioner was not affected by the increases that we gave. The previous Government, that was so much interested in the cost of living, was going to phase the increase in the Reversed Tax Credit, increase it by \$1 100 this year and \$1 300 next year.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member knows that once the circumstance developed this year, that I called on him not only to increase the Reversed Tax Credit this year, which he finally did in the Budget, but also to increase the threshold to \$18 000, so that anybody earning under \$18 000 would get it. He did not do that, Sir.

Those people earning between \$15 000 and \$18 000 are still not therefore getting the benefit of the Reversed Tax Credit at all, far less the increase. That has been the position of this Barbados Labour Party, taken as early as May 2008.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East needs to have a little lesson in the Westminster system of Government. I do not take my tutelage from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I said the previous Government was going to increase it over two years, and we accelerated that increase such that the benefit will come in one year. That is all I said. I am nothing to do with what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East called for, because the truth is, I was not listening.

Mr. Chairman, I do not even remember, and I am going to say in all honesty, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said it, because like most Barbadians, I would have to ask how a group of people, who the electorate of this country dumped about eight months ago, so overwhelmingly, could now believe that 270 000 people, according the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, have suddenly started to tune back into such a discredited group of politicians. I would have to ask that, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. It is unparliamentary to call an Honourable Member arrogant. It must be unparliamentary to say that we are a discredited group of politicians. May I say, Sir, that the Election result we have accepted, but we also know that it did not take from us the right to comment or the right to talk. If the Prime Minister feels that is what the Election results did for him, well, I have news for him, because we will be talking each and every day, when they do things that impact negatively on the people of Barbados.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member takes exception, I withdraw the word "discredited."

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They should be chastened. They should step back and reflect and analyse. You do not do that in eight months. It takes a lot more than that. Any Party that is more preoccupied in selecting

candidates eight months after an election, in which it was dumped unceremoniously, is not on the right track. You do not think about the short-term election. You think about the future of the nation rebuilding the institution. The idea that eight months after you are doing candidate selection already as if nothing has changed, it tells you the direction.

I am saying that we introduced all of these policies, the camps. We are looking for the location for the vendors, so that vendors in Barbados who are unlicensed can come to market on a Friday and Saturday in Bridgetown. However, after that, the rules will be applied, but they have the best shopping days to come to town and ply their wares, no licencing, no other requirements, as happens in many economies. That will help the cost of living, because there will be more competition, there will be higher levels of agricultural production, and there will be more people in the informal sector involved. Those are the things we are looking at.

The Honourable Member said that we have no employment strategy.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I said construction, maintained levels of employment in the construction sector. The Honourable Member flew up and told me that she has 200 names. We have not seen them yet. The Honourable Member said that she has the names of the 200 who were sent home.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member, yet again, as is his want, is misleading the House. I have never ever said the words "200 members, and Rayside Construction, or any construction company being sent home." If he wants to suggest that I did, then tell him to say it out of Parliament and let me deal with him there.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member has never had a chance to question anything that I said outside and it would never happen.

Sir, this question of us stopping people of owning land is one of the most absurd arguments I have ever heard. You do not pay a land tax when you buy land. You buy land at the value at which it is being sold or that you negotiate. We are saying that the previous Administration allowed land values to appreciate, and you cannot have it both ways. You cannot have the benefit of increased land values.

1.30 p.m.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter say in here that people want to go to heaven but they do not want to die, and that you have to accept increased land values. Sir, the plea for reduction in land taxes is for the people in Sandy Lane.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is obviously misleading the House because you do not pay land tax when you buy the land, but you have to pay the land tax to keep the land. If you cannot afford to pay the land tax to keep the land, then the Government would repossess it, and that is the point.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I have practised Law in Barbados for 22 years. I have worked for people all over this country and nobody that I have ever worked for has ever asked me what the land tax is on the land that they were buying. It has never been asked. You set a value.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You are not an Attorney at Law.

The Honourable Member needs to calm down and learn something today. There are enough attorneys on the Other Side who will explain to the Honourable Member that nobody asks what the tax is on the land. When you adjust the bands, the benefit does not only go to those persons at the bottom, but it also benefits those people who come to Barbados and only pay land taxes. They pay nothing else, no Income Tax or Corporation Tax. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is arguing their case, but pretending to argue it for poor people. The true impact of it will also benefit those at the top in the society, so I call that the 'Sandy Lane argument.'

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Minister of Finance is the only person in this country who can adjust the tax and the bands. I am calling on him not to adjust at the top. I am calling on him to adjust the land tax rates for properties at the bottom and in the middle, for people who live in Kingsland, for people who live in Cane Vale, for people who live in Grazettes, for people who live in Bournes Village, for people who live in Maxwell and for people who live in St. Matthias. Sir, if the Minister of Finance wants to leave it at the top, as he can do, I will support him with that, but I am saying that middle income and working-class people in this country should not have to carry that burden.

Mr. Chairman, every previous Government, when there have been evaluations, would look and see whether there is justice in the case to adjust the land tax rates. The people who own idle land and want to keep the land for

their children, they are the ones who are suffering too, because they have to pay the same constant rates.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please, we are in the wrap-up and we do not want to waste time in relation to matters that are speeches.

Honourable Member, please continue. You have another 10 minutes to wrap up.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman, you will get that, because when a point is imperfectly put, you will always get points of order to try and lessen the inappropriateness of it, and that is what is happening here. The argument was that the Democratic Labour Party, by failing to adjust the valuations, was stopping poor people from owning land.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I said that the Government will become the biggest stumbling block to people having land in this country.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The biggest stumbling block to people means, people keeping land. The reality is, Mr. Chairman, I am saying that people who have to find that additional money when the year comes now will be challenged to do so. We took 19 000 people off the land tax role and some of them will now find themselves paying taxes in this country, and the ones who remain are now seeing valuations that they could not believe.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Honourable Members by means of correction, I said 10 minutes, but we have already exceeded the time, so you are talking at least about three to five minutes.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I thought you were giving me all of that time. I did not need it, but it would help the Honourable Member to do some more points of order and get her speech right.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I understand the English Language. If Government is the biggest stumbling block to people owning and keeping land that is a very clear allegation. What we did, Sir, was decided that starting immediately, we would identify 500 house spots. The normal market value of those will be \$15 a square foot, even if NHC sold them, and we are going to sell them at \$10 a square foot in tenancies in this country, because there is no development cost to Government.

Sir, we believe those kinds of interventions, not the things that are being recommended by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, but those kinds of interventions by Government in the marketplace to help people to own land in this country, are what will make a difference in terms of this country becoming a landowning democracy.

Now, the Honourable Member, as I said, is a status quo politician, and not a forward-looking politician. Sir, that is why when we offered the concession of the NHC houses to the tenants...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They were not offering it, but for us to give to the people who have been in the House for 20 years or more, that was not even enough. That was a status quo argument. It affects the fellow who was in there for 19 years, 264 days. So even if you built a unit last year, and somebody has been living in it for three weeks, the Government is to transfer that unit to those persons, free of cost.

Mr. Chairman, you need to understand what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is working on.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member must, at least when he is trying to construct an argument, reflect the truth. The truth is, Mr. Chairman, that in this Parliament, we have called for the return of the deposits for those people who already have 20 years, and who would have qualified.

The Honourable Member for St. James South and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, and other Honourable Members in here, in fact, agreed that it is unfair for the people not to get back their deposits, because they have their constituents coming to them asking back for their deposits because they qualified for the 20 years.

In relation to those who have not yet qualified, my only statement was to ask the Minister of Housing to tell us whether the people in Church Village, who will not qualify until 2011, will be benefitting from free NHC houses on the 20-year programme. Sir, that is all that we ask.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, let me tell you what is the argument. The people who have run the NHC into the ground, with a \$33 million overdraft that we had to finance and the potential of a \$54 million settlement for an arbitration, are now telling us that the NHC must take up the money it does not have, and give it back.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They ran it in the ground, you know.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. The Cabinet of Barbados of which I was a Member in November took a decision to refinance the NHC, and to settle its balance sheet with the \$33 million. It so happened that the actual execution of it just fell to the Honourable Member for St. John to do, but that the NHC's balance sheets were sorted out before we left Government is a fact, and the commitment was given by the Cabinet and the Ministry of Finance.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, to suggest that the return of the deposit to the 800 or 1 000 people who paid down the deposits will break the National Housing Corporation, is to ignore the fact that there has been more wastage since then. Those people in good faith, paid their deposits, have the 20 years in, and this Government never said that they would not benefit. We are calling on the Government to give back those people their deposits, so that there is equity across the board.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The point is taken. Thank you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I cannot teach the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. She has been in here long enough, but the only way I would have gotten up on a point of order just now if I were in her position, would be to say that my Government had intended to give back the people the money.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is so intent on delivering a speech that she did not deliver earlier, that she is getting up on points of order that do not help the case.

1.40 p.m.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If the Honourable Member is going to say that the Cabinet just before they left office agreed to give back the deposits, I would say fair enough. All the Honourable Member said is that they agreed to refinance the National Housing Corporation.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That would not have built another house in Barbados. The same people who do not have housing and land would still not have them today.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If the Honourable Member would return the conveyances and stop frustrating them and read a book on conveyancing, they would not have that problem. They would not be delayed. Even if they had to pay a deposit, they would have a conveyance.

Mr. Chairman, I heard a big speech in here once by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House when he talks about me not returning conveyances. I could understand why he is perhaps a little lost, because he would have presided over the situation where Sam Lord's now has a mortgage on it having not received three titles on the matter and now the matter from the Crane has CLICO in Court, or CLICO has them in Court for the property, so he knows about not conveying titles.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please wind up. We have at least two minutes to wind up. We are out of time already.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Whatever they do not have is as a result of the Barbados National Bank under the previous Government lending money to a man who was not able to pay it back. At least they can get back their money now, but I am not going into that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I want to finish this debate by saying that the Honourable Member said that there was no employment strategy, which is where I was at the point. The Honourable Member believes that we have no power to shape the affairs of this country, or we are acting as if we are powerless to shape the affairs of this country. I have pointed out the things we have done in the first eight months of office. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East does not think that we have the power or that we are powerless to reshape Barbados, according to the Guinness ad "Come test me nuh", she can come and test the Democratic Labour Party. We are going to deliver on our pledges regardless of the harangues and the misinformation. Like nine pins, those who support the position of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, will fall one by one by one.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

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

The question that Head 19 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 52

MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND ENERGY \$34 279 331

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 52 stand part.

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

The question that Head 52 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 53

MINISTRY OF HEALTH, NATIONAL INSURANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY \$200 000

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I beg to move that Head 53 stand part.

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

The question that Head 53 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 54

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT \$1 591 636

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to move that Head 54 stand part.

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

The question that Head 54 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 57

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, WORKS AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT \$43 039 840

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to move that Head 57 stand part.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, 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 motions of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, the Money Resolution was read a first, a second and third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 14, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 14, 2008 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

1.50 p.m.

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BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
DUGUID, Dr. W. F. (Christ Church West)
ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D. C. (St. Philip West)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
THOMPSON, Hon. D. J. H. (St. John)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Opening. The convening sentence reads ‘the House of Assembly met at a.m. on Tuesday, October 07, 2008’; the hour is missing. Printed as in the source.

Q2. Announcements by the Speaker. The heading ‘ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER’ runs on at the end of Mr. Speaker’s words confirming the Minutes instead of standing as a heading. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Committee of Supply, Resolution. The Resolution reads ‘THE SUM OF \$80 004 807 00’ and ‘ESTIMATES 20082009’; the sums under Heads 19, 52, 53, 54 and 57 add up to \$80 004 807. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee of Supply, points of order. Although the House was in Committee with Mr. Chairman presiding, several interventions by His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, Dr. W. F. Duguid, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley and Hon. D. J. H. Thompson are addressed to ‘Mr. Speaker’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Speech labels. Mr. D. St.E. Kellman is styled ‘His Excellency’ in the PRESENT list and in each speech label, and Hon. R. D. Jones is labelled ‘Mr. R. D. JONES’ on the motion to suspend Standing Orders. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 7th October, 2008, with His Honour M. A. Carrington, the Speaker, presiding; prayers were led by Rev. Canon Harewood. The Minutes of Friday, 8th August, 2008 were confirmed, and Mr. Speaker welcomed Members back from the recess and announced the appointment of Mr. Pedro Eastmond as Clerk. The Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, laid several Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) Orders, 2008 and the Annual Report of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited for 2007; Hon. R. D. Jones laid the Annual Report of the Rural Development Commission for the year ended 31st March, 2004; Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick laid National Insurance and Social Security regulations and an order; and Hon. S. D. Blackett laid the Archives (Records Management)

Regulations 2008. In a personal explanation Mr. H. F. Lashley informed the House that he now sat as an Independent Member for St. Michael South East.

Standing Orders were suspended, and on Order No. 2 the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair, on a Resolution to grant \$80 004 807 under Supplementary Estimates No. 6, 2008-2009. Hon. D. J. H. Thompson set the Supplementary against the financial crisis in the United States, citing the failures of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Lehman Brothers, AIG and Washington Mutual, and said he had approved Central Bank statistics without any change. He rejected allegations about the economy as ‘Pavlovian’ behaviour, spoke of an additional \$10 million for the Barbados Tourism Authority and the new WestJet service from Calgary, and said the debt from subsidising petroleum prices had been \$60 million and would soon have reached \$180 million.

The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, argued that with property valuations so high the Minister of Finance should have adjusted land tax rates and bands, as she said had always been done, called the Government the biggest price gouger in the country and asked for a policy on unemployment; she said that a debt of \$120 million would be less than 1.5 per cent of GDP. His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. Kellman replied that current debt could not be financed by long-term borrowing and that the Opposition was asking the Government to be reckless.

Hon. R. D. Jones explained the provision for fencing and security at schools, saying there were about 104 Government-owned schools and that just under \$1.1 million had been spent on 16 primary schools in the summer; Mr. H. F. Lashley welcomed \$5.5 million for the Parkinson Secondary School and urged a national summit on violence in schools. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce said the Transport Board had about 309 buses and that \$10 million of a road programme of about \$33 million would be spent by the end of the financial year. Dr. W. F. Duguid, interrupted by repeated points of order from Mr. Kellman, spoke of the burden of diesel prices and road taxes on freighters and withdrew the word ‘arrogant’ at the Chairman’s request. Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick explained \$200 000 for an evaluation of the St. Joseph Hospital and Villa Maria structures, and Mr. J. D. Paul and Miss C. Y. Forde also spoke.

In his reply, which drew a series of points of order from Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley and Dr. W. F. Duguid, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson apologised that so large a Supplementary had not come as a Bill, defended the pricing mechanism for petroleum products, withdrew the word ‘discredited’ at Miss Mottley’s objection, and announced

that 500 house spots in tenantries would be sold at \$10 a square foot against a market value of \$15. Heads 19, 52, 53, 54 and 57 were agreed to without division, and the

Money Resolution was reported and passed all its stages. On the motion of Hon. R. D. Jones, the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 14th October, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

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